

## MODERN OPINIONS

We shall proceed to an examination of some modern positions. These are somewhat difficult to classify because they dovetail so much. For example, the consideration of the person as an absolute, and the individual as a part of a whole, is sometimes correlated with the consideration of the spiritual good as necessarily proper; or the consideration of these points develops into a discussion of society as a means to the proper good of the individual. Sometimes it is difficult to see which of these conceptions give rise to the others, but many believe that a certain notion of person is a basic one from which other ideas stem. Therefore, it seems reasonable, in terms of contemporary discussions, to begin with the Thomistic principle used to furnish the ostensible foundation for the cleavage between person and individual which has won such vogue among modern Thomists.<sup>25</sup>

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25. Jacques Maritain, Freedom and the Modern World, New York, 1936, p.49; The Person and the Common Good, New York, 1947, pp.59ff, 431; Scholasticism and Politics, New York, 1940, p.73; James Hoban, The Thomistic Concept of the Person, thesis, Washington, 1939, p.64.

Saint Thomas says that the nature of part is contrary to the nature of person.<sup>26</sup> And yet we have indicated that it is only as a part, as ordered to a transcendent Common Good, that the individual person may love himself more than society.

It is true that a person is not a part because he is a person, for the divine Persons are most truly persons, yet in no sense are they parts.<sup>27</sup> However, it is also true that when Saint Thomas opposes the nature of part to the nature of person, he is speaking of a part of an unum per se, a part which does not have complete subsistence, and not of a part of a whole which has only unity of order.<sup>28</sup> This is evident in the context which is used to prove that the soul, being a part of a human being, cannot be called a person.<sup>29</sup>

In other words, a person is not necessarily a part because he is a person, but being a person does not prevent

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26. In III Sent., d.5, q.3, a.2. Also Ia, q.29, a.3, c. and ad 4.

27. Charles De Koninck, In Defence of Saint Thomas, p.18.

28. Ibid., pp.16, 17.

29. In III Sent., d.5, q.3, a.2: "Ad tertium dicendum quod anima rationalis dicitur hoc aliquid per modum quo esse subsistens est hoc aliquid, etiam si habeat naturam partis; sed ad rationem personae exigitur ulterius quod sit totum completum."

him from being a part, whether of society, of the universe, or as ordered to God. Moreover, the human person who is a part is so, essentially, because of what he is in his entirety. Not because he is a person, but being as he is, a finite person, soul and body together, the human composite, he cannot be other than as a part in relation to the ultimate common good. Even as a member of political society, it is the entire man who is a part, though he is not a part of this whole according to all that he is and does.

It has been pointed out that if personality precluded being a part in every sense of the word, it would be impossible for a person to be a person and at the same time to be a part, even when his being a part is due to his "individuality."<sup>30</sup>

We have seen that had a single man been alone in creation, even then he would retain the nature of part.<sup>31</sup> The opposition to this theory cannot be glossed over with a mere reference to emphasis. Thus one author says that man is.

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30. Charles De Koninck, In Defence of Saint Thomas, pp.17,67.

31. Charles De Koninck, De la Primauté du Bien Commun, p.58: "Nous sommes d'abord et principalement des parties de l'univers."

more a whole than a part,<sup>32</sup> although he admits that, absolutely speaking, man is part or individual more than person and before being person, and that the intellectual substance is loved and willed for the order of the universe of creation before being loved and willed for itself. However, he hastens to reverse this priority in the supernatural order.<sup>33</sup>

When individuals are of the same species, they may be called parts of a whole. A person is not merely a suppositum, but a suppositum of a rational nature, that is, endowed with intellect and will. In other words, a being may be an individual without being a person, without having the dignity of a person. However, in view of what has been said, this does not so clearly justify the assertion that the individual is for society and society is for the person.<sup>34</sup>

It is true that all individuals of the same species are, in one proper sense, parts of a whole, the species, and that it is only because the individual under discussion is a person, possessing a spiritual nature and an eternal destiny, that he matters for his own sake, that the good of the whole re-

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32. Jacques Maritain, The Rights of Man and the Natural Law, New York, 1947, p.4.

33. Jacques Maritain, Person and the Common Good, p.7, note 7.

34. Jacques Maritain, The Rights of Man, p.8. Cf. W. Parsons, "Philosophy and Order in Politics," Am. Cath. Phil. Assoc., Vol.17, (1941) p.47.

turns to him and benefits him,<sup>35</sup> that he cannot really sacrifice his own greatest good for the good of society. It is equally true, however, that the created person has the nature of part because he is a finite person.

It is because the individuals who make up society are persons, a fact which none can deny,<sup>36</sup> that one should love society with a love of benevolence. Granted that it is in society that these persons find their fullest development, this does not mean that the proper good of these persons is the ultimate end of society.

Some authors merely wish to maintain what is admitted, namely that the persons who are parts of society are themselves subsisting entities.<sup>37</sup> However, others hold that only the individual person is real and has a real function in the history of the world.<sup>38</sup> This is plainly contrary to

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35. Jacques Maritain, Person and the Common Good, pp.51, 60, 441; Rights of Man, p.9; Jean Mouroux, The Meaning of Man, p.129.

36. Jacques Maritain, Person and the Common Good, p.442: "It is the human person who enters into society. . ."

37. Karl Kreilkamp, Metaphysical Foundations of Thomistic Jurisprudence, thesis, Washington, D.C., 1939, p.79: "As persons men can never be merely parts, in the way that food loses its identity and becomes part of the organism."

38. E. I. Watkins, Men and Tendencies, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1937 (quoting Peter Wust), p.159: "Individual personality alone is the true integer of history, the atom of all historical reality."

Saint Thomas's teaching: "Nevertheless, the whole itself [i.e. civil society] does have an operation which is not the operation of any one of its parts, but an operation of the whole, as when the whole army is in battle."<sup>39</sup>

The above point has already been discussed in the first chapter. In view of the fact that armies, missionary societies, trading companies, research or exploratory organizations, and similar groups have played unquestionably important historical roles, their historical reality cannot reasonably be denied.

Because the state is a temporal society which is mortal, whereas the person is immortal, some draw the conclusion that the individual is for society, and society is for the person.<sup>40</sup> But the person will still be an individual in the achievement of his eternal destiny; his participation in the ordered gradation of nearness to God and union with Him will endure as long as the person himself.

Those who defend the applications made of the distinction between person and individual maintain of course that

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39. In I Eth., lect.1, n.5.

40. J. Maritain, Rights of Man, pp.13, 18; Person and the Common Good, p.51.

the distinction is not intended as a separation.<sup>41</sup> This is doubtless true but the fact remains that the individual as a person seems to be exalted to a sort of "whole to whole" relationship with God, as if the lesser whole did not have the nature of part when compared to the greater.

There are many statements which it seems impossible for a Thomist philosopher to even attempt to justify in an absolute way. Certainly their authors have no intention of claiming man's independence of his Creator, whatever may be their idea of his relationship to the order established by that Creator, but some passages, taken literally, at least lean in that direction, for they deny man an aim or purpose beyond himself.<sup>42</sup>

Other authors claim that the reason why man is a member of society is that he is material. They go so far as to base his rights upon the fact that he is a person, but his duties upon the fact that he is a social being.<sup>43</sup> This would

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41. Jacques Maritain, Scholasticism and Politics, p.66; James Hoban, The Thomistic Concept of the Person, pp.42, 43.

42. Theodore Brauer, Thomistic Principles in a Catholic School, St. Louis, 1943, pp.202, 203: "Man as a person is indeed a totus in se et sibi, wholly in himself and for himself, an independent whole." Ibid., p.221: "...It can only mean that he is subject solely to the purposes of his own complete being. . ."; Jean Mouroux, The Meaning of Man, p.127.

43. Sister M.J. Wolfe, Problem of Solidarity, thesis, Catholic University of America, Washington, 1938, p.155.

seem to imply that the spiritual activities of man bar him from society, and that his person, as such, carries with it no obligations to society.

It is true enough, however, that although man is a part of political society, he is not part of this society according to all that he is.<sup>44</sup> Man's immersion in the whole universe, as fulfilling God's creative purpose, is not so all embracing that he does not have immediate and direct relationships with his God. Yet even here the created person still has the nature of part, in the sense we have already defined.

We have used the relationship between the creature and the Creator to show that the rational creature loves the whole of creation for God's sake more than he loves himself. It is the same relationship, however, which rescues man from being confined to an inferior good. Yet it is mainly with respect to the ultimate extrinsic and incomparably perfect end that man's person has the nature of part, and it is also

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44. Ia IIae, q.21, a.4, ad 3: "Man is not ordained to the body politic according to all that he is and has." Jacques Maritain, Rights of Man, p.14.

because of this respect that he is not completely subordinated to the whole.<sup>45</sup>

The foregoing statement that man is not part of political society according to all that he is must not be interpreted to mean that man's participation in society is something completely extrinsic to his nature. We have already seen that man is by his very nature dependent on the actual temporal society in which he finds himself for the full development of the human perfections which will be his throughout eternity. The often used analogy of the courier, who, while the whole of him is engaged in covering the course, is nevertheless so engaged only according to his neuro-muscular machinery,<sup>46</sup> may be appropriate to show that the intrinsic good of society is not the individual's ultimate end. However, this analogy seems to make his being a part an unimportant aspect of his activities in every order.

Then there is Saint Thomas's statement which has been turned against the primacy of the common good, and consequently against our love of self as ordered to that common good, namely that the single intellectual creature is more

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45. Charles De Koninck, De la Primauté du Bien Commun, p.14; J. T. McCormick, "Individual and State," Philosophy of the State, Baltimore, 1940, p.20.

46. Jacques Maritain, Rights of Man, p.15; Person and Common Good, p.62.

like God "intensively" and "collectively," while the universe is more like Him only "extensively" and "diffusively."<sup>47</sup> As one author has indicated the more intensive likeness is not absolutely a more perfect likeness,--any part of any whole comes closer in this sense to the simplicity of God.

Therefore, it is what is realized in creation composite et multipliciter which imitates most perfectly what is in God simpliciter et unite. Hence to deem secondary the perfection which in creation is accomplished by way of composition and multiplicity, is to deny value to that which most perfectly imitates what is in God simpliciter et unite.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, the notion cannot stand that the greater intrinsic perfection of the whole is obtained simply by repetition and multiplication. Saint Thomas speaks of a "more complete" likeness<sup>49</sup> and not just a more extensive likeness. Modern

47. Thomas Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," Modern Schoolman, Vol.22, (May, 1945) p.190.

48. Charles De Koninck, In Defence of St. Thomas, p.27; Cf. also pp.28-36.

49. Contra Gentes, III, c.97; III, c.64; Ia, q.47, a.2, c.: "For goodness, which in God is simple and uniform, in creatures is manifold and divided: and hence the whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better than any single creature whatever." In I Sent., d.44, q.1, a.3, ad 6: "...Et ideo melius est universum in quo sunt angeli et aliae res, quam ubi essent angeli tantum, quia perfectio universi attenditur essentialiter secundum diversitatem naturarum quibus implentur diversi gradus bonitatis et non secundum multiplicationem individuorum in una natura."

authors already quoted have made it clear that the divine goodness is imitated more closely by the harmonious whole than by any "theoretically best mirroring in one single finite being."<sup>50</sup>

The idea that man is made for God and for eternal life before being part of a human community<sup>51</sup> might possibly be misleading. It telescopes the two aspects of God's creative purpose. Man was made for God as ordained to the union with Him which constitutes his beatitude, and he was made for God, as are all creatures, to give glory to God. The proper order requires that, if God makes creatures, He must make them for Himself. We cannot overlook the fact that God's goodness is best manifested by the various grades of perfection within creation and within the narrower limits of rational creation. Authors already cited have pointed out that the human race itself is a direct object of the will of God and not merely a random happening.<sup>52</sup>

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50. Frank Sheed, Theology and Sanity, p.110. Cf. Charles De Koninck, De la Primauté du Bien Commun, p.64; A. D. Sertillanges, L'Amour Chrétien, Paris, 1919, Third Ed., p.11.

51. Jacques Maritain, Scholasticism and Politics, p.75.

52. Jean Mouroux, The Meaning of Man, p.123; Theodore Wesseling, "Person and Society," Dublin Review, Vol.208, (1941) p.223. Cf. A. D. Sertillanges, L'Amour Chrétien, p.111: "C'est collectivement d'une certain façon, que Dieu nous crée, en ce que son idee de l'homme, dont chacun de nous réalise un aspect. . ."

Even if by human community we understand the state, the "before" does not of course refer to a priority of time. As regards a priority of nature, certainly it is more important to be a citizen of the heavenly kingdom than of any earthly one, but the fact remains that man ordinarily needs the earthly society for the development of certain perfections that prepare towards those which unite him with God for eternal life.

Not every reference to the common good that we meet in modern discussions of the relationship of the individual to society can be understood in the sense in which the expression has been used in this thesis and in the presuppositions upon which it is based. Even when the common good is mentioned as the final cause of society, the context frequently indicates that the community is one of predication only. Moreover, in references to what might be interpreted as an extrinsic good for society the "disinterested" common good is limited to the perfection of the human species.<sup>53</sup>

Another statement, that society cannot command anything contrary to the individual's welfare,<sup>54</sup> is true, but its

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53. Sister M. J. Wolfe, Problem of Solidarism, pp.16, 54, 69, 70.

54. Herbert E. Langan, Philosophy of Personalism, p.46.

truth does not depend on the subordination of the good of society to the good of the individual. Any possible individual sacrifice would but promote the individual's genuine and highest welfare. Moreover, as we have seen earlier, the good of the whole cannot, by its very nature, be opposed to the good of the part.

We face another hindrance to the idea that man's love for society is a love naturally due from part to whole when we read, ". . . If man were a natural part of the city, then such inclination would be natural to him."<sup>55</sup> This is used in support of the idea that man is a part because of something other than his personality, something extrinsic to his nature as a person.<sup>56</sup> The implication that man is not a natural part of the city might be disturbing if it were not for several factors: first, the analagous use of the word, "natural," which here means originating in nature, and not merely in accord with man's nature; second, that man's nature as a part is not essentially dependent on his being a part of a definite political organization; and third, that Thomistic philosophy traditionally refers to man as a

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55. Ia, q.60, a.5, c.

56. Etienne Gilson, Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, p.285.

natural part of the universe,<sup>57</sup> who therefore naturally loves it more than himself, as every single thing loves the good of its whole or its species more than its own.<sup>58</sup>

Saint Thomas's statement that what is loved according to charity is "the highest good and not the common good"<sup>59</sup> may be presented as an objection to the idea that the self is to be loved more as ordered to the common good than because of its intrinsic good. But if this statement is examined in its context we see that the common good here referred to is a good that is common only by way of predication. Saint Thomas had offered the objection that charity would not be a special virtue if its object were the good, since that is the general object of all virtues; but in his response, he shows that it is not the good which is common to all the virtues that is the object of charity. It is in this manner that we must understand the common good to which Saint Thomas was referring when he said that it was not the object of charity.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, we also have Saint Thomas's words

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57. Cajetan, In Iam, q.60, a.5, n.5.

58. Ia, q.60, a.5, ad 1.

59. De Carit., q.1, a.5, ad 4.

60. Charles De Koninck, In Defence of Saint Thomas, pp.36, 37.

that a man ought out of charity to love God Who is the common good of all more than he loves himself precisely because God has the nature of common good.<sup>61</sup>

A statement that might be derived from the preceding text concerning the highest good, if it were taken in isolation, is that the beatitude of the intellectual creature is not God as the common good, but God in the transcendence of His own mystery.<sup>62</sup> If this expression means that because God is loved by charity as He is in Himself, He is not at the same time to be loved as a good which exceeds the created person's capacity for a personal, proper good, it is unacceptable. To say that we are ordered as parts of a whole to the greatest of all goods--since the formal beatitude of the person depends upon the objective beatitude which is,

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61. Ia IIae, q.109, a.3, c.: "Now it is manifest that the good of the part is for the good of the whole; hence everything, by its natural appetite and love, loves its own proper good on account of the common good of the whole universe, which is God. . . . But in the state of corrupt nature man falls short of this in the appetite of his rational will, which, unless it is cured by God's grace, follows its private good, on account of the corruption of nature." IIa IIae, q.26, a.3, c.

62. Jacques Maritain, Person and Common Good, p.13.

essentially, one that is communicable to many<sup>63</sup>--is not, however, the same thing as to say that the beatitude of any one person depends, in the very fruition, on the actual existence or beatitude of others.

The individual person's direct relationship with God is frequently referred to, but we have already seen that this direct relationship is not in opposition to the principles hitherto stated. Furthermore, it is not in opposition to the fact that religion has a social aspect.<sup>64</sup> To insist that man has the nature of part does not imply a barrier between God and the individual man. Why must either society or the universe be considered as "interposed" between man and his God?<sup>65</sup> The orchestra member does not consider the orchestra as an obstacle to the attainment of his own extrinsic end; an army is not interposed between the soldier and victory; a devoted son does not consider the family as coming between himself and the mother he loves.

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63. Charles De Koninck, De la Primauté du Bien Commun, pp.25, 55; In Defence of Saint Thomas, p.41: "It can surely be only because it is impossible to love God as He is in Himself without loving Him in His communicability to others." Ibid., p.71.

64. Frank Sheed, Theology and Sanity, p.247.

65. Thomas Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," Modern Schoolman, Vol.22, (1945) p.192.

A moral theory that possibly presents an objection to the conclusion that we must prefer the good of society to our own private good is the theory that the impulse to our own good is, in the order of nature, more fundamental than the desire of the good of the race.<sup>66</sup> "More fundamental," however, must then be accepted in the sense of necessary and prior in time. Moreover, the conclusion itself, that the good of the race cannot be our final end, is true; yet it is true only because the race has the same extrinsic final cause that we have, and not because our good is more fundamental in the sense of being a more ultimate cause.

A minor difficulty of a somewhat different nature presents itself in the notion that love varies with the closeness we feel towards the one we love.<sup>67</sup> Must I feel society as closer to myself than I am, in order to love it more? More than that, must I feel God's nearness in order to give Him the place He deserves in the order of charity? Then love of God is to be found only in mystical experience. Our quarrel is with the term "felt" which seems to rule out

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66. Michael Cronin, Science of Ethics, New York, Benziger Brothers, Second Ed., 1920, Vol. I, p.357.

67. M. C. D'Arcy, Mind and Heart of Love, New York, 1947, p.191.

both God and society as high in the order of love, unless of course the word is to be taken as synonymous with known or understood.

There remains for consideration out of a welter of contemporary opinions the persistently troublesome notion that we have referred to in earlier sections of this thesis, namely that a community cannot be real, since it cannot give the glory to God that a Saint can give.<sup>68</sup> Even if giving glory to God were accepted as the criterion in this matter, surely a community of many such persons would give more glory to God. True, such a community would definitely have supernatural aspects, but it was accepted at the outset of this thesis that the supernatural good of one was better than the natural good of many. The important point here is that inferiority does not necessarily connote unreality. We have already seen that there is strong, even if not extensive, current opposition to the tendency to consider persons as the only natural beings of importance in the universe.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, there is sometimes vigorously

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68. Dietrich von Hildebrand, "World Crisis and Human Personality," Thought, Vol.16 (1941) p.461. Cf. Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, p.158: ". . .It is individuals that are truly real."

69. Gustave Thibon, "Nova et Vetera--Primacy of the Person," Catholic World, Vol.165, (July, 1947) p.365.

expressed opposition to the idea that only persons can be loved.<sup>70</sup>

There are many other relevant or partially relevant theories that need to be interpreted or refuted, but the foregoing ones seem typical. So unrelated are some of these, and so intricately connected are others, that it is difficult to draw any very precise conclusion concerning all of them. If, apart from the teachings of the Encyclicals and of Saint Thomas which we have used in support of our position, there are here or there in these same writings apparent omissions or implications which have been interpreted as contrary to it, such an interpretation would entail that the greater natural and supernatural love is for what we have called the part. Moreover the glorification of the person as an end, the minimizing of the importance of membership in society, the pious desire to bind a man directly to his God, these or similar principles among modern writers,

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70. Thomas J. Higgins, S.J., Man as Man, Milwaukee, 1950, p.553: "Some people have said that it is impossible to love an abstraction. The impossibility fades before the cold fact that men do--even by dying for it." Cf. J. of St. Thomas, Curs. theol., Solesmes ed., T. III, (In Iam, q.19), disp.24, a.6, n.43, p.123: "Ut sic potest diligere res in universali et vage, sine aliqua determinatione individui cum ordine tamen ad individuationem."

can also be explained or denied without sacrificing either the greater natural dilection for society, or the greater dilection and charity for the whole of humanity as ordered to God.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

We have considered love in itself and in its various kinds. We have seen that in a consideration of the relationship between our love for ourselves and our love for society, love is a benevolent inclination of the will toward a good known by the intellect. The objects are respectively the one who loves, in his true nature--wherein his spiritual goods transcend the material ones--and society, the concrete whole to which he belongs.

We have particularly studied the love of benevolence in order to see in what ways it can be greater or less. We have seen that because of man's utter dependence on God, it is natural that his greatest love should be directed to Him, that love is always directed toward God at least in the sense that the very lovability of any object is but a participation in the Divine goodness. So the perfection of the good willed in rational love is dependent on the nearness of the object to God, although the intensity is measured by its nearness to ourselves.

Then, we have considered what a rational attitude would be on the part of a human being for the society of which he is a part. An application of the principle that

the common good of the whole is superior to the good of the part made it apparent that an individual person must acknowledge his own good to be inferior to the good of society, except insofar as he is ordered to a good of a higher order. Moreover while man may not always and in every way expressly love each higher good more than a lower one, we have seen that Saint Thomas leaves no room for doubt that, not only is the good of the whole better than the good of the part, but that the part naturally loves the good of the whole more than its own good.

In Chapter IV we tried to see a further reason for this preference of the part for the whole in the light of God's creative purpose. Since no individual can approach an adequate reflection of the divine good which God willed to manifest in creation, we see that, because of the multitude and variety of creatures, the intrinsic good of the universe, the order of its parts, is nearer and consequently dearer to God than the intrinsic good of any individual. Since man is reasonable only when he loves God most, so he is reasonable only when he loves in the second place that which is the highest of created goods and the nearest to God, the whole of creation. But within that whole of creation, only the whole of rational creation capable of possessing God can be loved with a love of benevolence.

It is evident, then, that man cannot escape being a part. In other words, the only way in which I can rationally love myself more than society is to love myself as ordered to a common good which transcends the common good of society, the extrinsic common good, to which the whole of rational creation is also ordered.

Finally we were able to see that these theories harmonized with the teachings of those whose authority is unquestionable, and we were able to reconcile, or at least account for diversities, real or verbal, among contemporary writers. No matter how great the intrinsic dignity conceded to man, a rational love for himself, whether natural or supernatural, is primarily due to his ordination to God, the extrinsic Common Good, to Whom society also is expressly to be ordered.

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