# The Beatific Vision of Christ according to the doctrine of St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio handed down in his *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*

# La Visión Beatífica de Cristo según la doctrina de San Buenaventura de Bagnoregio dictada en sus *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*

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**Abstract**: Bonaventure situates his teaching on the Beatific Vision enjoyed by Christ squarely at the center of his Christology, to affirm the unity and harmony of the authority of the Eternal Word and of Christ the Man. The central importance of his doctrine on the Beatific Vision has been overlooked in recent studies, hence the necessity of a return to the sources to rediscover the richness of his vision.

**Key Words**: Bonaventure; Christology; beatific vision; Christ's Scientia; Christ's magisterium; Spirituality.

**Resumen**: San Buenaventura sitúa su enseñanza sobre la visión beatífica de la que Cristo goza justo en el centro de su cristología, para afirmar la unidad y la armonía de la autoridad de la Palabra Eterna y de Cristo el hombre. La importancia central de su doctrina sobre la visión beatífica ha sido ignorada en los estudios recientes, de ahí la necesidad de un retorno a las fuentes para redescubrir la riqueza de su visión.

**Palabras clave**: San Buenaventura; Cristología; visión beatífica; Ciencia de Cristo; magisterio de Cristo; espiritualidad.

**Summary**: 1. Introduction. 2. Limitations of this Study. 3. Preliminary Observations: What is meant by "Beatific Vision of Christ". 4. Common Sentence before and after Bonaventure. 5. Silence of the *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*. 6. Teaching of the Magisterium on Christ's Beatific Vision. 7. Current Errors which disfavor discussion of Christ's Beatific Vision. 8. The Reason for Christ' Enjoyment of the Beatific Vision: Christ's Headship. 9. The Formal Cause of Christ's Enjoyment of the Beatific Vision: A Created Wisdom. 10. The Efficient Cause of Christ's Enjoyment of the Beatific Vision: The Eternal Light of the Word. 11. The Material Cause of Christ's Enjoyment of the Beatific Vision: Christ's Knowledge. 12. The Contents of Christ's Beatific Vision: What Christ knows via this Vision. 13. The Soteriologic Purpose or Final Cause of Christ's Beatific Vision. 14. The Compatibility of Christ's Beatific Vision with His Threefold State. 15. The consequent Magisterial Authority of Christ the Man. 16. Conclusion. Sources and Bibliography.

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## 1. Introduction

Vincenzo Battaglia, ordinary professor in Christology at the Pontifical University of the Antonianum, remarks at the very beginning of his article on Jesus Christ, in the *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*, that the very center of St. Bonaventure's theology is his Christology.[1] While he attributes this to the influence of St. Francis of Assisi and the current theological movements in the order, it would be more accurate, historically, to point out that

[1] *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*, Edizioni Francescane, Padova, 2008, "Iesus Christus", p. 506.

Christology was already co-primary in the thought in Alexander of Hales, who was Bonaventure's master at the University of Paris, even before either had joined the Order of Friars Minor.[2] As the *Doctor Irrefragabilis* says in the Prologue to Book III of his *Summa Theologica*:

> The whole discipline of the Christian Faith pertains to two (things): to faith and understanding of the Founder and to faith and understanding of the Savior.[3]

It was after the entrance of Master Alexander into the Order, that Bonaventure followed in 1246. The Seraphic Doctor would take up his pen, and begin to forge his own immortal fame as a theologian, only four years later in 1250, when he began writing his own Commentary on the Sentences of Master Peter Lombard.[4] And this after reading them under Alexander.[5] Indeed, St. Bonaventure's Commentaria, which will be the primary source for the present study, was intended by the Saint as a work in full fidelity to Alexander's Summa. As the Seraphic Doctor himself says in his Preface to the Second Book of his *Commentaria*:

> But just as in the First Book I adhered to the sentences and common opinions of the masters (of theology), and most of all (to those) of our master and father of good memory, Friar Alexander (of Hales), so in the following books I will not retreat from their footprints. For I do not intend to defend new opinions, but to explain in detail the common and approved ones. Nor may anyone appraise, that I want to be the craftsman of a new writing; for this I think and admit, that I am a poor and feeble compiler.[6]

This does not mean that St. Bonaventure merely copies Alexander's doctrine on Christ's enjoyment of the Beatific Vision. Indeed, what Alexander treats of briefly, in the 9 pages of the critical edition of his *Summa*, Bonaventure will discuss at length: 31 pages in the critical edition of his own *Commentaria*,[7] and in the 43 pages of the critical edition of his *Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi*,[8] which he wrote in 1254.[9]

St. Bonaventure's doctrine on Christ's enjoyment of the Beatific Vision is expounded according to reasons of congruence and necessity, consequent to the reason for the

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[2] Costanzo Cargnoni, "Vita e cronologia di san Bonaventura", *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*, p. 69.

[3] *Summa Theologica*, Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), 1948, tome IV, p. 1; the English translation given, is my own.

[4] Pietro Marinese, "Opere di Bonaventurae", *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*, p. 90

[5] Quaracchi Editors, Prologemena, in I. Librum Sententiarum, p. LVI, first column, citing Bl. Francesco da Fabriano's Chronica Fabrianenses.

[6] Praelocutio, *Bonaventure CD: Vols. I, II, & III*, The Franciscan Archive, Mansfield, MA, USA, 2013, p. 1. The English translation is my own. Cf. here below, footnote 11.

[7] *Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae*, Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), Firenze, tomus III, 1887, pp. 295-326. Alexander's treatment can be found on pp. 163-172, in his Summa (cf. above footnote 3.).

[8] *Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae*, tome V, pp. 1-43.

[9] Pietro Marinese, ibid..

Incarnation, the dignity of Christ the Man as the Head of the Church, and the utility of this vision for man's reparation.

In the present study, this chain of reasons of congruence and necessity will be highlighted in the exposition of the Seraphic Doctor's teaching, which will follow the order of his own exposition, which study will clearly and indubitably show that the affirmation of Christ's enjoyment of the Beatific Vision is the central link in Bonaventure's Christology, between the authority of the Eternal Word and the authority of Christ the Man as the One Master of All.

## 2. Limitations of this Study

In this study, the doctrine of the Seraphic Doctor, as expounded in his *Commentaria*, will be the object of study. This is apt, since it is therein that he develops fully his theological doctrine concerning Christ's enjoyment of the Beatific Vision. However, I will not omit reference to St. Bonaventure's *Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi*, wherein, in Qq.4-6, he touches upon the same matter, though in a less precise manner.[10]

Seeing that the *Opera Omnia* of St. Bonaventure has not yet been wholly translated into any language, nor fully indexed, I will constrain my observations in this paper to the texts of his *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*, Books I, II and III, since these are available in English, in an electronic searchable database.[11]

## 3. Preliminary Observations: What is meant by "Beatific Vision of Christ"

Before beginning the consideration of what the Seraphic Doctor teaches concerning Christ's Beatific Vision, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the expression, "the Beatific Vision of Christ", so that the topic of this paper be properly understood. This is especially true, because St. Bonaventure's doctrine is presented within the context of the terminology of the Scholastic method used at the University of Paris in the mid 13th Century.[12] To be understood aright, it is, therefore, necessary, to understand him in his own terms, without attempting to adequate them to the terms and concepts of contemporary thought.

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[10] *Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae*, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), 1891, tom. V, pp. 17-43. Note that all scriptural references which follow, regard the Vulgate version of Scripture.

[11] *The Bonaventure CD: Vols. I, II, & III*: Contains St. Bonaventure's Commentaries on the The First, Second, & Third Books of Sentences of Master Peter Lombard, trans. Br. Alexis Bugnolo, The Franciscan Archive, Mansfield, MA, USA, 2013: in html format. This electronic edition follows page for page the Quaracchi Edition of 1882 seqq., and hence all page citations in the one are the same in the other. For the sake of brevity, the Latin texts of Bonaventure will not be repeated either in the text of this paper nor in its footnotes. In the English translations which follow, note, that terms within parentheses are added by the translator for clarity, conformable to the context in which they are found; terms in square brackets are those Latin terms used by St. Bonaventure himself, which correspond to the English word(s) immediately preceding. Rather than attempt to summarize Bonaventure's Doctrine, which is so refined, that any comprehensible summary would be longer than the original, I will simply quote the most pertinent sections of his Commentaria.

[12] Pietro Marinese, "Opere di Bonaventura", *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*, ed. Ernesto Caroli, Edizioni Francescane, Padova, 2008, p. 90.

Therefore, let us examine what the Seraphic Doctor holds about three concepts, which are essential to the present investigation: "*vision*" [*visio*], "*beatific*" [*beatifica*] and "*of Christ*" [*Christi*].

"Vision", for Bonaventure, is used in three senses, according to what the Seraphic Doctor hands down in II. Sent. d. 10, a. 3, q. 2, at the beginning of the Response:

> we say that "we *see* God" in a threefold manner, namely by *corporal (vision)*, *imaginary (vision)* and *intellectual (vision)* — and by an *intellectual* vision God is seen shining in His very Self, but by an *imaginary* and *corporal* vision God is seen appearing in a subject creature etc..[13]

In this third sense, "vision" is a supernatural act, that is, it is an act of a created intellect actualized by grace and supported upon the Divine Action, and is thus distinguished not only from all natural acts, but from other manners of gratuitous cognition. This special sense of "vision", St. Bonaventure calls the "open vision" [*visio aperta*] of God. To understand this, it will be useful to cite, here, what the Seraphic Doctor says about the four modes of gratuitous cognition in II. Sent. d. 23, a. 2, q. 3, in his Response to the Question, "Whether Adam in the state of innocence cognized God thus, as God is cognized in the state of glory?":[14]

> « Wherefore, note, that there is a fourfold manner of cognizing God, namely through *faith*, through *contemplation*, through *apparition* and through *open vision* [*visionem apertam*]. And the first belongs to *common* grace, the second belongs to an *excelling* grace, the third to a *special* grace and the fourth to *consummating* glory. — And the sufficiency of these manners is gathered thus. For everything which is cognized, is cognized through something *present*; if, therefore, God is cognized, it is necessary, that He be cognized through something present to the intellect; but here I call "present", according to what (St.) Augustine calls, that which is present to the intellect to be seen. Therefore, either I cognize God through that which is present *to me*, or through that which is present *to another*. If through that which is present *to another*, thus there is the cognition of *faith*. For that God be Triune and One, in this I believe the Son of God, who told of (cf. John 1:18) and preached this, and the Holy Spirit, who inspired this. « For what we believe, we ought to on authority », just as (St.) Augustine says On the Utility of Believing (ch. 11, n. 25). — But if I cognize God through that which is present *to me*, this can be in a threefold manner: either through that which is present to me in *a proper effect*; and then there is *contemplation*, which is as more eminent, as man senses the effect of divine grace more in himself, and/or as he knows better how to consider God in exterior creatures. — Or it is present to me in *a proper sign*; and thus there is the *apparition*, just as God appeared to Abraham in a subject creature, which stood as a figure for [*figurabat*] God Himself; and as the Holy Spirit appeared in the dove. — Or God is present in *His own Light* [*lumine suo*] and in His very Self;

[13] Page 271, in his Response to the Question, "Whether the same locution can be from God and from an Angel?" (Here, "locution" refers to a spoken discourse.

[14] Pages 542-548. The citation which follows is from the Response, p. 545.

> and thus there is the cognition, by which God is seen in His Visage, or face to face, and thus there is *open vision*, which is said (to be) the "whole wage" [*tota merces*] of all merits ».[15]

Next, let us consider the term "beatific" [*beatifica*]. In Latin, *beatifica*, the adjective, means "that which makes blessed".[16] It must be noted, here, that St. Bonaventure does not use the adjectival form of this term in his *Commentaria*, but does employ the present active participle, beatificans,[17] and the verb *beatificare*.[18] However, use of this term to specify the "open vision" of which the Seraphic Doctor speaks, is justified by the fact that for St. Bonaventure, this "open vision" is that glorious act which is one of the three dowry-gifts of the Blessed, as he says in IV. Sent. d. XLIX, p. I, a. sole, q. 5:

> But because the *substantial* reward of beatitude consists in *God*, for that reason the principal acts of glory are (those), according to which the soul is converted unto God . . .
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> ... And for that reason it must be said, in another manner, that all the forces (of the soul), which have, through grace, (their) act in regard to God, will have through glory perfect acts, (their) imperfect (acts) having been emptied out. Whence the *rational* (force), to which it belongs now to believe through faith, shall then see (God) openly; the *concupiscible* (force), to which it belongs to love [*amare*], shall then love (God) perfectly; the *irascible* (force), to which it belong to be raised-upright and supported through hope, shall then hold (God) continually and certainly. Wherefore, according to these three acts there are distinguished three dowry-gifts, that is, vision, dilection, (and) comprehension or holding or *enjoyment* through an *appropriation* (of God to oneself); for this enjoyment (of God) comprises these three (acts).[19]

Finally, it is necessary to specify exactly the subject of this *beatific vision*, that is, the being who enjoys it: *Christ*. Here, by "*of Christ*" I intend the Human Nature of the God-Man. St. Bonaventure uses "*of Christ*" [*Christi*] throughout III. Sent. d. 14, wherein he

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[15] For the expression, "whole wage of all merits", the Quaracchi editors, ibid., p. 545, footnote 6, cite thus: (St.) Augustine, *Enarrations on the Psalms*, Ps. 89, sermon 2, n. 13: Whatever you labor at, you labor for this, to see. I know not, what is the great (thing) which we are going to see, when our whole wage is vision etc.

[16] *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, Dom. Du Cange, OSB, tom. I, ed. Léopold Favre, Niort, France, 1883, p. 613, 3rd column, "beatificare".

[17] To cite a the examples found outside of the arguments pro and contra: I. Sent. d. 2, a. 1, q. 2, in the body of the Response, ad 1, p. 54; II. Sent. d. 5, a. 3, q. 1, ad 4, p. 155; d. 5, Doubt 1, second paragraph, p. 158.

[18] To cites examples, where St. Bonaventure is not quoting others: II. Sent. d. 4, a. 1, q. 2, ad 4-5; d. 29, a. 1, q. 2, ad 3; III. Sent. d. 1, a. 2, q. 2, ad 1.

[19] IV. Sent. d. XLIX, p. I, a. sole, q. 5, Page 1009, second paragraph of the second column. This English translation, is my own, and is not included in the Bonaventure CD, since the Latin text is taken from the Fourth Book of the said *Commentaria*.

discusses ex professo the knowledge of Christ's Soul [*anima Christi*] had by means of this open vision.[20]

### 4. Common Sentence before and after Bonaventure

Before entering into the consideration of the beatific vision enjoyed by Christ the Man, it is also important to note that in St. Bonaventure's time the common sentence was that Christ enjoyed this from the first moment of His Conception, and continually throughout His earthly life,[21] and this in virtue of the Hypostatic Union. Dr. Ludwig Ott, furthermore, says that this is still the *sententia communis*, in Catholic theology and gives numerous citations from Aquinas and later theologians to demonstrate this classification.[22]

### 5. Silence of the *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*

Let us being our consideration, therefore, of Christ's enjoyment of the Beatific Vision, by remarking that this topic is rarely discussed by moderns. Consider, for example, the recently published, *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*,[23] In the article on *Beatitudo* by Antonio Poppi[24] there is no mention at all of Jesus Christ; in the article on *Scientia*, by Andrea di Maio, the section on "scienza gratuita", says nothing of Christ's knowledge.[25] And in the article on *Iesus Christus* by Vincenzo Battaglia, there is no mention of Christ's enjoyment of the beatific vision.[26] There is only a brief reference to Christ's ecstatic cognition in the article on *Cognitio* by Maurizio Malaguti.[27]

### 6. Teaching of the Magisterium on Christ's Beatific Vision

Second, let us briefly review the teaching of the Magisterium on Christ's enjoyment of the beatific vision, so see how sound the doctrine of the Seraphic Doctor was, and how much he anticipated the Magisterium in this doctrine. First, the Holy Office, in a decree of June 5, 1918, condemned three propositions which limited or denied Christ's enjoyment of the Beatific Vision.[28] Second, Pope Pius XII in *Mystici Corporis*,[29] teaches explicitly the

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[20] Pages 295 ff.

[21] Cf. III. Sent. d. 13, a. 1, q. 1, Scholium, n. 1, p. 278, first column, paragraph 2.

[22] *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, Tan Books & Publishers, Rockford, Illinois, 1974, p. 162-5; this work is a reprint of the 4th edition of the English translation by James Canon Bastible, D. D., published by Mercer Press, Ltd., Cork, Ireland, 1960, which itself is derived from the German original, *Gundriss der Katholischen Dogmatick*, Verlag Herder, Freiburg, 1952.

[23] A cura di Ernesto Caroli, Editrici Francescane, 2008, ISBN 978-88-8135-019-3.

[24] Pages 212-220.

[25] Page 710.

[26] Pages 506-517. On p. 511-12, however, there is an implicit reference to the limitations of the knowledge had by this vision.

[27] On p. 248; the entire article comprises pp. 242-249.

[28] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, being an English translation by Roy J. Deferrari, of Henry Denzinger's 13th edition of the *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, DZ 2183-5.

common sentence: « For hardly was He conceived in the womb of the Mother of God, when He began to enjoy the Beatific Vision ». He also affirms that Christ had the beatific vision, in *Haurietis Aquas*.[30]

### 7. Current Errors which disfavor discussion of Christ's Beatific Vision

At present, there are a number of errors common among contemporary theologians, which lead them to deny that Christ the Man, before the Resurrection, enjoyed the Beatific Vision. While it is outside the scope of this paper to give a detailed consideration of why this is the case, it is useful to mention one of the more influential theologians of recent times who was of this opinion, since he held each of these common errors.

Hans Urs Von Balthasar wanted to limit Christ's vision of God (1) to allow for faith and (2) nothing but His consciousness as Man of His divine mission.[31] He held this position as a consequence of (3) the all encompassing *kenosis* which he affirmed to have been in Christ.[32] The error of Von Balthasar is now a common one, perhaps on account of the fact that he was nominated a Cardinal of the Roman Church, shortly before his death, and due to the absence of the explicit affirmation of this teaching in either the Catechism of the Catholic Church or the subsequent Compendium.[33]

We shall see, shortly, how St. Bonaventure anticipates these three objections of Von Balthasar by 700 years and responds to them, and how Von Balthasar's error is founded upon his ignorance of several commonly accepted principles of Christology.

### 8. The Reason for Christ' Enjoyment of the Beatific Vision: Christ's Headship

Already in Peter Lombard's *Quatuor Libri Sententiarum*, Book III, d. 13, the Master of the Sentences recognizes that Christ's enjoyment of the Beatific Vision was understood as a necessary consequent of the Hypostatic Union and its consequences:

> Moreover, it must be understood, that Christ, according to the Man, received the fullness of grace from (His) very Conception. To Whom *the spirit was given not according to measure* (John 3:34), and in Whom *the fullness of Divinity dwells corporally* (Colossians 2:9)… Therefore, that Boy was *full of wisdom and grace* (Luke 2:40) from (His) very Conception. Wherefore, Jeremiah rightly says: *The Lord shall make (something) new upon the Earth: a woman shall*

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[29] Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* (1943), n. 75. Vatican translation. For Latin, see: AAS 35 (1943), pp. 229–230. I take this citation from Rev. Dylan Shrader, "When did Jesus know that he is God", available on the Internet, at http://resources.ipsissima-verba.org/documents/christ-human-knowledge-of-divine-identity.pdf, pp. 1-5.

[30] Pius XII, *Haurietis aquas* (1956), n. 56. Vatican translation. For original Latin, see: AAS 48 (1956), pp. 327–328.

[31] E. g. Von Balthasar says in *Theo-Drama*, p. 195, 200: **"***This would exclude the Beatific Vision of God...Jesus does not see the Father in a visio beatifica"***.** I take this citation and the following ones from, "Balthasar's denial of the Beatific Vision in Christ", on the Internet at http://www.unamsanctamcatholicam.com/theology/81-theology/170-balthasar-denies-beatific-vision.html.

[32] *Mysterium Paschale*, p. 122.

[33] See the article by Rev. Shrader, cited above in footnote 29 for citations and quotes.

> *encompass a man* (Jeremiah 31:22); because in the womb of the Virgin He existed as a perfect man [*perfectus vir*], not only on account of (His) Soul and Flesh, but also on account of the wisdom and grace, with which He was full.

Lombard's treatment, which follows, gave rise to the Questions of the Scholastics, inasmuch as he admitted a growth of human cognition in Christ the Man. St. Bonaventure, fully in tradition with the masters of his age, considers two general problems or topics in his Commentary on the Thirteenth Distinction, namely: the grace of the singular person and His Headship.

By the "grace of the singular person", the Seraphic Doctor does not mean the grace of the Eternal Word or of the Divine Hypostasis. Rather, the "expression *singular person* in reference to the Christ as man, is said as an extrinsic measure, not as an intrinsic one; just as one says of a corporation that it is a 'person before the law', not because it is a human person, but because it is reckoned as one for purposes of comparisons with human persons in certain matters, i. e. legal controversies."[34] Here the term "of the singular person" is used in the comparison of the grace enjoyed by Christ as Man with the grace of created persons. Or, as the Quaracchi editors say, not entirely properly, the term is equivalent to "according to which He is a *singular* man".[35]

St. Bonaventure explains why Christ the Man has a necessity of created grace, for His sanctification, in III. Sent. d. 13, a. 1, q. 1, in the Response:

> It must be said, that without a doubt in Christ there is the positing of a *gift* of grace, which grace, indeed, is called "the grace of the singular person"; and that this, indeed, is a *created* gift. — And the reason for this is: that such a gift of grace assimilates the soul to God and habilitates (it) for good and meritorious operations by raising (it). Therefore, since the Soul of Christ was deiform and able [*habilis*] to operate well, otherwise it would neither have been suitable [*idonea*] for the Union nor for the perfection of merit (cf. d. 2, a. 3, q. 2); for that reason it was necessary, that in Christ's Soul there be a finding of the *gift* of such a grace. — And from the same cause it was necessary [*necesse fuit*], that it be *created*, so that it could *inform the Soul*, as a perfection has (an ability) to inform its own perfectible, and so that it could *habilitate the powers*, just as a quality has (an ability) to qualify [*qualificare*] its own object. —And for that reason the reasons showing this are to be conceded.[36]

Furthermore, on account of Bonaventure's Christocentrism, he argues for a necessity of a fullness of created grace in Christ the Man, ibid., in the Response to q. 3:

> It must be said, that without a doubt in Christ, according to (His) human nature, there was from the first rise of (His) Conception a *perfect and consummated fullness of grace*. For it was not fitting [*decebat*] that the uncreated Word be united to a soul by the most perfect union, of which kind is

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[34] *Bonaventure CD: Vols. I, II, & III*: Translator's note, on III. Sent. d. 13, a. 1, q. 3, p. 281.

[35] III. Sent. d. 13, a. 1, q. 1, Scholium, n. 1.

[36] III. Sent. d. 13, a. 1, q. 1, in the Response, p. 277, the citation to d. 2, is taken from footnote 2 on the said page.

> the Union unto a unity of person, where the soul would not be deiform, according to what was possible. And for that reason it not only had a deiformity of grace and glory, but also (a deiformity) *above* every grace and glory. Nor was there in Him only a fullness of *sufficiency*, as in the Saints, of which fullness there is said in the sixth (chapter of the Book) of Acts (v. 8): *Stephan (was) full of grace and fortitude*; nor only the fullness of *prerogative*, just as in the Virgin Mary, of which fullness there is said in the first (chapter of the Gospel of St.) Luke (v. 28): *Hail Mary, full of grace* etc.; nor only the fullness of *numerosity* and *abundance* [*copiae*], as in the whole Church, of which fullness (there is written) in the fourth (chapter of St. Paul's Letter) to the Ephesians (v. 19): *He ascended upon the heavens, to fill all full* etc.; but even the fullness of *superabundance*, of which (there is written) in the first (chapter of the Gospel of St.) John (v. 14): *We have seen His glory, the glory as if of the One only-begotten by the Father, full of grace and truth*; "*full*", I say, with the fullness of *superabundance*, on account of which (the Apostle) subjoins to prove this: *And from His fullness we have all accepted* (v. 16). — There are to be conceded, therefore, the reasons showing this, that Christ from the instant of (His) Conception was full of grace and had in Himself the fullness of grace.[37]

Then, after establishing that the grace of Christ's Headship is a created one,[38] and different from that of the singular person,[39] he teaches that this Headship gives Christ a principality or priority in every order of grace, to the grace of every other singular person, in III. Sent. d. 13, a. 2, q 3, at the end the Response:

> There must be conceded, therefore, that the grace of the Head (of the Church) overflows upon all the citizens of the Supernal Jerusalem, though according to a 'more and less' [*secundum plus et minus*]: for more [*magis*] upon the *men*, who are redeemed, than upon the *Angels*, who are reintegrated, and more upon those who *follow* His advent, than upon those who *preceded* (it), because they see and believe more clearly and are filled [*perfunduntur*] more amply with the gifts of the charisms, on account of this that, if the Passion as promised was worthy so much for the former, that they were lead thoroughly along [*per*] the way of salvation, the Passion as exhibited and accomplished [*soluta*] ought to do this more amply.[40]

It is in this Response, that before the citation just made, St. Bonaventure explains that Christ as Head is the meritorious and dispositive cause of all the created graces enjoyed by all created persons:

> According to this threefold difference of cognition and love, there is the saying, that the grace of the Head (of the Church) inflows into (Her) members *effectively* the *uncreated* Grace, but *created* grace *meritoriously* and

[37] Ibid., in the Response to q. 3.

[38] III. Sent. d. 13, a. 2, q. 1.

[39] Ibid., q. 2.

[40] III. Sent. d. 13, a. 2, q 3, at the end the Response, p. 289.

> *dispositively*. For on account of the merit of Christ's Passion *promised* to the preceding Patriarchs God gave the grace of reconciliation, and on account of (the same) *exhibited* He give us the grace of reconciliation more abundantly, in which grace, indeed, there is a *sense* of cognition and *movement* of affection; and again, on account of that Passion a gate has been opened, so that to all Christ's members there may be given a glorious love and cognition, in which there consists the perfection of *movement* and *sense*. — On account of this same (merit) many mysteries are revealed to the Angels, and there are conferred (upon them) many joys over their restoration [*restauratione*], which is found (to have) been wrought through Christ. And for that reason even they accept *movement* and *sense*; not, I say, that one which concerns the *essence* of grace and glory, but which concerns (their) '*well being*' and perfection.[41]

Hence, since Christ as Head is the meritorious and dispositive cause of all created graces by which created persons merit their own enjoyment of the beatific vision, it follows necessarily, in Bonaventure's Christocentrism, the affirmation that Christ Himself as Man already enjoys the perfect fullness of all graces which can possibly be had by man, and thus consequently, the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision. He teaches this, in III. Sent. d. 13, in his reply to Doubt 4:

> It must be said, that there is a speaking of a "fullness" [*plenitudine*] according to *existence* and according to *appearance* and according to an *overflow* [*redundantiam*]. Therefore, I say, that in Christ from the instant of (His) Conception there was a fullness according to *existence*, because He had the perfection of grace.[42]

At this point, let us delve into the teaching of the Seraphic Doctor regarding Christ's Beatific Vision itself.

## 9. The Formal Cause of Christ's Enjoyment of the Beatific Vision: A Created Wisdom

First it must be noted that St. Bonaventure considers this topic in III. Sent. d. 14, under the question of Christ's knowledge had by means of His vision of the Eternal Word. First he considers what the formal cause of this beatific knowing or vision is.

And, thus, first, he distinguishes, in a. 1, q. 1, in the Response, between the knowing which is the act, and the knowing which is the knowledge by which one knows:

> For an understanding of the aforesaid it must be noted, that when there is asked, "Whether the "*cognition*" [*cognitio*], by which Christ's Soul cognizes the Word united to it, is the Word Itself, or something created?"; if (the question) is understood of cognition *as an act* [*actu*], it is, without a doubt, certain, that it is other (than the Word), because it *began to be* and *is an act* of the Soul and from the Soul; but the Word is eternal and is not from the Soul, but from God. — But

[41] Ibid.

[42] Page 293.

> if the "*cognition*" be said (to be that), *by means of which* [*quo mediante*] we cognize,[7] thus there was a diversity of (those) opining.[43]

In reciting this controversy as to whether Christ the Man knows the Word by means of a created knowledge or immediately, without any created means, he rebuts the second opinion, which he presents, namely that this knowing of the Word is immediate without any created means, saying of this second opinion:

> But though that seems more probable than the aforesaid; yet it deviates from the truth, if one looks into (the matter). For the Word is not united to Christ's Soul in that blessed Union, as One cognizable to one cognizing, and/or as the habit of a power, and/or as a perfection to a perfectible; but the Union is in the unity of the Person, which can be apart from a cognition; just as is clear in the Flesh of Christ, which has been united to the Word, and yet does not cognize It.[44]

Hence, having reasoned that the Hypostatic Union itself requires a created means for the human intellect in Christ to know, he presents his doctrine, regarding the created wisdom by which Christ the Man knows the Word:

> Therefore, there is necessary that there be another *manner of union* for this, that (Christ's) Soul cognize the Word united to it unto the unity of the Person; but this is through the assimilation of the one cognizing to the One cognized, and thus through some influence,[45] which makes the cognizing Soul itself, similar to God and deiform, and thus through some habit informing the Soul itself, because, indeed, a habit cannot be but something created. For something uncreated cannot be as a form of the soul itself. — And on that account it is necessary [*oportet*] to say in (this) third manner, that Christ's Soul, just as also the souls of other Saints, cognizes the uncreated Word through a *created wisdom*, which disposes the cognitive powers of their souls and renders (these) conform, so that they may cognize that Eternal Light [*lumen aeternum*].[46]

And the Seraphic Doctor immediately gives the reasons for his position, thus establishing that this created wisdom enjoyed by Christ the Man is wholly unique one derived from the dignity of the Hypostatic Union:

> Nor can it be understood otherwise. For in what manner can a soul, which does not itself become clear and luminous, cognize the Eternal Light and gaze at [*intueri*] the most High Clarity? Moreover, the Soul of Christ, because it was assumed by the Word, has a greater deiformity, and through this a more perfect and more eminent cognition, than any blessed soul through glory. — Wherefore

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[43] Page 296.

[44] Page 297. See also, Ibid., in reply to n. 1, a little below this for a fuller explanation.

[45] Here the Quaracchi editors note: "Which influence is popularly called the "light of glory" [*lumen gloriae*]."

[46] Ibid.

> it must not be understood, that the knowledge of *union* is distinguished from the knowledge of *comprehension*, as if it were not through some intermediary habit, but because a more excellent and more amply deiformity and clarity has been conferred upon Christ's Soul on account of this, that it has been united to the Word, than on account of this, that it is simply blessed. — There are to be conceded, therefore, the reasons proving, that Christ's Soul formally cognizes the Word by some cognition, which, I say, is not the Word Itself, but an effect of the Word, which (cognition), I say, the Word causes in Christ's Most Blessed Soul.[47]

Here, St. Bonaventure, by "knowledge of union" refers to Christ's knowledge had in virtue of the Union, and by "knowledge of comprehension", the genus of Divine Knowledge had by the Word in regard to God and the Father.[48]

## 10. The Efficient Cause of Christ's Enjoyment of the Beatific Vision: The Eternal Light of the Word

However, it must not be understood, that because St. Bonaventure holds that this vision is had by means of a created habit, that it is caused by the created habit. Because, like all Scholastics he distinguishes between the formal cause (here, the created knowledge) and the efficient cause (the Divine influence). The efficient cause, or the influence which inflows from the Eternal Word into the intellect of the Soul of Christ the Man is the light of glory, as he teaches, here in III. Sent. d. 14, a. 1, q. 1, in reply to n. 2:

> For just as it was demonstrated [*monstratum est*] in opposing, that God is in all essentially and most interior to all, and yet is cognized by few; and for that reason, though the uncreated Word has been united to the Soul, yet it is not cognized through this, that It is united unto the unity of the Person, but through this, that the intellect of the Soul united to It is made conform to It through the influence of (Its) Light [*lumen*]. For it is necessary, that an intellect in some manner be formed and informed by the intelligible itself, for this that it cognize it.[49]

In St. Bonaventure's thought, it is important to distinguish *light* [*lux*] and *the light* [*lumen*]. Light [*lux*] is the real thing, but *the light* [*lumen*] is the intention of the real thing. The Quaracchi editors explain this fully, in their Scholium to II. Sent. d. 13, a. 3, q. 2.[50] But, as it would be too length of an exposition to cite here, let it suffice to say that for St. Bonaventure, *the light* [*lumen*] is a reckoning of the tending of light unto the object illumined. And hence it is an influence or active quality of the light. Thus, in calling this Divine influence which produces the open vision had by Christ's Soul the *Eternal Light*

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[47] Ibid.

[48] For *knowledge of comprehension*, cf. III. Sent. d. 24, Doubt 4, resp., p. 530; that the Son, as God, alone knows the Father by this kind of knowledge, cf. I. Sent. d. 21, Doubt 3, resp., p. 387. The *knowledge of union* is explained in the exposition of the second opinion, just mentioned above, in III. Sent. d. 14, a. 1, q. 1, p. 297.

[49] III. Sent. d. 14, a. 1, q. 1, in reply to n. 2, p. 298.

[50] Page 329.

[*lumen aeternum*], St. Bonaventure is not establishing another created medium between Christ's Soul or the created wisdom by which it sees God and the Eternal Word, but rather wishes to signify the Divine act effecting such a wisdom in the Soul of Christ; that is the tending of God, who is Light [*Lux*], unto the object to be illumined, Christ's Soul.

That Christ's Soul has this open vision of God by a created wisdom, St. Bonaventure also affirms in his Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi, q. 5, in his response to the Question, "Whether the Soul of Christ was wise only by created wisdom, or also by uncreated Wisdom?", confirming this teaching with a citation from St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, Bk. IX, ch. 7, n. 12.[51]

## 11. The Material Cause of Christ's Enjoyment of the Beatific Vision: Christ's Knowledge

Next, in III. Sent., d. 14, a. 1, q. 2, St. Bonaventure begins his exposition of the exploration of the nature of Christ's knowledge had through this created wisdom generated by this beatific vision, by explaining the common sentence of the Scholastics, that it is not a knowledge of comprehension, yet it is a knowledge of the Whole, Which is God:

> And on this account there is a third, more common, more probable and more certain manner (of speaking), that neither the Soul of Christ nor any creature can comprehend the immensity of the uncreated Word or of God Himself, and yet it does cognize (Him) *whole*. — And these two can stand together, nay it is necessary to posit (them both), though it is difficult for our intellect to grasp. For if, on the one hand, we posit God (to be) *simple*, nay because it is necessary so to believe and posit; if He is cognized, then He is not cognized according to a part and a part, but *whole*. *Again*, if we posit God (to be) *immense*, because this we believe and confess, it is necessary to posit, that He is never comprehended *totally* by a finite intellect; and thus God is cognized *whole* by any creature whatsoever cognizing Him, but yet not *totally*.[52]

And he gives this explanation:

> But if there be asked, in what manner that could be understood; it must be said that it is (a thing) most difficult to understand, because in creatures there is found more of a dissimilitude than of a similitude. — However, let us understand, for the sake of example, that (there is) some eye, the sight [*aspectus*] of which is not entirely clear; and let us understand that (there is) some small white (object), yet intense in (its) luminosity and clarity of color; that eye will see that white (object) *whole*, yet does not comprehend the eminence of its whiteness; thus must it be understood, in its own manner, in the proposed. But here there is no small measure of dissimilitude, because in that white (object) the *quality* (of its luminosity) differs from the *clarity* (of its color), but in God it is entirely the Same. — And for that reason it was customary to posit another example in the

[51] *Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae*, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), 1891, tom. V, "De Scientia Christi", q. 5, in the Response p. 29-30.

[52] Response, 3rd paragraph, p. 300. Cf. Also Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae, ibid., q. 6, pp. 34-35.

> point, which by reason of its simplicity is touched [*attingitur*] *whole* by one line, yet is not comprehended (by it), because it can terminate infinite lines. But neither still is this similar, because in a point one (thing) is the *virtue*, another the *essence*; not so is it in God, in Whom it is entirely the Same. — And for that reason a third example must be posited in the spiritual substance, which is the image of God. because it is *whole* in one part of the body, and yet in that (part) *it is not delimited* [*non definitur*], because by reason of its simplicity it is thus *whole in it*, that it is *whole outside of it* in another part; thus too God (is) whole *in* one creature and whole *outside of* (it). Through this manner, too, it is necessary [*oportet*] to understand (the matter) about an *intellective power* [*potentiam intellectivam*]. — But this is better understood by reasoning than by the supposition of examples. For if one sees, that in God the *Simplicity* is not opposed to the *Infinity*, he can see, in what manner God can be cognized *whole*, and yet *not be comprehended*.[53]

In q. 3, the Seraphic Doctor rebuts the error, which holds that only God's energies and not God Himself can be seen in beatific vision, which error would be taken up by Gregory of Palmas and become the common opinion among the Greek Orthodox:

> And for that reason there were other more modern (authors), who said, that the Eternal Light cannot be looked at [*aspicere*] in the *Fount* of its clarity, but in certain *condescensions* and theophanies, and this on account of the improportionability of the eye (of our mind) to that Most High Light [*summam lucem*], Which would rather oppress by Its Immensity, than delight the eye of the creature, which holds itself to It, just as the eye of an owl [*oculum noctuae*] (to the light of the Sun); and for that reason it was necessary [*oportuit*], that God completely temper [*contemperaret*] Himself to the very soul, just as the Sun is completely tempered to the eye by means of a cloud. — But this manner of speaking deviates no less from the truth than the preceding one. On which account even Master Hugo (of Saint Victor) reproved it, On the Angelic Hierarchy (Bk. II, ch. 1, in fine): « Why is it », he said, « that God is seen by theophanies and outside of them He is not seen, except that He is never truly seen? For if an image alone is always seen, the truth is never seen. Therefore, let them take away their fantasies, by which they strive to becloud [*obtenebrare*] the Light [*lumen*] of our minds, and let them not separate [*intersepiant*] our God from us by the phantoms of their own exclusions [*simulacris exterminationum*]; because, just as neither can anything satiate us besides Him, so neither can anything cause us to stand still on the way to Him [*sistere usque ad ipsum*] ».[54]

And he concludes, affirming the Catholic sentence:

> Christ's Most Blessed Soul and the other blessed souls see the very Fount of Light [*luminis fontem*], in which they are refected, rested, delighted and in a

[53] Ibid., p. 300-301. Following this citation, the Seraphic Doctor distinguishes in the term "infinity", to explain more precisely what he means here.

[54] Page 304.

> certain manner absorbed by the Clarity of that Light, so that God is seen completely by them on all sides and is also seen in them; and this is true most of all in the Soul of Christ.[55]

## 12. The Contents of Christ's Beatific Vision: What Christ knows via this Vision

Now, let us examine what particular knowledge Christ the Man has via or by means of this created wisdom in this open vision of the Word.

First, St. Bonaventure establishes that things, other than God, are known in this vision, by applying the general principle that God is the ratio cognoscendi for all things, in III. Sent. d. 14, a. 2, q. 1, in the Response, where he says:

> For an understanding of the aforesaid it must be noted, that a *habit* of cognition has (an ability) to be numbered under the power of the *reason for cognizing* [*penes rationem cognoscendi*] (Cf. Aristotle, Ethics, Bk. VI, ch. 3 ff.). Therefore, since the Eternal Word is the most sufficient *Reason for cognizing* all (things) other than Itself — which is clear, because by Its very Self It cognizes all (things) — for this, that someone cognize things in the Word, it is not necessary [*non oportet*] that there be in him a *twin* cognition of the Word Itself and of the very thing cognized; "*twin*" [*geminam*], I say, as much as regards the *habit* of cognizing, on account of this, that (Christ's Soul) having the deiformity of glory, through which it cognizes the Word Itself, has whence to be assimilated to the Word Itself, Which is the perfect *Reason for cognizing* all other (things), and thus, in cognizing the Word, it has the habit, whereby it can cognize other (things), such that that habit, insofar as it is said to be "of the Word" and "of (things) other than the Word", does not differ except by a comparison alone. — For through the same (that), on account of which the very Eternal Word is in Itself *Light* and *Truth*, It is *Exemplar* of other things; and for that reason, he who has whence to be conformed to the Most High *Truth* Itself, has whence to be conformed to the *Reason for cognizing* all (things). Therefore, since the Eternal Word is the Reason for cognizing Itself and others through the same; for that reason I say, that Christ's Soul by the same habit, by which it cognizes the Word Itself, it cognizes things in the Word, with a difference existing alone as much as regards the comparison or respect.[56]

Second, he teaches that Christ as Man cognizes actually and habitually all that pertains to the knowledge of glory, but only actually and not habitually of all which does not pertain to the knowledge of glory, and this in the Response to the following, q. 2:

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[55] Ibid.; cf. the paragraph following this citation, in which St. Bonaventure expounds the differing expressions of Sacrd Scripture on this matter. Cf. also, the reply to n. 6, wherein the Seraphic Doctor explains a length how a created intellect is acted upon by the Eternal Light and thus stretches forward to an intuition or cognition, which however, is more a passion than an action, since nothing can act upon the Eternal Light Itself.

[56] Page 308.

> For an understanding of the aforesaid it must be noted, that Christ's Blessed Soul has the cognition of some (things), which are *essential to glory*, and of some, which do *not concern the essence of glory*. — If, therefore, we speak of the cognition of those which are essential to glory, I say, that Christ's Soul cognizes in act all which it cognizes in habit, because glory is a habit in act. Wherefore, just as His Soul cannot not be glorious, in the same manner it is impossible, that in Him the actual consideration of those (things), which are of the essence of glory, be interrupted. — But if we speak of the cognition of those (things) which are *not essential to glory*, in this manner it is not necessary, that all which it cognizes in habit, it cognize in habit. — And the sign of this is, that God showed something new [*aliquid de novo*] to the Blessed existing in glory, that is to the holy Angels. And for that reason the considering of something now, which was not previously considered, is not repugnant to the *state of glory*. — Nor is it even repugnant to the *perfection* of a creature, since that a creature be perfected, this is that its capacity be fulfilled; but a creature is capable of more according to an habitual cognition than according to an actual consideration; just as was shown in opposing. And for that reason not only in the Angels, but also in Christ's Soul this is true, that it cognizes more in habit, than it considers in act; and for that reason it must be conceded, that it does not consider in act all, which it has in habit, as much as regards those which do not concern the substance of glory. — And the reasons, which are for this side, are to be conceded.[57]

Third, he affirms that Christ's Soul cognizes habitually all which the Word cognizes, but does not cognize actually all which the Word cognizes, and this in the Response to q. 3, likening this habit of cognizing as a virtual capacity to see all things:

> And on this account there is a third manner of distinguishing, that something happens to be cognized by a *habitual* cognition and by an *actual* cognition, or by a cognition, which is as a *knowledge* [*scientia*], and by a cognition, which is as a *considering* [*considerare*]. If, therefore, we speak of "cognition" as much as regards the act of a *consideration*, thus it must be said, that Christ's Soul never cognizes as much, as the Word Itself cognizes. For through no glory can a creature be so raised up [*sublevari*], that it judge *at once* and *in act* of (things) infinite, since this belongs to an infinite virtue. But if we speak of a *habitual* cognition, thus it can be conceded, that it knows all which the Word united to it knows. — And this is clear thus: because, since Christ's Soul cognizes the Word Itself by a habit so perfectly glorious, that it cannot cognize It more perfectly; and (since) the Eternal Word Itself has a Will prompt to reveal to that Soul all which glitters in Itself, and (since) nothing glitters in It, which is not bound to be cognized by Christ's Soul: Christ's Soul has something, by which it is easy to cognize all which the Word cognizes. And the sign of this is, that for this, that it cognize something, which the Word cognizes, whatever that be, it is not necessary [*non oportet*], that there be given to it a new *habit* of cognizing, but all that it wants, it can read in It.[58]

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[57] Response to the following, q. 2, Page 311.

[58] Page 314.

Which virtual capacity he calls, a Mirror:

> If, again, you ask, whether that infinity of respects comes about the habit of cognition of Christ's Soul; I say, that it comes from the *Will* of the Mirror united to it, which has a prompt will to disclose [*propalandi*][7] all, which glitters in Itself; but It does not do this to any other soul. And for that reason it can and ought to be conceded concerning the Soul of Christ alone, that it is omniscient as much as regards (its) *habitual* cognition.[59]

Which is, thus, not properly infinite.[60]

### 13. The Soteriologic Purpose or Final Cause of Christ's Beatific Vision

Having considered the nature, causes and contents of Christ the Man's open vision of the Word, let us now take up the consideration of the soteriological purpose or motives upon which St. Bonaventure founds his doctrine.

First, the Seraphic Doctor holds that ignorance in Christ would have not been fitting to His Dignity as Mediator, and this in III. Sent. d. 15, a. 2, q. 1, in the Response:

> It must be said, that, just as Master (Peter) says in the text, Christ did not have the defect of ignorance. — And the reason for this is: that *it was* neither *fitting* [*decebat*] for Him, nor *was it expedient* for us. *It was* not *fitting*, because His Soul ought to have been deiform, and through this, filled with the light of wisdom and with the rectitude of justice; but ignorance is a privation of knowledge and can be a way unto error and to turn aside from the rectitude of justice, and through this it did not suit [*competebat*] Christ.[61]

Second, the Seraphic Doctor holds that ignorance in Christ would have not been expedient for our salvation:

> For us too *it was* not *expedient*, whom He had come to redeem and direct. For if He had had the defect of ignorance, He would not have known how to redeem us; He also would not have known how to direct (us), also because, *if a blind (man) proffer the lead* [*ducatum praebeat*] *to a blind (man), both fall into the ditch* (Mt. 15:14).[62]

This approach of St. Bonaventure is founded in his doctrine concerning the *reason for the Incarnation*, which he expounds at length in III. d. 1, a. 2, q. 2, discussing the various opinions among theologians prior to himself; wherein he sides with the more common one, which states:

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[59] Ibid., middle of next paragraph.

[60] Ibid., following paragraph. See also, *Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae*, ibid., q. 7, pp. 39-40.

[61] III. Sent. d. 15, a. 2, q. 1, in the Response, Page 337.

[62] Loc. cit., second half of same paragraph. Cf. III. d. 13, a. 1, q. 3, in reply to n. 5, p. 283.

> And the reason for this is, that the Incarnation of God belongs to a superexceeding consideration of worthiness [*superexcedentis dignationis*]; and for that reason, since there is in it a certain excess, the Mystery of the Incarnation would not have been introduced, unless there had preceded the opposite excess to be corrected and restored through it. Wherefore if God *had not lost His own sheep*, He would not have descended from Heaven to Earth.[63]

And hence, according to this principle, that the Incarnation was introduced to correct the opposite excess; the effect of man's fall being the loss of the possibility of ever seeing God face-to-face,[64] requires, that in the Incarnation, the Man assumed see God face-to-face prior to redeeming the world. This is confirmed by St. Bonaventure's teaching that the predestination of Christ the Man, is the exemplary cause of the predestination of all the elect:

> But if we speak of an "exemplar" in the *second* manner, thus Christ's predestination is the Exemplar of our predestination, the "Exemplar", I say, directive not in respect of the Most High Craftsman, but in respect of us, both in (things) to be believed and in (things) to be waited for [*exspectandis*] and even in (things) to be worked. For then the *grace* of God is rightly in us, when we become conform with Christ; and such too are our *bodies* going to be through grace, as Christ showed by His own Resurrection, according to which the Saints say; and we ourselves, if we wish to arrive at the final terminus of predestination, have necessarily to gaze *upon the Author and Consummator of (our) Faith* (Heb. 12:2, who *gave (us) an example, so that according to the manner which He worked, we too might work* (John 13:15). Indeed, according to which manner (St.) Peter says in the second (chapter of his) First (Letter), *Christ suffered on our behalf, leaving an example for you* (1 Pt. 2:21). And to this extent [*pro tanto*] (St.) Augustine says, that He Himself is « the very brightest Light of our predestination », as if God is saying to each one of us: *Look and work according to the exemplar, which I have showed thee on the mountain* (Exodus 25:40), this (exemplar) is in Christ, of Whom all those preparations [*apparamenta*] of the Old Testament were signs. — And in this sense it can be conceded, that Christ's predestination is the exemplary form of our predestination.[65]

Christ the Man being predestined to be the exemplar of the Elect, requires, thus, that He be such ab initio, so that from His very Conception, He be upon the mountain top of all perfection. Or, as the Seraphic Doctor says:

> because Christ cognizes as perfectly, as He ever was able to grasp, but the other Saints as perfectly, as they were disposed through the merits of grace.[66]

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[63] Page 24, second paragraph.

[64] Cf. II. Sent. d. 32, a. 3, q. 1.

[65] III. d. 11, a. 1, q. 2, in the Response, second paragraph of p. 246.

[66] III. d. 14, a. 1, q. 2, in reply to n. 6, middle of the paragraph, p. 302.

## 14. The Compatibility of Christ's Beatific Vision with His Threefold State

Now, let us return to the objection of many moderns, concerning the problem they see in affirming Christ's enjoyment of the Beatific Vision with Christ the Mediator's necessity of being capable of merit. The implicit minor being, that one cannot merit or at least cannot merit fully, if when suffering, he enjoys the Beatific Vision. The Seraphic Doctor's position responds to this by enunciating precisely the Christ's dignity as Mediator, and He participated at once in each of the three states of men, as innocent wayfarer (Adam & Eve), as punished wayfarer and comprehensor (the Blessed in Heaven), or as the Scholastics say, how He was simul viator et comprehensor,[67]

First, the Seraphic Doctor affirms the Catholic sentence, that Christ is the perfect Mediator and, hence, the perfect wayfarer and comprehensor, and this in III. Sent. d. 2, a. 2, q. 2, at the end of the Response:

> And for that reason there is a third manner of speaking, the true and Catholic one, that Christ assumed a true body and a true soul with its vegetable, sensible and rational powers. — And the reason for this is, that Christ assumed a human nature, to be the *Mediator* of God and men. And because (He was) a *perfect mediator*, for that reason (He had to be) perfect God and perfect man; and because He is not a *perfect man*, unless He has a body with all (its) members and a soul with all (its) powers: for that reason He assumed all these. *Again*, because He was a perfect *mediator*, for that reason He was a perfect *comprehensor* and a perfect *wayfarer* [*viator*], perfect in *contemplation* and perfect in *action*, perfect in *working* [*operatione*] and perfect in *suffering* [*passione*]. And there follows after all these, that He had the true substance of a soul.[68]

This responds to the third objection of Von Balthasar, that the Son's *kenosis* in Christ requires some amount of ignorance. An absolute *kenosis* might include ignorance, but the Son's *kenosis* is to establish Him in Christ as the perfect mediator, and hence ignorance is not necessary. It also replies to his second objection, that Christ's knowledge should have only pertained to what is necessary to accomplish His Divine Mission; because Christ was endowed not only with grace to accomplish His Divine Mission on Earth, but also to be the Perfect Mediator, from the instant of His Conception and for all eternity.

Second, to the objection advanced in III. Sent. d. 12, a. 2, q. 1, that Christ's state as a wayfarer required Him to have the ability to sin, St. Bonaventure replies by accepting as his own the position of St. Severinus Boethius, regarding Christ's participation in each state, the state of innocence, punishment, and comprehensor, in reply to n. 4:

> To that which is objected, that Christ was in the state of a wayfarer; it must be said, that even if He was in the state of a wayfarer, yet not *entirely*; for He had something of the state of a comprehensor. On which account (St. Severinus)

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[67] Bonaventure uses this expression in two places in his *Commentaria*, in III. Sent. d. 14, a. 3, q. 1, in the 5th argument of the fundament (i. e. in favor of the position he takes), and in d. 26, in the objection of Doubt 5, p. 585,

[68] Page 47.

> Boethius says, « that Christ assumed something from every state: on the one hand from the state *before* (original) sin He assumed the innocence, from the state *after* (original) sin He assumed the punishment, from the state of a *comprehensor* the impossibility of sinning » (cf. On the One Person in the Two Natures, ch. 8). Therefore, because Christ was not a pure wayfarer; for that reason it does not follow, that He could not sin, just as other wayfarers also can.[69]

And he specifies this more fully, in regard to which part of the Soul participated in which state of man, in d. 13, a. 1, q. 3, in reply to n. 2, saying:

> To that which is objected, that Christ was in the state of a wayfarer; it must be said, that Christ was at once in the state of a *wayfarer* and of a *comprehensor*, but in the state of a *comprehensor* according to the superior part (of the intellect), in the state of a *wayfarer* according to the inferior part and according to the flesh. And since grace according to its essence and complement respects the superior part and the mind; hence it is, that Christ had rather a perfect grace than a diminished one, because the grace respected more the perfect state.[70]

And hence, in accord with the Catholic sentence, St. Bonaventure denies that Christ had faith or hope, since in His enjoyment of the Beatific Vision He had all the perfection that these two theological virtues imply without any of the imperfection that they signify:

> To that, therefore, which is objected first, that He did not have faith and hope; it must be said, that faith and hope have an imperfection joined to them, they also have, nevertheless, something of perfection; and according to the reckoning of that which they have of *imperfection*, they run counter [*obviant*] a fullness more than they work for a fullness — on which account they are emptied out in glory — but according to the reckoning of that which is of *perfection* in them, if there is a finding of anything (of that), they have (an ability) to be in Christ. For that reason the absence of those virtues attests more to a fullness than to a diminution.[71]

This solution replies to Von Balthasar's first objection, that in Christ there must be a place for faith.

Finally, the Seraphic Doctor supports this position with the necessity consequent to the Hypostatic Union, that the Soul be perfectly disposed to this Union:

> To that which is objected, that (His) Body had a defect of fullness in age; it must be said, that it is not similar, because a defect of *age* in body worked for (His) humiliation and (for) the showing of (its) true nature, and thus for a confirmation of the Faith, but a defect of *grace* in (His) Soul would have profited us in nothing nor would it be fitting for God; and for that reason it is not

[69] Page 267.

[70] Page 282.

[71] Ibid., in reply to n. 1.

> similar. *Moreover*, there is another reason: because the disposition for Union holds itself on the part of the *Soul*, not on the part of the *Flesh*, just as was shown before (d. 2, a. 3, q. 1); for that reason it was necessary [*oportuit*] that the Soul be perfect rather than the Flesh.[72]

### 15. The consequent Magisterial Authority of Christ the Man

From St. Bonaventure's affirmation that the fullness of grace (which includes the open vision of God), in Christ the Man was necessary on account of His dignity as Mediator and His office as our Director to salvation,[73] there follows, that Christ the Man, as Teacher, is the One Teacher of all mankind, since as the Teacher enjoying the open vision of God, and habitually knowing as Man all that He actually knows as God, His authority is the one most certain, perfect, absolute and supreme. Though St. Bonaventure does not draw out this conclusion in his *Commentaria*, in Books I, II, or III,[74] he does fully develop it in his Sermon on "Christ, the One Teacher of All" — which he wrote about 2 years after completing his *Commentaria*, and which on account of it excellence and clarity, deserves to be quoted at length, to show the theological conclusion which St. Bonaventure draws from his doctrine concerning Christ's enjoyment of the Beatific Vision. Therein, the Seraphic Doctor makes clear that Christ's role as director of souls, is that of Teacher [*magister*], and hence He is the One Master of All:

> It is also clear, who be *the Author* and *the Teacher*: because Christ, who is the Director and Helper of our intelligence not only *generally*, as in all works of nature, nor so *specially*, as in the works of grace and meritorious virtue, but in a certain *middle* manner between both. . . .
>
> Therefore, He as the principal Master is principally *to be honored, to be heard, to be questioned*. — For indeed He is principally *to be honored*, as there is attributed to him *the dignity of the Magisterium*, Matthew, chapter 23 (v. 8): *Do not be called Rabbi; for one is your Master, but all you are brothers*. Moreover, He wanted to reserve the dignity of the Magisterium to Himself, according to that (verse) in John, chapter 13 (v. 13): *You call me, Master and Lord; and well you say it, for indeed I am*. — He is to be honored, moreover, not only *with words* [*vocaliter*] in speech, but also *really* in imitation; on account of which there is said further on (v. 14): *If I, therefore, wash your feet* etc.; because, as is said in Luke, chapter 14 (v. 27): *who follows not after Me cannot be My disciple.*[75]

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[72] Ibid., in reply to n. 5, p. 283.

[73] Cf. above the Soteriological Reason for Christ's Beatific Vision.

[74] Cf. however, his Prologue to Book III, p. 2, 5th paragraph, where he says of God: He made known to us the ways of life, when He distributed to us faith and hope and charity and the gifts of the graces, and adjoined the commandments, in which Christ Himself walked, and in which there consists the way of life, along which Christ *taught* us to walk.

[75] Cf. Bonaventure's Sermon, "Christus unus omnim Magister", *Opera Omnia S. Bonavenurae*, tom. V, 1891, pp. 567-574, throughout; the citations, however, is from n. 16, 20, 21 and 22, respectively. English translation is my own, published at http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/opera/bon05567.html.

He is also principally *to be heard* through the humility of faith, according to that (verse) of Isaiah, chapter 50 (v. 4): *The Lord gave me a learned tongue, that I may know how to support him who is wearied by the word: He raised in the morning, in the morning He raised my ear, that I may hear Him as my Master*. Twice it says *He raised*, because it is not sufficient, that our ear be raised *to understand (Him)*, unless it also be raised to *obey (Him)*. On account of which there is said in Matthew, chapter 13 (v. 43): *Let him who has ears to hear, hear!* For Christ teaches us not only by word, but also by example; and for that reason one is not a perfect hearer unless he accommodate his *understanding* to His words and his obedience to His *deeds*; on account of which (there is said) in Luke, chapter 6 (v. 40): *He will be perfect, if he be just as His Master*.

## 16. Conclusion

St. Bonaventure's doctrine concerning the Beatific Vision had by Christ's Soul manifests at once the eminent clarity of his Christology, tightly packed within the necessities consequent to the Incarnation. The excesses consequent to mankind's fall, require an excess of God's Mercy; thus, the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. The Humanity to-be-assumed must, therefore, enjoy the most perfect fullness of grace, as befits the dignity of Christ as the Head of the Church, and as is required by for the utility of man's salvation, who needs One to direct him back to God. The singular grace of Union, by which the Soul of Christ is disposed most eminently toward its Hypostatic Union with the Eternal Word, thus must be understood to include this grace of beatific vision, so that in the superior part of the Intellect of Christ's Soul, He enjoy the highest created wisdom, and this by the open vision of God, in which God is cognized by an Divine effect, or illumination, that is, the lumen aeternum. This establishes, Christ the Man as the perfect and supreme teacher of All, according to authority, certitude, and fullness of His magisterium. For He sees God wholly, and God as the very Fount of Light; He knows in this vision all habitually which the Word knows actually; and knows in virtue of this vision of the Word, all, since the Word is the *reason for cognizing all things*; He knows these clearly and whensoever He wills to know them, because the Eternal Word discloses nothing to His human intellect and is disposed to reveal all. Thus, He is the eminent Master of Truth, even according to His Human Nature.

The doctrine of the Seraphic Doctor presented here indicates the necessity of affirming in our own day, that Christ as Man beheld the beatific vision from the first moment of His Conception; because this singular grace of the God-Man at once is the foundation of the authority and certitude of all His teaching; without which certitude and authority, all that is held or believed regarding His Person is put in doubt. It is no wonder then, that in an age in which the identity and authority of that Person and the authority of His Teaching is put in doubt, whether in Himself or in His Church, that the denial of the common sentence held for more than 900 years, is found to be both convenient and popular among contemporary thinkers.

The clarity and reasons marshaled by St. Bonaventure show clearly why the affirmation of the Eternal Word's *kenosis* in Christ the Man *does not require* the denial of His enjoyment of the Beatific Vision as Man, but rather requires the affirmation of the same, if His dignity as Mediator, Head of the Church, and Exemplar of the Elect is to be affirmed.

In this wise, the Seraphic Doctor hands down a most eminent and inspiring Christology, which has perennial value for the Magisterium of the Church and the faith and hope of each

believer, providing thus an eternally unshakable foundation for the Catholic Church's teaching and for the Faith She transmits from age to age to every believer.

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