

Francisco Suárez and His Sources on the Gift of Tongues

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Abstract

This paper considers the grace of the gift of tongues both as it is currently practiced among many members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) and how it has traditionally been understood in medieval and post-medieval theology. The paper especially considers the perspective of Francisco Suárez on the subject insofar as he, as in most matters, is able to frame the *status quaestionis* of the topic and presents a uniform view of the Catholic theological tradition's understanding of the gift. Ultimately, I point out that there are significant points of divergence between the nature of this gift as the CCR understands and practices it and as it has traditionally been understood historically.

Keywords

Francisco Suárez, Baroque Theology, Gift of Tongues, Grace, Catholic Charismatic Renewal

I. Introduction

May of 2017 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), which identifies its origin as the 1967 college student retreat at Duquesne University.¹ The participants of the retreat had what they identified as a profound spiritual awakening culminating in the “baptism of the Spirit.”² From this experience the CCR

¹ The movement also clearly has roots in Ann Arbor, Michigan. For a discussion of its history there in terms of the Word of God community, see Léon Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* (New York, NY: The Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 72–79. For a more extensive account see René Laurentin, “The Birth of Catholic Pentecostalism,” in *Speaking in Tongues: A Guide to Research on Glossolalia*, ed. Watson Mills, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), pp. 235–242.

² See Patti Gallagher Mansfield, *as By a New Pentecost: The Dramatic Beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (Franciscan University Press, 1992).

gradually spread across various college campuses and covenant communities throughout the United States and now enjoys growing popularity throughout the world, especially in North and South America as well as Europe. Characteristic of the CCR's practices and identity is its emphasis upon extraordinary charisms or gifts which include physical healing, deliverance (of spirits), prophecy, and speaking in tongues. Among these extraordinary gifts, speaking in tongues is especially revered, frequently sought after, and utilized as a sign of one's spiritual growth or even as evidence of one's having been "baptized in the Spirit." Indeed, Ralph Martin describes "baptism in the Spirit" as the "core experience" of the CCR,³ and, as some Pentecostals maintain, it is accompanied by speaking in tongues. Hugh Black, a Pentecostal leader writes, "I have expected all new converts to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. . . . I also expect them all to speak in tongues and I am not aware that any have ever received [baptism in the Spirit] without so doing."⁴

Similar sentiments are found within the CCR. Steve Clark, for example, tells us that, "Commonly this experience [viz., being baptized in the Spirit] is connected with the gift of tongues."⁵ The *Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual*, used to lead the Life in the Spirit Seminars that are staples of the CCR, tells us, "Tongues come when a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Everyone should want the gift of tongues."⁶ Speaking in tongues seems virtually normative: "There are some people. . . who say that they do not want to have the gift of tongues. This is a wrong attitude. The person is placing limits on God's working. . . . Everyone should want to have tongues."⁷ The basis for one's faithful expectation of this gift for the CCR is no doubt rooted in various biblical passages, especially Acts 2:1–15 and 1 Corinthians 14: 1–40. The gift of tongues is especially associated with the events that transpired during Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon those gathered in the upper room and enabled them to speak in diverse languages (Acts 2: 9–11).

In what follows I argue that the understanding and practice of speaking in tongues, as it currently exists among the partisans of the CCR, is incongruent with what is found in the long history of the

³ Ralph Martin, "A New Pentecost? Catholic Theology and 'Baptism in the Spirit,'" *Logos* 14 (2011), p. 17.

⁴ Hugh Black, *The Baptism in the Spirit and its Effects: A Honest Look at the Questions People Raise about Baptism in the Spirit* (Greenock Scotland: New Dawn Books, 1994), p. 49.

⁵ Steve Clark, *Baptized in the Spirit and Spiritual Gifts* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1976), p. 27. It should be pointed out that Clark's works are repeatedly recommended by the *Life in the Spirit Team Manual*.

⁶ *Life in the Spirit Team Manual*, Catholic Edition (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1979), p. 147.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

Catholic theological tradition's understanding of this extraordinary gift. To establish my claim I turn to arguably the most preeminent theologian of the second scholasticism, the Jesuit Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), and consider the manner in which he approaches this extraordinary gift. I find therein an understanding that differs radically from the way it is practiced and understood within the CCR.

I focus on Suárez for three main reasons. First, Suarez enjoyed considerable authority as a widely revered theologian (and philosopher) within the 16th and 17th centuries. Another Baroque Jesuit, Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza, for example, refers to Suárez as the “light of Spain and the whole Church.”⁸ Within his own time, Suárez was given the title *doctor eximius ac pius* by Pope Paul V on account of his learned contributions to Catholic theology.⁹ Though perhaps not to the same degree as Thomas Aquinas, from whom Suárez nevertheless draws upon constantly as an unparalleled authority,¹⁰ the Jesuit has played a profound role in shaping the Catholic intellectual tradition, which tradition must be duly taken into account when further developed. Second, the CCR's focus on renewal is often expressed in terms of its evangelistic concerns and efforts. The same set of concerns—at least in an analogical fashion—was upon the immediate horizon of Suárez's cultural concerns as missionaries spread the Gospel to the New World as well as the Far East.¹¹ The concerns surrounding those missionary efforts often had a direct impact upon the manner in which Catholic theology was developed, as is especially obvious, for example, in Suárez's near contemporary, the Dominican Francisco de Vitoria, whose *relectiones* (viz., *De indis* and *De bello*) argued for the rights of native peoples against imperialist

⁸ Cf. Hurtado, *Universa philosophia*, Metaphysica, d. 1, s. 2, n. 48 (Lyon, 1624: p. 700b): “Qua in re complures sunt authorum sententiae, quas graviter & erudite proponit partimque refellit P. Francisc. Suarez clarissimum non solum Societatis, & Hispaniae lumen, sed etiam Ecclesiae totius . . .” Suárez's influences stretched even beyond Catholic theological circles and found admiration in both Protestant and secular circles. The 18th-century rationalist philosopher, Christian Wolff, is not short on praise for the Jesuit. See his *Philosophia prima sive ontologia* (Frankfurt, 1736), pars I, sec. 2, c. 3, § 169: “Sane Francisco Suarez e Societate Jesu, quem inter Scholasticos res metaphysicas profundius meditatum . . .”

⁹ Cf. Joseph Henry Fichter, *Man of Spain: Francis Suárez* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1940), pp. 272–273.

¹⁰ Jesus Iturrioz has compiled Suárez's citations of Thomas Aquinas and finds them to number 1,008 occasions, less frequent only than Suárez's citations of Aristotle, which come in at 1735 occasions. See Iturrioz, “Fuentes de la metafísica de Suárez,” *Pensamiento*, numero extraordinario (1948), p. 40.

¹¹ See, e.g., *Hispanic Philosophy in the Age of Discovery*, Studies in the History of Philosophy, vol. 29, ed. Kevin White (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997). See also the work of John Doyle regarding the missionary dimension of Suárez in particular and the efforts of the Society of Jesus as a whole: “Francisco Suárez : On Preaching the Gospel to People Like the American Indians,” *Fordham International Law Journal* 15 (1992), pp. 879–951.

conquistadores who sought to treat them as chattel. Third, Suárez has such an exhaustive knowledge of the entire theological tradition that preceded him that he is able to summarize perfectly the tradition's understanding of various points of doctrine. As Étienne Gilson put it, "Suarez enjoys such a knowledge of mediaeval philosophy as to put to shame any modern historian of medieval thought. On each and every question he seems to know everybody and everything, and to read his book[s] is like attending the Last Judgment of . . . centuries of Christian speculation by a dispassionate judge."¹² The same can be said for Suárez's theological erudition as well. On the matter of tongues he cites every authority conceivable from Church Fathers to Thomas Aquinas and Renaissance theologians, such as Cajetan and Joannes Viguierius. If one wishes to determine the *status quaestionis* regarding the "gift of tongues" as the early, medieval, and post-medieval Church understood it, Suárez's account offers a historically comprehensive and systematic presentation that determines the philosophico-theological basis of the gift.

In short, my concern for raising the question of the gift of tongues with respect to Francisco Suárez as well as his sources is to highlight the significant differences that obtain, on the one hand, between the traditional and consistent teaching on the subject articulated within the Catholic Church and, on the other, what currently exists and is practiced among partisans of the CCR. If the latter wish to integrate themselves into Catholic theology, they shall have to come to terms, not with Suárez himself, but certainly with the tradition he epitomizes.

II. Speaking in Tongues in the CCR

What is the CCR's understanding of the nature of speaking in tongues, and what is its practice? Generally, there seem to be two basic interpretations about the nature of this gift. The first account suggests that speaking in tongues involves the spontaneous utterance of actual, human languages. The second position, however, holds that speaking in tongues involves no actual intelligible human discourse but consists in mere vocalizations and, in some instances, even laughter or barks.¹³ Steve Clark, one of the founders of the CCR, seems to

¹² Étienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), p. 99.

¹³ The so-called Toronto Blessing, a Pentecostal group whose origin consisted in conducting religious services in the Toronto airport, was well known for its emphasis upon "holy laughter" and the simulation of dog barking. See James A. Beverley, *Holy Laughter and the Toronto Blessing: An Investigative Report* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995).

hold to the first understanding of the nature of speaking in tongues albeit in an attenuated fashion. He cites a number of biblical passages to support his position, namely, those from 1 Cor. 14.¹⁴ He writes:

My own personal experience is that it [viz., speaking in tongues] can be for everyone. In our community, it is usual for people to pray in tongues when they are prayed with to be baptized in the Spirit (if they have been properly instructed and prepared), and the few exceptions pray in tongues within a matter of days or weeks.¹⁵

This gift is crucial, Clark thinks, for speaking in tongues makes it easier for a person to “yield to the Spirit than it is in English.”¹⁶ The suggestion here, then, is that those speaking in tongues are speaking in actual languages, just not in English. (This is presumably for those who are native English speakers.) Yet, Clark adds that most people in America are inhibited from exercising this gift but can overcome their inhibitions by “bypassing their mind.”¹⁷ It seems that this particular gift is associated with the non-rational insofar as the intellect is circumvented, a claim we shall see repeated in yet another member of the CCR: Mary Healy.

If it is the case that speaking in tongues is a non-rational act “bypassing the mind,” it will be difficult to understand how this gift involves speaking in real human languages, as many proponents of the gift (including Clark) suggest, since human discourse always involves a conceptual (and thus rational) element.¹⁸ Not to mention, as contemporary philosophers of language, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, have suggested, language always involves a communal element as well in which meaning is developed contextually in a socio-historical setting. Thus, as Wittgenstein famously held, there is no private language.¹⁹ Nevertheless, Clark insists upon the importance of speaking in tongues for a person who has not “yielded” to speaking in tongues is not “fully in the Spirit.”²⁰ As Anthony Hoekema points out, this expectation of speaking in tongues upon being baptized in the Spirit is a fundamental and doctrinal tenant of the Assemblies of God and the majority of Pentecostals.²¹

¹⁴ Clark, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp. 32–33.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ See Aristotle, *De interpretatione*, c. 1.

¹⁹ See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), §§ 244–271.

²⁰ Clark, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 38.

²¹ Anthony Hoekema, *What About Tongue Speaking?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 38–39.

Further in line with Pentecostal teaching, Clark holds that speaking in tongues is just “speaking in languages,”²² by which he means speaking real, human languages. Importantly, for Clark and many Pentecostals, the language being spoken, though it is an actual human language, is one that the speaker neither knows nor understands. Given that the speaker is unaware of what is being communicated and Paul’s injunction not to speak in tongues without an interpreter, Clark too thinks that this gift should only be practiced in the presence of an interpreter. But interpretation for Clark is “not a gift of translation” for the interpreter likewise does not understand the language being spoken.²³ Rather, the gift of interpretation “is an urging to speak words that are given.”²⁴

Lutheran pastor Larry Christenson, for example, explains that:

A speaker in tongues is seldom understood. (In a group meeting his utterance will be ‘interpreted,’ but ‘interpretation’ is also a manifestation of the Spirit, and is not the same as translating a foreign language with the mind.) Occasionally people report an experience similar to that which occurred on the Day of Pentecost . . . though the speaker himself did not know the language nor understand what he was saying.²⁵

Other members of the CCR offer a different account that denies any actual human languages are at play when speaking in tongues. One prominent member of the CCR, Mary Healy, explains her view: “The gift of tongues is a kind of non-rational prayer of the heart, a gift of praying and praising God aloud but without intelligible words.”²⁶ Elsewhere, Healy points out, “The gift of tongues seems to have been common in the patristic era, although it went by another name: jubilation.”²⁷ The reason for identifying speaking in tongues with ‘jubilation,’ she explains, follows from the fact that the Fathers of the Church, as we shall see in what follows, referred to ‘speaking in tongues’ as the communication of actual human languages such as occurred in Pentecost.²⁸ Healy does not give any indication why this shift in meaning has occurred, such that what was traditionally described as communicating in an actual language should now identify non-verbal, vocal prayer. She only identifies the phenomenon as what is captured by ‘jubilation.’

²² Clark, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 127.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Larry Christenson, *Speaking in Tongues and Its Significance for the Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Dimension Books, 1968), p. 22.

²⁶ Healy, *Healing*, p. 201, n. 86.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 204, n. 141.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

To explain ‘jubilation’ Healy turns to a passage in Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*.²⁹ Therein Augustine describes a healing that took place in the midst of an assembly, which exalts with great joy at the miraculous event. The assembly praised God, Augustine says, in a “voice without words” (*voce sine verbis*). But this is to speak in tongues: “People exalt God aloud yet ‘without words’—that is, using the gift of tongues.”³⁰ Healy also refers us to Eddie Ensley, who tells us, “jubilation, which means a vocalized wordless prayer, [is] essentially what modern Charismatics would call glossolalia, or praying in tongues.”³¹ He begins his treatment of ‘jubilation’ in the patristic era by citing the same text from Augustine as Healy. He claims, “In part because jubilation was not controversial, few early writers scrutinized it as closely as practices such as the controversy over pictures and statues received.”³²

Evidence of jubilation abounds throughout the history of the Church, Ensley contends, and he points out that even Thomas Aquinas spoke in tongues and had a keen sense of jubilation. He cites a passage from Thomas’s commentary on Psalm 32 in which Thomas speaks of prayer as involving weeping, sighing, and jubilation. There, the Angelic Doctor seems to associate ‘jubilation’ with “wordless praise.”³³ For Thomas, since God is beyond all knowledge, He exceeds the limits of human conception and linguistic expression. But when the Christian expresses the good things of God, “He expresses this joy without words, with sound that has no words—the jubilation.”³⁴

Beyond Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Ensley’s work considers occasions of jubilation throughout the history of the Church and suggests that it is a traditional form of worship that only began to disappear after the Council of Trent and even further after the growing “rigidity” right before Vatican II, which, he claims, “was a period profoundly out of touch with tradition.”³⁵ Ensley’s conclusion, then, is just that speaking in tongues is jubilation. Moreover, jubilation is just wordless expressions—presumably vocalizations—of praise. Thus, such a view presents us with an altogether different account than what one finds with Clark and those Pentecostals who view speaking in tongues as discoursing in a real language. The question

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 141–143.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

³¹ Ensley, *Sounds of Wonder*, p. xvi.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121. This quote is taken from the older 1977 edition of Ensley’s original *Sounds of Wonder: A Popular History of Speaking in Tongues in the Catholic Tradition* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1977). He seems to have attenuated his position since then.

now is: how does the CCR view, in both forms just briefly discussed, cohere with the Catholic theological tradition as Francisco Suárez articulates it?

III. Grace in General according to Suárez

Suárez's discussion of the gift of tongues (*linguarum donum*) as a particular kind of grace occurs within his *Tractatus de gratia Dei seu de Deo salvatore* (hereafter, *De gratia*),³⁶ which, as its title suggests, aims to explore the nature of grace. The *De gratia* follows upon yet another of his celebrated works, the *De legibus ac Deo legislatore*.³⁷ The *De legibus*—a mammoth work stretching across ten books that explores the various kinds of law from the divine to canon and positive law—explores what the salvation of human beings consists in as well as the goodness and value of one's works with respect to two principles: law and grace. The relation is such that, whereas law provides the rule (*regula*) for human conduct, grace provides the power by which we are aided (*juvamus*) in our good acts.³⁸ Grace, holds Suárez in unison with Thomas Aquinas, is an aid for us to obey the commands of the law (natural, moral, etc.), especially against the deleterious attractions that concupiscence generates. As the two—law and grace—are complementary, the Jesuit views the *De legibus* and *De gratia* as themselves mutually complementary.

Before narrowing to a consideration of specific graces, including the gift of tongues, the *Doctor eximius* first considers the nature of grace in general, which will help us in our assessment of the gift of tongues. Suárez offers his reader an etymological examination and explains that the term 'grace' (*gratia*) stems from the fact that it is 'freely given' (*gratis datur*). He then subdivides grace into two fundamental genera. According to the first, grace signifies love (*amor*), for it is the first gift that anyone can confer upon another and, following Thomas Aquinas³⁹ and also with John 3:16 in mind, the Jesuit tells us that love is the root of all other gifts and favors (*beneficia*) that can be given.⁴⁰ Closely following upon the first, the second division of grace holds that grace signifies gifts freely given precisely on account of love.⁴¹ Suárez has in mind Eph. 4:7, Rom. 5:16–17 and 12:6. These two senses of grace are analogically related insofar as anything

³⁶ In what follows I make use of the Paris, Luis Vivès edition of Suárez's *opera omnia* and cite volume number followed by page number parenthetically when required.

³⁷ The *De legibus* occupies the fifth and sixth volumes of the Vivès edition.

³⁸ *De gratia*, prooem., n. 1.

³⁹ See Thomas Aquinas, *ST I-II*, q. 110, a. 1.

⁴⁰ *De gratia*, proleg. 3, c. 1, n. 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

that begets (*gignit*) love is called ‘grace.’ That is, the first sense of grace stems from the disposition or characteristics of the persons that renders them lovable, for which reason they receive gifts.⁴² Suárez is sure to identify a distinction, however, between the manner in which humans and God love. Whereas human love presupposes a good or beautiful object that is loveable, divine love presupposes no such object, for it is God Himself who makes the very object. Not only does He make it, God also renders the object lovable through His grace, taken in the second above-noted sense.⁴³ Grace in this latter sense forms the subject of Suárez’s treatment insofar as it is meant to be an aid to human action.⁴⁴ Moreover, the utterly gratuitous character of grace, described here, indicates the very divine beneficence and initiative insofar as God distributes grace “just as He wishes,” not solely to His friends, but also to His enemies so as to make sinners into saints.⁴⁵

In narrowing his focus on this particular dimension of grace, Suárez was sure to establish its supernatural character so as to distinguish it from the ordinary workings of nature. While there are certainly goods or benefits that are coordinate with nature, such benefits are proportionate to and capable of being satisfied by nature’s own proper powers. For example, a hungry person can procure food and satisfy his hunger; an ill person can follow a health regiment whereby he is restored to health; etc. What is more, Christ is the ultimate source of all graces, yet none of these natural benefits are bestowed upon us through Christ, but simply arise out of nature’s own operation.⁴⁶

Grace does not stand in opposition to nature.⁴⁷ What is more, Suárez in full agreement with Aquinas teaches that grace presupposes nature itself, more specifically a created ‘person.’⁴⁸ Nevertheless, as frequently described in Scripture, grace has a supernatural character insofar as it signifies a “higher gift” by which God not only sanctifies nature, renders its operations good, but also aids nature in contending against sin.⁴⁹ Since grace is something “super-added” to nature, it is understood to transcend nature itself.⁵⁰ Such natural transcendence occurs in two ways: either (1) absolutely or (2) as a benefit that is superior to nature.⁵¹ The first corresponds to something that is essentially supernatural and stands above the power

⁴² *Ibid.*, n. 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *De gratia*, prooem., n. 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, prol. 3, c. 2, n. 1.

⁴⁷ Cf. Thomas, *ST I*, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.

⁴⁸ *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 2, n. 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, prol. 3, c. 2, n. 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, prol. 3, c. 2, n. 7.

of any created nature to produce, for example, the Incarnation or the Eucharist. The second is some benefit to nature that, nevertheless, according to the common course of things and the power that pertains to created things, nature itself is not able to produce and is conferred by divine providence (e.g., a miraculous healing). The first completely stands above nature, whereas the latter is ordered to nature for its benefit; yet, “both are a non-owed gift or benefit to nature and given by God.”⁵²

Importantly, Suárez speaks of grace as “non-owed,” for one cannot demand such grace from God. One can ask for it, of course, but to expect God’s deliverance of such grace on a regular and quasi-mechanical basis runs contrary to the very nature of grace. God gives grace freely on account of His love for human beings, who, though they receive his grace confidently, always experience its unexpected grandeur. Grace enters one’s life-world and reorients the structures of one’s being towards a new horizon that had always been hidden in plain sight.

IV. The Gift of Tongues

It is with respect to the latter form of grace—the miraculous—that the gift of tongues pertains. The gift of tongues is coordinate to nature since one can by his own natural abilities learn a new language with which he was previously unfamiliar. The miraculous character of tongues, however, consists in one’s coming to a knowledge of a previously unknown language without the usual process whereby one acquires that knowledge. In describing this miraculous gift as coordinate with nature, Suárez identifies a critical element of the theological tradition’s understanding of the nature of miracles. The Catholic theological tradition has always viewed the miraculous as distinct from nature but not in opposition to it. According to Aquinas, God gives created natures true integral powers with which they can exercise secondary causality. But any effect that a secondary cause can produce can likewise be produced by its primary cause (God) directly without the intermediary agency of the secondary causes (creatures).⁵³ In a miraculous event, however, it could be the case that God, without the medium of secondary causes, directly produces the miraculous effect.

The upshot here is that nature is not violated and its integrity remains intact. This is significant when it comes to the gift of tongues.

⁵² Ibid., prol. 3, c. 2, n. 7 (vol. 7, p. 135): “... quia utraque esse potest beneficium naturae non debitum, et a Deo gratis collatum...”

⁵³ See Thomas, *SCG* III, cc. 101-102; cf. Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 169–174.

Every authority Suárez cites holds in unison that the gift of tongues pertains to actual, intelligible, human languages. Here, the only question is the manner in which the speaker comes to ‘know’ the previously unknown language.

Not only does Suárez view the gift of tongues as a grace that benefits nature but does not undermine it, he thinks this is true of all the special gifts that Paul identifies in 1 Corinthians 12. These gifts number nine altogether and, in addition to the gift of tongues, include the word of wisdom (*sermo sapientiae*), the word of science (*sermo scientiae*), faith, healing, the exercise of virtue, prophecy, the discernment of spirits, and the interpretation of discourses (*interpretatio sermonum*). Unlike the division of grace that pertains to something that in its very being is supernatural, each of these special gifts is for the sake of nature itself. The means, however, through which the effects of grace are produced stand outside of nature’s own powers. This is especially true of the gift of tongues, for here what is understood not only by Suárez but again also by the entire tradition that preceded him, is an intelligible human language.

For Suárez, the gift of tongues, or *linguarum donum*, constitutes the eighth gift Paul identifies. Historically, this is the gift that was communicated to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost and to other faithful during the beginning of the birth of the Church.⁵⁴ Here, an identity can be drawn between the description ‘speaking-in-tongues’ with precisely that which was practiced on Pentecost as described in Acts 2. This identity can, in turn, serve as a means of determining whether the present-day practice of the CCR’s ‘speaking-in-tongues’ is the same. For Suárez, this gift serves a practical purpose. It empowers the Apostles and their disciples with the ability to “preach everywhere and to all nations without impediment and be understood.”⁵⁵ Two things must be noted here. First, insofar as the gift of tongues serves a utilitarian purpose it is thereby subordinated to the end for which it is ordained. As such, it does not constitute an end itself. On this point, the Renaissance Thomist Cajetan tells us that the value of the gift of tongues consists in the perfection to which it attains (*viz.*, the conversion of all nations) and not in itself absolutely.⁵⁶ As is the case with all ends that are for the sake of other ends, those mediate ends receive their intelligibility from the ultimate end to which they are ordained.⁵⁷ This picture of tongues would seem to stand in contrast to some Protestant interpretations which hold “The tongues were not given primarily as a means of

⁵⁴ Suárez, *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 5, n. 47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* (vol. 7, p. 165): “. . . ut Apostoli et eorum discipuli sine impedimento possent ubique praedicare, et ab omnibus nationibus intelligi . . .”

⁵⁶ Cajetan, *In Summam theol.*, II-II, q. 176, a. 1, n. 2.

⁵⁷ Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1.1094a1-8.

communicating the Gospel, but as a *supernatural sign* that God was in the midst of these believers.”⁵⁸

The question here is: to what end is the gift of tongues directed? Scripture, tradition, and Suárez are clear: making known the intelligibility of the Gospel and uniting the various peoples into “one and the same mystical body.” For this reason, Suárez thinks, it was most fitting that the “doctors and others” should speak among each other and understand one another so that all should be gathered into one society more easily.⁵⁹ His preliminary account of the gift of tongues describes the purpose of that gift as fostering ‘unity’ among the people of God. But what kind of ‘unity’ is at issue here? Already the various nations constitute a kind of unity by which one nation enjoys its identity over and against another nation: Jews from Gentiles, Greek from Romans, etc. The kind of unity that Scripture has in mind and to which Suárez refers is the unity of *faith*, which comes about by the intellect’s ascent to the truths that are being made known through the gift of tongues.⁶⁰ Such a unity is possible, however, only if an intelligible discourse is present to which one can give (intellectual) assent. The gift of tongues is thus an intelligible phenomenon—congruous to human nature as rational—that consists in the discourse of actual human languages. What becomes even more evident is that this is not only Suárez’s view but the entire theological tradition to which he is heir and benefactor.

Beyond discussing the nature of the gift of tongues in terms of the purpose to which it is directed, Suárez also explores this particular gift as it is in itself. Immediately he notes a controverted question that preoccupied a number of important theologians. Some think that the gift of tongues pertains to the one who hears; others think that it is a gift to the one speaking. The first would be understood such that, though the speaker would be discoursing only in his own proper language, he is in fact understood by the assembled hearers in their diverse languages.⁶¹

The second way of understanding the nature of the gift of tongues is in terms of the speaker himself. This would occur when the “species and knowledge of diverse languages are infused into the speaker, and the faculty to speak in all of those languages is given to him.”⁶² Interestingly, Suárez adds that this gift would allow the speaker to speak one language at a time successively and according to different occasions, not all of them together simultaneously, for “it

⁵⁸ Christenson, *Speaking in Tongues*, 20.

⁵⁹ Suárez, *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 5, n. 47.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, n. 48.

⁶² *Ibid.*, n. 48 (vol. 7, p. 166): “. . . si loquenti infundantur species et notitiae diversarum linguarum, deturque ei facultas loquendi in omnibus illis. . . .”

would be impossible [for them] to be brought together in the mouth of the speaker.”⁶³ Whether this is a physiological impossibility, a cognitive impossibility, or both Suárez does not say.

Nevertheless, given the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition that framed Suárez’s theological discourse, I suspect that the matter here is determined by the exigencies of Aristotelian epistemology. As Aristotle indicates in his *De Interpretatione*, vocalizations are signs of an intellectual *verbum* or concept. That concept itself is a similitude of the thing known.⁶⁴ So when a person makes the utterance ‘cat’ in the English language, for example, the concept corresponding to the cat is summoned in the person’s intellect. When, however, a Spanish speaker makes the utterance ‘gato,’ the two utterances—one English, the other Spanish—are diverse but the concept they immediately signify and the reality they mediate signify is the same. Thomas Aquinas holds fast to the basic structures of this Aristotelian semantic account,⁶⁵ but adds an interesting twist when he refers it to the gift of tongues. In marking the difference between the gift of tongues and the gift of prophecy, Thomas explains that “the gift of tongues refers to the utterance of diverse voices, which are a sign of some intelligible truth, which signs are also themselves a certain phantasm, which appear according to an imaginary vision.”⁶⁶ In contrast, prophecy consists in “the illumination of the mind itself to know some intelligible truth.”⁶⁷ Moreover, whereas the gift of prophecy pertains to knowledge of things, the gift of tongues pertains to a knowledge of words.⁶⁸ For this reason, prophecy consists in *scientia*, whereas the gift of tongues only enjoys a semiotic character.

Accordingly, were all languages to be spoken together at once there would be a semiotic cacophony of incommensurate signs functioning at such cross-purposes as to frustrate intelligibility. If the gift of tongues is understood in this latter sense, as pertaining to the speaker, there is nothing miraculous or supernatural on the part of the hearers because the speaker is speaking in a language that the hearers themselves naturally know.⁶⁹

After Suárez notes the controversy regarding whether the gift of tongues pertains to the speaker or hearer, he gives us a fascinating

⁶³ Ibid., n. 48 (vol. 7, p. 166): “. . . non simul, et ejusdem vocis formatione (id enim impossibile est simul fieri in ore loquentis), sed successive, et juxta occurrentes occasiones.”

⁶⁴ Aristotle *De Interpretatione* 1.16a1-10.

⁶⁵ Cf. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 13, a. 1.

⁶⁶ Ibid., II-II, q. 176, a. 2 (ed. Leonine, vol. 10, p. 412): “. . . donum linguarum refertur ad diversas voces preferendas, quae sunt signa alicuius intelligibilis veritatis: cuius etiam signa sunt quaedam ipsa phantasmata quae secundum imaginariam visionem apparent. . . .”

⁶⁷ Ibid. (ed. Leonine, vol. 10, p. 412): “Dictum est autem supra quod donum prophetiae consistit in ipsa illuminatione mentis ad cognoscendum intelligibilem veritatem.”

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Suárez, *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 5, n. 48.

account of the theological tradition's understanding of the matter. Each of the authorities he cites agrees that the first opinion is the improbable one. The frequent reason offered against that opinion is that the Apostles were actually discoursing in intelligible human languages. Not surprisingly, Aquinas features prominently in Suárez's account. The Dominican master explains that it would not be fitting for the Apostles to be instructed by those to whom they were sent in their own native language, either in terms of how the Apostles themselves should speak or understand those speaking to them.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the Apostles were sent out in their poverty, which means that finding someone able to serve as a language tutor would be impractical.⁷¹ Suárez capitalizes upon this reasoning, which he describes as the "best reason" (*optima ratio*), and adds that it was not only necessary for the Apostles to speak in tongues so that the hearers could understand the message being proclaimed, but also that the Apostles would understand what the unbelievers (*infideles*) were saying to them so as to respond to their questions and even hear their confessions.⁷² For this reason, Thomas thinks the gift of tongues pertains to the "perfection of knowledge" (*perfectionem scientiae*) since the Apostles themselves truly understood what was being communicated.⁷³ In short, the gift of tongues functions within the intelligible order. This doctrinal aspect is the also first motive given, as it were, for the gift of tongues that Cajetan, identifies: "First, from the universal office of teaching of those disciples of Christ."⁷⁴ Following upon Paul's injunction not to speak in tongues without an interpreter (1 Cor. 14: 27ff.), the gift of tongues is not meant to edify one's own self but has an ecclesial character and doctrinal purpose.

The claim that the gift of tongues is a gift given to the speaker was not original to Aquinas and his posterity but was already established in the fourth century with Gregory Nazianzus, whom Suárez also cites.⁷⁵ Nazianzus identifies ambiguous punctuation as the reason for the lack of clarity as to whether this was a gift to the speaker or hearer.⁷⁶ Nazianzus prefers the interpretation that this was a gift for the speaker since it coheres with the larger scriptural account of Pentecost in which it was asked whether the Apostles were drunk. In response to which, Peter denied the accusation pointing out that it was

⁷⁰ Thomas, *ST* II-II, q. 176, a. 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Suárez, *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 5, n. 52.

⁷³ Thomas, *ST* II-II, q. 176, a. 1, ad 2.

⁷⁴ Cajetan, *In Summam theologiae* II-II, q. 176, a. 1, n. 1 (ed. Leonine, vol. 10, p. 411): "Primum, ex universali officio docendi illorum Christi discipulorum."

⁷⁵ The Vivès edition of Suárez's *De gratia* erroneously cites Gregory's 44th *Oratio*. The proper *Oratio* is the 41st.

⁷⁶ Gregory Nazianzus, *Oratio* 41.15 (PG, vol. 36, col. 450).

not yet past the third hour of the day.⁷⁷ What is more, understanding the gift as pertaining to the speakers serves as a didactic juxtaposition to what occurred at the tower of Babel. Whereas the pride of men severed the unity of society and language that existed among them, by means of this gift of the Holy Spirit what was diversified is brought back into unity.⁷⁸ Suárez follows Nazianzus on this point and holds that the gift of tongues was not only given to the early Church for the instruction of those who hear, but also for society and the unity of the faithful itself, for which it was necessary that they should be able to converse among themselves and be able to understand one another mutually.⁷⁹

What is more, for Nazianzus, given the didactic character of the gift of tongues, this gift was understood to be for the sake of unbelievers and not for the faithful.⁸⁰ This is congruous with what Paul himself says: “Thus, tongues are a sign not for those who believe but for unbelievers” (1 Cor. 14:22). It is difficult, then, to appreciate the value of speaking in tongues when that practice is carried out among believers themselves or in an individual context, which frequently occurs in CCR gatherings as we have seen from Clark. There is also a question about the frequency of this gift that would seem to undermine its miraculous character. There is no question that miracles continue to this very day beyond the birth of the Church during Apostolic times.⁸¹ The question here pertains instead to their extraordinary character as miracles, which—precisely as *extra*-ordinary—are not regular or frequent occurrences. This extraordinary character is inscribed within the very meaning of a miracle itself from the Latin *mirari* (= ‘to wonder’). Suárez cites an important text of Augustine, his *In Evangelium Joannis Tractatus*. In the 32nd Tractate Augustine explains that on the “day of Pentecost, [God] sent the Holy Spirit over [the Apostles]. By which, as is said, those who were gathered in one place, received and were filled with [the Holy Spirit], and spoke in the languages of all peoples.”⁸² Again, like the other authorities Suárez considers, Augustine too considers the event to be one in which the Apostles were communicating in actual human languages. But then immediately thereafter, Augustine raises an interesting question, which Suárez himself notes.⁸³ Why is it the case that now those

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Suárez, *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 5, n. 52.

⁸⁰ Gregory Nazianzus, *Oratio* 41.15.

⁸¹ Augustine himself points out that miracles have not ceased now that the world believes. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate dei*, lib. 22, c. 8.

⁸² Augustine, *In Evangelium Joannis Tractatus*, tr. 32, n. 6 (PL vol. 35, col. 1645): “... die Pentecostes misit desuper Spiritum sanctum. Quo, sicut dixi, qui fuerant in uno loco congregate, accepto impleti, omnium gentium linguis locuti sunt.”

⁸³ Suárez, *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 5, n. 51.

who have been baptized and believe in Christ no longer speak in the languages of all nations?

John Chrysostom asks the same question in a Homily devoted to Pentecost. His answer is that now such signs are no longer needed among the faithful who already believe. For Chrysostom, speaking in tongues is—as we have already seen with Nazianzus—just a sign for unbelievers.⁸⁴ Cardinal Suenens dismisses Chrysostom's explanation as “somewhat unconvincing.”⁸⁵ Signs continue throughout the ages, he contends. Moreover, he tells us that the apparent frequency of these signs “lessened as faith grew weak.”⁸⁶ Could one's inability to speak in tongues be a sign that he or she lacks faith and has yet to receive the Holy Spirit? Suenens suggests ‘yes,’ but, interestingly, Augustine offers a much different answer.⁸⁷ Augustine not only rejects the idea that one lacks faith or has not received the Holy Spirit, he is utterly appalled by the suggestion: “Be away with this perfidious temptation from our hearts.”⁸⁸ He goes on to point out that if the gift of tongues is no longer received, this is because “now the Church itself speaks in the languages of all nations.”⁸⁹ Given both the universality of the Church and the fact that the gift of tongues is for the sake of non-believers, as Paul, Nazianzus, and Chrysostom hold, in present-day circumstances the gift of tongues would seem to be nearly otiose. It is telling, then, that Suárez cites this very Augustinian text with approval, for it constitutes the Jesuit's own verdict on the matter.

It would seem, then, according to the lights of the Fathers and Suárez, that the gift of tongues is no longer regularly given now-a-days for the reason that it is no longer needed since, as is constantly reaffirmed, the Church speaks in the languages of all nations.⁹⁰

Finally, Suárez concludes that, though the gift of tongues is given to the speaker, it is not immediately given so that things (*res*) might be understood, but rather it is a knowledge of words (*verba*) themselves and their signs.⁹¹ Suárez stands in agreement with Aquinas who, again with Aristotle's semantic theory in mind, explains that the

⁸⁴ John Chrysostom, *De sancta Pentecoste, Homilia* I, n. 4.

⁸⁵ Suenens, *A New Pentecost?*, 27.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁸⁷ Augustine, *In Evangelium Joannis Tractatus*, tr. 32, n. 7.

⁸⁸ Augustine, *In Evangelium Joannis Tractatus*, tr. 32, n. 7 (PG, vol. 35, col. 1645): “Absit ut ista perfidia tentetur cor nostrum.”

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: “Quia iam ipsa Ecclesia linguis omnium gentium loquitur.”

⁹⁰ It is worth pointing out that in his commentary on Thomas Aquinas's account of the gift of tongues, Cajetan raises the question why today the Church does not have the gift of tongues. His answer follows what we have already seen with Augustine. Cajetan, *In Summam theologiae* II-II, q. 176, a. 1, n. 3 (ed. Leonine, vol. 10, p. 411): “Experimento enim apparet Ecclesiam lingua vel linguis carere multarum gentium temporibus istis repertarum, quibus oportet per interpretes fidem declarari, et praedicatores discere ab illis linguam.”

⁹¹ Suárez, *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 5, n. 52.

gift of tongues pertains to words that are brought forth and which are themselves signs of some intelligible truth (*alicuius intelligibilis veritatis*). The sign of those intelligible truths are certain phantasms that appear in the vision of the sense faculty of imagination.⁹² Thomas's reason for associating the gift of tongues with a sense faculty is to distinguish it from the gift of prophecy which pertains to the intellectual faculty. "It is said above, however, that the gift of prophecy consists in the illumination of the mind itself to know an intelligible truth."⁹³ It is precisely because the gift of prophecy concerns knowledge of things (*res*) that it is more perfect than the gift of tongues, which only pertains to knowing words (*verba*).⁹⁴ Nevertheless, as Suárez understands it, this gift of tongues, which pertains to human discourse that occurs in a *rational* mode, is presupposed for the understanding of things (*res*), by means of the words which function as signs of those things and their concepts, that the speaker expresses.⁹⁵

For Suárez, the gift of tongues is a miraculous gift that is infused as a *habitus* by the Holy Spirit. Just as knowledge of a single language occurs through the cultivation of a particular *habitus* during an infant's natural cognitive maturity, so the Holy Spirit, through the infusion of grace, can bring about this *habitus* with respect to other languages.⁹⁶ That this gift is a habit can be seen, Suárez holds, from what Paul himself says in 1 Corinthians 14:18, wherein he gives thanks to God that he "speaks in all your languages."⁹⁷ For the Jesuit, it is not that Paul was saying that he was *actually* speaking in all languages, only that he has the ability (i.e., *habitus*) to do so.⁹⁸ Interestingly, Suárez concludes his reflection on the gift of tongues by noting that there just might be occasions in which it is given not as a *habitus* but in the mode of an act, that is to say, just in the moment without cultivating a disposition on the part of the speaker. "But now, since it is not such a necessity, perhaps it is not thus infused [i.e., as a habit], although every now and then on occasion it is conceded to be transitorily through the mode of an actual motion."⁹⁹ What is interesting about this claim, beyond the clarification of the nature of the gift of tongues it offers, is Suárez's recognition of the general

⁹² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 176, a. 2.

⁹³ *Ibid.* (ed. Leonine, vol. 10, p. 412): "Dictum est autem supra quod donum prophetiae consistit in ipsa illuminatione mentis ad cognoscendum intelligibilem veritatem."

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Suárez, *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 5, n. 52.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 54.

⁹⁷ Here, Suárez is relying upon the Latin Vulgate text which reads: "gratias ago Deo quod omnium vestrum lingua loquor."

⁹⁸ Suárez, *De gratia*, prol. 3, c. 5, n. 52.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* (vol. 7, p. 168): "Nunc vero, quia non est tanta necessitas, fortasse non ita infunditur, licet per occasionem interdum transitorie et per modum actualis motionis aliquando concedatur."

lack of need of the gift of tongues (presumably for the Augustinian reasons given earlier) and the scarcity of its actual manifestation.

V. Conclusions

What conclusions should we draw from the foregoing discussion? We have seen that the theological tradition of the Church understands the gift of tongues to pertain to discoursing in actual human languages. There may, of course, be those who understand speaking in tongues as carried out today to be the same as what occurred in Pentecost, namely, speaking in real languages. For the sake of argument, I concede that such occurrences exist. But, given that the purpose of speaking in tongues is for the sake of unbelievers and making intelligible some proclamation, the question is: what purpose would speaking in a real human language serve if no one present could understand it? Such a view of speaking in tongues as transpiring among those who do not understand what they are saying runs contrary to the opinion of every Father and theologian of the early through post-medieval Church, as we have seen. Why should speaking in a real tongue occur in the midst of those who already believe if, as some suggest, such speaking is a sign of God's supernatural presence? A sign can both reveal and conceal. As Paul points out if the unfaithful should come across an assembly of Christians, those without faith would simply take Christians to be mad (1 Cor. 14:23). How would speaking in tongues function as a 'sign' for the unbeliever? Moreover, for the believer who already believes, what sign is needed?

What then of the non-linguistic forms of speaking in tongues understood as jubilation or a "non-rational prayer of the heart"? Such understandings likewise seem incongruous with what we have just considered regarding this gift, for, as Suárez, in unison with the entire theological tradition, holds that what is at issue is the actual communication of intelligible human languages. Of course these are understood languages, which is why Suárez's position still differs significantly from the first view of the gift of tongues the CCR provides. But beyond the fact that speaking in tongues pertains to actual human languages, what sense does it make to describe 'prayer' as 'non-rational,' as Mary Healy does? In yet another mammoth work of Suárez, the *Opus de virtute et statu religionis*—more commonly known as the *De religione*—the *Doctor eximius* devotes considerable space to the examination of the nature of prayer. As is to be expected, in his ruminations about prayer Suárez draws upon the entire Catholic theological tradition. He notes that there is considerable latitude in the way prayer is understood by various Church Fathers, Latin theologians, rhetoricians, the

Scriptures, and even the manner in which it is used in the Church.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, some sense of the term can be had if it is considered etymologically. Prayer (*oratio*) is from the verb ‘praying’ (*orandi*), which signifies ‘to petition’ (*rogare*) or ‘to implore’ (*obsecrare*).¹⁰¹ He then notes a twofold acceptance of the meaning of prayer which he defines either as “all interior motions of the soul to God, whether through thought [*cogitationem*] of Him or through affection.”¹⁰²

Might this latter aspect of prayer (*viz.*, affection) validate Healy’s claim about a “non-rational prayer of the heart”? In short, the answer is ‘no.’ The sort of “affection” that Suárez has in mind here is a mental disposition. The examples he gives from various Church Fathers bear out this reading. Suárez quotes John Damascene as saying “prayer is an ascent of the *mind* to God,” and also Augustine, as saying “What is prayer except the ascent of the spirit from the earth to the heavens desiring to explore invisible heavenly things?” Suárez offers yet another quote from Augustine, “Prayer is the conversion of the mind to God, through pious and humble affect.” Each of these descriptions regards prayer as pertaining to the mind.¹⁰³ This account is also commensurate with Aquinas’s teaching that prayer is not an act of the appetite but “is an act of reason” (*rationis actus*).¹⁰⁴ One wonders how the idea of a “non-rational prayer of the heart” would square with the tradition Suárez presents.

Further still, the Jesuit goes on to describe other kinds of prayer (*viz.*, mental and devotional prayer,¹⁰⁵ vocal prayer—both in general and private¹⁰⁶—as well as the public prayer of the Church¹⁰⁷), but the most salient form of prayer concerning our immediate topic is vocal prayer. If Healy is correct that speaking in tongues is a kind of “non-rational prayer of the heart,” it would definitely constitute a form of vocal prayer except without words. We recall that she cites Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* (lib. 22, c. 8), an instance of such vocal prayer “without words” as jubilation.¹⁰⁸ It must be pointed out that when Suárez addresses vocal prayer he nowhere seems to understand such a practice to be without words. Is that a simple oversight on his part or an accidental peculiarity of the Suárezian doctrine? I do not think either is the case.

¹⁰⁰ See Suárez, *De religione*, tr. 4, lib. 1, c. 1, n. 1.

¹⁰¹ Suárez, *De religione*, tr. 4, lib. 1, c. 1, n. 1.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, n. 6 (vol. 14, p. 5) :“Igitur generali quadam significatione, orationis nomine significari solet omnis interior motus animi in Deum, sive per ejus cognitionem, sive per affectum.”

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, n. 6.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 83, a. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Suárez, *De religione*, tr. 4, lib. 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, lib. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, lib. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Healy, *Healing*, 143.

The difference between vocal prayer as Healy portrays it and as Suárez holds seems to be the following. Unless she intends to discount any kind of vocal prayer that involves language, which I do not suspect that she does, Healy would seem to be in the position of having to admit a twofold division of vocal prayer: (i) vocal prayer without words and (ii) vocal prayer with words. Suárez only holds to the latter, and, what is more, given the manner in which he describes vocal prayer itself, the former (i) would simply be untenable and utterly absurd. Suárez argues that for there to be vocal prayer some intention of the mind or act of the intellect (which, precisely insofar as it flows from the intellect, must be *rational*) is necessary.¹⁰⁹ Before offering his argument for that claim, Suárez infers a corollary: “it is not sufficient that the words of petition come forth to the exterior [of the person praying] . . . for the sleeping, insane, and speechless infants [*infans*] similarly bring forward such words, but *they do not pray*.”¹¹⁰ Suárez thinks this is self-evident claim.

Nevertheless, perhaps modern-day speakers in tongues would not perceive the self-evidential status of Suárez’s claim; the Jesuit also offers the following considerations. Prayer is a moral and human act that is apt for merit. But without the will there is no moral act.¹¹¹ Thus, non-human animals and non-sentient life cannot in any way be said to pray, for they lack the rational capacity for such actions that are moral. It is not only our rational faculties that allow us to pray but they are also precisely that on account of which we are said to be created in the image and likeness of God.¹¹² As Thomas Aquinas holds, ‘human acts’—those acts that we carry out insofar as we are human—are those that flow from the intellect and will.¹¹³ Suárez follows suit and, given that only humans can pray,¹¹⁴ thinks that prayer must be a human act, which is, as such, rational. He concludes that (vocal) prayer must be intentional.¹¹⁵ Moreover, since prayer is a locution to God, one cannot pray unless that locution is directed to God through an intention, in the same way that neither humans nor angels can speak with one another unless there is an intention to communicate some truth.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ Suárez, *De religione*, tr. 4, lib. 3, c. 3, n. 3.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* (vol. 14, p. 222): “. . . nam dormiens, amens aut infans, similia verba proferentes, non orans, ut bene argumentor Gabr[iel Vázquez] . . . et per se notum.” (Emphases mine)

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Cf., e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, prolog.

¹¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 1, a. 1.

¹¹⁴ It might be objected that angels too can pray. Yet if they do pray, as the tradition maintains, it is so precisely because they too are rational—more specifically, intellectual—beings, which maintains the claim that prayer is something that is fundamentally rational.

¹¹⁵ Suárez, *De religione*, tr. 4, lib. 3, c. 3, n. 3.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

It is important to observe Suárez's reasoning. Infants because they lack developed rational faculties, though they vocalize, simply do not pray. This would hold presumably for other non-rational beings capable of vocalizing without words. If, as Healy claims, speaking in tongues is "non-rational," it cannot be held to be a prayer, much less can it be considered the "gift of tongues," as the theological tradition of the Church (including Suárez) understands it.

Could it be the case that what transpires as speaking in tongues is, as Healy and Ensley suggest, simply what has been understood as jubilation throughout the history of the Church? Here, again, I think such a claim is problematic. None of the texts that either Healy or Ensley adduces support their reading that what presently exists as speaking in tongues within the CCR occurred historically. To return to Augustine's *De civitate dei*, 22.8, though he describes the situation as one wherein the assembly gave great "wordless" praise, nothing suggests that what was occurring was an instance of speaking in tongues. Nor is there anything in the text that indicates Augustine approved of the jubilation as something that is necessary for ordinary Christian life, as Clark thinks speaking in tongues is. What Augustine describes is not some "non-rational prayer of the heart" but just ecstatic joy. There is nothing particularly remarkable about the congregation's reaction, for what is noteworthy about the event, from Augustine's point of view at least, is the miraculous healing itself.

For his part, Ensley suggests that if one turns to the "original sources" themselves of Thomas Aquinas, one will find evidence of the saint himself praying in tongues and also giving an account of jubilation that captures the present practice.¹¹⁷ Yet, Ensley himself fails to cite a single original source, certainly nothing from the Leonine critical edition of Thomas's *opera omnia*, not even anything from non-critical Latin editions. Rather, he points to a collection of English translations published by Paulist Press (1988).¹¹⁸ Like Healy, Ensley misreads the texts he cites. The text in question is from Thomas's *Commentary on the Sentences* IV, d. 15, q. 4, a. 2, which deals with the difference between public and private prayer. As we have already seen, Thomas thinks that prayer is always a rational act; here, addressing private prayer, he gives a number of reasons for "adding a voice." But what Thomas means is a voice expressing *words*.¹¹⁹ In emphasizing the value of adding vocal words to prayer, Thomas's account runs contrary to Healy and Ensley, who have distinguished such vocal-linguistic prayer from speaking in tongues, understood as

¹¹⁷ Ensley, *Sounds of Wonder*, p. xvi.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Simon Tugwell, ed., *Albert and Thomas: Selected Writings* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1988).

¹¹⁹ Thomas, *In Sent.*, IV, d. 15, a. 4, a. 2.

“jubilation” or “wordless voice.” I concede that Thomas admits in the passage that the private prayer expressed in vocalized language can spill over into weeping, sighs, and jubilation. But he makes it clear that such reactions are something distinct from the prayer itself, and his comment about jubilation is incidental to the actual purpose of the text.¹²⁰ Like Augustine before him, there is nothing to suggest that what Thomas has in mind by “jubilation” is anything other than an emotional reaction to the intelligible content of prayer, which reaction is quite different from the sounds uttered by CCR members when they ‘speak in tongues.’ Finally, Thomas makes no suggestion that such jubilation is anything that should be esteemed or even sought.

Still, Ensley finds Thomas’s discussion of jubilation as it occurs in Psalm 32 to be a justification for speaking in tongues as is currently practiced among members of the CCR. Once again he reads his own ideas into the text. The commentary speaks of jubilation regarding the “good things of glory [*bona gloriae*],” which “eye has not seen and ear has not heard” (1 Cor. 2).¹²¹ What is being expressed here is not so much jubilant praise with a lack of words, but the beatific vision of the essence of God, which exceeds all human concepts and expression. Moreover, Thomas’s mention of ‘jubilation’ is entirely directed by the context of the Psalm in question, which itself is cast in terms of jubilation. It is not as though the Psalm gives Thomas occasion to bring to bear a pre-thematized doctrine of jubilation as a means of interpreting the text. Apart from this particular Psalm and the above-mentioned passage from the Commentary on the *Sentences*, ‘jubilation’ does not arise as a theological or philosophical theme in any of Thomas’s other works as a consultation of Schütz’s *Thomas-Lexikon* will reveal.¹²² While Ensley rightly points out that, according to Thomas, we can never know the essence of God completely as it is in itself this side of paradise, he mistakenly thinks that this means we are left only with wordless jubilation. Aquinas has much to say about God, and that with human language. Were all of our language incapable of expressing anything whatsoever about God, the consequence would be agnosticism, which Thomas well knows is incompatible with the faith.¹²³ The medieval Jewish theologian Moses Maimonides held the view that all of our language is equivocal with respect to God, and Thomas deliberately rejects such a view in favor of analogy.¹²⁴ Our words about God have meaning insofar as

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Thomas, *In Psalm*, 32.

¹²² See Ludwig Schütz, *Thomas-Lexikon: Sammlung, Über und Erklärung der in sämtlichen werken des h. Thomas von Aquin* (NY, NY: Frederick Ungar Publ., 1957).

¹²³ Thomas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 13, a. 5.

¹²⁴ Ibid. Cf. *ibid.*, I, q. 13, a. 3.

there is a metaphysical relation of causal similitude between God and creation. Nevertheless our language cannot express the reality of God adequately and perfectly. This is simply Thomas's point in his Commentary on Psalm 32.

My point here is not simply to challenge Ensley's reading of Aquinas but to give witness to methodological and scholarly problems within his overall work that do not allow him to conclude that jubilation is simply what current members of the CCR do when they speak in tongues. It is not sufficient to look within the history of theology and the Church to find occasions in which the term 'jubilation' is mentioned and then read into those texts one's own contemporary and peculiar understanding of 'speaking in tongues.' But, regrettably, this is precisely what Ensley does and what those who build their arguments upon his work unquestioningly accept.

Perhaps proponents of the CCR will explain that the issue is just a matter of semantics, and that what they are presently practicing is something distinct from what the Catholic theological tradition has consistently described as the gift of tongues. So be it. But then why appropriate the term 'gift of tongues' to denominate a phenomenon that is entirely distinct? Does this equivocation not risk misunderstanding concerning the nature of this gift? It seems that, wittingly or not, the CCR is content to trade upon an ambiguity in language when it proposes "speaking in tongues." But this is precisely the sort of ambiguity that Suárez had in mind, when he authored *De gratia*, "to avoid the deceptions of the heretics, who under the ambiguities of various words attempt to introduce their errors."¹²⁵ I make no accusation of heresy, but what cannot be denied is that there are definite "ambiguities" in what they teach regarding the gift of tongues vis-à-vis what is found in the Catholic tradition.

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¹²⁵ *De gratia*, proleg. 3, c. 1, n. 1 (vol. 7, p. 130): "... ut haereticorum deceptiones vitemus, qui sub variis hujus vocis amphibologies suos errores introducere conantur."