

St. Thomas Aquinas

The Summa Theologica

(Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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OF JOY (FOUR ARTICLES)

WE must now consider the effects which result from the principal act of charity which is love, and (1) the interior effects, (2) the exterior effects. As to the first, three things have to be considered: (1) Joy, (2) Peace, (3) Mercy.

Under the first head there are four points of inquiry:

- [\(1\)](#) Whether joy is an effect of charity?
 - [\(2\)](#) Whether this kind of joy is compatible with sorrow?
 - [\(3\)](#) Whether this joy can be full?
 - [\(4\)](#) Whether it is a virtue?
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Whether joy is effected in us by charity?

Objection 1: It would seem that joy is not effected in us by charity. For the absence of what we love causes sorrow rather than joy. But God, Whom we love by charity, is absent from us, so long as we are in this state of life, since "while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6). Therefore charity causes sorrow in us rather than joy.

Objection 2: Further, it is chiefly through charity that we merit happiness. Now mourning, which pertains to sorrow, is reckoned among those things whereby we merit happiness,

Objection 3: Further, charity is a virtue distinct from hope, as shown above ([Question \[17\]](#), [Article \[6\]](#)). Now joy is the effect of hope, according to Rm. 12:12: "Rejoicing in hope." Therefore it is not the effect of charity.

On the contrary, It is written ([Rm. 5:5](#)): "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us." But joy is caused in us by the Holy Ghost according to Rm. 14:17: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but justice and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Therefore charity is a cause of joy.

I answer that, As stated above ([FS](#), [Question \[25\]](#), [Articles \[1\]](#),2,3), when we were treating of the passions, joy and sorrow proceed from love, but in contrary ways. For joy is caused by love, either through the presence of the thing loved, or because the proper good of the thing loved exists and endures in it; and the latter is the case chiefly in the love of benevolence, whereby a man rejoices in the well-being of his friend, though he be absent. On the other hand sorrow arises from love, either through the absence of the thing loved, or because the loved object to which we wish well, is deprived of its good or afflicted with some evil. Now charity is love of God, Whose good is unchangeable, since He is His goodness, and from the very fact that He is loved, He is in those who love Him by His most excellent effect, according to 1 Jn. 4:16: "He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him." Therefore spiritual joy, which is about God, is caused by charity.

Reply to Objection 1: So long as we are in the body, we are said to be "absent from the Lord," in comparison with that presence whereby He is present to some by the vision of "sight"; wherefore the Apostle goes on to say (2 Cor. 5:6): "For we walk by faith and not by sight." Nevertheless, even in this life, He is present to those who love Him, by the indwelling of His grace.

Reply to Objection 2: The mourning that merits happiness, is about those things that are contrary to happiness. Wherefore it amounts to the same that charity causes this mourning, and this spiritual joy about God, since to rejoice in a certain good amounts to the same as to grieve for things that are contrary to it.

Reply to Objection 3: There can be spiritual joy about God in two ways. First, when we rejoice in the Divine good considered in itself; secondly, when we rejoice in the Divine good as participated by us. The former joy is the better, and proceeds from charity chiefly: while the latter joy proceeds from hope also, whereby we look forward to enjoy the Divine good, although this enjoyment itself, whether perfect or imperfect, is obtained according to the measure of one's charity.

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Whether the spiritual joy, which results from charity, is compatible with an admixture of sorrow?

Objection 1: It would seem that the spiritual joy that results from charity is compatible with an admixture of sorrow. For it belongs to charity to rejoice in our neighbor's good, according to 1 Cor. 13:4,6: "Charity... rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth." But this joy is compatible with an admixture of sorrow, according to Rm. 12:15: "Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep." Therefore the spiritual joy of charity is compatible with an admixture of sorrow.

Objection 2: Further, according to Gregory (Hom. in Evang. xxxiv), "penance consists in deploring past sins, and in not committing again those we have deplored." But there is no true penance without charity. Therefore the joy of charity has an admixture of sorrow.

Objection 3: Further, it is through charity that man desires to be with Christ according to Phil. 1:23: "Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." Now this desire gives rise, in man, to a certain sadness, according to Ps. 119:5: "Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged!" Therefore the joy of charity admits of a seasoning of sorrow.

On the contrary, The joy of charity is joy about the Divine wisdom. Now such like joy has no admixture of sorrow, according to Wis. 8:16: "Her conversation hath no bitterness." Therefore the joy of charity is incompatible with an admixture of sorrow.

I answer that, As stated above ([Article \[1\]](#), ad 3), a twofold joy in God arises from charity. One, the more excellent, is proper to charity; and with this joy we rejoice in the Divine good considered in itself. This joy of charity is incompatible with an admixture of sorrow, even as the good which is its object is incompatible with any admixture of evil: hence the Apostle says ([Phil. 4:4](#)): "Rejoice in the Lord always."

The other is the joy of charity whereby we rejoice in the Divine good as participated by us. This participation can be hindered by anything contrary to it, wherefore, in this respect, the joy of charity is compatible with an admixture of sorrow, in so far as a man grieves for that which hinders the participation of the Divine good, either in us or in our neighbor, whom we love as ourselves.

Reply to Objection 1: Our neighbor does not weep save on account of some evil. Now every evil implies lack of participation in the sovereign good: hence charity makes us weep with our neighbor in so far as he is hindered from participating in the Divine good.

Reply to Objection 2: Our sins divide between us and God, according to Is. 59:2; wherefore this is the reason why we grieve for our past sins, or for those of others, in so far as they hinder us from participating in the Divine good.

Reply to Objection 3: Although in this unhappy abode we participate, after a fashion, in the Divine good, by knowledge and love, yet the unhappiness of this life is an obstacle to a perfect participation in the Divine good: hence this very sorrow, whereby a man grieves for the delay of glory, is connected with the hindrance to a participation of the Divine good.

Objection 1: It would seem that the spiritual joy which proceeds from charity cannot be filled. For the more we rejoice in God, the more is our joy in Him filled. But we can never rejoice in Him as much as it is meet that we should rejoice in God, since His goodness which is infinite, surpasses the creature's joy which is finite. Therefore joy in God can never be filled.

Objection 2: Further, that which is filled cannot be increased. But the joy, even of the blessed, can be increased, since one's joy is greater than another's. Therefore joy in God cannot be filled in a creature.

Objection 3: Further, comprehension seems to be nothing else than the fulness of knowledge. Now, just as the cognitive power of a creature is finite, so is its appetitive power. Since therefore God cannot be comprehended by any creature, it seems that no creature's joy in God can be filled.

On the contrary, Our Lord said to His disciples ([Jn. 15:11](#)): "That My joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled."

I answer that, Fulness of joy can be understood in two ways; first, on the part of the thing rejoiced in, so that one rejoice in it as much as it is meet that one should rejoice in it, and thus God's joy alone in Himself is filled, because it is infinite; and this is condignly due to the infinite goodness of God: but the joy of any creature must needs be finite. Secondly, fulness of joy may be understood on the part of the one who rejoices. Now joy is compared to desire, as rest to movement, as stated above ([FS, Question \[25\], Articles \[1\],2](#)), when we were treating of the passions: and rest is full when there is no more movement. Hence joy is full, when there remains nothing 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, as was shown above ([Question \[24\], Articles \[4\],7](#)). When once, however, perfect happiness has been attained, nothing will remain to be desired, because then there will be full enjoyment of God, wherein man will obtain whatever he had desired, even with regard to other goods, according to Ps. 102:5: "Who satisfieth thy desire with good things." 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). This is what is meant by the words of Lk. 6:38: "Good measure and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall they give into your bosom." Yet, since no creature is capable of the joy condignly due to God, it follows that this perfectly full joy is not taken into man, but, on the contrary, man enters into it, according to Mt. 25:21: "Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Reply to Objection 1: This argument takes the fulness of joy in reference to the thing in which we rejoice.

Reply to Objection 2: When each one attains to happiness he will reach the term appointed to him by Divine predestination, and nothing further will remain to which he may tend, although by reaching that term, some will approach nearer to God than others. Hence each one's joy will be full with regard to himself, because his desire will be fully set at rest; yet one's joy will be greater than another's, on account of a fuller participation of the Divine happiness.

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known, so that it is known as much as it can be. There is however a fulness of knowledge in respect of the knower, just as we have said of joy. Wherefore the Apostle says (Col. 1:9): "That you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

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Whether joy is a virtue?

Objection 1: It would seem that joy is a virtue. For vice is contrary to virtue. Now sorrow is set down as a vice, as in the case of sloth and envy. Therefore joy also should be accounted a virtue.

Objection 2: Further, as love and hope are passions, the object of which is "good," so also is joy. Now love and hope are reckoned to be virtues. Therefore joy also should be reckoned a virtue.

Objection 3: Further, the precepts of the Law are about acts of virtue. But we are commanded to rejoice in the Lord, according to Phil. 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always." Therefore joy is a virtue.

On the contrary, It is not numbered among the theological virtues, nor among the moral, nor among the intellectual virtues, as is evident from what has been said above ([FS, Questions \[57\],60,62](#)).

I answer that, As stated above ([FS, Question \[55\], Articles \[2\],4](#)), virtue is an operative habit, wherefore by its very nature it has an inclination to a certain act. Now it may happen that from the same habit there proceed several ordinate and homogeneous acts, each of which follows from another. And since the subsequent acts do not proceed from the virtuous habit except through the preceding act, hence it is that the virtue is defined and named in reference to that preceding act, although those other acts also proceed from the virtue. Now it is evident from what we have said about the passions ([FS, Question \[25\], Articles \[2\],4](#)) that love is the first affection of the appetitive power, and that desire and joy follow from it. Hence the same virtuous habit inclines us to love and desire the beloved good, and to rejoice in it. But in as much as love is the first of these acts, that virtue takes its name, not from joy, nor from desire, but from love, and is called charity. Hence joy is not a virtue distinct from charity, but an act, or effect, of charity: for which reason it is numbered among the Fruits ([Gal. 5:22](#)).

Reply to Objection 1: The sorrow which is a vice is caused by inordinate self-love, and this is not a special vice, but a general source of the vices, as stated above ([FS, Question \[77\], Article \[4\]](#)); so that it was necessary to account certain particular sorrows as special vices, because they do not arise from a special, but from a general vice. On the other hand love of God is accounted a special virtue, namely charity, to which joy must be referred, as its proper act, as stated above (here and [Article \[2\]](#)).

[Donate bitcoin.](#) St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [SS](#) » [SS028.html](#) of the object, a special character, viz. "difficult," and "possible to obtain"; for which reason it is accounted a special virtue. On the other hand joy does not add to love any special aspect, that might cause a special virtue.

Reply to Objection 3: The Law prescribes joy, as being an act of charity, albeit not its first act.