

Thomas Aquinas' Notion of Peace according to his *Commentary on John's Gospel*

聖多瑪斯在《若望福音注釋》中 對平安的看法

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摘要：在《天主教教理》中，和平（英文“peace”一詞同時可以譯作中文的「和平」及「平安」）這個题目的討論是放在第五誡「不可殺人」中有關「維護和平」這個部份。當中講及平安是人內心的平靜以避免發怒和報復的慾望。按這個定義，教理進一步將平安的討論伸延至維護公義及避免戰爭這些有關和平的領域。換言之，平安在《天主教教理》中的討論是由「個人內心」的層面伸延至「人與人之間」的層面。由於教理的討論集中於後者，因此本文希望多加探討前者的意思。為了合乎天主教教義的原則，本文會使用聖多瑪斯對平安的解釋，作為增加我們對這题目的了解。在其《若望福音注釋》中，聖多瑪斯對平安作了多方面的深入解釋，包括個人平安的意思、它與慾望的關係、這些關係如何以理智、意志及感觀慾望之間的運作去理解、以及何謂人類和平等。這些解釋不單能增強我們對「個人內心」平安的解釋，亦能進一步加強《天主教教理》中對和平的討論的向度。

關鍵詞：聖多瑪斯、平安、《若望福音注釋》、《天主教教理》

Abstract: *In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, peace is discussed under the topic called “safeguarding peace” in the section of the Fifth Commandment (You shall not kill). It is the tranquility of the heart to avoid anger and desire for revenge. With this definition, the scope of peace is extended to the realm of maintaining justice and avoiding wars. In other words, the discussion of peace in the Catechism is shifted from the intra-personal dimension (the inner tranquility of the heart) to the interpersonal dimension (the avoidance of wars). While inter-personal peace is discussed comprehensively in the Catechism, the intra-personal dimensions of peace deserve more attention. To be consistent with Catholic doctrines, explanation of the intra-personal dimensions of peace has to use someone who has influenced Catholic doctrines considerably as reference. In his Commentary on John’s Gospel, Thomas Aquinas, a Doctor of the Church in the medieval period, does not only examine intra-personal peace, its cause, and its relationship with desires, he also discusses the aspects of peace (i.e., peace with the self, with God, and with neighbors), the order of these aspects, and their connections with the intellect, the will, and the sense appetites. These views strengthen our understanding of peace from different dimensions and could further support the interpretation of the Catechism.*

Keywords: *Aquinas, peace, Commentary on John’s Gospel, Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1. Introduction

What is peace? Does peace exist? If it does, how does it exist and how can we have it? Is peace something good? The answers to these ontological enquiries about peace seem to be intuitive. It is generally agreed that peace does exist, albeit immaterially; and most people treasure and look for it. Yet peace is difficult to attain usually because we could easily feel unpeaceful.¹

It is also intuitive that we know what peace is. When we sit on a grassland and watch the sunset, we feel calm and peaceful. When we suffer from family quarrels, moving out from home is a way to find peace. Peace, in this sense, is personal and it is used to describe a psychological state. At the same time, peace, undoubtedly, has its interpersonal dimension, which describes a state of affairs interpersonally.

These intuitive senses about peace need clarification. By closely following the Catholic tradition, this paper will examine the ontological enquiries about peace especially what peace is in the Christological tradition. We first see what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter CCC) says about peace: being discussed in the section of the Fifth Commandment (You shall not kill), peace is the tranquility of the heart to avoid anger and desire for revenge. With this definition, the scope of peace is extended to the realm of maintaining justice and

¹ The word “peace” in English can mean both 「和平」 and 「平安」 in Chinese. This is explained in my article (in Chinese) 〈和平與不安〉 “Peace and Unsettlement,” 《神思》 *Spirit* 143 (2024): 34-42.

avoiding wars. In other words, the discussion of peace in the CCC is shifted from the intra-personal dimension (the inner tranquility of the heart) to the interpersonal dimension (the avoidance of wars).

While inter-personal peace is discussed comprehensively in the CCC, the intra-personal dimensions of peace deserve more attention. To be consistent with Catholic doctrines, explanation of the intra-personal dimensions of peace has to use someone who has influenced Catholic doctrines considerably as reference. Thus, I choose to use the literature of Thomas Aquinas, a Doctor of the Church in the medieval period. In his *Commentary on John's Gospel* (hereafter *Commentary*), Aquinas does not only examine intra-personal peace, its cause, and its relationship with desires, he also discusses the aspects of peace (i.e., peace within the self, with God, and with neighbors), the order of these aspects, and their connections with the intellect, the will, and the sense appetites. These views, I hope, would strengthen our understanding of the topic, and provide further support to the interpretation of the CCC.

The paper will include several sections. We will first look at the notion of peace in the CCC (Section 2). This is followed by a brief discussion about peace in the Greco-Roman world, which is the context of John's Gospel on which Aquinas' commentary is based (Section 3). After that, a brief notion of Aquinas' account of peace will be given (Section 4). This will be followed by the notion of peace in Aquinas' *Commentary* (Section 5). Finally, I will explain how the views of Aquinas help develop some aspects of peace that are not comprehensively shown in the CCC (Section 6).

Finally, it is emphasized that this paper also has another contribution: since not much academic attention has been given to Aquinas' biblical commentaries, this paper studies a piece of literature that has much potential for understanding Aquinas' view.

2. The Notion of Peace in the CCC

In the CCC, the notion of peace is discussed under the topic of "The Fifth Commandment" (You shall not kill).² The discussion of the notion is continued in the subsequent paragraphs with the topic of wars.³ Peace, according to the CCC, regards the peace of heart. It avoids the desire of anger for revenge.⁴ As it is a desire of a person, peace first requires a stage of intra-personal tranquility. It is for the sake of the person. Moreover, it benefits interpersonal relationship, which is crucial for the maintenance of justice, the effect of charity, the development of human life, and the respect for the dignity of persons and human rights.⁵ Notably, keeping peace and preventing wars pertain to the dimensions of both interpersonal human-human relationship and interpersonal God-human relationship. Thus, it seems that the CCC focuses mainly on the role of peace and its effects on interpersonal relationships, such as the harmonious state among nations, races, or persons, and the perfect state between God and humans while the inner tranquility is only briefly mentioned.

2 CCC, 2302-2306.

3 *Ibid.*, 2307-2317.

4 *Ibid.*, 2302.

5 *Ibid.*, 2304-2305.

Then, it is conceivable that an explanation of the intra-personal dimension of peace can give further support to the aforementioned section in the *CCC*. There are at least two reasons for this. First, inner peace is important to the mental care of persons. Second, it is the prerequisite of having interpersonal peace.

This needs to be followed by the matter of *how* intra-personal peace could be discussed. I choose to use Thomas Aquinas' notion of peace shown in his literature. As a Doctor of the Church, Aquinas has influenced Catholic doctrines considerably. His *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter *ST*) is a masterpiece and the most popular reference that is widely used by theologians in their reflections. Additionally, Aquinas' *Commentary* has valuable information about the notion of both intra-personal and interpersonal peace. The *Commentary*, and so do other biblical commentaries of Aquinas, is not only an interpretation of the biblical texts, but they could also show important theological views. While most of the views are coherent with those shown in the *ST*, these commentaries usually bring new insights that allow us to understand his views from different perspectives. As we will soon see, the *Commentary* explains peace mainly from the intra-personal dimension. Thus, this notion of peace given by the Doctor of the Church could strengthen our understanding of peace in the *CCC*.

3. An Understanding of Wars and Peace in the Greco-Roman World

The focus of the *CCC*, namely, the explanation of peace in terms of warfare, is not without a reason. Wars, no matter if they are local or international, commercial or social, threaten life not only in the present

but also in ancient times. This likely requires no specific explanations. What matters to our discussion, rather, is the notion of war in the ancient Greco-Roman world, since it is the context of John's Gospel.

There is certain literature relating to warfare in the Greco-Roman world. Among them, *Peace and Peacemaking in Paul and the Greco-Roman World* by Edward M. Keazirian, I believe, is our good reference. Other than drawing the readers' attention to how the notion of peace relates to the Greek culture, social environment, beliefs, and military conflicts in the Greco-Roman world,⁶ Keazirian's work has two important points for our discussion. First, he distinguishes three aspects of hostility in Greek culture.

Greek usage identifies three aspects of enmity / hostility: one's inner disposition, the thing itself, and its outward expression. The first deals with "the inner disposition from which hostility arises, i.e., 'hatred,'" and is represented by μισέω [...] denoting hatred, aversion, and intense dislike. The second denotes enmity / hostility itself "irrespective of the underlying disposition or of its manifestation or otherwise in visible form." Finally, the third level relates to the outward expression of that hostility, whether nationally and internationally as πόλεμος ("war"), or more locally as στάσις, a broadly applicable term for civil strife, dissension, political unrest, inner strife in the soul, disagreement between groups, or domestic strife, that is, any disruption in normal civic, domestic, or personal social and economic processes.⁷

⁶ Edward M. Keazirian, *Peace and Peacemaking in Paul and the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014), pp. 3, 19.

⁷ Keazirian, *Peace and Peacemaking*, p. 22.

Accordingly, the notion of peace, which is in contrast with hostility, could correspond to both the interpersonal and the intra-personal dimensions of hostility—war being the interpersonal one and hatred being the intra-personal one.

Second, Keazirian describes two kinds of peaceful situations by clarifying between “ἡσυχία” and “εἰρήνη.”

On the one hand, ἡσυχία is phenomenological in that it describes what one subjectively experiences in a given “peaceful” situation, that is, what seems to be the reality (peace and quiet, calmness and tranquility) without regard for unseen threats or festering issues that could potentially shatter that serenity. On the other hand, εἰρήνη is objective in that it denotes a “peaceful” situation (calm, quiet, and tranquil) only when those conditions exist without unresolved enmity that could destroy the security and serenity of the situation.⁸

In John’s Gospel, the word for peace is “εἰρήνη” and it is used in John 14:27; 20:19, 21, 26. Thus, according to the distinction made by Keazirian, it is notable that the peace in the above-mentioned biblical verses in John’s Gospel signifies a kind of objective peace: it is a calm and tranquil situation independent of personal feelings. It follows that, according to the author of John’s Gospel, the peace given by Jesus is an objective situation without warfare or conflicts. In this respect, it is consistent with the idea shown in the CCC mentioned in the previous section.

⁸ Keazirian, *Peace and Peacemaking*, p. 24.

What has just been noticed indeed enriches our understanding of the notion of peace. However, I wonder if Aquinas, as a medieval scholar, notices these subtle distinctions in Greek when he comments on the Gospel. Eleonore Stump, an expert on Aquinas, suggests that Aquinas uses several versions of Latin translations of the Bible⁹ and he knows “very little Greek and virtually no Hebrew, and he does not seem to have been interested in acquiring these languages.”¹⁰ Rather, his concerns “seem more focused on appropriating the insights and arguments of earlier philosophers and theologians than on engaging in historical investigation of the biblical texts.”¹¹ However, I do not mean (nor does Stump suggest) that Aquinas is ignorant of or neglects the warfare of the Greco-Roman world and the suffering of the Church before his time.¹²

4. Aquinas' Notion of Peace

4.1 A Union of Appetites

With the backdrop set, I will turn to study a main characteristic of peace according to Aquinas' *ST* in which peace regards the tranquility of persons and how it is affected by desires or appetites.¹³ Aquinas writes:

⁹ Eleonore Stump, “Biblical Commentary and Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 255.

¹⁰ Stump, “Biblical Commentary and Philosophy,” p. 256.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² It is also important to note that what has just been mentioned is not the only way to understand peace. What I want to show, rather, is how the above interpretation provides a different aspect of the topic.

¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae (ST)*, II-II, q. 29.

man's heart is not at peace, so long as he has not what he wants, or if, having what he wants, there still remains something for him to want, and which he cannot have at the same time [...] peace denotes, in addition to this union [the union of appetites among various persons], the union of the appetites even in one man.¹⁴

Appetites can be good or bad, right or wrong. They could disturb peace in various ways. When appetites are not fulfilled, the dissatisfaction brings about some emotions (such as sadness and anger) and disturbs the tranquility of the person. Therefore, the union of appetites, according to Aquinas, makes peace possible.

However, this does not follow that one could neglect moral obligations and pursue the union of appetites for the sake of attaining peace. Lust, for instance, is a strong desire that could disturb a person's inner peace. But a man could not arbitrarily satisfy his lust by simply having a relationship with the woman he loves.

4.2 Peace given to the Church

Many scholars focus on how Aquinas links the concept of peace with just war. Matthew Tapie's study, however, is an exception. By studying on how Aquinas comments on the features of peace given by Jesus in John 14:27,¹⁵ Tapie points out that Aquinas' notion of peace relates to the Church.¹⁶ This involves how Aquinas categorizes peace: peace as concord, apparent or false peace, true but

¹⁴ ST, II-II, q. 29.

¹⁵ "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." John 14:27.

¹⁶ Matthew A. Tapie, "'For He is Our Peace': Thomas Aquinas on Christ as Cause of Peace in the City of Saints," *Journal of Moral Theology* 5, no. 1 (2016): 111-116.

imperfect peace, and perfect peace respectively.¹⁷ Tapie intends to make clear how the church on earth could obtain the perfect peace possessed by Jesus.¹⁸ He argues that peace in John 14:27 “can mean true-but-imperfect peace enjoyed on earth as well as perfect peace enjoyed in heaven.”¹⁹ This peace brings *order* to the interior disposition of Jesus’ followers. In other words, a person’s intellect, will, and sensitive appetite would be in good order when she listens to Jesus, receives his peace, and attains a state of the mind’s calmness.²⁰ This argument of Tapie, I suggest, is consistent with the notion of the union of the appetites shown above. Tapie continues:

[t]his calmness of mind consists of the following: 1) a reason liberated from disordered affections; 2) a tranquility of soul, which is defined as not being harassed by emotional states; 3) a simplicity of heart, which refers to the will entirely set toward God and neighbor.²¹

Tapie further argues that four virtues (humility, meekness, patience, and charity) are required to preserve the peace in the Christian community.²² Correspondingly, four vices (pride, anger, impatience, and inordinate zeal) would hinder the preservation of peace.²³

17 Tapie, “For He is Our Peace,” p. 116.

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

20 *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 118.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

With Tapie's analysis of John 14:27, I will *further* develop Aquinas' notion of peace with his *Commentary* by particularly focusing on several verses in John 20 (section 5). As mentioned, Jesus gives peace to his followers when he is still with them on earth (John 14:27). Then after his resurrection, Jesus appears to his followers and greets them repeatedly by saying "peace be with you" (John 20: 19, 21, 26). These greetings, I suggest, are not sheer coincidences. Rather, they mirror the peace mentioned earlier in John 14:27. By inviting the readers to recall the peace promised to be given (John 14:27), the greetings of the resurrected Jesus restore the calmness of the disturbed mind. In particular, the followers are upset and in a state of panic after the death of Jesus, peace is considerably important for their restoration, which requires "a reason liberated from [the] disordered affections, [...] a tranquility of [the] soul [... that is] not being harassed by emotional states [... and] a simplicity of [the] heart [with which] the will entirely set toward God and neighbor."²⁴ This needs further clarification. Yet, we first need to turn to the context of peace in both the *Commentary* and John 20.

²⁴ Tapie, "For He is Our Peace," p. 118.

5. Peace in the *Commentary*

5.1 The Biblical Verses with “Peace be with You” in John²⁵

John 14:27	Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.
John 16:33	I have told you all this so that you may find peace in me. In the world, you will have hardship, but be courageous: I have conquered the world.
John 20:19	In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, “Peace be with you”
John 20:20-21	And, after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord, and he said to them again, “Peace be with you.” “As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.”
John 20:26	Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. “Peace be with you,” he said.

5.2 A Definition of Peace, its Contents, and Types

Aquinas' *Commentary* gives us new insights into the notion of peace, starting with its definition.

²⁵ New Jerusalem Bible, <https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/john/> [accessed 31st May, 2024].

Peace is nothing else than the tranquility arising from order, for things are said to have peace when their order remains undisturbed.²⁶

This definition provides a foundation for his argument on the “order of the interior disposition” given in the *ST*,²⁷ which includes the states of the intellect, the will, the sense appetency, and the desires. In other words, the undisturbed order or the tranquility of the soul is an unaffected emotional state or a state with ordered appetency. When an ordered intellect is in a state where it is free and undisturbed by inappropriate desires, it sets towards God and the love of neighbors. The will subsequently has to follow and assent to this ordered intellect so as to remain undisturbed as well. Then, the desires are well-ordered and in union, that is, in Aquinas’ words, the situation of the heart’s simplicity.²⁸

In addition, Aquinas makes *two distinctions*. The first distinction relates to the kinds of peace: (inner) peace of a person, peace of a person to God, and peace of a person to the neighbor. The peace of a person is what we generally call the inner one or what I named previously the intra-personal one. The other two kinds of peace are interpersonal, namely, God-human relationship and human-human relationship.²⁹

26 Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on John’s Gospel*, § 1962, <http://acquinas.cc> [accessed 6th June, 2024].

27 *ST*, II-II, q. 29, a. 2.

28 *Commentary*, § 1962.

29 *Ibid*.

5.3 The Distinction of Perfect Peace given by Jesus and the Imperfect Peace of the World

In John 14:27, it is clear that peace is given by Jesus himself. It is a gift of faith and is appropriated to both the Son and the Holy Spirit.³⁰ This peace is different from the peace of the world. Here, Aquinas makes the second distinction: distinction between the perfect peace given by Jesus and the imperfect peace of the world. While the peace of the world could be disturbed, Aquinas thinks that the peace of Jesus is perfect.³¹ This idea, which is previously shown in his comments on John 14:27, is repeated when Aquinas explains John 16:33: “I [Jesus] have told you [the disciples] all this so that you may find peace in me. In the world, you will have hardship.” Here, Aquinas compares the peace experienced by the saints with worldly peace. As opposed to worldly peace disturbed by evils, the saints enjoy the perfect peace of Jesus because they have God in their hearts.³² This is not to say that the saints would have no troubles. But the saints overcome the worldly troubles caused by evils and consequently attain perfect peace through faith and their faithful actions. This peace relates to resurrection, in the sense that God overcomes the power of death and evils through resurrection. But before further explanation, we need to briefly discuss the phrase “peace be with you” said by the resurrected Jesus.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, § 1961.

³¹ *Ibid.*, § 1964.

³² *Ibid.*, § 2174.

5.4 “Peace be with You” said by the Resurrected Jesus

The resurrected Jesus greets his disciples by saying “peace be with you” (John 20:19, 21, 26). This phrase has at least two interpretations: it is a blessing given by the resurrected Jesus; and it is a statement that states the peaceful situation of the disciples (that is, the persons who are talking with the resurrected Jesus are in a peaceful situation). Frankly speaking, the exact meaning that the writer intends to convey is not clearly shown. No particular studies examine this issue either. However, people seem to take the phrase to be the blessing of the resurrected Jesus, Aquinas included. In his comment on John 14:27, Aquinas states that peace is given by Jesus.³³ And after the resurrection, Jesus repeatedly blesses his followers with his perfect peace (John 20:19, 21, 26).

5.5 Further Explanations for the Perfect Peace and the Imperfect Peace

After these clarifications, we can go back to further explain Aquinas’ distinction between the saints’ perfect peace and our imperfect peace on earth so as to have a more comprehensive picture of the distinction in light of the resurrection. He says,

we cannot have an undisturbed peace either with ourselves, or with God, or with our neighbor. [But] [w]e will enjoy it perfectly in the future, when we reign without an enemy and there can never be conflicts.³⁴

³³ *Commentary*, § 1963.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, § 1962.

The perfect peace mentioned in section 5.3 is further explained here: perfect peace given by Jesus is truly revealed by his resurrection. The saints have perfect peace in the future, which is attained from Jesus. On earth, however, perfect peace would be disturbed due to the existence of sin and all kinds of constraints.

Aquinas continues to clarify their differences. First, perfect peace is directed to eternal goods while imperfect peace is directed to temporal things. Sometimes, imperfect peace would urge a person to commit sins.³⁵

Second, imperfect peace is something “outside” (*exterius*) while perfect peace is “both inside (*interius*) and outside (*exterius*).” The meaning of “outside” and “inside” here, I suggest, is not very clear. Intuitively, “outside” denotes exterior or outward things. This word seems to imply the material dimension. In contrast, “inside” denotes the inner or interior things. This word seems to imply the spiritual dimension. This is coherent with the idea that our imperfect peace on earth would involve exterior (or material) things, that is, the kind of peace that we ordinary people have on earth.

Yet, it does not follow that imperfect peace reflects no truth. Rather it seems to be, according to Tapie’s understanding shown in section 4.2, the kind of true-but-imperfect peace.³⁶ I believe that imperfect peace *can have* the truth because desires concerning worldly or material needs, such as preservation of life, are natural and in this sense true. But the peace of yearning for the preservation of

35 *Ibid.*, § 1964.

36 Tapie, “For He is Our Peace,” p. 117.

life is imperfect because it aims at a temporal and mortal need. When people preserve their lives by keeping resources for their *future* and ignore justice, and not share resources with others in need, the peace they enjoy is imperfect both because it aims at temporal things and because the interpersonal peace between the needy and those keeping the resources is disturbed.

On the other hand, perfect peace regards both the “inside and outside.” In other words, we cannot simply presume that perfect peace relates only to spiritual things, it also relates to worldly matters on earth.³⁷ That is, the kind of peace given by the resurrected Jesus is perfect no matter if it relates to spiritual or worldly matters. While it is easy to imagine how perfect peace relates to spiritual matters, it remains puzzling how perfect peace relates to worldly ones. I suggest that this could be exhibited by, for example, how Jesus teaches us to take care of those who are hungry, thirsty, in prison, and have no clothes (Matthew 25). Moreover, according to the above quotation, the saints enjoy perfect peace in the *future* when they, like the resurrected Jesus, overcome worldly matters. This implies that before achieving sainthood, the “saints” were indeed ordinary people who were hindered by worldly things and possessed the perfect peace given by Jesus “imperfectly” on earth. Yet, thanks to the grace of God and their persistence, the saints overcome worldly difficulties and enjoy perfect peace truly in heaven afterwards.

The third difference relates to the *degrees* of perfection. Aquinas says that imperfect peace concerns externals and not interior

37 *Commentary*, § 1964.

tranquility while perfect peace concerns both the interior and the exterior (*interius et exterius*).³⁸ I take this to mean that no matter how we people on earth make every effort to attain peace, we cannot have the perfect stage of inner tranquility even though we seem satisfied with the external world. When we attain the perfect peace given by the resurrected Jesus, we can attain inner tranquility. For example, it is Jesus' perfect peace that aids the saints (particularly the martyrs) who face great suffering on earth to deal with the external circumstance (the suffering) with courage. They also feel inner peace in the face of suffering and enjoy the perfect peace with the resurrected Jesus in the future even though they might be interrupted terribly by the pain and the suffering. Indeed, we people on earth need the peace of Jesus to overcome worldly evil. As Aquinas says, Jesus overcomes the world by taking away the weapons of evil, casting out the rules of the world, and converting people to believe in him.³⁹

Finally, a remark should be given to how the resurrected Jesus offers the intra-personal and interpersonal (the God-human and the human-human) peace mentioned in section 5.2. With the hardship caused by the absence of Jesus, both the intra-personal and the interpersonal peace of the followers are disturbed. For the intra-personal one, Aquinas says that the inner peace of the disciples is disturbed as "they were depressed and hesitant in their faith."⁴⁰ To overcome this weakness, Jesus promises those who love the law of God would have his peace to overcome their weaknesses.⁴¹

³⁸ *Ibid.*, § 1964.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, § 2175.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, § 2532.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

The disciples' peace with God (the interpersonal one) is also disturbed because "they had sinned against him, some by denying him, others by running away."⁴² The peace offered by Jesus is thus the reconciliation with God.⁴³ Interpersonal peace among the followers is also disturbed because "they were being persecuted by the Jews."⁴⁴ To cope with this problem, the peace offered by Jesus can cure them in a way that they can find peace in persecution.⁴⁵

Here I summarize the insights we have obtained from Aquinas' *Commentary* (a summary of section 5).

- A clear and precise definition of peace is given: peace is the tranquility that arises from order. The tranquility is obtained when the order of the intellect, the will, the sense appetency, and their connections among one another are undisturbed.
- The tranquility works in three kinds of relationships: the person with oneself, the person with God, and the person with others. They are also known as intra-personal peace (the first one) and interpersonal peace (the second and the third ones).
- The peace that humans have on earth is imperfect because of the disturbance of the temporal things. Thus, humans

⁴² *Commentary*, § 2532.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

need peace from Jesus to overcome worldly evils. Yet, it does not follow that imperfect peace is not true peace.

- Perfect peace is revealed by Jesus' resurrection. Jesus gives perfect peace to humans. The saints could enjoy perfect peace as they have overcome worldly evil and they enjoy perfect peace in heaven. However, even though the peace given by the resurrected Jesus is perfect, people on earth can enjoy it "imperfectly" only, because they are hindered by external worldly things.
- According to the different kinds of relationships mentioned, humans suffer from three kinds of disturbed peace on earth: with oneself, with God, and with others. Jesus gives perfect peace to people to overcome difficulties in these relationships: perfect peace could overcome the weaknesses of the disturbed inner peace; perfect peace is reconciliation with God; perfect peace helps people to face persecution with courage.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ How perfect peace could mend the disturbed peace with others needs some explanation. This relates to the context of the Gospel in which the perfect peace of Jesus is given, that is, the context of the suffering of the disciplines after the death of Jesus. As mentioned, Aquinas thinks that the disciples' peace with others is disturbed because the Jews persecute them. Thus, when Aquinas says that perfect peace mends their relationship with others in the context of their persecution, I take it to mean that, with the perfect peace, the disciples could courageously bear the suffering caused by the persecution. Courage, as a kind of moral virtue, is important to religious communities. The members in these communities may lack courage and faith and do not know what to do during the absence of Jesus: whether they should give up or be persistent in their faith in the face of persecution. The relationship among these members could, therefore, be weak. They may have different views towards the impending suffering. Some of them may even query

6. How Aquinas' Notion of Peace Provides Further Support to the Interpretation of the CCC

Aquinas' notion of peace from his *Commentary* supports the understanding of peace in the CCC in the following ways.

- It further elaborates the relationship between desires and peace: In the CCC, anger, which would bring about the action of revenge, is the desire that should be controlled. I further suggest that other desires, such as greed, need to be noted as well because they would also seriously ruin one's peace. The notion of the union of desires given by Aquinas helps make clear that when desires are overwhelming, the order among the intellect, the will, and the sense appetency cannot be kept. This does not only affect the tranquility of the soul, the interpersonal peaceful state could also be worsened. In other words, Aquinas' explanations remind us to pay attention to other desires and how they would affect peace.
- It clarifies how worldly things disturb the tranquility of the soul: By specifically pointing out that worldly things are the source

the decisions of their church leaders. For example, in Paul's second letter written to Timothy, Paul encourages Timothy to be brave when he will have to face persecution for the sake of the church. In Aquinas' commentary on this letter, he explains how courage is crucial for the churches and their leaders. As a token, I believe that the "disturbed peace with others" here relates to the "disturbed peace in the church communities that suffer from persecution." With the perfect peace given by Jesus, church members stay courageous, and thus, the peaceful relationship among church members could be strengthened.

for disrupting tranquility, Aquinas, on the one hand, shows that evils should be forsaken; on the other hand, he emphasizes the importance of deciding wisely with our intellect, especially on how worldly things would disturb our tranquility.

- It clarifies the dimensions of peace with the distinction of the inner peace of a person, the peace with God, and the peace with neighbors: This distinction shows that peace has both intra-personal and interpersonal dimensions. While the CCC emphasizes the tragedies made by warfare (i.e., the interpersonal level), Aquinas' notion of inner peace highlights the tranquility of the heart (i.e., the intra-personal level), which, I believe, is a prerequisite for interpersonal peace.
- It confirms that Jesus is the source of perfect peace: While disordered minds and interpersonal quarrels always ruin our peace, we do feel that peace is a good (or even an ideal) thing that we yearn for. In other words, we hope to have perfect peace, which originates from Jesus. Aquinas does notice this and demonstrates it with the disturbed mind of the disciples. Because of their ignorance about the resurrection of Jesus, they need the perfect peace given by the resurrected Jesus. With his "peace be with you," the resurrected Jesus offers the kind of peace that people yearn for during their hard times.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ However, one would worry that "peace with God" and "source of the perfect peace" are applicable to Christological theists only. I admit so but it is reminded that Aquinas is a theologian and our discussion is restricted to the Christological context, I, therefore, accept this atheistic concern.