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Love’s Rest: Thomas Aquinas and the Psychology of Joy

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Give me, O Lord my God,
that life without death
and that joy without sorrow
where there is
the greatest freedom,
unconfined security,
secure tranquility
delightful happiness,
happy eternity,
eternal blessedness,
the vision of truth,
and praise, O God. Amen.

--from St. Thomas Aquinas, Qua Ad Caelum Adspirat (For the Attainment of Heaven)¹

One of the pleasures of working as a psychiatrist at the Durham VA Medical Center, just across the street from Duke University Hospital, has been the opportunity to care for a group of veteran outpatients, most of whom I have now known for 5-10 years. Due to the way that the VA assigns caseloads and their far-flung geographic spread (they come from all over central and eastern North Carolina, sometimes driving as much as 3 hours to see me), I see each of them at most a few times per year. But these men and women have taught me much about what it means to survive in a challenging and threatening world. They are, for the most part, a hardscrabble bunch. Most of them live from paycheck to paycheck (or disability check to disability check), navigating barely-adequate housing, violent urban neighborhoods, and rural poverty. Cumbered by chronic mental illnesses, the scars of childhood and wartime trauma, substance abuse, and the tentacles of racism and class discrimination, many of them approach life not as an oyster to be cracked but as a minefield full of danger. And yet they live, and even find joy.

In the past several weeks, thinking of the topic of this consultation, I’ve been occasionally asking patients, “Where do you find joy?” It has been a rewarding exercise. Almost everyone has taken a few seconds to reply, with no ready-made answers. But the answers, once given, have been thoughtful and diverse. One grizzled Vietnam combat veteran with severe PTSD, for whom each day is a struggle, said only half-jokingly that joy for him would be to find himself on a deserted Pacific island with a healthy cannabis bush. But for others, this question was a gateway to deep and often-hidden wellsprings of life. One man, deeply traumatized by a complicated betrayal when he was in the military, initially stated, “I don’t look for joy; I live in a survival mode” – but then spoke movingly of times in his past work as a jewelry-maker when he would be overcome by watching someone break into tears upon seeing a beautiful piece he had crafted. Another man, isolated in his rural community with few close relationships and frequent adversarial contact with the local sheriff’s department, stated at first that “I don’t look for joy; I look for peace” – but then tenderly described

his dog extending her paw to him as he left the house that morning, to which he replied “I love you, too.” Yet another, a brain-injured veteran whose marriage and life savings have both been threatened by his online pornography use, spoke of his joy when he was able to spend time with his granddaughter (and was clear that nothing involving a computer brought him joy).

This small, uncontrolled, ad hoc, anecdotal study suggests that “joy” is a concept capable of stopping people in their tracks and inviting them to reflect on the most meaningful and life-giving aspects of their existence. Within the contemporary psychological literature, when it is mentioned at all, joy is nearly always categorized as an emotion, often with little distinction between joy and other positive affective or emotional states. Increasingly, though, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other investigators, particularly those who employ more narrative or qualitative methods in their work, are recognizing that “joy” names a set of complex, particular emotional responses that differ from ordinary happiness or pleasure, and that tap deeply into the core of human flourishing. George Valliant, for example, argues that joy is primarily an emotion of social bonding that reinforces reunion (e.g., of a child to her mother), play, and communal activity (including communal worship). Unlike pleasure (which results from drive reduction) and mastery (which emerges from cognitive experience and refers to one’s own achievement), joy draws humans to each other and to our common activities and purposes. Joy is an important part of Barbara Fredrickson’s broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, which holds that positive emotions serve both to enhance psychological resilience and to cultivate interpersonal relationships and social networks by which future challenges are weathered. In a dated but nuanced study of the phenomenology of joy, Chris Meadows describes first-person, subjective experiences of joy among 333 university students in the early 1970s and distinguishes six contrasting types of joy: excited joy (associated with vitality, boundless energy, and potency) and serene joy (associated with quiet, calm, and pervasive feeling of harmony and unity), individuated joy (focused on self-potency or personal triumph) and the more prevalent affiliative joy (emerging in social contexts), and anticipatory and consummatory joy. Meadows proposes five intrinsic phenomenological dimensions of joy arising from his subjects’ descriptions. First, joy is characterized by harmony and unity resulting from a sense of personal integration, from acts of creating, from newfound insight, from meaningful resolution of conflict, from close relationship and/or sexual union, from a feeling of harmony with nature, or from reunion with a loved one. Second, joy is characterized by vitality, the feeling of aliveness, vigor, and potency. Third, joy is characterized by transcendence, experienced “when one senses or has the feeling that he is moving or has moved, soared, or passed beyond ordinary existence.” Fourth, joy is characterized by freedom manifested in play, in dance, in running and leaping, and by triumphant verbal expressions. Finally, joy is experienced by heightened perception and altered perceptions of time and color, when subjects described fuller and richer perceptual experiences. Drawing on this data and on the work of others, Meadows argues that joy is the first emotion to emerge in healthy human development, and defines joy as “the emotion which comes when one has grasped a good, or

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6 Meadows, A Psychological Perspective on Joy and Emotional Fulfillment, 114.
fulfilled a strong desire that is crucial to a person’s own flourishing, the by-product of fulfilling his or her deepest yearnings.”

The use of terms like “transcendence,” “unity,” and “freedom” suggests that work in the psychology of joy is never very distant from the theological, and indeed researchers like Meadows and Valliant engage psychology with theological concerns very much in mind (Meadows’ doctoral work was done at Princeton Theological Seminary under the direction of the eminent pastoral theologian Seward Hiltner). But it is notable that apart from the work of these researchers and a handful of others, specific psychological work on joy (by that name) is relatively sparse. The “positive psychology” movement is now 15 years old, but the *Journal of Positive Psychology* has published only one article with “joy” in its title. Though it is often mentioned in the context of positive emotions, joy plays little specific role in major texts of positive psychology and well-being. There are few other recent articles in the vast psychiatric and psychological literature that focus specifically on the experience of joy.

Why might this neglect of joy within psychiatry and psychology be occurring? Any answer must be speculative, and may be as simple as the fact that no one has yet built a research program around joy the way that others have done around the concepts of forgiveness or gratitude. But it is tempting to speculate also that this neglect may be in part attributable to the way that “joy” escapes efforts to domesticate or to reduce it to a “positive emotion” or, worse, to a neurophysiological process. Even when approached phenomenologically, joy pushes against the boundaries of narrative and subjectivity. Joy, after all, is not just the experience of feeling well, or at peace, or connected to someone else—though it may include all of these things. It is not just the experience of the fulfillment or satiation of desire, though it may indeed include that. Rather, like my veteran patients, humans generally use “joy” to name the fulfilment of a special kind of yearning, the yearning to be deeply whole and connected and grounded; to be called into deeper communion with what is genuinely true, and genuinely good, and genuinely beautiful; to be in right relation with the deepest good of the universe. But making sense of that yearning, and its fulfillment, requires not only psychological but also moral and theological vision—vision of who humans most deeply and truly are, and how humans find our deepest longings fulfilled, and how we flourish as individuals and in community. If this is the case, then it is clear that an adequate psychology of joy requires something like a *theology* of joy, and that a theology of joy could helpfully inform future psychological work on joy.

**Aquinas on Joy**

What would a theologically-informed psychology of joy (or, conversely, a psychologically-informed theology of joy) look like? I suggest that Thomas Aquinas provides one example within the Christian tradition of a thinker for whom theological and psychological vision are ultimately

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7 Ibid., xv.
inseparable, and whose theologically-informed articulation of human nature and human flourishing deeply informs his psychological treatment of joy and other “positive emotions.” Aquinas describes joy (gaudium) in the *Summa theologiae* in three distinct but related ways, each of which informs the others: as an affection (affectio) of the soul, closely linked with the emotion/passion of delectatio, delight or desire-satisfaction; as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, drawing on St. Paul’s list in Galatians 5:22-23; and as an effect within human beings of the theological virtue of charity. Rather than analyzing each of these approaches separately, I list here several themes of Aquinas’ understanding of joy, followed by three concluding comments about why Aquinas matters for this consultation on joy, human nature, and human destiny.

1. **Joy presupposes love, and corresponds to it.**

   For Aquinas, love is the root of human emotional life. Following Augustine, Aquinas affirms that all human emotions arise from love (amor) of some kind. To love something, or someone, is to see it (or him or her) as good for us, and to unite ourselves to it (or him or her) in intellect; Aquinas describes love as complacentia boni, taking one’s place with what is good. Love is a “uniting and binding force” (vis unitiva et concretiva) that draws the lover, if not into real union with the beloved, at least into affective union (unio affectiva) with him or her (or it). If the beloved is already present to the lover, this love manifests in the emotions of delight (delectatio) or joy, as the lover rests in the presence of the beloved. But if the beloved is absent or distant—a nearly constant reality in human life—then love gives rise to desire (concupiscentia), which draws the lover toward the beloved. If this quest to find the beloved is threatened, the lover may experience hope (spes) if union with the beloved still seems like a possibility, or despair (desperatio) if the beloved seems forever lost. But if the lover finds the beloved, desire gives way to delight and joy. Both delight and joy, for Aquinas, connote the soul’s rest in something or someone who is loved. When I visit New Haven, as lovely as it is, I will be separated from my wife and children in Durham, whom I love very much. I will miss them, which is to say also that I will long for reunion with them; and when that reunion eventually comes, God willing, all of us will find the occasion marked by joy. Practically, then—and relevant for this consultation—any psychological or theological inquiry into joy will eventually manifest in a simple question for anyone who seeks joy: whom, or what, do you love?

2. **Joy names a special kind of desire-fulfillment, corresponding to the nature of humans as rational animals.**

   Joy for Aquinas arises from rest in an attained good, in a real union with someone who, or something that, one loves. It is an emotion marked by desire-fulfillment. But joy, for Aquinas, does not arise from just any sort of fulfilled desire. The term that Aquinas uses most broadly to describe desire-fulfillment is not joy (gaudium) but delight or pleasure (delectatio), which arises whenever any desire is fulfilled, but most often connotes sensual and bodily desire-satisfaction (traces of this

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1 Aquinas typically refers to human emotions as passions (passiones), but some scholars point out that joy for Aquinas is not properly a passion but rather an affection, since Aquinas holds that joy emerges from the intellect and will and does not reflect a transmutation of the body, as all passions do; cf. Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of Summa Theologiae* Iα2ae 22-48 (New York: Cambridge, 2009), 35-38. Although this is an interesting technical question, I will not engage it here, and will instead primarily refer to Thomas’ concept of joy by the word “emotion,” which is foreign to Aquinas but which can equally apply to passions or affections as Thomas describes them.


3 *STh* IαIae q. 25 a. 2 *resp*.

4 *STh* IαIae q. 25 a. 2 *ad2*. 
sensual meaning of delectatio show up in our English words “delectable” and “delicious”). Delectatio is the emotion corresponding to a wide range of desire-fulfillment experiences: the satisfaction of a good meal, or a good wine; making love when this is deeply desired; the birth of a child; winning a race. All of these, for Aquinas, are good things, and they can indeed be occasions for joy, but the delight that arises from these good things is not necessarily joy. Aquinas recognizes, rightly, that delight/pleasure is experienced not only by humans but by the nonhuman animals, who can perceive when desire is fulfilled and find pleasure in that. But Aquinas reserves the term gaudium (joy) to describe a special kind of delight/pleasure not shared (in his view) with the nonhuman animals. Whereas animals desire only those things which are proper to their nature as animals (food, drink, safety, shelter, sex, etc.), humans additionally desire things that are proper to our nature as animals capable of ordering our lives in response to God’s good ordering of the creation—which is to say, our nature as rational animals, animals gifted with the ability to discern and to participate in the ratio by which God orders the world. Our nature as rational beings enables us to love people, and things, and even God, differently than we would if we were non-rational animals. We love them because they call us to a deeper understanding of who we are as beings before God, and enable us progressively to participate in God’s good ordering of the creation. And when we love people or things in a way consistent with our nature as rational beings, and attain them, we are filled with joy. “We take delight, Aquinas states, “both in those things which we desire naturally, when we get them, and in those things which we desire as a result of reason. But we do not speak of joy except when delight follows reason.”

We see, then, that joy for Aquinas is an affective marker of our deepest humanness; it arises not specifically when, as hungering and thirsting and desiring animals, our needs are temporarily satisfied, but rather when we achieve or attain union with something, or someone, who calls us more deeply into our nature as thinking, creating, loving, feeling beings capable by grace of loving God and the things of God, and of ordering our lives in God. Not that joy is only about “spiritual” or intellectual things: Aquinas makes clear that “whatever we desire naturally,” presumably including wine and sexual union and exercise, “can also be the object of reasoned desire and delight,” and therefore of joy. But if wine or sex or exercise bring us joy, it is not simply because they make us feel good (or less bad), but rather because they remind us of who we most deeply and truly are as rational, loving creatures, and facilitate that becoming.

3. Joy is not compatible with instrumental consumption.

Aquinas’ account of joy is closely linked conceptually, if not linguistically, with his account of enjoyment (fruitio). Aquinas quotes Augustine that “to enjoy is to adhere lovingly to something for its own sake” (frui est amore inhaerere alicui rei propter se ipsam). Like gaudium, fruitio “seems to have relation to love, or to the delight which one has in realizing the longed-for term, which is the end.” But key here is that unlike hedonic love, which looks simply for the pleasure of the lover, or instrumental love, which loves something only because it is a means to an end, the love of

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15 STb Ia1lae q. 31 a. 1 resp.
16 STb Ia1lae q. 91 a. 2.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 STb Ia1lae q. 11 a. 1 sed contra.
20 STb Ia1lae q. 11 a. 1 resp.
enjoyment seeks the beloved “for its own sake.” To enjoy something, for Aquinas as for Augustine, is not simply to use it instrumentally, but rather to delight in its (or his or her) intrinsic goodness as a creature. It is perhaps for this reason that Aquinas, following Aristotle, links joy with the exercise of justice21 and affirms that pleasure (delectatio) results when we delight in the actions of others and do good to others.22

4. Joy can be present even in the absence of the beloved.

Although joy always connotes rest in an attained good, Aquinas is clear that delight/pleasure (and, correlatively, joy) can arise and persist even when the beloved person or thing is not present in reality. “Pleasure,” he states, “is caused by the presence of suitable good, insofar as it is felt, or perceived, in any way,”23 and then names three ways by which the “suitable good” can be present. First, there is “actual union” (coniunctio secundum rem), when the beloved is really and fully present: in actual union the lover not only enjoys union with the beloved in intellect (apprehensive union) but the presence of the beloved himself or herself. But in the absence of the beloved, pleasure (and joy) can still arise in two ways. First, memory preserves a type of “union of likeness” (coniunctio secundum similitudinem) with the beloved, and this union brings pleasure. Second, hope combines this union of likeness, in which the beloved is present in the lover’s mind, with the expectation that the beloved might actually be found.24

This awareness of the role of hope and memory in maintaining joy in the absence of the beloved leads directly to Aquinas’ discussion of whether sadness (tristitia), the emotion that arises when a persistent evil is present and unavoidable, might give rise to pleasure/delight. Pleasure and sadness would seem to be incompatible, Aquinas states, but in fact sadness causes pleasure in two ways. First, when someone is presently sad—for example, grieving the death of a spouse—the sadness nonetheless calls to mind the beloved. The absence of the beloved gives rise to sadness, “and yet the mere thought of [the beloved] brings pleasure.”25 Second, when sorrow is not in present experience but rather in memory—on the fifth anniversary of the beloved’s death, for instance, when the hard work of grief is done and life, though changed, is again full of tempered but life-filled wonder—then this past sadness causes present pleasure, when one joys in having been delivered from the deepest pains of the past, surviving on.26 Aquinas returns to the question when he considers whether the joy effected by the theological virtue of charity (see below) is compatible with sorrow. He responds that although apprehension of God in Godself does not bring sorrow, we do indeed continue to find our joy mixed with sorrow in this life, “insofar as [one] grieves for that which hinders the participation of the divine good, either in us or our neighbor, whom we love as ourselves;”27 indeed, this sorrow may be the direct effect of charity.28

21 STh IaIIae q. 59 a. 5 resp.
22 STh IaIIae q. 32 aa. 5, 6.
23 STh IaIIae q. 32 a. 3 resp.
24 Ibid.
25 STh IaIIae q. 32 a. 4 resp.
26 Ibid.
27 STh IaIIae q. 28 a. 3 resp.
28 STh IaIIae q. 28 a. 1 resp., a. 3 ad1. It is notable, however, that although for Aquinas joy is compatible with sorrow, it is not compatible with acedia, the spiritual and psychological lethargy sometimes compared in our time to modern depression (a comparison that I find flawed). Following but modifying patristic tradition, Aquinas classifies acedia as a vice and a sin against charity, directly opposed to joy; whereas joy is love’s rest in God’s goodness, acedia is a form of sorrow that displays an inability of the soul to rest in God’s goodness, a joyless spiritual listlessness. Many in our time, including Kathleen Norris and Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, have suggested that acedia in our time shows up not as
Joy results from the work of God in us, and true joy anticipates and reflects our participation in God’s life.

Most of what I have presented about Aquinas’ account of joy to this point is taken from his discussion of the emotions (passions/affections) in the Prima Secunda of the Summa, and could stand in principle even were Aquinas not a specifically Christian thinker. But his most sustained engagement with joy in the Summa is found not in the “Treatise on the Passions” (IaIIae qq. 22-48) but rather in his account of joy as a fruit of the Holy Spirit and an effect of the theological virtue of charity. It is in these discussions that the depth and richness of Aquinas’ account of joy is most evident.

Following St. Paul and Christian tradition, Aquinas affirms joy as one of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), preceded by charity and succeeded by peace, patience, goodness, benignity, meekness, faithfulness, and modesty. “Fruit” (fructus) functions for Aquinas in two ways. On one hand, he states, we can consider the relationship of fruit to the tree that bore it, as effect to cause. In this view, the fruits of the Holy Spirit (including joy) proceed from humans through the power of the Holy Spirit in them. On the other hand, we can consider the relationship of fruit to the one enjoying it, “as the final object of his longing and the consummation of his delight” (sicut ultimum expectatum et delectans). In this view, the fruits of the Holy Spirit, including joy, are given to humans to enjoy because they point the way to God, the last and final end of human flourishing.

As a fruit of the Holy Spirit, joy occupies a particular place in the ecology of human flourishing in God. As with all human emotional life, joy presupposes love and corresponds to it—but here the love is God’s love (caritas), given to humans that humans might love God, and the things of God, in return. And because “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them” (1 John 4:16), and therefore charity is God’s presence in the life of the wayfarer, so therefore “the necessary result of charity is joy, because every lover rejoices at being united to the beloved.” This charity-born(e) joy, in turn, is perfected by peace and patience, which prevent the soul from being distracted by external disturbances and internal turmoil; and this divine joy manifests itself in right relationship with others and with a healthy orientation toward sensory pleasure.

For Aquinas, then, it is clear that true joy, the highest joy, results from God’s gracious activity. God loves us, and enables us to love God in return. In so doing, we are united to God, and God to us, and so are enabled by grace to experience the fullest and deepest joy, that which comes from resting in the One who is our last end and highest good. And although this God-given joy is always imperfect in this life, Christians look forward to the day when union with God will be consummated and joy will therefore be complete and perfect. Aquinas’ description of this consummation is worth quoting at length:

lethargy but as intense busyness. STb IaIIae q. 35; Rebeccia Konyndyk DeYoung, “Resistance to the Demands of Love: Aquinas on the Vice of Acedia,” The Thomist 68 (2004): 173-204.
29 STb IaIIae q. 11 a. 3 ad2.
30 Ibid., STb IaIIae q. 70 a. 1. Aquinas plays liberally with the relationship of the Latin words for enjoyment (fruitio) and fruit (fructus). Perhaps the word fruitio derives from the practice of fruit-gathering, he speculates—and if so, it is significant that the fruit of a tree is what the tree produces in the last place, and is sweet and satisfying. To enjoy something or someone, then, is not only to find him or her satisfying, but also to seek his or her end, the perfection of his or her nature; STb IaIIae q. 11 a. 1 resp.
31 STb IaIIae q. 70 a. 3 resp.
Joy is full, when there is nothing left to be desired. But as long as we are in this world, the movement of desire does not cease in us, because it still remains possible for us to approach nearer to God by grace . . . When once, however, perfect happiness [beatiudinem perfectam] has been attained, nothing will remain to be desired, because there will be full enjoyment of God [plena Dei fruitio], wherein [humans] will obtain whatever [they] had desired, even with regard to other goods . . . Hence desire will be at rest, not only our desire for God, but all our desires: so that the joy of the blessed is full to perfection—indeed over-full, since they will obtain more than they were capable of desiring: for ‘neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him’ (1 Cor 2:9).

Joy, Human Nature and Human Destiny: What Does Aquinas Offer to My Patients, and To This Consultation?

How might Aquinas’ Aristotelian, Augustinian, and specifically Christian account of joy inform our conversations about joy, human nature, and human destiny—or the lives of my patients in Durham? I briefly suggest three possibilities.

First, Aquinas’ work affirms and supports what is already evident in the limited psychological scholarship on joy and in the role of the term “joy” in ordinary language—namely that joy, though linked closely to pleasure and happiness, is somehow different from them also. In a world dominated by instrumental and technical rationality, performance metrics, and glorification of production rather than creation, or conversely in a world where many struggle simply to survive, it would be no surprise for Aquinas—and should be no surprise for us—that the simple question, “Where you find joy?” would be met with pregnant silence. In the psychiatry residency program within which I am a core faculty member, we speak a great deal of “morale” and “job satisfaction” and “work-life balance,” but we do not speak much of “joy.” This is, I suspect, because the language of joy beckons us out of our ordinary modes of self-monitoring (“How am I feeling right now? Do I like my present situation, or do I wish it were different?”) into deeper and less-charted waters that connect to something deeper, something more soulful, about who we are. In this way Meadows’ description of joy as “the emotion which comes when one has grasped a good, or fulfilled a strong desire that is crucial to a person’s own flourishing, the by-product of fulfilling his or her deepest yearnings,” seems apt.

But what are these “deepest yearnings” that evoke joy when they are fulfilled? How do we account for them? It is here that Aquinas’ account provides an answer: that joy possible because of the kind of animals that we are. For Aquinas, humans are not animals capable only of basic life functions, limited goal pursuit, and sensory desire gratification; we are, rather, animals who are complex psychological beings, capable by grace of ordering our individual and common life in response to God’s ordering of the creation. Like an octave in a well-tuned stringed instrument,

32 STh IIaIIae q. 28 a. 3 resp.
33 Meadows, A Psychological Perspective on Joy and Emotional Fulfillment, xv.
34 Whether other animals with complex psychological lives are capable of joy is an interesting question, and probably a matter of how broadly the concept of “joy” is construed. That many mammalian species are capable of something like joy, evident in play and playfulness and in complex forms of emotional communication and interaction, seems clear. But none, as far as we know, are capable of reflecting on that experience as joy; cf. Alasdair MacIntyre, Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues (Chicago: Open Court, 1999).
true joy for Aquinas is the harmonious resonance that emerges when the form and structure of human agency and human interior life align with God’s ratio. To us and to my patients, Aquinas says: you are not just a bundle of neurotransmitters to be subjected to technological modification, nor just hedonic animals looking to avoid pain and maximize pleasure in the most efficient way possible. Attend to your joy; cultivate joy; for there, if your desires are rightly ordered, you will find the truth of yourselves: that you are made for something more, something that much of our imagination-constricted, instrumentally-oriented modern culture cannot name because it lacks the vision necessary to see it.

Finally, Aquinas offers a specifically Christian way to understand joy, and would insist that any non-theological account of joy is at best incomplete. The account of joy as the pursuit of “something more” as given in the previous paragraph is consistent with Aquinas’ thought, but could in principle function within any theistic tradition or even in a non-theistic context, provided that some account of cosmic moral order can be provided. Aquinas was a willing and mostly generous interlocutor with Jewish and Muslim scholars of his time, liberally quoting from the philosophical works of Maimonides, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and others, and would likely affirm that all humans, regardless of religious affiliation, can participate in joy. His account of joy in the Summa theologiae is not framed as an argument for Christian exclusivism, nor is it a commentary on how God might be at work among people who have not received Christian baptism. But nonetheless, Aquinas affirms that the highest joy, the joy into which humans are called in grace, is the joy of the wayfarer’s rest in the One who is the satisfaction of all desire and the quieting of all longing. God created humans to be God’s image-bearers, and when human nature was wounded by sin, God sent God’s Son as the way (via) back to God, and invites humans to participate, through the sacraments and the ordering of our actions and affections, in the Son’s life. In the life of the Son we are carried, as wayfarers, into God’s glory and rest. Human nature, in this account of Aquinas, is inseparable from human destiny; and the destiny of the graced wayfarer is joy.