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IS UNIQUENESS AT THE ROOT OF PERSONAL DIGNITY?

JOHN CROSBY AND THOMAS AQUINAS

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PERSONS ARE INDIVIDUALS that exist for their own sake, not just for the use or benefit of some other. This truth, which I shall call the principle of personal dignity, has become so much of a commonplace in our culture that there may seem no need to defend it. And yet, there is anything but consensus about its concrete implications--about which ways of treating persons are and are not consonant with their dignity. This is evident in the ongoing, sometimes acrimonious debates over such issues as euthanasia or capital punishment.

No doubt this lack of consensus has many causes, not all of which are matters for philosophy. But personal dignity itself is certainly a philosophical matter; and despite the general agreement about it, we cannot simply assume that we understand it perfectly. If we did, its implications would probably be clearer. What exactly does being for one's own sake consist in? And just what is it about persons that gives them this status? These are metaphysical questions. It belongs to metaphysics to refine our understanding of principles, by getting at the "ontology" that underlies them, their basis "in the things themselves."

Some years ago, John Crosby published a broad study of the person entitled *The Selfhood of the Human Person*.(1) The book's second chapter, called "Incommunicability," is aimed at

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establishing personal dignity in a rigorous way.(2) Its thesis is that the dignity of persons rests chiefly upon what Crosby terms their "incommunicable selfhood." The expression is technical. But what it means, put in plain language, is nearly as much of a common-place as the principle of personal dignity itself. It is just what it says on the back of the book: "each person is unique and unrepeatable." There is something solemn about the pronouncement. It stirs our sense of how precious each of us is.

Crosby's thesis, then, certainly has an initial appeal. Of course he is not just repeating commonplaces. His task is philosophical. It is the best effort I know to set forth this special, personal uniqueness in a precise and publicly verifiable way, and to show clearly how it makes each person to be, as he puts it, "incommunicably his or her own."(3)

In this article I wish both to draw attention to a number of very valuable points in Crosby's treatment, and to maintain that, despite these, the true basis of personal dignity must be something other than the sort of uniqueness that he proposes. I shall first try to show, partly on Crosby's own grounds, that his argument for the existence of this uniqueness is unsuccessful (sections I-IV). Then I shall argue (section V) that while the dignity of persons-- their being for their own sake--does mean that they are irreplaceable in a way that other individuals are not, this irreplaceability is not a function of uniqueness; nor is it the very basis of the dignity, but rather the result thereof.

My discussion relies heavily on the metaphysics of St. Thomas. I do not believe that it is therefore alien to Crosby's way of

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thinking. On the contrary, Crosby regards Thomas as an important, if insufficient, source for the philosophy of personal dignity; and in my judgment Thomas upholds the "priority of persons" even more strongly than Crosby realizes. I do not think Crosby fully appreciates the nature or the magnitude of the difference in worth that exists, for Thomas, between persons and everything else.(4) But if we understand this difference in the way that Thomas suggests, I think we can see that uniqueness has nothing to do with it.

I. CROSBY: EACH PERSON EXISTS "AS IF THE ONLY ONE"

One very helpful facet of Crosby's discussion is the fact that he distinguishes between various types of uniqueness and shows how many of these do not constitute a basis for properly personal dignity. The most obvious of these is the uniqueness that belongs to all individual entities, as such: the fact of not being predicable of many (46f.). In this sense, although it is obviously true that every person is unique, such uniqueness confers no special value. Just as there are not and cannot be many beings that are Socrates, there also cannot be many beings that are the dog Lassie, or many that are Mount Everest, or many that are the copy of today's newspaper lying on my coffee table. But of course there are other copies of today's newspaper, just like this one. And we can at least imagine another mountain of the same size and shape and makeup as Everest, and even another dog just like Lassie. The personal uniqueness that Crosby is looking for is far removed from what we might call mere "numerical" uniqueness. It is more in the line of what we could call "formal" uniqueness, being "one of a kind."

However, as Crosby shows well, not just any way of being "one of a kind" will establish personal dignity. It is not hard to conceive sets or classes that can have only one member, but do not indicate any special value: "the last dinosaur," "the only daughter of the Smiths," "the first book written by Husserl" (65). Moreover, in each of these examples, the feature making the item

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unique is quite accidental to it. There was probably nothing in the last dinosaur itself that made it have to be the last one. What we are seeking is a value that is intrinsic to the person.

Not just any unique and intrinsic value will serve. Crosby also sets aside those sorts of features that do indicate some intrinsic value, and that would be at least practically impossible to repeat, but that pertain only to the realm of abilities, achievements, and so forth: the sort of uniqueness belonging to "great personalities" (68-70). This is an important point. We do not have to suppose that every person makes a unique or outstanding "contribution" to the world--as though, if no category were overlooked, every person would find his or her way into the book of world records. Even if this were true, it would not establish the person's value as one who exists just for his or her own sake. It would only establish the value of something that the person has--some quality or work. What we are seeking is something else: the value pertaining to the very subject, the person himself or herself, in his or her sheer "selfhood." Crosby says:

> In our new personalist perspective it would not only be qualities and excellences but rather also the subject of them, the one who has them, this or that particular human being, which would stand before us as worthy, good. Now for the first time the value datum called the dignity of the human person would appear, and it would appear as rooted in incommunicable selfhood. . . . Love for other persons would also become possible for the first time, for it would now be possible to reach with our love beyond the qualities of persons and to attain to the persons themselves. (66)

What then is this "incommunicable selfhood," this properly personal uniqueness, that grounds personal dignity? Crosby sees it as the absolute version of something that is also found in qualified ways, and in

diverse grades, among certain nonpersonal beings--that is, the living ones. Looking at these helps us bring it into focus (47-49).

If we observe any living thing, even a plant, we find that it has what Crosby calls a kind of "inner center" out of which it exists and operates. The living being is not just a passive bearer of "superficial" perfections, perfections that merely "happen" to it

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from the outside, as in the case of the bits of paper that carry today's news. The organization and growth of a tree derive from a source within the tree itself. This source is not a bodily part "inside" the tree. It determines the very unity and order among the tree's parts and their movements. It is what once went by the name of 'soul'.

This inner center is even stronger in the case of living things that also have cognition. In these, the center itself is capable of enrichment and development. There are things "going on" in Lassie's soul (e.g., her pleasures and pains). These are what used to be called "immanent" acts, acts remaining "at the source," within the subject, from which they proceed. Through such acts, Lassie relates in much more diversified and significant ways with other beings in the world than do things that lack cognition.

When we turn to persons, we find an inner center that is immeasurably richer and deeper. Much of Crosby's book is devoted to exploring its various aspects. At this point in the book, what he wants us to observe is simply the immensity of it. There is something unconditional about it, a kind of "absoluteness" and "infinity." The idea is not unfamiliar. It is the person's "un-fathomable depth," the "infinite abyss of existence" that Newman describes so eloquently (52).(5)

What requires more explanation is the connection between this idea and that of uniqueness or incommunicability. As Crosby acknowledges, it might seem as though this "absoluteness" or 'infinity" does not pertain so much to incommunicability as to another feature of the person, namely, the especially high degree to which he is a whole of his own and not just a part (50).(6) But Crosby argues that in the person wholeness and uniqueness come together. We might say that they converge at infinity. "This absoluteness or infinity seems almost to coincide with personal incommunicability," for it means that each person has "*so strong*

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a being of his own that he exists as if in a sense the others did not exist" (51; emphasis in original).

This is the crucial notion. Crosby returns to it time and again. Each person exists "as if there were no other," "as if he or she were the only one," etc. This would be the special in-communicability or uniqueness that is proper to persons, and which, unlike the other types of uniqueness, would match with their personal dignity: to exist as if there were no other.(7)

Of course Crosby does not mean that each person literally is "the only one"; it is "as if," or even (in the case of created persons) "almost" as if (248). He insists that his formula neither implies solipsism nor in any way excludes interpersonal communion (54-58). But to relate to others precisely as persons is to encounter each of them "in his or her infinity, as if he or she were the only person" (54-55). He quotes Buber on the Thou: "with no neighbour, and whole in himself, he is *Thou* and fills the heavens. This does not mean that nothing exists except himself. But all else lives in *his* light" (55).(8)

For Crosby, then, the expression "existing as if the only one," rightly understood, conveys a solid truth about persons. Particularly noteworthy is the rigorous formulation that he gives to it (49f.): namely, that persons are not subject to the "laws of finite numerical quantity."

The thought is this. The units in a number are smaller than the number, parts of a whole; and each is so much the smaller, the larger the number. But persons, in their infinity, are not lessened or relativized by any number of others. Even if the supply goes up, we might say, the value of each stays the same. In this sense, each is so great as to exist as if there were no other. Crosby takes this resistance to "numbering" quite seriously. He quotes Guardini:

> The one who says "I" exists only once. This fact is so radical that the question arises whether the person as such can really be classified, or what the classifications must be in order that man may be placed in them as a person. Can

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> we--to take an elementary form of classification--count persons? We can count *Gestalten*, individuals, personalities--but can we, while doing justice to the concept of "person," speak meaningfully of "two persons"? . . . Here reason balks. (51)[9]

Crosby notes that these considerations might lead to an argument for the presence of something immaterial in the being of persons (52-53). Material things are extended in space, and so subject to the laws of finite numerical quantity. Two of them are more than one, four more than two; and if the number is very great, any single unit is practically negligible. It seems that only what is immaterial or spiritual can escape those laws.

Similarly, as regards "classification," Crosby suggests that we might look for a unique "essential content" in each human person, rather like what St. Thomas holds for in the case of the pure spirits, the angels. Just as each angel is his own species, so too, perhaps, each human person is a species of his or her own, a veritable subspecies of mankind (63-64).

II. OBJECTION: THE ONE TRUE WORLD

Clearly the analysis upon which Crosby bases his theory of the unrepeatability and incommunicability of the person contains important elements for the account of personal dignity. In my opinion, however, the decisive affirmation--that each person exists as if (or almost as if) he or she were the only one--is simply not true. Even taking into account all of Crosby's clarifications and qualifications, it does not seem to me that this is at all how personhood, and especially human personhood, presents itself. Several objections might be raised, I think. One of them comes from Crosby himself.

In a later chapter, entitled "Subjectivity and Objectivity," Crosby devotes several fine pages to what he calls the "transcendence towards a certain infinity" that displays itself in human subjectivity (161-73). This transcendence is something

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more than the familiar transcendence of "intentional" acts (i.e., directedness toward objects). It consists in a tension toward what lies even "beyond" the objects surrounding us. Crosby describes it as a "passion for ultimacy," a "metaphysical" passion. Here (166) he cites Aristotle's famous description of the intellectual soul as "in a certain way all things."[10] He associates this transcendence with the distinctively human concern for relating to things just as they are in themselves, or in other words, the desire for truth).

Other animals, Crosby says, dwell in "environments." They do relate to other things, but only within the horizon of particular impulses and desires. By contrast, human beings dwell--or at least have an urge to dwell--in the "world," the totality of all that is. And while there may be different "environments" for different animals, he says, "there is only one world" (166).

At the same time, it is not the case that human persons can "encompass and exhaust" the totality (167). They do not master the world. The passion for ultimacy is an infinite "need" (164). Crosby might have quoted Aristotle again: the soul, by itself, is only "potentially" all things.

Crosby is pointing again, from another angle, to the person's wholeness and infinite depth.

> We can discern a "correspondence" between each person being a whole of his own and never a mere part . . . on the one hand, and each person being open to the totality of all that is, on the other. That we are wholes and not parts is somehow expressed and lived whenever we inhabit the world and do not let ourselves be confined by some environment. (168)[11]

Crosby sees this transcendence toward "the world" as an eminently personal characteristic. "We could in fact 'define' personal

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subjectivity in terms of our directedness to the totality; we could say that personal subjectivity is that depth of inwardness in a living being which opens the being to the absolute realm of all that is" (169). It is proof of the person's dignity (168).

I have no quarrel with this account of the human person's transcendence. It does indeed suggest some kind of affinity between the human person and the "totality of all that is." But does it not also mean that the person is distinct from the totality, and that, in the final analysis, he is exceeded by it? Surely the implication is that the human person is, after all, some sort of part. Even if he need not be part of a mere "environment"--a part of a part, so to speak--he is at least part of the world as a whole. And he is so *qua* person. For again, this need for totality is no mere biological or emotional impulse. It is a strictly personal need.

That it is also a need for truth underscores another fact: the one world toward which it directs me is not "my" world. I do not decide its constitution. We may recall Augustine: I find the light of truth "in" me, but it is not "my" light. It is independent of me and exceeds me.

In short, it is my very personhood, with its passion for ultimacy, that convinces me that I am not the only one, not the whole world; not even almost. It convinces me that not all "lives in my light." Not even I myself live in my own light. It is surprising that Crosby does not perceive at least a tension here.

This objection may not be positively fatal to Crosby's notion of the person's existing "as if the only one." Perhaps he could find a way to resolve it. But in any case, as I shall try to explain in the conclusion, on Thomas's account of personal dignity, it is not even an objection. Furthermore, there are other, even graver objections to Crosby's account. These will be the concern of the following two sections.

III. THE UNDERLYING ISSUE: CAN PERSONS BE COUNTED?

Crosby's crucial move, in establishing his notion of personal incommunicability, is from the infinite depth of the person to the

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person's existing as if he were the only one. Is this move really valid? The argument is that insofar as a person is a kind of infinity, he escapes the laws of finite numerical quantity. His immensity makes him incommensurable with others. Crosby thus argues that each person is incomparable. Even if there are in fact many persons, they cannot, *qua* persons, be grouped together and counted as so many parts of the group. They can only, as it were, be viewed one at a time.

I would submit that it is a fallacious argument. The person's infinity does not necessarily imply that he cannot be compared with others. The implication can be avoided by doing just what Crosby suggests: thinking of the infinity as something immaterial. If we do think of it in a material way--as an infinite mass of something, an infinite extension--then indeed, we may be led to imagine something whose presence will monopolize our whole field of vision, something that will "fill the heavens" for us if we see it at all. But if it is an immaterial infinity, then this is only a metaphor. Arguing from metaphors is risky.

It is not that notions of quantity or magnitude have no proper application to immaterial things. But as St. Thomas teaches, immaterial "magnitude" is not a question of mass or extension. It is a question of perfection (*STh* I, q. 42, a. 1, ad 1). The great magnitude of the intellectual soul, for example--its capacity to "take in" all things--is not a power to eat all things. It is a power to assimilate the "forms," the truths of things. It is indeed great. Nevertheless, even if a person did succeed in containing the whole world in this way--even if he knew all truth--there would be no reason to think of him as "the only one" to do so. For unlike bodily goods, a spiritual good, such as truth, can be communicated to many subjects without being divided up (*STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 4, ad 2; III, q. 23, a. 1, ad 3). We do not have to vie for slices of truth about the world, even though we are many and the world is one.

Likewise, the fact that a person remains "immense" even in the presence of others does not exclude the possibility of comparing

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him, *qua* person, with others. Guardini says that reason balks in the face of counting persons. Saint Thomas does not balk at all.

To take the extreme case, Thomas thinks it perfectly reason-able to count the divine persons. Nor does he simply take the possibility of counting them for granted. In fact he faces the question of the "laws of numerical quantity" quite squarely. Against counting divine persons, it is objected that "wherever there is number, there is whole and part; so if in God there is a number of persons, then in God whole and part must be posited, which is repugnant to the divine simplicity" (*STh* I, q. 30, a. 1, obj. 4). Thomas answers with a distinction:

> number is twofold, viz. simple or absolute number, as two and three and four; and the number that is in numbered realities, as two men and two horses. So if the number in the divinity is taken absolutely or abstractly, nothing excludes there being whole and part in it. And in this way it does not exist except in our understanding; for number abstracted from numbered realities is only in the mind. But if number is taken as it is in numbered realities, then indeed in creatures, one is part of two, and two of three, as one man is part of two, and two of three. But it is not so in God; for the Father is as much as the whole Trinity.[12]

This is a dense passage; it is worthwhile to spell it out a little.

Wherever there are numbered things, we can consider their number absolutely, just by itself. This does not mean thinking that the number exists just by itself. Numbers exist in reality only by being attached to things that are not numbers. Pure, unattached numbers "exist" only in the sense that they are objects of thought. The mind can entertain a number in an abstract way-- mathematically--attending only to what pertains to its own *ratio* or intelligibility.

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In the *ratio* of a number, there is always whole and part. The intelligibility of any number includes that of a single unit, and it adds to this the intelligibility of another unit or other units. Hence, in the mathematical consideration, a unit of a number is always less than and part of the number: two units of three are always less than and part of three, and so on. And the only way to speak of whole and part in the pure number is with respect to its intelligibility.

But if we ask about whole and part in a number as it really exists, in numbered things, our question no longer concerns the mere *ratio* of the number. It concerns the things, and it has to do with their magnitude, for it pertains to the very intelligibility of whole and part that a whole be greater than any of its parts.

Even in numbered things, of course, the mathematics of the number will never positively rule out whole and part. But neither is there any law of numbers that necessitates the existence of whole and part in the things. This is so despite the fact that we first grasp numerical intelligibilities in creatures, and that the nature of creatures is such that one is always of lesser magnitude than two, two always less than three, and so on. The mathematics of the number abstracts altogether from the natures of the things numbered. It holds even when the number is eventually applied to realities of divine nature, realities in which there can be no talk of whole and part. Each one of the three divine persons is an absolutely infinite perfection, to which nothing can be added to form a greater whole. But, Thomas is saying, it is merely incidental to this that the intelligibility of "three" adds something to the intelligibility of "one."

Thomas's distinction between two senses of "number" is particularly significant. We count the divine persons, and we say that they are a certain number: they are three. But of course we do not mean that they are the pure number three. We mean that they are a number of persons, three persons. In other words, counting them does not mean treating them as abstract units. It does not at all entail losing sight of their divine personhood. It only entails

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considering that each one of them has unity in himself, and that each one is distinct from the other ones.

How are they distinct? Not, certainly, as species of a genus. Each species of a genus adds its own proper perfection--its differentia--to the common nature of the genus, and it gives that nature a distinct existence. It would mean that each person is a distinct God. The existence of a number of Gods is incompatible with both the simplicity and the infinite perfection of the divine nature (*STh* I, q. 11, a. 3). Each divine person must exist, not just "as if," but really as, the one God. They are distinct from each other only by the oppositions in their interrelations.[13]

We should consider what this means: none of the persons is even conceivable without the others. It is by the relations among them that the divine persons are constituted (*STh* I, q. 40, a. 2). For the Father to exist *is* for the Son to exist; they have a single existence, that of the one God (*STh* I, q. 30, a. 4, ad 3; I, q. 42, a. 4, ad 3). If we prescind from any two of the divine persons, the third simply disappears from view.

I stress this because Crosby goes so far as to assert that from the point of view of Christian belief, since each of the divine persons has the whole perfection of the divine nature, which is absolutely infinite, each of them displays the "personal incom-municability" that he is trying to establish. He says that "each divine person has the divine nature *as if he were the only divine person*" (58; emphasis in original [see also 252]). It seems to me that from the point of view of Christian belief, this is just what cannot be said. If anything, Trinitarian theology would seem to be the most telling counterexample to the notion that a person exists "as if the only one."

Thomas does grant that the infinity of each divine person means that he is immeasurable. Only what is determined or finite can be measured (cf. *STh* I, q. 7, a. 4; I, q. 14, a. 12, obj. 3). But to number the persons, and to see each as one of many, is not to measure them. In this numbering, what is finite and measured is,

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again, only the abstract number (*STh* I, q. 30, a. 2, ad 5). Moreover, while it is true that the divine persons, being immeasurable, are also incommensurable, this does not mean they cannot be compared. Things need not be finite or measurable in order to be compared. They need only have something in common, in terms of

which they can be considered together. The divine persons have the divine essence in common. Thus they can be counted, and they can even be compared as to magnitude. Their magnitude, which is their perfection, is nothing other than their essence; they are one in magnitude. That is, they are equal (*STh* I, q. 42, a. 1). Thomas even says that they are one in dignity (*STh* I, q. 42, a. 4, ad 2).

IV. ANGELIC PERSONS: INFINITE IN MIND BUT FINITE IN KIND

Thomas insists often on the possibility of counting immaterial realities. To explain it, he draws another distinction concerning numbers, this time within the domain of number as found "in numbered things." On this I shall mainly be following question 30, article 3 of the *Prima Pars.*

Number in numbered things is of two very different types. One type pertains to the accidental category of quantity. It is formed by the division of "the continuous," for example, cutting a pie into a number of slices (see *STh* I, q. 50, a. 3, obj. 1 and ad 1). This type of number is found only in material things subject to the accident of extension. It can apply to immaterial beings, Thomas says, only metaphorically.

There is another type of number in things that is "transcendental," not a function of any one category. It is "meta-physical," pertaining to being as being, as "one" and "many" do (see *STh* I, q. 11, aa. 1 and 3). This type of number does not pre-suppose material extension in the things numbered. They need not possess the accident of quantity,[14] for there is another type of division, which is not with respect to quantity. Thomas calls it

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"formal" division. This division is not a matter of slicing some-thing up. It is simply the distinction existing among opposite or diverse forms.[15]

This is how not only the divine persons, but also the angels, which are subsistent forms, can be counted. Angels are highly perfect beings, the best natures in all creation. For this very reason, Thomas judges, their number must be very great (*STh* I, q. 50, a. 3).

On the other hand, of course, the situation of angelic persons is not exactly the same as that of the persons of the Trinity. In the passage quoted earlier, Thomas says that in creatures, one really is part of two, and two of three, as one man is part of two, and two men part of three. A whole multitude of creatures is always greater than any one of them. Even though individual angels are not slices of an extended mass, they are still parts of a greater, that is, more perfect, whole. This is because each of them, no matter how perfect, is essentially finite.

This point is not, I believe, in contrast with the ascription of a kind of infinity to any person, *qua* person. The infinity of persons is in the depth of their capacity for immanent activity. This capacity is what Crosby calls their subjectivity, and Thomas calls their minds. But, as Crosby himself argues in the case of humans, the person's subjectivity is something distinct from his very being or his essential identity, his "selfhood." Crosby in fact sees in this distinction a proof that a human person's selfhood is after all something finite (124-44, 266-68).

For Thomas this point holds of angels too. The angel's mind cannot be identical with his essential being, for the very reason that mind is in a way infinite, extending somehow to all that is (*STh* I, q. 54, a. 2). Absolutely speaking, according to his essential being, the angel is a finite entity. He is a creature, and no creature can have an infinite essence. That would mean that he contains in himself all the perfection of being, and this is proper to God (*STh* I, q. 7, a. 2; cf. I, q. 4, a. 2). The angel's essence is a determinate

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species, which is part of a determinate genus. And even the entire genus of angels is only part of reality as a whole. Only in God is essence not confined to a genus (*STh* I, q. 3, a. 5), and only there are essence and mind identical (*STh* I, q. 14, aa. 2 and 4; I, q. 54, a. 2). In a created being, the possession of mind makes for only a qualified infinity. The intellectual creature is not infinite in essence or in intrinsic perfection, but only in scope of operation.

We may also note that the fact that an angel is a species of a genus means that not even the angelic nature is incommunicable in every respect. The genus is communicable. Each angelic person is one of a kind, but he does not exist as if he were the only angel or the only angelic person. Moreover, because the angel's essential form is determined to a species of a genus, his mind does not possess its full knowledge of reality in virtue of his own form alone. It needs additional intelligible forms, ideas infused by the mind that creates the world (*STh* I, q. 55, aa. 1 and 2). Not even an angel lives entirely "in his own light."

I am dwelling on the status of angelic persons in view of Crosby's conjecture that in human persons there is something like the essential incommunicability or uniqueness of angels. Thomas does of course teach that since an angel's substance is nothing but its form, each angel exhausts its species. But since the nature of its species is something other than its mind or subjectivity, the incommunicability of its species is also something other than the infinite depth of its mind or its subjectivity. The properly personal incommunicability that Crosby is trying to establish, the person's existing as if the only one, would be rather a function of the person's infinite depth. It is this incommunicability that he is positing as the basis of personal dignity.

Thus, even if it could be shown that each human person is unique in species, like an angel, I do not see how this uniqueness would pertain directly to his or her properly personal dignity, even in Crosby's own account. The dignity has to do with the immensity of mind, its infinity. But the created person's species, whether or not it is communicable, is a strictly finite reality. It is one species among many. It is only a part of the world as a whole.

I do not mean that the incommunicability of the angelic species is totally unrelated to the angel's possession of mind. The angel's species is incommunicable because its form exists separately from matter, as a complete substance in its own right. The form is not received in matter, and so the angel's species cannot be multiplied by the division of matter. And having a nature that is not "contracted" according to the conditions of matter, a spiritual nature, is the very basis, in a substance, for the type of infinity signified by the word "mind."(16)

However, Thomas's metaphysics also allows for forms that are spiritual--not absolutely dependent upon matter for their existence--and yet are not complete substances. They are naturally ordered to being received in matter. Such forms are human souls. The spirituality of the soul is what gives human individuals powers that are "uncontracted" by matter, powers of mind. It is what makes them personal individuals. Nevertheless the substance of a human being is not wholly spiritual,(17) and, at least in Thomas's metaphysics, only a being that is wholly spiritual can be incommunicable in species. What gives a being its species is its form, but if its nature also includes matter, then there is nothing in it to prevent the existence of another being that differs from it materially but not in species. This holds even if the forms are spiritual.

The doctrine of matter as "principle of individuation" is not a popular one. I think it is often misunderstood,(18) but I shall not go

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into its details here. I would simply note that, for Thomas, it is only because human beings do not differ in species that, in their essential dignity, they can be judged equal. Difference in species "always entails

inequality."[19] It is not easy to square the thesis of the essential equality of human persons, which today is as much of a commonplace as that of their dignity, with the idea that personal dignity rests on uniqueness.[20]

V. THE IRREPLACEABILITY OF PERSONS:

BECAUSE THEY ARE FOR THEIR OWN SAKE

None of the foregoing is meant to gainsay Crosby's ascription of a kind of infinite depth to the person. This depth is indeed in the line of what we are looking for as the basis of personal dignity. What I have tried to show is simply that it is not in itself grounds for saying that the person is unique, "as if the only one," and that essential or specific uniqueness, such as angels have, is not directly to the point. We also noted that Crosby himself rejects several other types of uniqueness. This itself leads one to suspect that uniqueness is not really to the point.

But if we demur on the person's uniqueness or unrepeatability, are we not inviting the thought that he could be replaced? That is, if we do not exclude the possibility of another person just like this one, what is to prevent us from saying that, at least in principle, this one could simply be eliminated, with the other filling in for him? Can a being be replaceable and yet exist for its own sake? Probably not. I would argue, however, that a person's being for

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his own sake is independent of uniqueness; and that, for this very reason, his being irreplaceable is independent of it too.

What is really involved in being for one's own sake? Crosby's remark on the "personalist perspective" gives us a lead.[21] If we had this perspective, he said, "it would not only be qualities and excellences but rather also the subject of them, the one who has them, this or that particular human being, which would stand before us as worthy, good"; and then we could "reach with our love beyond the qualities of persons" and "attain to the persons themselves."

Saint Thomas makes this move quite explicitly. Nor for him is it simply a matter of shifting our appreciation or our love, from qualities to their subjects. Rather, he distinguishes between a merely qualified, secondary mode of love, "love of concupiscence," and the unqualified and primary mode, "love of friendship." The distinction is well known.[22] I only wish to note how strong it is and to indicate its bearing on the question of personal dignity.

To love, Thomas says, is to want good for some being, *velle alicui bonum*.[23] It thus involves two relations: a relation to the good that is wanted, and a relation to the being that the good is wanted for. The latter, the being that the good is wanted for, may be either the lover himself, or one that he takes as "another self,"

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a friend.[24] To love a being with "love of friendship" is to want good for that very being.

As for the good that is wanted, this is often something other than the being for which it is wanted. This is

what an object of "love of concupiscence" is: a good that is wanted for a being other than itself. The "wine-lover," for instance, wants the good of wine, not for the wine itself, but for him, and perhaps for his friends. Good qualities are also loved in this way. We want health or knowledge or virtue, but not for themselves. We do not "wish them well." Even happiness is only an object of love of con-cupiscence (*STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 7, ad 2). It is not happiness itself that we want happiness for. We are not wishing happiness to be happy.

However, it would be a mistake to think that in "wanting good for some being" what is wanted must always be other than the being that it is wanted for. This would make little sense. In loving a friend, one does not just want other goods to exist, for him; one surely also wants him to exist, for him. One wants his well-being. A necessary element of this is his simply being.(25) This does not mean that one also loves him with love of concupiscence; that is true only if one also wants him for another. What I mean is that the object of love of friendship, as such, is not only a being for which good is wanted, but also a good that is wanted--for itself.

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That which is loved with love of concupiscence is the object of only one of love's two relations, while that which is loved with love of friendship is the object of both.

It is clear then that love of concupiscence is a quite secondary mode of love. It always supposes and refers back to a love of friendship, and its object is only loved together with, and for, the object of love of friendship. Love of friendship wants the good for its own object; and the first good that it wants for its object is nothing other than the object itself. What is essential to love is that there be a being that is loved with love of friendship. What is loved with love of concupiscence is only an accompaniment.

The distinction between the object of love of friendship and the object of love of concupiscence is thus very strong. It is not just that the former is loved "more" or that it is valued as a "higher" good. It is treated as good in a different and predominant sense. Thomas goes so far as to compare the difference between the objects of the two loves, as goods, to the difference between subsistents and inherents, as beings.

> 'Good' is said in two ways, as 'being' is. For in one way, truly and properly, that which subsists is called a being, such as a stone or a man. In another way, that [is called a being] which does not subsist, but is that by which something is; as whiteness does not subsist, but by it something is white. So then, 'good' is said in two ways: in one way, as of something subsisting in goodness; in another way, as of the goodness of another, i.e., as of that by which something fares well. So then, something is loved in two ways: in one way, as a good subsistent; and this is loved truly and properly, viz. when we want good for it. And this love is called by many 'love of benevolence' or 'of friendship'. In another way, [something is loved] in the manner of an inherent goodness, according as something is said to be loved, not insofar as we want good to be for it, but insofar as we want good for something to be by it; thus we say that we love knowledge or health.(26)

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However, the comparison is not quite a strict parallel. Inherents, such as qualities, can of course only be loved with of love of concupiscence. But even many subsistents, Thomas teaches, can only be loved in this way: for example, a bottle of wine, a horse, and in fact any irrational being. We do not love these things, he says, "by reason of their substance," or for the things themselves. We love them for ourselves, by reason of some perfection that we obtain from them.(27) Even though they are subsistent beings and the good is "seated" in them, it is not in them that we want the good to "come to rest." The ones whom we want the good for are always rational subsistent beings, that is, persons.

In order to explain this, Thomas looks more closely at what it is to want a good for someone in the way that love of friendship does.(28) What love of friendship wants is not just that the good be "in" or "near" the one loved. One might want that for a horse. Rather, it wants the one loved to "have" the good, in a specific sense of "have." It wants him to be in control of its exercise. That is, the handling of it shall be up to him. He is to be master of its use. (This does not mean that he must be the sole master.) Not to

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want the good for someone in this way is simply not to love him with love of friendship.(29) But only individuals endowed with freedom of decision can control the use of things. In other words, only they are even capable of "having" the good. And the root of free decision is nothing other than mind or intellect, the person's "infinite depth" (*STh* I, q. 83, a. 1).

There is a special affinity between intellectual beings and the good. All things exhibit some tendency to the good, Thomas says, but the beings endowed with intellect are the ones that are inclined to it most perfectly and properly, with the kind of inclination called "will."(30) This is because they can grasp it in an absolute or unconditional way, according to its "universal *ratio*." They alone can relate to the very goodness of what is good, responding to it in a way that is fully proportionate to it. In other words, only in a person does the good finds a true home for itself, one to whom it can really "belong." If goods did not exist for persons, we might almost say, it could only be because there is nothing for which anything exists at all. There would be nothing in which the good could come to rest or function as a true goal. The good itself would be pointless--no good. Another chapter of

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Crosby's book develops ideas along these very lines.(31) My point is that it is right here that we can find the root of personal dignity.

The idea is very simple. Being free, a person is able to have the good. The first good that he is fit to have is the good that he himself is. To see this *is* to see that he is for his own sake. He "belongs to himself." He is not there merely for another's use. *Liber est causa sui*.(32)

If this account is correct, then a person's being for his own sake has nothing to do with whether or not there can be others just like him. Being for his own sake means, not that he is one of a kind, but that he belongs to himself. He does so by nature. It is in this sense that he is "incommunicably his own."(33) Rather than a matter of how he compares with others, it is a matter of how he relates to his own good. It is his being such that his good--and first of all he himself--is for him to have, not just for another. (Of course it may also be for another.) And this, I believe, is the very reason for saying that he cannot be replaced.

If a person were only a good to be had by another, then indeed the existence of a second being just like him in goodness would mean that he could be eliminated. His double could serve just as well. The one whom the goodness is for would be equally satisfied. But if the person's good is for him to have, then to eliminate him would be to throw the baby out with the bath-water. No substitute could serve, because the one to be served would not be there. Even in economics, it is not strictly true that whenever a supply of goods rises, the value of each unit drops. The value drops only if the demand remains the same. With each new person, there is not only an additional good, but also a new demand for the good. And of course no one else can satisfy a person's demand for himself.

Crosby holds that unless we see a person as unrepeatable or unique we do not have a sufficient basis for judging him or her to

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be absolutely irreplaceable.(34) It seems to me that to say this is to stay entirely in the line of things "good for another," objects of love of concupiscence.(35) It is what is good only in this sense, good for another, that would need to be unique in order to be absolutely irreplaceable. Moreover, even then, its irreplaceability would not be that of a person; it would still not exist for its own sake in the sense in which persons do. In order for an individual to have the irreplaceability of a person, what is needed is not uniqueness, but a

rational nature. Between individual substances that have personal dignity and those that do not, what makes the difference is rationality.(36)

CONCLUSION: THE CREATED PERSON--

PART OF THE WORLD AND REACHING BEYOND THE WORLD

Personal dignity, then, is indeed a function of the person's "infinite depth."(37) This is not because his depth gives him a special

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kind of uniqueness or unrepeatability, or makes him unlike any other. It gives him dignity because it gives him a special grade of perfection--the highest in the whole of nature--and an especially perfect relation to the good. There may be others like him, but he is not solely for any other.

My conclusion is that personal dignity is quite compatible with the person's being a part of the world. That is, there is no tension between the two. We can look upon him as part of the world without ceasing to look upon him as a person.

I do not think that personal dignity would be compatible with being part of a subject that "has" the good; that is, a person cannot be part of a person.(38) But the world is not a person. This is so even though it truly exists as "the only one"--there is only one world--and even though it is a whole and in no way a part. For the world is one and whole only in the manner of an ordered multitude (*STh* I, q. 47, a. 3). It has only a qualified sort of unity and wholeness.(39) It is not a true subject, that is, an individual substance, let alone one with an "infinite subjectivity," or a mind, or free choice. The world is only, so to speak, something "good to have," not *per se* an object of love of friendship. It does not exist for its own enjoyment, even though some of its parts do. Nevertheless, although nothing in the whole of nature is more perfect than persons, there is more perfection in nature as a whole--more "good to be had"--than in the persons alone.(40)

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Of course I am speaking of created persons. Although they have a certain infinity, this is compatible with their being parts of the world. This is because it is not an "absolute" infinity. I mean this in two ways. First, as mentioned in the discussion of the angels, the created person is not infinite in substance--just in him-self, in his own essential being. What is infinite about a created person is his mind or "subjectivity," which is not his substance. Only the divine persons are an infinite substance, one containing in itself all the perfection of being, all goodness. This substance is indeed not part of the world, but rather its origin and ultimate end.

Second, not even the infinity of the created person's mind is "absolute." The created mind, taken just in itself, in its own reality, is finite. It is only a determinate kind of power of the soul, a particular being and good (see *STh* I, q. 82, a. 4, ad 1). It does not consist in all being and all goodness. If infinity pertains to its nature, this is because its nature is not solely what it is just in itself, an "absolute" nature; it is not a substance, but an essentially relative item. It constitutes that "infinite need" that we considered earlier. Created mind enables its subject to unite himself to all being and goodness--not so as to be what he consists in, but so as to be his object, light and nourishment for his life. Only the divine mind lives entirely in its own light. God alone is fully satisfied just by being himself.

So the infinity of created mind is in its relation to something else. Its greatness is indissociable from that of its object. The dignity that it confers is not "absolute" or self-contained.(41)

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Yet the loss in self-sufficiency is more than compensated. If we consider the created person just in himself, as to the good that is intrinsic to or inherent in him--the good that he "contributes"-- we find that, however noble it may be, it is only a portion of the good contained in the world as a whole.(42) But if we consider him in relation to the perfection that he is capable of having and enjoying, we eventually find that the whole world--to say nothing of his own selfhood--is too small for him. He is *capax Dei*. Nothing short of the divine essence can fully satisfy him.(43)

It is not that he wants his own essence to become divine; if it did, he would no longer be himself (cf. *STh* I, q. 63, a. 3). But he can be raised to the rank of one who shares with the divine persons in the life of beholding and rejoicing in the divine light. This capacity constitutes an affinity with God that the world as a whole does not boast. Thomas offers a terse formulation: "the universe is more perfect in goodness than the intellectual creature extensively and diffusively; but intensively and collectively there is more of the likeness of the divine perfection in the intellectual creature, which is receptive of the supreme good."(44)

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I do not mean that we need to know that only union with God can satisfy human persons before we can say that they are for their own sake. We can see this just by looking at how they are in themselves. But if a person's being for his own sake *is* his being fit to have the good, and if he is so by nature, then perhaps we can say that to see the dignity of persons is to catch at least a glimpse of the fact that they are the targets of the love that moves the one true world.(45)

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1. John F. Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996); cited hereinafter by page number alone.

2. Much of this chapter appeared previously as an article in *The Thomist*: John F. Crosby, "The Incommunicability of Human Persons," *The Thomist* 57 (1993): 403-42.

3. In a recent paper Crosby has returned to the defense of his thesis: "A Neglected Source of the Dignity of Persons," in John F. Crosby, *Personalist Papers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 3-32. As I read it, the paper has two main aims: first, to show that over and above common rational nature, a sufficient account of the dignity of persons must also include their incommunicability; and second, to resolve certain difficulties regarding the relation between the incommunicability and the common nature. As regards the basic argument for the existence of the incommunicability, however, the paper does not seem to add significantly to the earlier treatment. (On p. 12, n. 8, he refers us to chapter 2 of the 1996 book.) I shall not, therefore, be discussing it at any length.

4. See below, n. 22.

5. Crosby cites John Henry Newman, "The Individuality of the Soul," *Parochial And Plain Sermons* (London: Rivingtons, 1869), 81-83.

6. We may recall how St. Thomas understands the meaning of the word 'person': it signifies "that which is most perfect"--most complete, most whole--"in the whole of nature" (*STh* I, q. 29, a 3).

7. See also Crosby, "A Neglected Source of the Dignity of Persons," 16-17.

8. The quotation is from Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 100.

9. The quotation is from Romano Guardini, *The World and the Person* (Chicago: Regnery, 1965), 215-16.

10. Aristotle, *De anima* 3.8.431b20.

11. He continues: "It is the mark of a non-person to have its whole being in some limited region of the world, whereas persons can surpass every regional limitation and live in openness to the totality. St. Thomas makes this point in arguing that God governs human beings for their own sakes (*Summa contra gentiles* III, 112); one of his arguments is based on the fact that the soul, as Aristotle said, is in a sense all things. He seems to mean that world-open beings can only be persons, and must be treated as persons, even by divine providence."

12. "Ad quartum dicendum quod numerus est duplex, scilicet numerus simplex vel absolutus, ut duo et tria et quatuor; et numerus qui est in rebus numeratis, ut duo homines et duo equi. Si igitur in divinis accipiatur numerus absolute sive abstracte, nihil prohibet in eo esse totum et partem, et sic non est nisi in acceptione intellectus nostri; non enim numerus absolutus a rebus numeratis est nisi in intellectu. Si autem accipiamus numerum prout est in rebus numeratis, sic in rebus quidem creatis, unum est pars duorum, et duo trium, ut unus homo duorum, et duo trium, sed non est sic in Deo, quia tantus est Pater quanta tota Trinitas" (*STh* I, q. 30, a. 1, ad 4).

13. On the fact that the relations do not introduce composition into the divinity, see *STh* I, q. 28, aa. 1-3; I, q. 30, a. 1, ad 2; also I, q. 42, a. 4, ad 3.

14. Thomas's point in *STh* I, q. 30, a. 3 is that although the threeness of the persons in God is really in God, because the persons are really distinct, the threeness is not anything really distinct from the persons themselves; it does not posit any accident in them.

15. This would include the relative properties of the persons of the Trinity, which "signify in the mode of form." See *STh* I, q. 31, a. 2, ad 2; I, q. 39, a. 3, ad 4.

16. See *STh* I, q. 14, a. 1; for helpful discussion, see Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "St. Thomas and the Integration of Knowledge into Being," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 24 (1984): 383-93.

17. The very exercise of the human person's "subjectivity" or mind displays a corporeal dimension as well. For it always involves operations of the senses, and careful analysis of these shows that they are exercised by bodily organs (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 3). It is because the human mind needs the help of the senses in order to bear well upon its own object that the soul by nature needs the body (*STh* I, q. 89, a. 1). See Stephen L. Brock, "The Physical Status of the Spiritual Soul in Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 3 (2005): 231-58.

18. Crosby distances himself from "Aristotelian hylomorphism, at least in the interpretation according to which a general form and individuating matter unite to form a concrete substance" (43 n. 2). This is certainly not how Thomas interprets it. "The proper name of any person," he says, "signifies that through which that person is distinguished from all the others. For just as soul and body belong to the definition (*ratio*) of man, so *this* soul and *this* body belong to the identification (*intellectus*) of *this* man, as it says in *Meta*. VII; for it is by these that this man is distinguished from all the others" (*STh* I, q. 33, a. 2). A little earlier he had said, "Persona igitur, in quacumque natura, significat id quod est distinctum in natura illa; sicut in human natura significat has carnes et haec ossa et hanc animam, quae sunt principia individuantia hominem" (*STh* I, q. 29, a. 4).

19. *STh* I, q. 47, a. 2; cf. *STh* I, q. 75, a. 7. The point is that the differentiation is always by addition or subtraction of some perfection. Each species constitutes a distinct grade of being.

20. Crosby argues that the very incomparability of persons makes them equal in dignity, by excluding the possibility that one be greater or lesser in dignity than another (Crosby, "A Neglected Source of the Dignity of Persons," 22-23). The number three is neither greater nor less than the color blue; are they therefore equal?

21. Quoted above, section 1.

22. Nevertheless, in his critical discussion of Thomas's conception of *bonum,* Crosby neglects it (177ff.). For thorough and excellent treatments of the distinction and of its relation to Thomas's understanding of the person, see the following studies by David M. Gallagher: "Person and Ethics in Thomas Aquinas," *Acta Philosophica* 4/1 (1995): 51-71; "Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1-47; "Thomas Aquinas on Self-Love as the Basis for Love of Others," *Acta Philosophica* 8/1 (1999): 23-44.

23. *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 4. It should be noted that Thomas does not regard this as a complete definition of love (*STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 2, c. and ad 1). It only expresses the dimension of "benevolence" that is found in love. What love adds to benevolence is a certain affective union (which is an inclination toward real union) with the one loved. However, for our present purposes, it is sufficient to consider the dimension of benevolence, since our concern is not precisely with what makes persons to be lovable, but with something that this presupposes: what makes them to be for their own sake. See also the following note.

24. Crosby too (see previous note) distinguishes between personal dignity and lovableness (66-68). He finds lovableness to be in some way more concrete or particular than dignity: whereas personal dignity follows directly upon the general feature of being *a* person, a person's lovableness is a function of his being *this particular* person. Crosby therefore suggests that lovableness is even more deeply rooted in incommunicable selfhood. Thomas, I think, would agree that there is something more concrete or particular about lovableness. When lover and beloved are distinct persons, the beloved's lovableness depends not only on how he is in himself but also on a relation to the lover, the relation that gives rise to the affective union of love. This relation is the beloved's status as "another self" for the lover (see *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 2, ad 2; I-II, q. 28, a. 1). But far from seeing this as a function of something *unique* about the beloved person, Thomas holds it to consist in some sort of *likeness* (*STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 3; I-II, q. 28, a. 1, ad 2). Indeed, is it not possible for one person to have some love for another simply because the other is a person too?

25. Thus Aristotle says that "the man to whom one wishes good to happen for himself, one must also desire to exist" (*Eudemian Ethics* 7.2.1236b30, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle,* The Revised Oxford Translation, vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984], 1959).

26. "Bonum dupliciter dicitur, sicut et ens: dicitur enim, uno modo ens proprie et vere, quod subsistit ut lapis et homo; alio modo quod non subsistit, sed eo aliquid est, sicut albedo non subsistit, sed ea aliquid album est. Sic igitur bonum dupliciter dicitur: uno modo, quasi aliquid in bonitate subsistens; alio modo, quasi bonitas alterius, quo scilicet alicui bene sit. Sic igitur dupliciter aliquid amatur: uno modo, sub ratione subsistentis boni et hoc vere et proprie amatur, cum scilicet volumus bonum esse ei; et hic amor, a multis vocatur amor benevolentiae vel amicitiae; alio modo, per modum bonitatis inhaerentis, secundum quod aliquid dicitur amari, non inquantum volumus quod ei bonum sit, sed inquantum volumus quod eo alicui bonum sit, sicut dicimus amare scientiam vel sanitatem" (*In De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, lect. 9 [Marietti §404]). Similarly: "id quod amatur amore amicitiae, simpliciter et per se amatur, quod autem amatur amore concupiscentiae, non simpliciter et secundum se amatur, sed amatur alteri. Sicut enim ens simpliciter est quod habet esse, ens autem secundum quid quod est in alio; ita bonum, quod convertitur cum ente, simpliciter quidem est quod ipsum habet bonitatem; quod autem est bonum alterius, est bonum secundum quid" (*STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 4).

27. "Nec est inconveniens si hoc etiam modo amemus aliqua quae per se subsistunt, non quidem ratione substantiae eorum, sed ratione alicuius perfectionis quam ex eis consequimur; sicut dicimus amare vinum, non propter substantiam vini ut bene sit ei, sed ut per vinum bene sit nobis vel inquantum delectamur eius sapore vel inquantum sustentamur eius humore. Omne autem quod est per accidens reducitur ad id quod est per se. Sic igitur hoc ipsum quod aliquid amamus, ut eo alicui bene sit, includitur in amore illius quod amamus, ut ei bene sit. Non est enim alicui aliquid diligendum per id quod est per accidens, sed per id quod est per se; et ideo oportet quidem diversitatem amorum accipere secundum ea quae sic amamus ut eis velimus bonum" (*In De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, lect. 9 [Marietti §405]).

28. "Non autem proprie possum bonum velle creaturae irrationali, quia non est eius proprie habere bonum, sed solum creaturae rationalis, quae est domina utendi bono quod habet per liberum arbitrium." (*STh* II-II, q. 25, a. 3; cf. *STh* I, q. 38, a. 1.) So it is not just that irrational beings ought not to be loved with loved of friendship; insofar as they are irrational, they cannot be. There is no such thing as "wishing them well" (or, for that matter, wishing them ill). Aristotle touches upon the idea in the *Physics* (2.6.197a36-b22): things like happiness and good fortune and their opposites are ascribed only to beings endowed with choice.

29. It might seem that one can have love of friendship for someone without wanting him to control the use of the good that one wants for him: for example, when a mother wants medicine for her infant. But this is only a temporary situation. What she ultimately wants, if she does love him with love of friendship, is that he eventually grow up and have his life in his own hands.

30. *STh* I, q. 59, a. 1. Like created intellect, created will is always distinct from its subject's essence, because it extends to a good that exceeds the subject's own substantial being (*STh* I, q. 59, a. 2). Note however that it is still the person himself, not his mind or his will, or even his freedom, that properly "has" the good, and that the good is properly "for." Mind and will, and the freedom of will, are only qualities, powers, by which the person relates to the good. The proper object of love of friendship is the person himself, the subsistent, not some quality in him. We are not seeing the person as the mere "support" for mind (like the newspaper that supports today's news); rather, we are seeing what his possession of mind implies about him. His mind too is for him to have and use; he is related to it, and to all his powers, not only as their recipient, but also as their end (see *STh* I, q. 77, a. 6, ad 2). Still, the thought is not that one should love the person "rather than" his mind. "The person" includes not just the person's substance or essential constitution, but also everything else that pertains to him (see *Quodl*. 2, q. 2, a. 2). It is not that the person, the subject, has two "parts," his substance and his mind; the substance of the person *is* the person, is himself. The "addition" of mind does not result in a different subject (see *Quodl*. 2, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1).

31. Chapter 6: "Selfhood and Transcendence in Relation to the Good," 174-217.

32. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.2.982b26.

33. On "one's own" (*suum*), with an especially interesting use of *liber est causa sui*, see *STh* I, q. 21, a. 1, ad 3.

34. Crosby, "A Neglected Source of the Dignity of Persons," 9-13. He is looking for a way to respond to arguments of the kind proposed by Peter Singer.

35. What I am suggesting is well illustrated by this statement: "When Socrates died, a hole was left in the world, such that no subsequent person could possibly fill it" (ibid., 11.) True or not, this is looking upon Socrates from the standpoint of what his existence contributes to something other than himself--the world. Indeed it is looking upon him as a part of the world. I am not at all objecting to this way of considering Socrates. I am only saying that it is other than the consideration in which we see Socrates as existing for Socrates himself.

36. This is not to say that abstract rational nature itself is the proper subject of the dignity. The proper subject is the individual that subsists in such nature. Individuality certainly does contribute to the constitution of his dignity, because only individuals subsist. What does not subsist cannot properly "have" the good. "Rational nature" only expresses the formal principle, the constitutive feature that completes the determination of the person's status as one who exists for his own sake. But while a person's individuality, and hence incommunicability, is thus very much tied to his dignity, it is not by involving something that makes him somehow "one of a kind." Of course he must be somehow distinct from the others of his kind, but he does not need to have a proper "differentia," a grade of being that is exclusively his, in order to claim personhood.

37. This, again, is a function of the spiritual element in his substance. (See above, text at n. 16.) Intellect adds something to the nature of the soul, but it also flows from the soul (*STh* I, q. 77, a. 6). Still, the soul is not a "self-contained" principle of its mind. If intellectual light flows from it, this can only be explained by the fact that it in turn finds its origin in an even higher intellectual substance, one in which mind and substance are identified (see *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4, ad 5). This fits with what I am suggesting in this section: that the created person's dignity is not something self-contained either (see below, n. 41).

38. This is why a human soul is not a person: *STh* I, q. 75, a. 4, ad 2.

39. It does not have the unity of a single substance. If it does have real unity, real order, this can only be because there is an extrinsic substantial unity upon which it depends. This extrinsic principle must be intellectual, because it belongs to intellect to give order. See *STh* I, q. 11, a. 3; I, I, q. 47, a. 3.

40. In this respect--in the line of "goods to be had"--they are ordered to the world's perfection; this is no detriment to their being for their own sake, since this is a different "line." See *ScG* III, c. 112: "Per hoc autem quod dicimus substantias intellectuales propter se a divina providentia ordinari, non intelligimus quod ipsa ulterius non referantur in deum et ad perfectionem universi. Sic igitur propter se procurari dicuntur et alia propter ipsa, quia bona quae per divinam providentiam sortiuntur, non eis sunt data propter alterius utilitatem; quae vero aliis dantur, in eorum usum ex divina ordinatione cedunt." The same sort of discussion would apply to the consideration of the person as part of a common species. A common species is not a subject or a subsistent, not "for itself" in the sense in which a person is. In the line of "goods to be had," the species as a whole may contain more perfection than any one of its members; and in this line, its members are ordered to it. This would be true whether or not they are personal beings. But if they are personal, then the perfection of their species (and of other species as well) is also ordered to them, in the line of "having the good": it is something for them to apprehend and enjoy.

41. To consider the person's dignity is to consider his status as a "good." But the created person's dignity does not consist in his being the whole or highest good; the good as a whole, and the highest good--the origin and ultimate end of the world--transcend him. The dignity lies rather in the special relation that he has to the good (see *STh* I-II, q. 1, a. 8; II-II, q. 2, a. 3). That it is not absolute in the way that the dignity of the divine persons is (see above, n. 13) seems fitting. As Thomas teaches, "person" as said of God and creatures cannot be univocal; it is analogical, and is said of God in a prior and more excellent way (*STh* I, q. 29, a. 3).

42. It may very well be that each created person does after all make a "contribution" that no other does. Indeed it is hard to imagine why else God would create a multitude of us. My thesis is simply that this contribution would be something other than what gives the person the dignity of "a person." I would also hold that at least in the case of human persons, it could not be something that is *intrinsically* unrepeatable, even if in fact it were never to be repeated (see above, pp. 187-88); and, that it would not be an "absolute" or substantial feature, but rather something pertaining to the person's activity--perhaps his very activity as *capax Dei*. C. S. Lewis has some profound pages in which he suggests that each person is distinctive precisely in the *way* that he or she is meant to know, love and praise God (C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* [Glasgow: Fount Paperbacks, 1977], chap. 10 ["Heaven"]).

43. *STh* I, q. 2, a. 8, c., ad 2, and esp. ad 3: "bonum creatum non est minus quam bonum cuius homo est capax ut rei intrinsecae et inhaerentis, est tamen minus quam bonum cuius est capax ut obiecti, quod est infinitum. Bonum autem quod participatur ab Angelo, et a toto universo, est bonum finitum et contractum."

44. "Ad tertium dicendum quod universum est perfectius in bonitate quam intellectualis creatura extensive et diffusive. Sed intensive et collective similitudo divinae perfectionis magis invenitur in intellectuali creatura, quae est capax summi boni" (*STh* I, q. 93, a. 2, ad 3). In short, the object of the created person's natural "need" is greater than what he can ever "contribute"; but it is also greater than what the whole world can contribute, and the world as a whole does not even have this "need." Still, it may seem paradoxical that a "need" constitute the greatest natural dignity. Helpful here is one of Thomas's determinations of the greatest created virtue or excellence. "Aliqua virtus potest esse maxima dupliciter, uno modo, secundum se; alio modo, per comparationem ad habentem. Secundum se quidem misericordia maxima est. Pertinet enim ad misericordiam quod alii effundat; et, quod plus est, quod defectus aliorum sublevet; et hoc est maxime superioris. Unde et misereri ponitur proprium Deo, et in hoc maxime dicitur eius omnipotentia manifestari. Sed quoad habentem, misericordia non est maxima, nisi ille qui habet sit maximus, qui nullum supra se habeat, sed omnes sub se. Ei enim qui supra se aliquem habet maius est et melius coniungi superiori quam supplere defectum inferioris. Et ideo quantum ad hominem, qui habet Deum superiorem, caritas, per quam Deo unitur, est potior quam misericordia, per quam defectus proximorum supplet" (*STh* II-II, q. 30, a. 4). Charity makes us more like God than mercy does: "per caritatem assimilamur Deo tanquam ei per affectum uniti. Et ideo potior est quam misericordia, per quam assimilamur Deo secundum similitudinem operationis" (ibid., ad 3). Thomas draws a similar distinction in explaining why beatitude pertains more to speculative than to practical intellect: *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 5, ad 1.

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