

# WAS REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE A PERSONALIST?

A Rapprochement Between the Individual-Person Distinction and the Primacy of the Common Good Contra Maritain's Personalism<sup>1</sup>

Taylor Patrick O'Neill  
Assistant Professor of Theology  
Mount Mercy University  
Cedar Rapids, IA

**ABSTRACT:** This paper uses Garrigou-Lagrange in order to explore the wider question of a Thomistic response to personalism and the thought of Jacques Maritain. How ought Thomistic thinkers to conceive of the individual and person distinction so widely utilized by the personalists? Does usage of this distinction necessitate personalism as condemned by Charles De Koninck and his reading of St. Thomas on the common good? Certainly, it is surprising that Garrigou-Lagrange utilized personalist jargon given his other theological views. In short, this article argues that the individual-person distinction can be used in two very different ways: as congruent with St. Thomas and De Koninck and as incongruent with them. Garrigou provides an example of the former, elucidating a properly Thomistic understanding of the relation between the primacies of the person and the common good. Jacques Maritain provides an

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondence to [editors@realityjournal.org](mailto:editors@realityjournal.org).

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example of the latter. Upon final analysis, we may make some important claims about nature and grace, the individual and the state, etc. by utilizing language shared with adherents of personalism but without abandoning the important thought of De Koninck on the primacy of the common good.

## I. Introduction

It is well known that Charles De Koninck champions the primacy of the common good over the private or proper good of the individual. In *On the Primacy of the Common Good Against the Personalists*, De Koninck condemns what he calls *personalism*, defined generically as a misunderstanding of St. Thomas Aquinas' teaching on the common good, one which replaces the classical teaching with a doctrine of the primacy of the person and personal goods above common goods. As we shall see, such a doctrine tends to alienate common goods from private flourishing, an alienation that often has ramifications for our very understanding of the relation between the material part of man (the individual) and the spiritual part of man (the person).

At the outset, I must state that I agree with De Koninck's analysis of Thomas' understanding of the common good and its relation to private goods. However, I believe that there are good reasons to question the accuracy of De Koninck's particular accusations of personalism. Of course, within *On the Primacy*, De Koninck does not name names. However, this does not mean that there has not been some general agreement as to whom he had in mind. Fr. Aquinas Guilbeau, OP has recently defended a dissertation devoted entirely to *On the Primacy*. He admits that, "...readers of his [De Koninck's] work assumed that Jacques Maritain was his primary target."<sup>2</sup> And yet, as De Koninck's work opened up into a large and far-reaching debate, a crucial question remained: was Maritain really a personalist? Yves Simon did not think so. Fr. Guilbeau states:<sup>3</sup>

Yves Simon, a French-born Thomist philosopher at the University of Notre Dame and a friend of Maritain, reviewed De Koninck's work and came to two conclusions: 1) De Koninck's commentary on Aquinas's teaching, as well as his criticism of the personalists, is sound and trustworthy, but 2) De Koninck is

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<sup>2</sup> Guilbeau, O.P. 2016: "Presentation of Thesis: Charles De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good" given at "Aquinas on Politics" Conference; Mount Saint Mary's College: Newburgh, NY, 02 June 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Guilbeau 2016: *Charles De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*. Unpublished dissertation presented to the University of Fribourg. Quoted with permission.

wrong to imply, or at least to allow his readers to conclude, that Maritain promotes the erroneous theses of the personalists. To Simon's mind, Maritain's personalism constituted a body of thought different in kind from the personalism criticized by De Koninck.

We have here what I find to be a curious case: Simon believes that Maritain is not only *not* a personalist according to De Koninck's definition, but, moreover, that he agrees with everything that De Koninck has to say regarding the relation of the person to the common good. It is true that Simon has some critiques of De Koninck's analysis, but that is beyond the scope of this paper.

While the primary scope of this work is the supposed personalism of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., we shall have to engage significantly with the personalism of Maritain. In short, if Maritain is the primary philosopher which De Koninck has in mind while condemning personalism, the extent to which Garrigou's thought aligns (or, rather, does *not* align) with Maritain, shall be important for establishing the thesis that Garrigou is not a personalist.

Nonetheless, Fr. Garrigou was, much to the surprise of Maritain and Simon themselves, purportedly labelled as a personalist by Charles De Koninck. In a correspondence between Maritain and Simon (first brought to my attention by Michael Waldstein), Simon recounts to Maritain an after-lecture party attended by both Simon and De Koninck. When pressed to identify the personalists against whom he had written, De Koninck was said to have included Garrigou "with insistence."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps it is unfair to De Koninck to insist upon the second-hand account of this episode as actually indicating his thought about Garrigou. Simply put, we ought not to give too much credence to hearsay as speaking for De Koninck himself. Yet, I think that the question of whether Garrigou was a personalist is worth pursuing if for no other reason than that Maritain himself cites Garrigou as a

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<sup>4</sup> From a correspondence between Yves Simon and Jacques Maritain dated from Sept. 8, 1944, with the former speaking to the latter: ". . . After the lecture there was a party at my house. I had told W[aldemar Gurian] to open fire. He didn't delay. Hardly had De Koninck sat down when he got the fatal question right in the solar plexus: Who are these personalists? De K[oninck] hesitated visibly and showed a little less Belgian good nature and a little more reserve. He mentioned a Californian review 3 (do you remember, The Personalist, which Mounier discovered four or five years after launching Esprit); Adler and Farrel; Garrigou-Lagrange (with insistence),1 Fr. Schwalm, the author of lessons in social philosophy."

source of the individual-person distinction.<sup>5</sup> He specifically cites the following passage from Garrigou's 1922 work *Le Sens commun*, which states:<sup>6</sup>

Man will reach the fullness of personality, will become a *per se subsistens* and a *per se operans* only in the measure in which in him reason and freedom control his senses and his passions; otherwise he will remain like the animal, merely an individual enslaved by events and circumstances, always under the influences of something alien to himself; he will be merely a part, ever incapable of being a whole.

This passage predates Maritain's first usage of the distinction in his 1925 work *Trois Réformateurs: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau*. Clearly it was formative upon his own thought, again, I think, justifying the question of whether Garrigou ought to be seen as guilty of the personalism which De Koninck condemned. And, as we shall see, others have cited Garrigou as a personalist, further justifying the question.

That Maritain would have been a target of a critique of personalism was perhaps unsurprising given his reputation as a personalist thinker who promoted Christian democracy. It is clear that so much of the personalist debate surrounding De Koninck's text was not merely speculative but had ramifications

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<sup>5</sup> J.A. Baisnée, "Two Catholic Critiques of Personalism," in *The Modern Schoolman*, vol. XXII, issue 2 (January, 1945), 59-75, 64: "At least from 1925 when he wrote *Trois Réformateurs: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau*, to 1942 when he wrote *Les Droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle*, Jacques Maritain has consistently upheld the distinction between the Individual and the Person. In the latter work he refers particularly to his earlier essay, *Freedom in the Modern World*, and to the chapter on "The Human Person and Society" in his *Scholasticism and Politics*; for a more complete treatment of this distinction, he invokes the authority of the eminent Dominican Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, by quoting a passage of *le Sens commun, la philosophie de l'être et les formules dogmatiques* which gives the formula of the Personalists favorite argument in proof of the distinction between the Individual and the Person."

<sup>6</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. 1922: *Le Sens commun, la philosophie de l'être et les formules dogmatiques*, 332-33: "Mais l'homme ne sera pleinement une *personne*, un *per se subsistens* et un *per se operans* que dans la mesure où la vie de raison et de la liberté dominera en lui celle des sens et des passions; sans cela, il demeurera comme l'animal, un simple *individu* esclave des événements, des circonstances, toujours à la remorque de quelque autre chose, incapable de se diriger lui-même; il ne sera qu'une partie, sans pouvoir prétendre être un tout." (Translation is from Baisnée).

in the practical political order of World War II Europe and its fall into various fascist tyrannies. Fr. Guilbeau states:<sup>7</sup>

To De Koninck's reading of personalist publications, personalist writers eschewed the classical doctrine of the primacy of the common good and in its place promoted a new doctrine of the primacy of the person, which personalist philosophers had developed *as a seemingly better intellectual weapon to combat totalitarianism*.

And so, while Maritain was perhaps an easy target, labelling Garrigou-Lagrange as a personalist was a real surprise. Garrigou was known as an unflinching defender of the classical Thomistic commentatorial tradition which De Koninck also championed. Moreover, Garrigou and Maritain had even fallen out of friendship over their political differences. Garrigou disagreed with Maritain's democratic views and was instead a strong French loyalist, supporting monarchy and confessional governance.<sup>8</sup> And so, one is left asking: was even the Sacred Monster of Thomism a personalist? If so, who *wasn't*? More pointedly, if De Koninck had Maritain in mind when writing *On the Primacy*, and if Garrigou was influential on Maritain's views of the individual and the person, do his critiques stand against the thought of Garrigou?

What I want to do in this article is to briefly examine two key sections of Garrigou's writing which have been put forth as *the key evidence* of his predilection for personalism. I believe that a careful examination of Garrigou's words in light of what De Koninck states in *On the Primacy* will suffice to show that what Garrigou says is, in principle, *nearly exactly the same* as what De Koninck writes in his work. I do not believe that there is any real difference between the two regarding the good of the person and the common good. As such, extrapolating from Garrigou's situation, questions regarding De Koninck's labelling of personalists in general may be called into question, even if one agrees with De Koninck's presentation of the common good itself.

Moreover, as we shall see, theological knee-jerk responses to the individual-person distinction (employed by both Maritain and Garrigou) are perhaps unfounded and overly general. In other words, while this essay deals primarily with Garrigou-Lagrange, it really goes beyond Garrigou as a figure, opening up a

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<sup>7</sup> Guilbeau 2016: *Charles De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*.

<sup>8</sup> See Peddicord, O.P. 2005: *The Sacred Monster of Thomism: An Introduction to the Life and Legacy of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.*, 80-113.

more nuanced consideration of the individual-person distinction and its relation to personalism as such. Perhaps the employment of this infamous distinction does not *itself* justify allegations of personalism. In other words, perhaps the individual-person distinction can be reconciled with a championing of the primacy of the common good. If so, perhaps we may transcend the historical consideration of the main players of this debate in order to embrace a speculative understanding of what it means to be human as part of the common good.

## 2. Garrigou's Person and Individual

We have already cited Garrigou's words from 1922's *Le Sens Commun*. I believe that Garrigou unpacks and more explicitly speaks to the individual-person distinction in his 1951 commentary on St. Thomas' treatise on beatitude. It ought to be noted that this was published roughly eight years after the publication De Koninck's *On the Primacy*. It likely goes without saying that Garrigou had both read that work and had been at least somewhat privy to the debate which it effected in the ensuing years.

At any rate, within that work, Garrigou states that man's *natural* desire can never receive the goodness of God since man's desire is created and limited whereas God is obviously uncreated and unlimited.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, man, through the gift of his supernatural ordering toward beatitude, desires universal goodness, a goodness that "totally satiates desire."<sup>10</sup> Such a goodness can be found in God alone, who is not *a* good but is goodness itself. So far, so good.

But now Garrigou moves toward the aforementioned individual-person distinction. He considers the relation of lesser goods to goodness itself. Lesser goods are not the ultimate goal of human existence but they may function as an "intermediate goal." After all, we are composite beings who strive toward our supernatural end in and through our action in a physical universe composed of particular goods. As such, Garrigou states that, "the active life serves society, the contemplative life aims directly at glorifying God, the supreme good."<sup>11</sup> And

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<sup>9</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1951: *Beatitude: A Commentary on St. Thomas' Theological Summa, Ia IIae, qq. 1 – 54*, 73.

<sup>10</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1951: *Beatitude*, 74.

<sup>11</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1951: *Beatitude*, 74.

thus the following question is posed, “Does the human individual exist to serve society (communism), or does society exist to serve the individual (liberalism)?”<sup>12</sup> Garrigou proposes a middle way between the extremes of communism and liberalism. “The individual, in temporal matters, serves society;” says Garrigou, “but in eternal things he rises above civil society, since he is a fellow citizen of the saints, a member of the household of God.”<sup>13</sup> But what might it mean to serve society in temporal matters and to rise above society in eternal things? Garrigou responds, “In defense of his country the citizen must be willing even to shed his blood. But civil authority, on the other hand, while its proximate goal is the well-being of society, has as its ultimate goal that eternal life which is the end of all human activity.”<sup>14</sup> He continues, “Man’s active life, then, his lower and external life, is subordinated to society. But man’s contemplative life, his higher and internal life, transcends civil life.”<sup>15</sup>

This distinction is reminiscent of Maritain’s conception of the common good. Maritain famously states, “We have not yet considered what might be termed the typical paradox of social life. Here again we shall find the distinction of the individual and the person. For this paradox results from the fact, already noted, that each of us is in his entirety an individual and in his entirety a person.”<sup>16</sup> Applying this distinction between individual and person to how man acts within the created order, Garrigou states:<sup>17</sup>

Man, as an individual, is subordinated to society, whereas society is subordinated to man as a person. Thus, in the spiritual order (as person) man is bound to provide first for himself, whereas in the temporal order (as individual) man is praiseworthy when he is generous in providing for his neighbor. Again, virginity excels matrimony, because divine values surpass human values. And private spiritual good stands higher than common civil good.

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<sup>12</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1951: *Beatitude*, 75.

<sup>13</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1951: *Beatitude*, 75.

<sup>14</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1951: *Beatitude*, 75.

<sup>15</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1951: *Beatitude*, 75.

<sup>16</sup> Maritain 1947: *The Person and the Common Good*, 45-46.

<sup>17</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1951: *Beatitude*, 75.

These particular lines are indeed controversial. Argentinian theologian Julio Meinvielle, citing the individual-person distinction as employed by both Garrigou and Maritain has written:<sup>18</sup>

But here we must point out an important and fundamental truth which never ceases to amaze regarding Garrigou-Lagrange. Nobody will argue that this illustrious Thomist has always had a singular and laudable commitment to faithfully following St. Thomas and not departing from him nec ad unguem. However, in such an important manner as defending the famous definition of person as given by Boethius, which Thomists have insisted upon against Escoto and Ricardo de San Victor, R.P. Garrigou-Lagrange, OP – and the same can be said of Maritain – invents a novelty that destroys everything in the effort of St. Thomas.

He sees the distinction as employed in a way which posits not merely distinction but division and duality, stating, “The opposition of individual-person lacks a foundation in Thomism.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, he concludes that:<sup>20</sup>

I have already said that the conception of Maritain and of Garrigou-Lagrange cannot be considered immune from Platonic, Cartesian, and Kantian infiltrations. They conceive of the human person as an angel which is imprisoned in the body that is “individual.” They are then forced to draw two

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<sup>18</sup> Meinvielle 1948: *Crítica De la Concepción De Maritain Sobre la Persona Humana* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones “Nuestro Tiempo”), 29: “Pero hay que señalar aquí algo importante y fundamental que no deja De sorprender en el R. P. Garrigou Lagrange, O. P. A nadie se le oculta que este ilustre tomista ha puesto siempre un singular y laudable empeño por seguir fielmente a Santo Tomás y no apartarse De él nec ad unguem. Sin embargo, en una cuestión tan importante como es la De defender la célebre definición De persona De Boecio, en que los tomistas se han empeñado a fondo, en contra De Escoto y De Ricardo De San Víctor, el R. P. Garrigou-Lagrange O. P. —y lo mismo dígase De Maritain— inventa una novedad que echa por tierra todo el esfuerzo De Santo Tomás.” Translations of Meinvielle are my own.

<sup>19</sup> Meinvielle 1948: *Crítica De la Concepción De Maritain*, 39: “La oposición De individuo-persona carece De fundamento en el tomismo.”

<sup>20</sup> Meinvielle 1948: *Crítica De la Concepción De Maritain*, 50-51: “Decía hace un momento que la concepción De Maritain y De Garrigou-Lagrange no puede considerarse inmune De infiltraciones platónicas, cartesianas y kantianas. Conciben a la persona humana como a un ángel encarcelado en el cuerpo que sería el “individuo” y entonces se ven obligados a trazar dos series irreductibles De leyes, las unas para la persona humana, y las otras, para el individuo humano; olvidando que el hombre concreto singular es una única especie, constituido individuo o persona subsistente por un único principio.”



irreducible series of laws, ones which pertain to the human person and ones which pertain to the human individual, forgetting that the concrete man is a single species, an individual or a subsisting person which constituted by a single principle.

Similarly, Edmund Waldstein has stated that Garrigou's words denote, "personalism of the worst sort." He continues that, "...it is astonishing that a theologian as great as Garrigou-Lagrance ever seriously proposed it."<sup>21</sup>

And yet, despite these critiques, I think that this distinction regarding man's proper prioritization of supernatural and natural goods is found right within the work of Charles De Koninck himself (thus negating the idea that utilizing the distinction necessitates holding an opposition between the individual and the person).

### 3. De Koninck's Two Formalities

I believe that there are two very relevant statements from the tradition which De Koninck treats, each of which, he contends, can be misread and appropriated by what he terms the personalist error. However, each quotation can and is properly elucidated by De Koninck in a traditional, Thomistic, non-personalist manner. It is my position that these two statements and their interpretation by De Koninck show complete congruity with what Garrigou has written above.

The first of these two statements comes from St. Thomas Aquinas. Of course, it perhaps goes without saying that all members of this discussion were attempting to remain faithful disciples of the Common Doctor. In the *Prima Secundae Pars*, St. Thomas states:<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Waldstein, 2015: *Sanctucensis*, "Was Garrigou-Lagrance a Personalist?" <https://sanctucensis.wordpress.com/2015/07/10/was-garrigou-lagrance-a-personalist/>.

<sup>22</sup> 1271: *Summa Theologiae* Ia-IIae, q.21, a.4, ad.3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod homo non ordinatur ad communitatem politicam secundum se totum, et secundum omnia sua, et ideo non oportet quod quilibet actus eius sit meritorius vel demeritorius per ordinem ad communitatem politicam. Sed totum quod homo est, et quod potest et habet, ordinandum est ad Deum, et ideo omnis actus hominis bonus vel malus habet rationem meriti vel demeriti apud Deum, quantum est ex ipsa ratione actus." All translations are from the 1947 work of the English Dominican Fathers unless otherwise noted.

Man is not ordained to political society, according to all that he is and has; and so it does not follow that every action of his acquires merit or demerit in relation to political society. But all that man is, and can, and has, must be referred to God: and therefore every action of man, whether good or bad, acquires merit or demerit in the sight of God, as far as the action itself is concerned.

Garrigou would certainly have seen his writing as conforming to this statement. Since man in some way transcends society insofar as it is not for him a final but only an intermediate good, man does not serve society *primarily*, even if he must serve it in considerable ways (even unto shedding his blood for political society). How does De Koninck understand the words of St. Thomas? De Koninck says:<sup>23</sup>

Saint Thomas means to say only that man is not ordered only to political society since the common good of that society is only a subordinate common good. Man is ordered to this society only insofar as he is a citizen. Although man, the individual, member of a family, civil citizen, celestial citizen, etc. are the same subject, they are formally different. Totalitarianism identifies the formality 'man' with the formality 'citizen'.

Here, I think that we see something astonishing. De Koninck makes a distinction something like the individual-person distinction. De Koninck distinguishes between two formalities in man: citizen/individual and man. Moreover, as citizen or individual, man serves society, but he does not serve it as his highest good. Indeed, the very essence of totalitarianism is to collapse the distinction between these two formalities and to posit man as a citizen *simpliciter*. This seems to me to be precisely what Garrigou means when he condemns communism as an ideology which entirely subordinates the human being to the service of society.

While the formalities of citizen-individual and man are distinct, they are not totally separated. Of course, the distinction between citizen-individual and man is not a real or physical one. Within one man there exists these two formalities. The distinction of the formalities allows for the subordinated view of goods which is constitutive of St. Thomas and De Koninck's doctrine of the common good. De Koninck states, "For us, on the contrary, not only are these formalities distinct, they are subordinated one to another according to the order of

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<sup>23</sup> De Koninck 1943: *On the Primacy of the Common Good against the Personalists*, in *The Writings of Charles De Koninck*, vol. 2, 102.

goods.”<sup>24</sup> This subordination, I believe, is present in Garrigou as well. He does not see participation within society as divorced from one’s supernatural participation in the common good of beatitude, but as ordered to it. Garrigou affirms, “But civil authority, on the other hand, while its proximate goal is the well-being of society, has as its ultimate end that eternal life which is the end of all human activity.”<sup>25</sup> Since society is composed of persons, its ends are similar to the ends of the person. Society aims toward its own peace and temporal justice, but the most just society is that one which has as its ultimate goal the salvation of the persons which constitute the society.

The second statement which De Koninck treats that is of interest here is from Pope Pius XI’s encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*, which was released six years before *On the Primacy*. Therein Pius states, “The city is for man; man does not exist for the city.”<sup>26</sup> In analyzing this statement, De Koninck says:<sup>27</sup>

If the common good were the good of the city insofar as the city is a sort of individual, it would then be a particular good properly alien to the members of the society.... The city would then be like an anonymous tyrant which subjects man to himself. Man would be for the city. This good would be neither common nor the good of rational natures.

Again, this seems no different than Garrigou’s condemnations of communism. Continuing, De Koninck once again returns to his distinction between the two formalities in man. “Second, the city, as a common good, is for man insofar as he comprises formalities which order him to higher common goods, formalities which are in man higher than that which orders him to the common good of the city.”<sup>28</sup> The formality of man as member of the created order of humanity, ordered gratuitously and called to the beatific vision via grace is higher than the formality of man as citizen, ordering him to the good of the city. De Koninck continues:<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> De Koninck 1943: *Primacy of the Common Good*, 102.

<sup>25</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1951: *Beatitude*, 75.

<sup>26</sup> Pius IX 1937: *Divini Redemptoris*, Section III, § 5: “quandoquidem Civitas homini, non homo Civitati existit”.

<sup>27</sup> De Koninck 1943: *Primacy of the Common Good*, 103.

<sup>28</sup> De Koninck 1943: *Primacy of the Common Good*, 103-104.

<sup>29</sup> De Koninck 1943: *Primacy of the Common Good*, 104.

“The formality ‘man as purely man’ cannot be identified with the formality ‘citizen,’ any more than it can be with the subject ‘man.’ Hence, when we say a common good is subordinated to man, this can only be by reason of a formality which looks to a higher common good. *It is only the most perfect common good that cannot be subordinated to man.*”

As a corollary, lesser common goods *can* be subordinated to man as called to the common good of beatitude. And this is precisely what Garrigou states when he writes that, “society is subordinated to man as a person,”<sup>30</sup> that is, as a spiritual, thinking, free creature who can achieve beatitude.

It seems clear that what Garrigou calls “person” is roughly the same as that which De Koninck calls the “formality of man.” This is man not as the citizen-individual of the lesser common good of the city, but man as eternal, intelligent being called to participate directly in the highest common good of God’s own divine life. This is De Koninck’s “most perfect common good” and Garrigou’s “household of God.” This ultimate end cannot be subjected to the good of the state or city, which ought to exist to assist man in reaching this ultimate end.

Of course, if the city were subordinated to particular men (rather than the abstract man or, to put it in another way, the humanity of its citizens), then it would cease to be common, it would cease to be a city, and it would hurt even the private good of the members. Moreover, if society were subordinated *only* to private goods such that it served each individual according to their own private good it would cease to be communal. If it demanded no subjection of the individual to society, then it would fall toward the opposite extreme from communism, that of liberalism. It would become an aggregate of individuals, each locked away and compartmentalized from the good of the other. Thus, the distinction between citizen-individual and man-person is not only legitimate, it is crucial to maintaining a virtuous mean between communism and liberalism. Without it, man *qua* man must be either subordinated to society completely or society must be subordinated to man completely. Neither case allows for the nuance of the created order with the full hierarchy of lesser and higher common goods.

So, if De Koninck himself admits of a distinction which seems *very* close to the distinction utilized by Garrigou, why would he label Garrigou a personalist? At

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<sup>30</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1951: *Beatitude*, 75.

the very least, we can see that distinguishing between what man owes to the city and what man owes to the common good of the cosmos and its Creator are two different things, even if they are related. Indeed, what De Koninck decries is a transgression of genera which takes the *per accidens* ordering of man as citizen not submitting his entire self to the lesser common good of the city and extrapolates from that an erroneous universal. He says:<sup>31</sup>

From the fact that some private good is better than some common good, as is the case with virginity which is better than marriage, one concludes that any private good taken as such is better than any common good taken as common, that the private good as such can have an eminence which escapes the common good as such, that one can then prefer a private good to a common good because it is private.

Indeed, this would be a grave error. It would destroy the entire notion of a common good insofar as it would pit the private good over and against any common good. This would be a sort of extrinsicism which could only recognize common goods as *bonum alienum*. The common good would be indifferent to the private good of the part, if not its outright enemy. Indeed, we know this to be impossible given the social nature of man. Man is never a necessary whole but is a contingent part. He is contingent upon the city for temporal peace. He is contingent upon God for the gift of supernatural peace in beatitude. Both of these states of peace are communal, involving others, requiring that the peace be distinct from the private good of the singular man. Salvation and sanctification, by definition, mean being caught up in a communion of persons, i.e. the saints, the angels, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for salvation and sanctification are words that simply mean full, radical, gratuitous love *of the other*.

And yet, it seems quite clear that Garrigou is certainly not making this mistake of divorcing private and common good. His distinction between persons and individuals is not one which sets up common goods universally as alien or subservient to private goods. In the temporal or material order, Garrigou recognizes the necessity for man to sacrifice his own temporal good for the good of the city. One ought to give one's very earthly life in order for the city to live on. And, of course, what is a private biological evil for the soldier (say, to lay down his life for the state) is, nevertheless, not an evil for him upon final analysis,

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<sup>31</sup> De Koninck 1943: *Primacy of the Common Good*, 104-105.

since he has nobly submitted his private, temporal good for a higher good which he loves. In so doing, he has actually acquired virtue, a private but ultimately immaterial good. This is a sign of the intimacy and reciprocity of private and common goods in a given society. If some common good were alien to the individual, the defense of country would not only lack the nature of a responsibility, it would be downright absurd.

Moreover, in the supernatural order, Garrigou affirms the communal nature of beatitude (as E. Waldstein points out). Garrigou says:<sup>32</sup>

We must begin to detach ourselves from earthly goods in order to grasp clearly the following truth often uttered by St. Augustine and St. Thomas: “Contrary to spiritual goods, material goods divide men, because they cannot belong simultaneously and integrally to a number.” A number of persons cannot possess integrally and simultaneously the same house, the same field, the same territory; whence dissensions, quarrels, lawsuits, wars. On the contrary, spiritual goods, like truth, virtue, God Himself, can belong simultaneously and integrally to a number; many may possess simultaneously the same virtue, the same truth, the same God who gives Himself wholly to each of us in Communion. Therefore, whereas the unbridled search for material goods profoundly divides men, the quest for spiritual goods unites them. It unites us so much the more closely, the more we seek these superior goods. And we even possess God so much the more, the more we give Him to others. When we give away money, we no longer possess it; when, on the contrary, we give God to souls, we do not lose Him; rather we possess Him more. And should we refuse to give Him to a person who asks for Him, we would lose Him.

Moreover, in his commentary on *De Regno*, Garrigou affirms with St. Thomas that “The common good of the multitude is greater and more divine than that of an individual.”<sup>33</sup> It is clear that Garrigou is not holding a perverted ordering

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<sup>32</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1938-39: *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, Part 3: “The Illuminative Way of Proficients,” c.14.

<sup>33</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1926: *Du gouvernement royal*; cf. Aquinas c.1267: *De Regno*, c.X (c.IX in the French translation upon which Garrigou translated): “Maius autem et divinius est bonum multitudinis quam bonum unius” – “Greater and more divine is the good of the multitude than the good of one”.

of private and common goods which De Koninck uses as his basic definition for personalism.<sup>34</sup> Let us return to the words of Garrigou:<sup>35</sup>

Thus, in the spiritual order (as person) man is bound to provide first for himself, whereas in the temporal order (as individual) man is praiseworthy when he is generous in providing for his neighbor. Again, virginity excels matrimony, because divine values surpass human values. And private spiritual good stands higher than common civil good.

Clearly, Garrigou does not see beatitude as a private good, and is instead speaking of the subjective attributes acquired by man through the communal participation in God's divine life. In other words, a man ought to shed his blood for the life of the city. But man ought not to endanger his soul by offering incense to pagan gods, even if it means that his city will be spared by pagan invaders. Insofar as man lives temporally and interacts with the world, he is subordinated to society, but insofar as he prays and strives for beatitude, his dignity transcends the things of the world around him, including temporal society. And this is precisely why any just temporal society is ordered toward the natural and supernatural flourishing of its members. Its end is defined by the ends of human nature as such, which it must apprehend and act accordingly toward *as a given*. I believe that Garrigou means to say here precisely what St. Thomas means when he says that, "the good of the grace of one is greater than the good of the nature of the whole universe."<sup>36</sup> This means that man should choose his own *spiritual* good over the *material* goods of his society. But this does not mean that man's private goods trump the common good *simply*, nor does it mean that the common good is alien to man's private good, and this is precisely because *the common good has both spiritual and material elements* and we can delineate between The Common Good and lesser common goods. No one ought to hold that man is made for society such that the ultimate good

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<sup>34</sup> De Koninck 1943: *Primacy of the Common Good*, 102: "But it is this order of goods, first and final causes, and not man purely as man that is the principle of the order of these formalities in the same subject. Personalism reverses the order of goods and accords the greatest good to the lowest formality of man. What the personalists understand by person is, in truth, what we understand by pure individual, quite material and substantial and enclosed in itself, and they reduce rational nature to sensible nature which has the private good as its object."

<sup>35</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1951: *Beatitude*, 75.

<sup>36</sup> 1271: *ST Ia-IIae*, q.113, a.9, ad.2: "Sed bonum gratiae unius maius est quam bonum naturae totius universi."

of a man is subordinated to the ultimate good of a temporal society qua temporal society. Indeed, the most just societies are those that recognize that they exist ultimately *for* the ultimate good of their spiritual citizens, and that the flourishing of the state *just is* the flourishing of its citizens. To put it another way, the state is ordered toward the dignity of the person and its end is subordinate to it. In this case, the state would cease to exist as a proper state at all if its own good had to be chosen over and against the virtuous flourishing of its citizens. It would be a failed society.

However, if by “society” we mean not a temporal community such as a school, a state, etc., but rather *the society* of humanity, that is, an eternal society, The Common Good, then the ultimate good of the person is indeed subordinated to the ultimate good of the society, for this society is defined not by accidental interactions between persons. Rather, it *is* the totality and perfection of humanity as a whole, in which the singular person can only act as a part. Creation is not, properly speaking, the creating of so many persons but is rather the creating of an organic whole, a cosmos, which reflects the majesty of its Creator. This is precisely what St. Thomas means when he says, “Every evil that God does, or permits to be done, is directed to some good; yet not always to the good of those in whom the evil is, but sometimes to the good of others, or of the whole universe...”<sup>37</sup> If the ultimate good of the cosmos were simply the sum of the ultimate good of each rational creature, then universal salvation would not just be true, but necessarily true. However, for St. Thomas, the good of the universe is a self-expression or manifestation of the divine nature.<sup>38</sup> Thus, in order properly to understand man’s relation to the common good, we have to distinguish between different significations of the term, and we must especially distinguish between common goods (subject to a prudential mean in its relation to man, i.e., to avoid both communism and liberalism, i.e., sometimes subject to an individual man and an individual man is sometimes subject to it) and The Common Good (to which man is always subject in all ways).

The proper Christian temporal society could not justify damnable offenses against God from a single soul for the sake of the continuation of that society.

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<sup>37</sup> 1271: *ST Ia-IIae*, q.79, q.4, ad.1: “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod omnia mala quae Deus facit vel permittit fieri, ordinantur in aliquod bonum, non tamen semper in bonum eius in quo est malum, sed quandoque ad bonum alterius, vel etiam totius universi.”

<sup>38</sup> This idea is present throughout St. Thomas and is implied by the quotation immediately above. See also 1266-68: *ST Ia*, q.23, a.5, ad.3.



Nor would a society whose institutions are housed in buildings constructed of matchsticks sacrifice itself at the altar of one citizen's right to smoke whenever and wherever he pleases. Men are subject to society and must serve it, just as they are subject to God and must serve Him. Indeed, the latter subjection is infinitely more important than the former, but the former requires the latter for its very existence. There can be no true service to society, no true demand of society on a man, that transgresses that man's final end of friendship with God. The proper society recognizes this, asking its citizens for no more and no less than their help to preserve the integrity of that society's power to encourage its citizens toward virtue and beatitude, toward friendship with God.<sup>39</sup> It would simply make no sense for a society to ask a particular citizen to sacrifice his beatitude in order to strengthen the state's ability to lead its citizens to beatitude.

And even in relation to The Common Good, no man could serve it or properly subordinate himself to it by seeking his own private good first. Nor would it be reasonable to consider a spiritual act which harmed him but benefitted others, e.g. a man abandoning his own salvation in an effort to effect salvation in others, as just or charitable. This act would be, by nature, a rejection of man's subordination to The Common Good. We may lay down a particular good for the higher good of someone else, but it would be fundamentally absurd to lay down one's ultimate good for the ultimate good of others, nor would such an act be possible, given the social and reciprocal nature of The Common Good. Thus, it is not that Garrigou has abandoned the notion of common goods and subordinated them to private goods. It is simply that he has subordinated lower goods to higher goods because, "divine values surpass human values."

Given the context of Garrigou's treatment, his words being set against the backdrop of the twin errors of communism and liberalism, it is clear that Garrigou is speaking in the particular and not universally about the relation between common and private goods. De Koninck says:<sup>40</sup>

If one concedes that single persons are ordered to the separate common good insofar as this has the note of common good, it is not so readily conceded that, in the universe itself, persons are willed only for the good of the order of the universe, the intrinsic common good that is better than the single persons who

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<sup>39</sup> Or at least disposition toward friendship with God.

<sup>40</sup> De Koninck 1943: *Primacy of the Common Good*, 84.

materially constitute it. One would rather have it that the order of the universe is only a superstructure of persons that God wills, not as parts, but as radically independent wholes; and these wholes would be parts only secondarily.

This could only be said of Garrigou if he were claiming that one ought to provide for one's spiritual good apart from the spiritual good of another. But, the context of Garrigou's words negate this reading as do his positive affirmations that beatitude belongs, "simultaneously and integrally to a number" and that if we should refuse to provide spiritually for someone else that we would "lose Him" who is the source and object of beatitude. De Koninck says:<sup>41</sup>

...if the spiritual good of the person is higher than any created common good, and if, according to this spiritual good, the person ought to love himself more, it in no wise follows that the created common good, as such, is subordinate to the single person. Once again, the spiritual good of man involves an essential relation to the separate common good and, in this order, man has more reason of a part than anywhere else.

Garrigou certainly affirms the two antecedents mentioned here. The person must provide for his supernatural good before providing for the temporal good of the city. He recognizes the higher goodness of the spiritual good and even recognizes that, in a certain way, he must love himself properly first before he can provide spiritually for others. De Koninck himself explicitly asks the question, "...must one love oneself more than one's neighbor? There is not the slightest doubt that we must love ourselves more."<sup>42</sup> And yet, as De Koninck affirms, the consequent of these two antecedents (that the spiritual good of the person is higher than any created common good and that a person ought to love himself more or first) does not preclude one from negating the consequent that "the created common good... is subordinate to the single person," which is essentially his definition of personalism. Garrigou recognizes that it is not. He merely affirms with De Koninck that the temporal well-being of a society is of lesser value than the eternal well-being of one of its citizens. If denying this is the hallmark of De Koninck's personalism, then De Koninck's personalism does not apply to Garrigou any more than it applies to Pius XI or De Koninck himself.

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<sup>41</sup> De Koninck 1943: *Primacy of the Common Good*, 101.

<sup>42</sup> De Koninck 1945: *In Defence of St. Thomas*, in *The Writings of Charles De Koninck*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. Ralph McInerny (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009) 325.

#### 4. Individual and Person in Maritain: A Troubling Dualism

The individual-person distinction was a fundamental tenet of the personalism of Jacques Maritain. However, it is clear when looking closely at the work of Maritain that the distinction is congruent with the distinction used by Garrigou in term only. Maritain's metaphysical understanding of the distinction is *not* the same as Garrigou's.

Whereas De Koninck speaks of individual and man or person as two distinct but intertwined realities constitutive of human existence, Maritain uses the distinction to propose a true metaphysical duality in man. As Guilbeau points out, "For Maritain, the distinction was not metaphorical; it was metaphysical. He insisted that individuality and personality constitute 'two metaphysical aspects of the human being,' two aspects 'each with their own ontological physiognomy.'"<sup>43</sup> Of course, Maritain does not go so far as to hold that these two aspects of humanity are so divorced that they constitute two separate beings,<sup>44</sup> but he *does* state that these two aspects are neatly divided and compartmentalized into the material and spiritual elements constitutive of composite human nature. Indeed, in his *Scholasticism and Politics*, Maritain states, "I am wholly an individual, by reason of what I receive from matter, and I am wholly a person, by reason of what I receive from spirit."<sup>45</sup> One rightly wonders whether this means that one's personhood is situated only in the soul. Is one's body not a constitutive element of one's personhood by virtue of its integral unity with the soul? Isn't one a person by virtue of being soul *and* body? For Maritain, the answer appears to be negative.

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<sup>43</sup> Guilbeau, O.P. 2016: *Charles De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*. The Maritain quotes come from 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 65.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Maritain 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 60: "It is not as Descartes believed: the soul is not *one thing* – thought – existing as a complete being; and the body *another thing* – extension – existing in its own way as a complete being. But soul and matter are two substantial co-principles of one and the same being. Of a single and unique reality whose name is man."

<sup>45</sup> Maritain 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 65.

Moreover, for Maritain, this radical metaphysical distinction between individual and person poses an inherent incongruity in the human moral life, with the material part of man being that which is responsible for defectibility and vice.<sup>46</sup>

Man, in so far as he is material individuality, has but a precarious unity, which wishes only to slip back into multiplicity; for matter as such tends to decompose itself. In so far as we are individuals, each of us is a fragment of a species, a part of this universe, a single dot in the immense network of forces and influences, cosmic, ethnic, historic, whose laws we obey. We are subject to the determinism of the physical world. But each man is also a person, and in so far as he is a person, he is not subject to the stars and atoms; for he subsists entirely within the very subsistence of his spiritual soul, and the latter is in him a principle of creative unity, of independence and freedom.

As Guilbeau points out, this proposition is striking. It posits such a bleak picture of the material part of man that it is characterized as a source of determinacy which opposes the freedom of the spiritual part of man. As such, it is unsurprising that Maritain blames the material part of man's nature for whatever evil comes forth from a human agent. As Guilbeau aptly puts it, "In Maritain's theory, therefore, the two principles could not be more different. As man's corporeal nature orients him to narrow and self-centered pursuits, his spirit points him outward and upward, to a disciplined self-possession that is in fact selfless."<sup>47</sup>

Maritain is careful to note that he is not calling the material part of man's nature evil ("...it is not something bad in itself").<sup>48</sup> However, it is quite difficult to see these reassurances of Maritain as anything other than lip-service, especially when considering quotations like the following:<sup>49</sup>

If the development of the human being follows the direction of *material individuality*, he will be carried in the direction of the 'hateful ego,' whose law is to *snatch*, to absorb for oneself. In this case, personality as such will tend to adulterate, to dissolve. If, on the contrary, the development follows the direction of *spiritual personality*, then it will be in the direction of the generous self of saints and heroes that man will be carried. Man will really be a person,

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<sup>46</sup> Maritain 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 61-62.

<sup>47</sup> Guilbeau 2016: *De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*, 41.

<sup>48</sup> Maritain 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 65.

<sup>49</sup> Maritain 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 65-66.

in so far as the life of the spirit and of freedom will dominate in him that of passion and of the senses.

Later on, Maritain goes so far as to call man's material individuality "unfortunate," "destitute and miserable," and "profoundly indigent."<sup>50</sup> Thus, I agree wholeheartedly with Fr. Guilbeau when he says that, though "Maritain insisted that the two principles of matter and spirit do not divide the human subject... it remains difficult to see how he did not push the polarity of these joined principles nearly to their breaking point."<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, this pessimistic view of the material element in man extends to man's social dimension. For example, in *The Rights of Man and the Natural Law* Maritain states, "That means, in philosophical terms, that in the flesh and bones of man there is a soul which is a spirit and which is worth more than the entire material universe."<sup>52</sup> In support of this claim, Maritain cites St. Thomas, who says, "The good of the universe is greater than the particular good of one, if we consider both goods in the same genus. But the good of the grace of one is greater than the good of the nature of the whole universe."<sup>53</sup> However, Guilbeau points out that, "It is clear that Maritain's comparison of the soul to the material universe strays from St. Thomas's comparison of the good of grace and the good of nature."<sup>54</sup> Grace does not only affect the soul as if the body of man is accidental or divorced from man's supernatural end of beatitude. It is precisely man *as a composite being*, soul *and* body, who is elevated above the world of mere nature. Man as graced and beginning participation in divine life is certainly higher than the merely natural created order. However, that the soul itself, prescinding from the material and man's flesh and bones, is worth more than the whole material universe is absurd, for the whole material universe

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<sup>50</sup> Maritain 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 71-72. See also Guilbeau 2016: *De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*, 45.

<sup>51</sup> Guilbeau 2016: *De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*, 42.

<sup>52</sup> Maritain 1942: *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle* (New York: Éditions de la Maison Française), 15-16 and in *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 8, 620-21: "Cela veut dire, en termes philosophiques, que dans la chair et les os de l'homme il y a une âme qui est un esprit et qui vaut plus que l'univers matériel tout entier." Translation from *The Rights of Man and Natural Law*, 5-6.

<sup>53</sup> 1271: *ST Ia-IIae*, q.113, a.9, ad.2: "bonum universi est maius quam bonum particulare unius, si accipiatur utrumque in eodem genere. Sed bonum gratiae unius maius est quam bonum naturae totius universi."

<sup>54</sup> Guilbeau 2016: *De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*, 46n44.

contains the bodies of all other men, in many of whom the gift of beatitude is already beginning to blossom in sanctifying grace and the theological virtues. In other words, Maritain erroneously conflates the soul with the order of grace and the body with the order of nature. The soul itself is part of man's nature (man would *be* a soul and a body even in a state of pure nature) and the body is the recipient of perfecting grace, albeit through the soul. We see here something dangerously close to an ontological and Platonic dualism.

Let us recall that Maritain says that man as an individual is “a fragment of a species, a part of this universe, a single dot in the immense network of forces and influences...”<sup>55</sup> Again, Guilbeau elucidates:<sup>56</sup>

Included in the ‘network of forces and influences’ are the pressures of family and city. This linking of man’s social life with his materiality goes hand in hand with Maritain’s linking of man’s personal life with his spirituality. Maritain asserts that, as a material individual, the human creature is subject to the laws of physics, biology, history, human society, and all of the other laws that govern the material universe. As a spiritual person, however, man soars above the stars as an instance of creative freedom in an otherwise determined universe.

It is unsurprising, then, that Maritain would hold that the common good is “other than the good of each.”<sup>57</sup> Fr. Guilbeau contrasts this with the thought of De Koninck for whom, “the common good is the good of the persons who constitute the community.”<sup>58</sup> As such, De Koninck is correct to state that, for the personalists (including Maritain), the common good is depicted as a *bonum alienum*. To so radically state that man as a person is “more a whole than a part and more independent than servile,” and to state that man as a person has a “superexistence” whereby he is a “universe unto himself”<sup>59</sup> and then to link this personhood solely to man’s soul is, quite simply, to go too far. It posits a divorce not just within man but also a divorce between man and the community of the created order. While one should give to Maritain as much benefit of the doubt as one can, it is hard to see his doctrine of individual and person as being anything other than a troubling form of dualism.

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<sup>55</sup> Maritain 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 61-62.

<sup>56</sup> Guilbeau, *De Koninck’s Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*, 42.

<sup>57</sup> Maritain 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 71 – 72.

<sup>58</sup> Guilbeau 2016: *De Koninck’s Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*, 47.

<sup>59</sup> Maritain 1942: *The Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 6.

## 5. A Thomistic Rejection of a Personalist Dualism

It is true that, for St. Thomas, matter is, by nature, ordered toward multiplicity, division, and ultimately decay. However, it is clear that Thomas' understanding of composite human nature is substantially different and less polarized than Maritain's. Consider Thomas' classical definition of man as positing the soul (spirit) to be his form and the body to be his matter.<sup>60</sup> Of course, every Thomist ought to agree that the soul is the nobler part of man.<sup>61</sup> However, Maritain's dualism threatens to destroy the very intelligibility of hylomorphism itself insofar as it posits a radical disjunction between man's matter and form. The ontological and moral polarity in Maritain's propositions endanger the very notion that "form and matter are joined together in the union of one act of being."<sup>62</sup> Moreover, St. Thomas reminds us that "the soul is naturally united to the body in order to complete the human species" precisely because "the human soul's act of understanding [which St. Thomas asserts is the 'proper operation of man']<sup>63</sup> needs powers... which function through bodily organs."<sup>64</sup>

St. Thomas *does* attribute defects which arise even in man's higher faculties to the defects of matter *qua* matter, of which the body is composed. Consider the following:<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See 1266-68: *ST* Ia, q.76, a.1; 1259/65: *SCG* lib.2, c.68.

<sup>61</sup> 1266-68: *ST* Ia, q. 6, a.1: "Anima autem humana est ultima in nobilitate formarum. Unde intantum sua virtute excedit materiam corporalem, quod habet aliquam operationem et virtutem in qua nullo modo communicat materia corporalis." - "Now the human soul is the highest and noblest of forms. Wherefore it excels corporeal matter in its power by the fact that it has an operation and a power in which corporeal matter has no share whatever."

<sup>62</sup> 1259/65: *SCG* lib.2, c.68, n.3: "quod forma et materia convenient in uno esse."

<sup>63</sup> 1266-68: *ST* Ia, q.76, a.1: "Propria autem operatio hominis, in quantum est homo, est intelligere..."

<sup>64</sup> 1259/65: *SCG* lib.2, c.68, n.12: "Quia tamen ipsum intelligere animae humanae indiget potentiis quae per quaedam organa corporalia operantur, scilicet imaginatione et sensu, ex hoc ipso declaratur quod naturaliter unitur corpori ad complendam speciem humanam."

<sup>65</sup> 1259/65: *SCG* lib.4, c.52, n.1-2: "Patitur autem communiter humanum genus diversas poenas, et corporales et spirituales. Inter corporales potissima est mors, ad quam omnes aliae ordinantur: scilicet fames, sitis, et alia huiusmodi. Inter spirituales autem est

Now, the human race commonly suffers various penalties, both bodily and spiritual. Greatest among the bodily ones is death, and to this all the others are ordered: namely, hunger, thirst, and others of this sort. Greatest, of course, among the spiritual penalties is the frailty of reason: from this it happens that man with difficulty arrives at knowledge of the truth; that with ease he falls into error, and that he cannot entirely overcome his beastly appetites, but is over and over again beclouded by them. For all that, one could say that defects of this kind, both bodily and spiritual, are not penalties, but *natural defects necessarily consequent upon matter*. For, necessarily, the human body, composed of contraries, must be corruptible; and the sensible appetite must be moved to sense pleasures, and these are occasionally contrary to reason.

*However*, a distinction must be made between matter *qua* matter and the material part of human nature. Matter as matter is subject to decay according to the natural state of things. However, matter *as governed by spirit*, as in the case of integral human nature, presupposes that, by grace, the matter is properly fitted to its form and is withheld from the normal defects of matter.<sup>66</sup> Just a few lines below the above quotation, St. Thomas continues:<sup>67</sup>

But, for all that, let one weigh matters rightly, and he will be able to judge with probability enough—granted a divine providence which for every perfection has contrived a proportionate perfectible—that God united a superior to an inferior nature for this purpose: that the superior rule the inferior, and that, if

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potissima debilitas rationis, ex qua contingit quod homo difficulter pervenit ad veri cognitionem, et de facili labitur in errorem; et appetitus bestiales omnino superare non potest, sed multoties obnubilatur ab eis. Posset tamen aliquis dicere huiusmodi defectus, tam corporales quam spirituales, non esse poenales, sed naturales defectus ex necessitate materiae consequentes. Necesse est enim corpus humanum, cum sit ex contrariis compositum, corruptibile esse; et sensibilem appetitum in ea quae sunt secundum sensum delectabilia moveri, quae interdum sunt contraria rationi". Emphasis my own.

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, i.1266-70: *De malo*, q.5, a.5, especially s.c.2, wherein St. Thomas says, "matter is proportioned to form" - "formae proportionatur materia".

<sup>67</sup> 1259/65: *SCG* lib.4, c.52, n.2: "Sed tamen si quis recte consideret, satis probabiliter poterit aestimare, divina providentia supposita, quae singulis perfectionibus congrua perfectibilia coaptavit, quod Deus superiorem naturam inferiori ad hoc coniunxit ut ei dominaretur; et si quod huius domini impedimentum ex defectu naturae contingeret, eius speciali et supernaturali beneficio tolleretur; ut scilicet, cum anima rationalis sit altioris naturae quam corpus, tali conditione credatur corpori esse coniuncta quod in corpore aliquid esse non possit contrarium animae, per quam corpus vivit; et similiter, si ratio in homine appetitui sensuali coniungitur et aliis sensitivis potentiis, quod ratio a sensitivis potentiis, non impediatur, sed magis eis dominetur."



some obstacle to this dominion should happen from a failure of nature, it would be removed by His special and supernatural benefaction. And the result would be, since the rational soul is of a higher nature than the body, belief that the rational soul was united to the body under such a condition that in the body there can be nothing contrary to the soul by which the body lives; and, in like fashion, if reason in man is united to the sensual appetite and other sensitive powers, that the reason be not impeded by the sensible powers, but be master over them.

Consequently, St. Thomas affirms that, in one way of speaking, death is natural to the human body “by a necessity of matter.” In another way, however, death is unnatural to the human body insofar as it is united to the soul in the formation of a composite being, that is, “as befitting the form.”<sup>68</sup> Even if it is true that defect stems from man’s material part, it is clear that defect is contrary to the integrity of man’s composite and integral nature. Man as a graced person sees the perfection of this matter so that it is proportioned to his soul. As such, St. Thomas says:<sup>69</sup>

Therefore, death and dissolution are natural to human beings by reason of a necessity of matter, but immortality would befit them by reason of the form’s nature. And yet natural sources do not suffice to provide immortality. Rather, a natural disposition for it indeed befits human beings by reason for their soul, and supernatural power fulfills it.

Consider the passage from the *respondeo* in *De malo*, q.5, a.5, which states:<sup>70</sup>

For example, a blacksmith making a saw for cutting wood seeks out iron, since iron, because of its hardness, is matter fit for the saw’s form and end. But iron has a condition by which it is unsuitable for both the form and end of the saw,

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<sup>68</sup> i.1266-70: *De malo*, q.5, a.5, c.: “uno modo secundum aptitudinem ad formam; alio modo secundum id quod consequitur in ipso secundum necessitate materiae tantum.”

<sup>69</sup> i.1266-70: *De malo*, q.5, a.5, c.: “Sic ergo mors et corruptio naturalis est homini secundum necessitatem materiae; sed secundum rationem formae esset ei conveniens immortalitas; ad quam tamen praestandam naturae principia non sufficiunt; sed aptitudo quaedam naturalis ad eam convenit homini secundum animam; complementum autem eius est ex supernaturali virtute;”

<sup>70</sup> i.1266-70: *De malo*, q.5, a.5, c.: “sicut artifex qui facit serram ad secundum, quaerit ferrum, quia est materia apta ad formam serrae et ad finem eius propter suam duritiem. Invenitur tamen in ferro aliqua conditio secundum quam ferrum non habet aptitudinem nec ad formam nec ad finem, sicut quod est frangibile vel contrahens rubiginem vel aliquid huiusmodi, quae sunt impeditiva finis; unde non sunt electa ab agente, sed magis ab agente repudiarentur, si esset possibile.”

for instance, that it can break or rust or some such thing, and these impede attainment of the end. And so the blacksmith does not choose these things but rather would reject them if he were able to do so.

When it comes to the divine artist, however, He has the power to uphold matter such that it is perfectly proportioned and fitting to the form, whereas the blacksmith can only use that which is least disproportioned and unfitting to the form. As such, it is clear that man's matter is capable through a *donum gratiae* (see *ST Ia*, q.97, a.1, ad.3) of perfection and that this perfection is not accidental to human nature but constitutive of it.

Consequently, we can truly say that the graced man does not become less bodily, but has a body which receives the communication and perfection of his higher part *for the sake of the perfection of his nature*. He is thus *just as ontologically material* as the man outside of sanctifying grace, but with a perfected and properly proportioned matter rather than a defective and improper one. This is the mystery of humanity: in his integral nature, the perfections of the man's spirit communicate themselves to the body due to their great intimacy. In a certain manner, this elevates man's very material element beyond the natural defects of matter. But this makes man more rather than less human. Far from abandoning matter and individuality the more that the graced person rises to God, the body and its material individuation themselves are incorporated fully into the elevation.

While distinct, the two parts of man are intimately united and both necessary as composite parts which make a person a person, an "I".<sup>71</sup> St. Thomas says: "Hence the soul devoid of its body is imperfect, as long as it is without the body." He continues, "but the soul, since it is part of man's body, is not an entire man, and my soul is not I; hence, although the soul obtains salvation in another life, nevertheless, not I or any man."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> The two parts of man do not create two I's, as Meinvielle states well (although erroneously implicating Garrigou), 1948: *Critica De la Concepcion De Maritain*, 48: "Tanto Maritain como Garrigou-Lagrange se ven forzados a partir en dos sujetos a toda persona humana: un yo individuo, un yo persona. Un yo=individuo, subordinado al Estado y un yo=persona no subordinado."

<sup>72</sup> i.1265-68: *Super primam ad Corinthios*, c.15: 12-19, §924: "Unde anima exuta a corpore, quamdiu est sine corpore, est imperfecta.... anima autem cum sit pars corporis

Just as proper human existence and understanding are built upon man's composite nature, so is man's pursuit of virtue, which requires not the obliteration of man's material part but its elevation and ordering toward its form, the spiritual and higher part of man. And yet the language of Maritain seems to imply the former rather than the later. Indeed, Maritain holds that moving toward virtue and perfection requires that "the weight of individuality should diminish, and that of real personality and of its generosity, should increase."<sup>73</sup> Again, I agree with Guilbeau who says, "Though Maritain's language of cutting and pruning may bring to mind a horticulturist, who in a garden brings beauty out of various matter, his overall view of maturity seemingly requires the services of an exterminator, who eradicates the threat that lower matter poses to a garden's higher beauty."<sup>74</sup>

On the contrary, the Thomistic tradition specifically (and the Christian tradition in general) considers the moral life as one which, by the grace of God, sees the soul elevate and perfect the body through its subordination to it. But subordination and elevation appear to be replaced in Maritain by diminishment. It is not that there is a relation of subordination, each part of man having its part to play in the dynamic interconnection of the human creature's existence. For Maritain, the relation seems to be a zero-sum game, wherein the material part of man must "diminish" such that the spiritual part of man may "increase."

And this is, I believe, a dangerous conception of human nature. It angelizes perfected man. Indeed, the grandeur of the human being is that, through the power of God, matter, *with all of its limitations*, can be elevated in the service of the spiritual. Man's ultimate end is not to become an angel. Man's ultimate end rests in becoming a perfect composite being, this kiss between matter and spirit being perfectly modelled and effected in the mystery of the Incarnation.

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hominis, non est totus homo, et anima mea non est ego; unde licet anima consequatur salutem in alia vita, non tamen ego vel quilibet homo."

<sup>73</sup> Maritain 1938: *Scholasticism and Politics*, 67.

<sup>74</sup> Guilbeau 2016: *De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*, 44.

## 6. Two Different Employments of the Individual-Person Distinction

Far from holding to this seemingly dualistic doctrine of Maritain, it is clear that Garrigou's conception of the relation between matter and spirit (and thus the individual and the person) is consistent with the thought of St. Thomas. Garrigou is much more optimistic about the role of matter and temporal goods in the spiritual life, which he calls "ways and means to spiritual values."<sup>75</sup> While asserting that beatitude consists ultimately in contemplating God, a power born out of the intellectual power of man's soul, nevertheless, "dispositions for this contemplation are the moral virtues, and secondarily, bodily health and sufficiency of external goods."<sup>76</sup>

The material universe not only affects the state of the soul, and in potentially good ways, the body can and ought to be elevated to perfection by the graced soul. Whatever trouble, as it were, that the material part of man gives the spiritual part is only due to the fallenness of man which effects a state wherein man's spiritual part no longer properly communicates its perfection to man's material and lower part. Garrigou states, "Thus the body is meant by nature to subserve the soul's intellective knowledge. Only accidentally, particularly as a consequence of sin, is the body a burden to the soul."<sup>77</sup> This does not mean that the body is not in and of itself subject to defect, which St. Thomas clearly holds. However, it does mean that, as situated as a component of integral human nature, that decay is both unfitting and consequent upon sin.

As such, the body ought to be perfected and united to the soul, not diminished in a competitive game with the soul. Consider the passions which, as sense appetites, are seated entirely within the material part of man, "common to man and animal."<sup>78</sup> And yet, for Garrigou and the Thomistic tradition, the passions are not to be negated but ordered in service of what is highest in man:<sup>79</sup>

[The passions] participate in man's moral life, either by being ruled, or even arouses, by right reason, or by not being ruled as they should. Hence man's will should reduce these passions to the happy medium where they become

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<sup>75</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1951: *Beatitude*, 76.

<sup>76</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1951: *Beatitude*, 78.

<sup>77</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1946: *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought*, 184.

<sup>78</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1946: *Reality*, 282.

<sup>79</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance 1946: *Reality*, 282.

instruments of virtue. Thus hope and audacity become instruments of courage; sense-pity subserves mercy; and bashfulness subserves chastity. Here again St. Thomas rises above two opposed extremes: over Stoicism, which condemns passion, and over Epicureanism, which glorifies passion. God gave us sense appetite, as He gave us imagination, as He gave us two arms, all to be employed in the service of true manhood, virtue, moral good.

Though I do not doubt that Maritain would assent to this classical conception of the body and the senses as expressed by his one-time friend, Fr. Garrigou, it is unclear how that assent could stand at the same time as his extreme pessimism regarding the relation of matter and spirit in man. Maritain stresses too much the incompatibility between man's form and matter, overlooking the perfect submission of the body to the soul in man's natural and integral state. One may argue that the fact that this state of perfect submission is a gift of grace (rather than the natural state of matter) highlights the weakness of the body and justifies Maritain's language. On the contrary, I believe that it shows that man *qua* man necessitates a body which perfectly cooperates with the dignity of the person, rather than pulling it down, getting in the way, and thus requiring a divorce or abandonment.

Indeed, while Maritain refers to man's material individuality as "unfortunate," "destitute and miserable," and "profoundly indigent," Garrigou condemns such a view as an "exaggerated dualism," which he asserts is present in the thought of Plato. Meinvielle's critique of Garrigou and Maritain *both* falling into this Platonic dualism does not do justice to the significantly nuanced differences between Maritain and Garrigou. Here Garrigou explicitly rejects Platonic body-soul dualism immediately after employing the individual-person distinction.

Garrigou says that Platonic dualism, "while favoring the immortality of the soul, still looks on the body, not as the soul's substantial instrument, but rather as a burden and hindrance."<sup>80</sup> And here we see bared naked the true distance between Garrigou and Maritain regarding the distinction between individual and person. For Garrigou, the distinction in terms speaks to a distinction of sympathetic and congruent natures in man; for Maritain, the division in terms speaks not to distinction but divorce and not to congruence but to discord.

Moreover, returning to the original passage from Garrigou's 1922 *Le Sens commun*, when Garrigou says that man must use reason and freedom to "control

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<sup>80</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1951: *Beatitude*, 78.

his senses and his passions,” and that without doing as such he will “remain like the animal, merely an individual... merely a part, ever incapable of being a whole” it ought not to be interpreted that Garrigou is asserting a metaphysical rupture or discord between man’s two natures. On the contrary, it is clear that the “whole” (*un tout*) to which Garrigou refers is the integrity of a composite human nature, one which sees that lower nature guided by that which is highest in man, intellect and will. Without this, man’s intellect and will are subjected to his passions and he lives by what is lowest in him, that is, “like an animal” (*comme l’animal*).

Moreover, just a few pages later, Garrigou speaks explicitly to the unity of matter and spirit which compose the *one* human nature, emphasizing the intimacy of the soul and the body as well as the latter’s dependence on the former as both form and source of its act (“*Actus autem est in eo cuius est actus. Unde oportet animam esse in toto corpore, et in qualibet eius parte*”).<sup>81</sup> Garrigou says:<sup>82</sup>

If the rational soul and the sensitive soul were truly distinct, a self would perceive its sensations and another self would perceive its thoughts. But sensation being an act of an animated organ, say, of the eye or of the ear, must proceed from a radical principle which determines or informs, that which animates the body. Therefore, the rational soul must give the body its sensitive life. It must also give it vegetative life. *The unity of the composite requires it*, and, in fact, the function of sensation, while belonging intrinsically to the living organs, must also be given life by that same principle [the soul] which animates the body and gives it the ability to sense.

Again, the substantial distinction between soul and body, between that which most properly makes one a person (the soul as seat of the intellect and will) and that which most properly makes one an individual of a material species, *ought not be read as implying an ontological rupture*. On the contrary, the integrity of

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<sup>81</sup> 1266-68: *ST Ia*, q.76, a.1: “But act is in that which it actuates: wherefore the soul must be in the whole body, and in each part thereof.”

<sup>82</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange 1922: *Le Sens commun*, 341: “Si l’âme raisonnable et l’âme sensitive étaient réellement distinctes, un moi percevrait ses sensations et un autre moi ses pensées. Mais la sensation étant un acte d’un organe animé de l’oeil, de l’oreille, doit procéder d’un principe radical qui détermine ou informe, anime le corps. L’âme raisonnable doit lui donner aussi la vie végétative, l’unité de compose l’exige, et de fait les fonctions de sensibilité étant intrinsèquement inhérentes à des organes vivants, le principe qui anime le corps et lui donne de sentir doit lui donner aussi de vivre.” Translation and emphasis are mine.

human nature as such requires their radical unity, a unity which itself defines the very essence of man.

Thus, we can see that the mere employment of the distinction between individual and person is not itself a hallmark of the personalism condemned by De Koninck. Indeed, De Koninck himself uses something like the distinction, as we have seen. And this is, perhaps, not surprising, for the distinction at its most pure is simply a reference to the reality of man as a composite being. However, the true danger of personalism and the individual-person distinction arises when it is used, as in Maritain, to propose a metaphysical duality (a duality of subjects) between the two parts of which man is composed. As such, it is not the distinction itself but an erroneous metaphysic of human ontology that ought to be avoided.

I have attempted to show above that it would be a mistake to take the similar language of Garrigou and Maritain to be evidence of a similar doctrine between the two. In reality, a closer inspection of their thought reveals that they utilize the distinction in antithetical ways. Moreover, the distinction as utilized by Garrigou *does not* fall under De Koninck's justified critique of personalism. Garrigou justifiably calls for the elevation of a holistic personhood through the proper submission of sensitive appetites to the rational soul, presupposing the necessity of the body in the personal encounter with God in beatitude. Maritain, on the other hand, speaking of body and soul as two polarities of human existence, a polarity where the soul appears unable to truly unite personhood and dignity with and into the body. In this, it seems that Fr. Guilbeau and I are again in agreement. He states:<sup>83</sup>

Close examination of the text reveals that what for Garrigou-Lagrange was a moral distinction between generously personal and selfishly individualistic activity, Maritain transformed into a metaphysical distinction, locating within the human creature two poles of identity and activity: the person and the individual.

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<sup>83</sup> Guilbeau 2016: *De Koninck's Defense of the Primacy of the Common Good*, 20n48.

## 7. Conclusion: Toward a Theonomic Understanding of the Created Order via a Rejection of Extrinsicism

We may ask why Garrigou's thought on the individual-person distinction matters. Certainly, Garrigou was not a main-player in this debate, at least not explicitly so. Even if it is true that De Koninck "with insistence" once labelled the so-called Sacred Monster of Thomism as a personalist, I believe, there is no real incongruity between what Garrigou and De Koninck have written. Both admit of a certain distinction between man as temporal citizen and man as ordered toward beatitude. Both admit that man must serve his ultimate end first and foremost rather than any intermediary or created societies. Yet both admit that man is always a part of a larger whole. And De Koninck admits that none of this requires that one be guilty of his definition of personalism or the metaphysical antinomy between man as individual and man as person which is found in Maritain. To put it simply, I believe that one would be mistaken to label Garrigou a personalist, who has demonstrated throughout his *corpus* an unflinching devotion to the primacy of the common good, the integrity of material nature, and the harmony between the body and the soul.

With that being said, I believe that the very uprightness of nature and its relation to grace is at stake in the employment of the individual-person distinction; it must be used carefully. What Maritain has wrought is, I think, what Steven Long calls the "loss of natural order as a theonomic principle."<sup>84</sup> While it is certainly true that the soul or spiritual part of man is what is highest in him, in no way does this mean that the lower, bodily, material part of him is not also pressed by God into the service of man's dignity as *imago Dei*. Man does not share matter with God, of course, but that matter is itself good and capable of elevation toward the spiritual is seen clearly throughout the history of the Church's condemnations of Manichaeism and all varieties of Gnosticism. As such, we may call Maritain's conception of the individual and the person to be a dangerous extrinsicism between nature and grace, one which appears to seriously call into question the profound goodness of the material of the created order and its fundamentally theonomic character.

I believe that Garrigou and De Koninck are united in recognizing the integrity and dignity of the subordinated place of what is material in man. Garrigou decries

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<sup>84</sup> Long 2010: *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace*, 36-51.



two fundamental forms of extrinsicism in our time: tyranny (as in communism or fascism) and liberalism. In their opposition toward one another, both end up in the same place, namely an extrinsicism which pits the common good against private goods. In tyrannical fascism or communism, the person is subordinated entirely to the state such that the flourishing of the state can be and often is to the detriment of its citizens. In liberalism, the state is subordinated to the person such that certain citizens may become exorbitantly rich in private goods but to the detriment of the common good of the state in which they live. Between these two extremes is the Christian way, which does not collapse all goods together, nor does it neglect the true hierarchy of goods. The Supreme Good rises high above all others, but these others exist in congruity with it, always pointing toward it, such that any tension whatsoever is impossible.

In short, to be man is to serve. He must ultimately serve God, but he cannot do this without properly serving those around him. What it looks like to serve those around him depends upon the nature of the service. Man serves any society in which he exists as a part by subordinating private and particular goods to the particular goods of others just as he serves society by not subordinating his ultimate good to lesser common goods or the ultimate good of others. In each of these kinds of service, an individual man is indeed serving The Common Good. And thus here, I think that both Garrigou and De Koninck would certainly agree with Thomas Gilby who suitably states that for St. Thomas, “Every human grouping, however humble, reflected the exemplars of divine association.”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Gilby 1958: *The Political Thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 244.

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