

QUESTION 28

Joy

We next have to consider the effects that follow upon the principal act of charity, which is the act of loving: first of all, the interior effects (questions 28-30) and, second, the exterior effects (questions 31-33). On the first topic there are three effects to be considered: joy (*gaudium*) (question 28), peace (*pax*) (question 29), and mercy (*miser cordia*) (question 30).

On the first topic there are four questions: (1) Is joy an effect of charity? (2) Is joy of this sort compatible with sadness? (3) Can this sort of joy be full (*plenum*)? (4) Is this sort of joy a virtue?

Article 1

Is joy an effect of charity within us?

It seems that joy (*gaudium*) is not an effect of charity within us:

Objection 1: Sadness (*tristitia*), rather than joy, follows from the absence of what is loved. But God, whom we love through charity, is absent to us as long as we live in this life, since, as 2 Corinthians 5:6 says, “As long as we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” Therefore, within us charity causes sadness rather than joy.

Objection 2: Through charity we especially merit beatitude. But among the things through which it is claimed that we merit beatitude is sorrow (*luctus*)—this according to Matthew 5:5 (“Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted”). Therefore, sadness, rather than joy, is an effect of charity.

Objection 3: As is clear from what was said above (q. 17, a. 6), charity is a virtue distinct from hope. But joy is caused by hope—this according to Romans 12:2 (“... rejoicing in hope”). Therefore, joy is not caused by charity.

But contrary to this: As Romans 5:5 says, “The charity of God is diffused in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” But joy is caused within us by the Holy Spirit—this according to Romans 14:17 (“The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”). Therefore, charity is a cause of joy.

I respond: As was explained above when we were discussing the passions (*ST* 1-2, q. 25, a. 3), joy (*gaudium*) and sadness (*tristitia*) arise from love (*amor*), but in different ways.

For joy is caused by love either (a) because of the presence of the thing that is loved or also (b) because in the very thing that is loved, that thing’s own proper good exists and is conserved. Accordingly, the latter pertains to the love of benevolence (*ad amorem benevolentiae*), through which someone rejoices over his friend’s prospering, even if his friend is absent.

By contrast, sadness is caused by love either (a) because of the absence of what is loved or (b) because someone for whom we will the good is deprived of his own good or oppressed by some evil.

Now charity is the love of God, whose good is unchangeable, since He is His own goodness. And by the fact that He is loved He exists in the one who loves Him through His most noble effect—this according to 1 John 4:16 (“He who abides in charity abides in God, and God in him”). And so spiritual joy, which is had from God, is caused by charity.

Reply to objection 1: As long as we are in the body, we are said to be “absent from the Lord” in comparison with that presence by which He is present to some through the ‘vision of sight’. This is why the Apostle adds in the same place, “We walk by faith and not by sight.” However, He is also present to those who love Him in this life through the indwelling of grace (*per gratiae inhabitationem*).

Reply to objection 2: The sorrow that merits beatitude is over things that are contrary to beatitude. Hence, the fact that such sorrow is caused by charity has the same explanation as the fact that spiritual joy over God is caused by charity, since rejoicing over a good has the same explanation as being saddened by things that are incompatible with that good.

Reply to objection 3: There are two ways in which there can be spiritual joy over God: (a) insofar as we rejoice over the divine good considered in its own right and (b) insofar as we rejoice over the divine good as participated in by us. Now the first sort of joy is better, and it is this that principally proceeds from charity. But the second sort of joy proceeds also from hope, through which we look forward to the enjoyment of the divine good—though the enjoyment itself, whether perfect or imperfect, is obtained according to the measure of our charity.

Article 2

Does the spiritual joy that is caused by charity receive an admixture of sadness?

It seems that the spiritual joy that is caused by charity receives an admixture of sadness:

Objection 1: It belongs to charity to rejoice together over the goods of one's neighbor—this according to 1 Corinthians 13:6 (“Charity does not rejoice over wickedness, but rejoices together over the truth”). But such joy receives an admixture of sadness—this according to Romans 12:15 (“Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep”). Therefore spiritual joy takes on an admixture of sadness.

Objection 2: As Gregory says, “Penitence is to weep over evils that have previously been done and not to commit again acts that have to be wept over.” But true penitence does not exist without charity. Therefore, the joy that belongs to charity has an admixture of sorrow.

Objection 3: Because of charity it happens that one desires to be with Christ—this according to Philippians 1:23 (“... having the desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ”). But a certain sadness follows upon this desire—this according to Psalm 119:5 (“Woe is me that my sojourn here has been prolonged”). Therefore, the joy that belongs to charity receives an admixture of sadness.

But contrary to this: The joy that belongs to charity is joy over God's wisdom. But joy of this sort does not have any sadness mixed in—this according to Wisdom 8:16 (“Her conversation has no bitterness”). Therefore, the joy that belongs to charity does not receive an admixture of sadness.

I respond: As was explained above (a. 1), there are two sorts of joy over God that are caused by charity.

One is the principal joy, which is proper to charity and by which we rejoice over the divine good considered in its own right. And this sort of joy that belongs to charity does not suffer from any admixture of sadness, just as the good over which there is joy cannot have any admixture of evil, either. And this is why the Apostle says in Philippians 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always.”

On the other hand, the second sort of joy that belongs to charity is that by which one rejoices over the divine good insofar as it is participated in by us. However, this participation can be impeded by something contrary to it. And so on this score the joy that belongs to charity can have an admixture of sadness, viz., insofar as someone is saddened by what works against participation in the divine good either in us or in our neighbors, whom we love as ourselves.

Reply to objection 1: The tears of our neighbors are only over some evil. But every evil implies a defect in one's participation in the highest good. And so charity makes one sad for his neighbor to the extent that participation in the divine good is impeded in him.

Reply to objection 2: As Isaiah 59:2 says, sin causes a division between us and God. And this is a reason for sorrowing over our own past sins as well as over the past sins of others, insofar as we are impeded by those sins from participating in the divine good.

Reply to objection 3: Even though we in some way participate in the divine good through cognition and love even in the dwelling of our present unhappiness, the unhappiness of this life nonetheless keeps us from a perfect participation in the divine good of the sort that will exist in heaven.

And so this sadness by which one mourns the delay of glory likewise has to do with an impediment to his participation in the divine good.

Article 3

Is the spiritual joy that is caused by charity able to be made full in us?

It seems that the spiritual joy that is caused by charity is not able to be made full in us (*non possit in nobis impleri*):

Objection 1: God's joy is made more full in us to the extent that we have more joy over Him. But we can never rejoice over God to the extent that He is worthy of being rejoiced over. For it is always the case that His goodness, which is infinite, exceeds a creature's joy, which is finite. Therefore, joy over God can never be full in a creature.

Objection 2: What is made full cannot be made greater. But even the joy of the blessed in heaven can be greater, since the joy that belongs to one of the blessed is greater than the joy that belongs to another. Therefore, joy over God cannot be made full in a creature.

Objection 3: Comprehension seems to be nothing other than a fullness of cognition. But just as a creature's cognitive power is finite, so, too, is a creature's appetitive power. Therefore, since God cannot be comprehended by any creature, it seems that a creature's joy over God cannot be made full.

But contrary to this: In John 15:11 our Lord said to His disciples, "... that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be made full."

I respond: Fullness of joy (*plenitudo gaudii*) can be understood in two ways.

In one way, on the part of *the thing over which there is rejoicing*, so that, namely, there is as much rejoicing over it as it is worthy of being rejoiced over. And in this sense only God's joy over Himself is full, since (a) God's joy is infinite and (b) His infinite goodness is wholly worthy of this (*hoc est condignum infinitae bonitati Dei*). By contrast, the joy of any creature has to be finite.

In the second way, fullness of joy can be thought of on the part of *the one who is rejoicing*. Now as was explained above when we were talking about the passions (*ST* 1-2, q. 25, aa. 1-2), joy is related to desire in the way that rest is related to movement. But there is full rest when nothing remains of the movement. Hence, there is full joy when nothing any longer remains to be desired. But as long as we are in this world, the movement of desire does not come to a rest within us, since, as is clear from what was said above (q. 24, aa. 4 and 7), it still remains that we might get closer to God through grace. Now when perfect beatitude will have been reached, then nothing will remain to be desired, since then there will be full enjoyment of God and in this enjoyment a man will obtain whatever he has desired in other goods—this according to Psalm 102:5 ("... who satisfies your desire with good things"). And so desire will come to a rest—not only the desire by which we desire God, but there will likewise be rest with respect to all desires. Hence, the joy of the blessed in heaven is perfectly full—and, indeed, more than full, since they will obtain more than they have been content to desire (*plus obtinebunt quam desiderare suffecerint*). For as 1 Corinthians 2:9 says, "... nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him." And this is why Luke 6:38 says, "Good measure ... and overflowing they shall give into your bosom."

However, since no creature is capable of a joy over God that is wholly worthy of Him, it follows that the sort of joy that is altogether full joy is not 'grasped' by a man; rather, the man 'enters into' it—this according to Matthew 25:21 ("Enter into the joy of your lord").

Reply to objection 1: This argument goes through for fullness of joy on the part of the thing that is rejoiced over.

Reply to objection 2: When beatitude has been arrived at, each one will attain the limit fixed for

him by divine predestination, and there will remain nothing further that is tended toward—even though in that end state one will attain a greater closeness to God and another will be less close to Him. And so the joy of each one will be full on the part of the one who is rejoicing, since the desire of each one will be put fully to rest, and yet the joy of one individual will be greater than the joy of another because of a fuller participation in God’s beatitude.

Reply to objection 3: Comprehension implies a fullness of cognition on the part of the thing known, so that, namely, it is known to the extent that it can be known. However, cognition also has a fullness on the part of the knower, just as has been explained for the case of joy. Hence, in Colossians 1:9 the Apostle says, “... that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding.”

Article 4

Is joy a virtue?

It seems that joy is a virtue:

Objection 1: A vice is contrary to a virtue. But as is clear in the case of *acedia* (*acedia*) and envy (*invidia*), sadness is posited as a vice. Therefore, joy ought likewise to be posited as a virtue.

Objection 2: Just as love (*amor*) and hope (*spes*) are certain passions whose object is the good, so too with joy. But love and hope are posited as virtues. Therefore, joy should be posited as a virtue, too.

Objection 3: Precepts of the Law are handed down concerning acts of the virtues. But it is commanded that we rejoice over God—this according to Philippians 4:4 (“Rejoice in the Lord always”). Therefore, joy is a virtue.

But contrary to this: As is clear from what was said above (*ST* 1-2, qq. 57, 60 and 62), joy is not enumerated either among the theological virtues or among the moral virtues or among the intellectual virtues.

I respond: As was established above (*ST* 1-2, q. 55, aa. 2 and 4), a virtue is a certain sort of operative habit and so by its proper nature has an inclination toward some act. Now it is possible for many ordered acts of the same character to arise from a single habit, with one of the acts following upon another. And since the later acts proceed from the habit of the virtue only through a prior act, it happens that the virtue is defined or named only from the prior act, even though the other acts also follow from it.

Now it is clear from what was said above about the passions (*ST* 1-2, q. 25, aa. 1-3) that love (*amor*) is the first affection of an appetitive power and that desire and joy follow upon it. And so it is the same habit of virtue that inclines one (a) to love and (b) to desire the good that is loved and (c) to rejoice over it. But since love (*dilectio*) is the first among these acts, it happens that the virtue is named (*denominatur*) not from joy or desire, but instead from love; and the virtue is called charity.

So, then, joy is not a virtue distinct from charity, but is a certain act or effect of charity. And because of this, it is numbered among the fruits [of the Holy Spirit], as is clear from Galatians 5:22.

Reply to objection 1: The sadness that is a vice is caused by a disordered love of oneself, which, as was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 77, a. 4), is not a specific vice but instead a sort of general root of the vices. And so one has to posit particular sorts of sadness as specific vices, since they flow from a general vice and not from any specific vice.

By contrast, the love of God is a specific virtue, viz., charity, and, as has been explained, it is to charity that joy is traced back as an act proper to it.

Reply to objection 2: Hope follows from love in the same way that joy does, but hope adds a certain specific character on the part of the object, viz., that the object is both difficult to obtain and possible to obtain. By contrast, joy does not add, over and beyond love, any special character on the part

of the object that could give rise to a special virtue.

Reply to objection 3: A precept of the Law is handed down about joy insofar as joy is an act of charity, though it is not the first act of charity.