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## HOW RAPHAEL PORTRAYED THOMAS AQUINAS'S LOGIC OF GENOCIDE AGAINST THE CATHARS

How Thomas Aquinas pitted faith against reason and how Raphael painted the truth of this deception with compassionate restraint

By Pierre Beaudry, 8/25/2024

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### FOREWORD

This report is a postscript to my previous report: [WHAT DOES PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS MEAN FOR PLATO](#). In the concluding remarks of that previous report, I identified how for Plato, *it is truly the happiness of others which makes your own*. This is also the principle that Raphael adhered to in painting the two major frescoes in the Vatican *Stanza della Signatura*, *The School of Athens* and *The dispute of the Holy Sacrament*, with a truthful reference to Pope Innocent III's genocidal collusion with Thomas Aquinas against the Cathars people of Southern France during the thirteenth century.

### INTRODUCTION

According to the Aristotelian logic of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), if you believe that faith is superior to reason, you are a good Christian. On the other hand, if you don't believe that is true, you are a heretic and you do not deserve to live because you have falsified the "act of faith" (*auto-da-fé*).<sup>1</sup>

The consequence of such a falsification of faith is death and the *auto-da-fé* is the public religious ceremony which celebrates the burning of the victim at the stake. (Figure 1.) According to Aquinas:

*"(1) There is the sin, whereby they (the heretics) deserve not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be shut off from the world by death. For it is a much more serious matter to corrupt faith, through which comes the soul's life, than to forge money, through*

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<sup>1</sup> *Auto-da-fé* means "act of faith" in Portuguese.

*which temporal life is supported. Hence if forgers of money or other malefactors are straightaway justly put to death by secular princes, with much more justice can heretics, immediately upon conviction, be not only excommunicated but also put to death.*" [Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, ii, Q. xi. Article III.]

This logical specious argument was written by Thomas Aquinas in order to justify the genocide of the Cathars of Southern France during the twenty year-long Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229), where 20,000 Cathar Christians were killed in the name of God. Thus, Thomas Aquinas justified genocide with a spurious logical argument in defense of the superiority of faith over reason.

This report is to demonstrate how Raphael's *Dispute of the Holy Sacrament* is a passionate yet restrained representation of the flaw of Thomas Aquinas's "theological" belief that faith is superior to reason, and demonstrates the means by which both faith and reason can be made to coincide in a sublime unity of conception above and beyond any religious denomination.

### **POPE INNOCENT III, THOMAS AQUINAS AND DOMINIC DE GUZMAN**

The political pretext for committing genocide today originated with Pope Innocent III (1160-1216) with the support of the founder of the Dominican Order, Dominic de Guzman [aka St. Dominic, (1170-1221)], when they launched together a twenty year crusade against the Albigensian population of Southern France known as the Cathars, at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. (See Figure 1.)

This crusade was the beginning of 625 years of Inquisition that the Church of Rome carried out in the name of God against more than 50,000 victims from the beginning of the Albigensian crusades in 1209 to the end of the Spanish Inquisition in 1834. In his *Summa Theologia*, Thomas Aquinas justified this genocide by a set of logical arguments that went beyond theology and philosophy.

During and after the Albigensian Crusade, it was the general rule that the accused heretic did not have a right to legal counsel, and if a lawyer did offer himself for that purpose, he would also be excommunicated. Furthermore, the families of accused heretics were to be deprived of all of their properties by legal

confiscation, without recourse. The papal *Curia* would collect the first half of the property values, and the Dominican inquisitors would collect the second half.

Since the inquisitors were predominately Dominicans, they followed the Vatican demand that heretics had to be tortured and then put to death on theological grounds. Thus, Aquinas was asked to add the following “theological” justification to his *Summa Theologia*, which became the official theological doctrine of the Vatican. This is how Aquinas trapped himself and the Church into Aristotelian logic:

*“(1) There is the sin, whereby they (the heretics) deserve not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be shut off from the world by death. For it is a much more serious matter to corrupt faith, through which comes the soul’s life, than to forge money, through which temporal life is supported. Hence if forgers of money or other malefactors are straightaway justly put to death by secular princes, with much more justice can heretics, immediately upon conviction, be not only excommunicated but also put to death.*

*“(2) But on the side of the Church there is mercy, with a view to the conversion of them that are in error; and therefore the Church does not straightaway condemn, but {after a first and a second admonition}, as the Apostle teaches [Tit. Iii. 10]. After that, if he be found still stubborn, the Church gives up hope of his conversion and takes thought for the safety of others, by separating him from the Church by sentence of excommunication; and, further, leaves him to the secular court, to be exterminated from the world by death...” [Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, ii, Q. xi. Article III. Whether heretics should be tolerated, in Documents of the Christian Church, Op. Cit., p. 186-187.]*

As a lifelong Catholic myself, I consider this to be a deformation of the Catholic faith by an Ultramontane Papacy.<sup>2</sup> Although many bishops and priests

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<sup>2</sup> Ultramontanism (beyond the mountains) is a Roman Catholic doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope and of the superiority of the Roman Church over all of the rulers of Europe based on the

have publically acknowledged such a deformation throughout the years, the Vatican never officially recognized that fault.

What caused the Middle Ages to collapse into such depravity was the Aristotelian Delphic logical argumentation established by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD) and regurgitated by his epigones of the Dominican Order. They thought they were protecting their Church by spreading the disease of deductive logic to justify the superiority of faith over reason. This fault must be confessed publically. Here is Wikipedia's report regarding Pedro Berruguete and his *auto-da-fé* painting of Dominic de Guzman, the founder of the Dominican Order:

*“Representations of an auto-da-fé often depict torture or someone being burnt at the stake. The two victims at the mid-lower right are tied by the neck to two posts and held up by two stakes driven horizontally into the posts behind them, meant to prolong their deaths by preventing suffocation by the ropes or garrotes wrapped around their necks. Another possible purpose of these stakes was to further shame and humiliate the victims, due to their apparently intentional resemblance to the human male anatomy. The two victims tied to the posts await their deaths as the pile of burning firewood before them is fed and fueled sufficiently to attain the desired result. The two victims standing in line await their own turns next on the posts. All of these victims are Cathars, allegedly Saint Dominic's primary targets.”<sup>3</sup>*

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Thomas Aquinas fallacy of composition which asserts that since faith is superior to reason, religious order is superior to civil order.

<sup>3</sup> [File:Pedro Berruguete Saint Dominic Presiding over an Auto-da-fe 1495.jpg - Wikipedia](#)

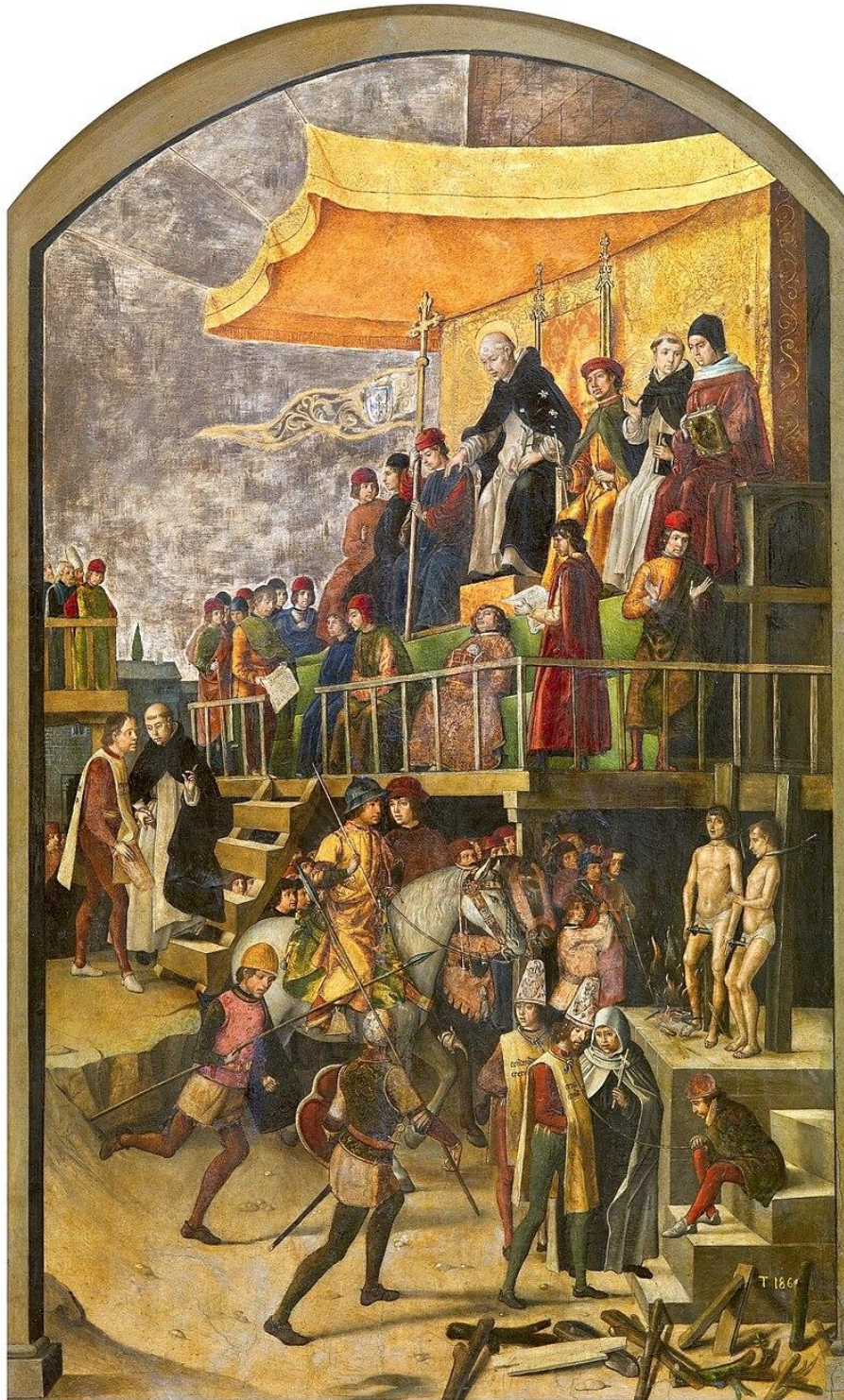


Figure 1. [Dominic de Guzman presiding over an auto-da-fé](#), by Pedro Berruguete (C. 1495).  
From the sacristy of the Convent of Santo Tomás in Ávila, Spain, the headquarters of the  
Inquisition.

## THOMAS AQUINAS<sup>4</sup> AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

Barbara W. Tuchman reported in her 1978 book, *A Distant Mirror, The Calamitous XIV Century*, that Thomas Aquinas supported Pope Innocent III on the Jewish question. Tuchman wrote: “The doctrine that Jews were doomed to perpetual servitude as Christ-killers was announced by Pope Innocent III in 1205 and led Thomas Aquinas to conclude with relentless logic that ‘since Jews are the slaves of the Church, she can dispose of their possessions.’ Legally, politically, and physically, they were totally vulnerable.”<sup>5</sup>

More than a century after the death of Innocent III, Pope Clement VI (1291-1352), the fourth Avignon Pope who reigned during the Black Death, wrote a Bull, *Quamvis Perfidiam* (1348), condemning those who had blamed the Jews for the Black Death. He said that those who blamed the Jews for the plague were “seduced by that liar, the Devil.”<sup>6</sup> Clement VI added: “It cannot be true that the Jews, by such a heinous crime, are the cause or occasion of the plague, because through many parts of the world the same plague, by the hidden judgment of God, has afflicted and afflicts the Jews themselves and many other races who have never lived alongside them.”<sup>7</sup>

### THE ARISTOTELIAN DEDUCTIVE LOGIC OF THOMAS AQUINAS

From the vantage point of logical deductions, the following excerpts from Thomas Aquinas speak volumes. His writings show clearly how the imperialist

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<sup>4</sup> See my report: [THE TRUTH ABOUT THOMAS AQUINAS](#)

<sup>5</sup> Barbara W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror, The Calamitous XIV Century*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1978, p. 110. Tuchman added: “To mark their separation, Innocent III in 1215, decreed the wearing of a badge, usually in the form of a wheel or circular patch of yellow felt, said to represent a piece of money. Sometimes green or red-and-white, it was worn by both sexes beginning between the ages of seven and fourteen. In its struggle against all heresies, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Church imposed the same badge on Moslems, on convicted heretics, and, by some quirk in doctrine, on prostitutes. A hat with a point rather like a horn, said to represent the Devil, was later added further to distinguish the Jews.” (p. 112.)

<sup>6</sup> Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica: Ba-Blo*. Granite Hill Publishers. p. 733.

<sup>7</sup> Shlomo Simonsohn, *Apostolic See and the Jews*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1991, Vol. 1, Documents 492, p. 1404.

forms of Ultramontane-Dominican policy of murdering the heretics, and of justifying preemptive wars against Jews and Muslims, stem from his Aristotelian theology. Here is the main deductive argument of Aquinas for the superiority of the Church over every government on Earth:

*“Secular power is subject to the spiritual power as the body is the subject to the soul, and therefore it is not usurpation of authority if the spiritual prelate interferes in temporal things concerning those matters in which the secular power is subject to him, or concerning those matters the care of which has been entrusted to him by the secular power.”* [Thomas Aquinas, *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Dino Bogongiari, Editor Hafner Publishing Company, 1953, p. xxxiv.]

Why would religious power be superior to secular power? For Aquinas, it is a given that faith is superior to reason and therefore, faith is allowed to become a weapon against reason. I would like to ask the reader to be patient enough to read the entirety of the following Aquinas argument in favor of faith against reason:

*“... Our understanding, existing in potentiality, is moved to activity by one of two things; either by its proper object, which is an intelligible form...or by the will...So then our understanding, in potentiality, is variously situated with respect to the members of a contradiction. For sometimes it is not inclined more to one member than to the other, either because of lack of evidence or because of the apparent equality of the evidence for both sides; and this is the state of doubt, when a man wavers between two contradictory opinions. But sometimes the understanding is inclined more to one side than to the other, yet the evidence, which so inclines it, is not of sufficient weight to determine the complete acceptance of that side, and hence a man accepts one conclusion, but without fully excluding the contradictory; and this is the state of opinion...Sometimes, however, the understanding, in potentiality, is determined to the extent of complete adhesion to one side; and it is thus determined sometimes by the intelligible object, sometimes by the will. It may be determined by the object either mediately or immediately: immediately, when the truth of intelligible propositions appears at once and without doubt from consideration of the intelligible object; and this is the*

*state of {the man who understands} the axioms [principia], which are at once recognized as true when their terms are known...; it is determined mediately when the understanding, upon the recognition of the definitions of the terms, is determined to one side of a contradiction in virtue of these fundamental axioms; and this is the state of {knowledge}. But sometimes, the understanding cannot be determined to one side of a contradiction either at once, through the very definition of the terms, as in the case of axioms, or in virtue of the axioms, as in the case of demonstrable conclusions; but it is determined through the agency of the {will}, which chooses to assent to one side, definitely and positively, **THROUGH SOME INFLUENCE WHICH IS SUFFICIENT TO MOVE THE WILL** (capital emphasis added) but not the intellect, namely the fact that it seems good or fitting to assent to this side; this is the state of {belief}, as when a man believes in the words of someone because to believe seems becoming or advantageous; and thus we are moved to believe in certain sayings inasmuch as eternal life is promised to us as a reward for belief, and by this reward our will is moved to assent to what is said, although our understanding is not so moved by any evidence presented to it...*

*“The state of {understanding} involves assent...but it does not involve reasoning (cogitatio)...While the state of knowledge involved both reasoning and assent; but the reasoning is the cause of the assent and the assent brings reasoning to a close. For as a result of the application of axioms to conclusions assent is given to conclusions by resolving them into axioms, and at that point the movement of reason is stayed and brought to rest...and thus assent and reason are not in this case involved on, as it were, equal terms; but reasoning induces assent, and assent brings the process to rest. In the case of belief, however, assent and reasoning are on, as it were, equal terms. For here assent, as has been said, is not caused by reasoning but by the will. But since the understanding is not in this way brought to its one proper termination, viz, to the vision of the intelligible object, hence it is that its motion is not brought to rest but is still employed in reasoning and enquiry on the objects of faith, however firmly it assents to them...And hence*



*the understanding of the believer is said to be taken captive (2 Cor. X.5), BECAUSE IT IS DETERMINED BY EXTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS, NOT BY ITS OWN PROPER PROCESS. (capital emphasis added). Hence too, it comes that in a believer, motions may surge up contrary to that which he most firmly holds, a thing which does not happen in a man who understands, or in one who knows...*” (Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, Q. xiv. Art. I.)

### THE OPPOSITION BETWEEN FAITH AND REASON



Figure 2. Reason: The School of Athens, by Raphael de Sanzio. (1509-1511)

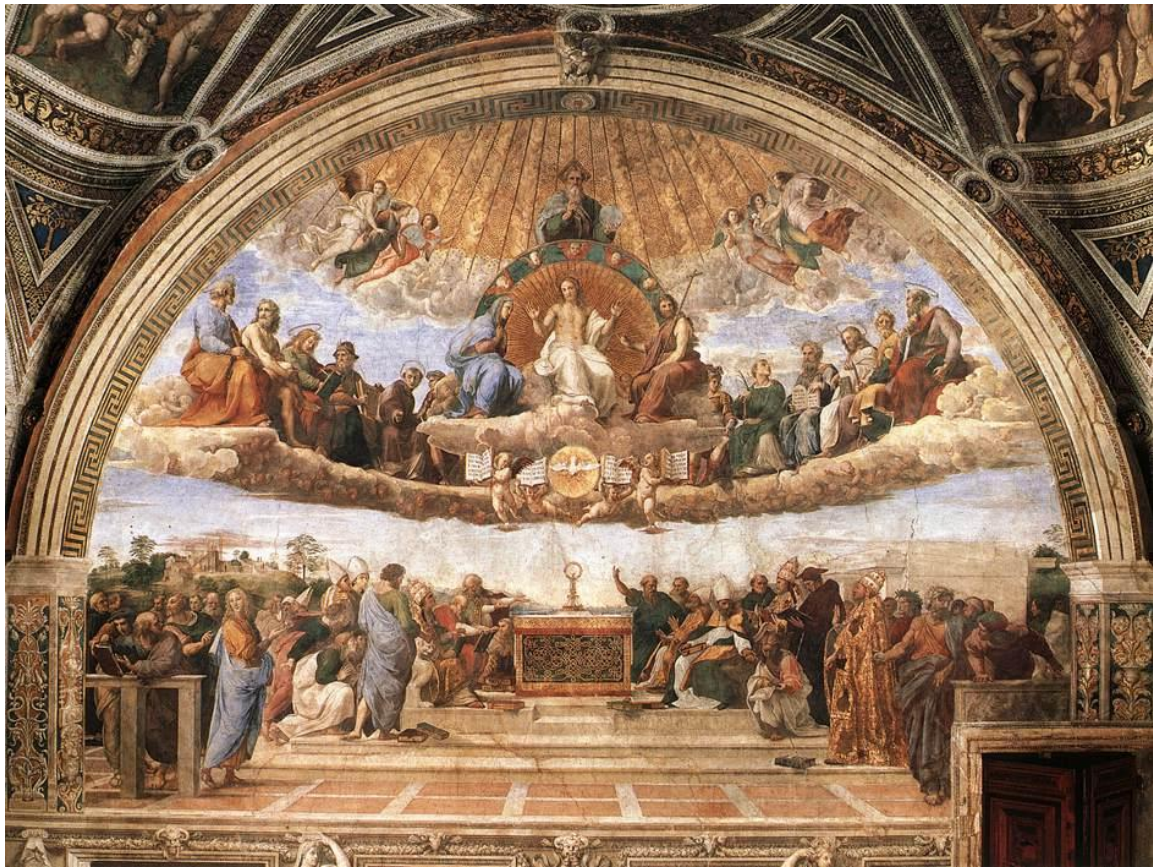


Figure 3. Faith: The Dispute of the Holy Sacrament, by Raphael de Sanzio (1509-1511)

The two murals *The School of Athens* (Figure 2.) and the *Dispute of the Holy Sacrament* (Figure 3.) face each other in the Stanza della Signatura in the Vatican as Faith faces Reason in your mind. The questions these two frescoes pose to the observer as he enters the room are: What is the unity of composition between those two frescoes? Why are those two frescoes facing each other in the same room inside of the Vatican? What is the nature of the “dispute” between Plato and Aristotle? What is the “dispute” in the *Dispute of the Holy Sacrament*?

The answer to those four questions can really only be found by looking into the history of the Church and into ancient Greek philosophy in order to discover the nature of the conflicts that Raphael had in mind for the observer to investigate. Once the answers to those questions begin to emerge in the observer’s mind, then the same question of the opposition between Plato and Aristotle in *The School of Athens* must be posed between the self-portrait of the Platonist Raphael and the

portrait of the Aristotelian Pope Innocent III in the opposiote fresco. (Figure 4.)  
[See my report: [17.-RAPHAEL'S-'DISPUTE OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT' AND THE ANOMALY OF POPE INNOCENT III.pdf \(amatterofmind.org\)](#)]



Figure 4. Coincidence of opposites in the *Dispute of the Holy Sacrament*: The left eye of Raphael's self portrait (left) and the left eye of Pope Innocent III (right) are at equal distance from the Holy Sacrament in the center of the fresco.

The observer of those two frescoes will be able to discover the invisible link between faith and reason when the question of unity of faith and reason between these two artistic compositions arises in his mind. Why? Because faith and reason can come to be united in your mind through your willful powers of discovery of truth in a higher form of "make-believe." How does artistic make-believe work? *By having reason imagining how things are better than they actually are.* The way to discover this is by comparing the Raphael look into the spectator's eyes and mind with the conspiratorial look between Pope Innocent III and Thomas Aquinas.

*The unity of principle of the two frescoes is the answer to the question: How do those two murals come together as the same subject matter of the Stanza della Signatura in the Vatican? How do those two frescoes represent things better than they actually are?* That's the fundamental question to be answered, because that is

how to discover the unity of composition between the two frescoes and between faith and reason.

Thus, the spectator must first look at each of those two murals as if one were the opposite of the other representing the two domains of Theology and Philosophy, which reflect the opposition between Plato and Aristotle on the philosophical side and the opposition between the self-portrait of Raphael and Pope Innocent III on the theological side. (See Figures 4 and 5.) Once you have discovered the precise measure of that double opposition, the rest of the pieces will fall into place.



Figure 5. Coincidence of opposites between Raphael (extreme left) and Pope Innocent III (extreme right)

The trick, here, is to discover what the opposition is between Plato and Aristotle in *The School of Athens*; and then, discover the same opposition between the self-portrait of Raphael and the portrait of Innocent III in the *Dispute of the Holy Sacrament*. Thus, the unity of these multi-faceted “disputes” are to be found by discovering what is in the sharing of minds that are in opposition within the two frescoes. It is well known that in *The School of Athens*, the opposition resides in the Platonic upward ideas and in the downward perceptions of Aristotle, which is also reflected in the two books they are holding: *The Timaeus* and *The Ethics*.

How is that opposition reflected in the *Dispute of the Holy Sacrament*? The trigger is the self-portrait of Raphael. Once the observer discovers that the self

portrait of Raphael and the portrait of Pope Innocent III are equally separated from the position of the Holy Sacrament in the center of the fresco, then the apparent mystery of the “dispute” begins to dissipate. Also, the colors of the books displayed across the room are red and green, the same colors of the two books Plato and Aristotle are holding

Raphael discretely identified the red *Decretals* (book of papal Decrees), which Innocent III is holding in his hands as the “legal” justification for his crusades. This is the biggest mistake that the Church of Rome has ever committed. Why would the cover of the Pope’s book be the same color as Aristotle’s? The Pope’s offering of his pen to the Aristotelian Thomas Aquinas is as if the Pope were calling on him to justify, a few decades after his death, his evil actions of genocide by saying: “This pen is for you, my son. Now, go and justify my papal powers.” Furthermore, it is the conspiratorial fixation of such religious fanaticism between two leading figures of the Church which tells the silent story of the Cathars genocide which Raphael dared to point to with his truthful ironies of colors on the walls of the Stanza.

The discovery of the coincidence of opposites between the self-portrait of Raphael and Innocent III can be made in two complementary ways; one is by measuring the respective distance of each of their left eyes from the central position of the Holy Sacrament in the center of the altar; the other is through the discovery of the fact that the eyes of Raphael are soft and loving while the eyes of Innocent III are harsh and hateful. With only those discrete elements in hand, you can resolve every other opposition. But, the question is: How can you achieve the unity of composition of those two frescoes? The answer lies in solving the paradox of the Holy Trinity.

### **FAITH IS LOVE IN GOD AS REASON IS INTELLIGIBILITY IN A TRIUNE MEDIATED GOD**

Nicholas of Cusa’s concept of a triune God as being the foundation of happiness is a true idea of the future, which can only be understood by time-reversal in *the simultaneity of temporal eternity*; that is, as the transformation of the Trinity of God into the truthful future spiritual nature of mankind itself. In chapter 18 of *The Vision of God* ([\*De Visione Dei\*](#)), Cusa asserts that UNLESS GOD WERE TRINE, THERE WOULD BE NO HAPPINESS:

“Who then, can deny that You who are God and trine? – when he sees that unless you were three and one, You would not either be a noble or a natural and perfect God, nor would the spirit of free choice exist, nor could he himself attain unto the enjoyment of you and unto his own happiness. For since You are Intellect-that-understands, Intellect-that-is-understandable, and the Union of both, created intellect can attain in You– its understandable God – union with You and happiness. Similarly: since You are Lovable Love, the created will that loves can attain, in You its lovable God, union and happiness. For he who receives You, who are God and are rational, receivable Light, can arrive at such a closed union with You that he will be united to You as a son to his father.”<sup>8</sup>

Theologically speaking, the unity of faith and reason is located in the consubstantiality of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It does not stand to a reason that three persons be integrated into a single one. Thus, the Trinity can only be accepted from faith in *the simultaneity of temporal eternity*. However, one of the best ways to understand the intelligibility of such a triply-connected single process of change is with the composition of a sphere which can be discovered to be of a triune nature when you enter the Stanza della Segnatura of the Vatican and imagine that you have entered into a sphere the measuring of which includes 1) a closed concave surface, 2) the diameter of that closed area, and 3) the area itself between the center and the concave surface.

In that sense, the Holy Sacrament is, theologically speaking, a triply-connected unity for faith in the same proportion as the sphere of positive curvature is a triply-connected unity for reason. Philosophically speaking, the unity of faith and reason comes together when the observer discovers the truth behind Raphael's brush stroke showing the brutal hatred in the stare between Innocent III and Thomas Aquinas, in contrast and opposition to Raphael's own stare into the eyes of the observer. It is by discovering that the principle of *the benefit of the other* is the unity of the Room of the Segnatura in the Vatican that the

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<sup>8</sup> Nicholas of Cusa, [\*De Visione Dei\*](#), Chapter 18: UNLESS GOD WERE TRINE, THERE WOULD BE NO HAPPINESS, (81).

Theological/Philosophical thought object between *The School of Athens*, and the *Dispute of the Holy Sacrament* becomes resolved.

Here, the concept of happiness can only mean completeness when the three functions of God are being put into effect; that is, *conception, mediation, and motion*. This is how the idea of the Trinity is related to the pursuit of happiness, when you develop this triply-connected concept with the triune idea of the Father (conceiving), the Son (mediating), and the Spirit (moving). As Cusa stated:

“Therefore, because You, O God, thus enlighten me, I see that in You who are God-the-Son of God-the-Father all things are present in their Rational Principle (ratio), Concept, Cause, or Exemplar. And [I see] that the Son is the Medium of all things, because He is the Rational Principle [of all things]. For by the medium of Reason (ratio) and Wisdom, You who are God the Father work all things. And Spirit, or Motion, puts the concept of Reason into effect, just as we witness that a chest in the mind of an artisan is put into effect by the medium of the moving force in his hands. I see, then, my God, that Your Son is the uniting Medium of all things, so that all things may find rest [happiness?] in You by the medium of your Son. And I see that blessed Jesus, the son of man, was most closely united to Your Son and that only by the mediation of Your Son, who is absolute Mediator, could the son of man be united to You who are God the Father. Is there anyone who, upon quite carefully considering these [truths], is not highly caught up in rapture?” (Ibidem, 86)

This is a most difficult and yet most important prayer that Cusa had made to the Holy Trinity of God, because there is no higher Mediation in heaven than the Will of God to give Himself for the benefit of mankind through Christ. The very fact that the *benefit of the other* coming from God has to be mediated through Christ in order for mankind to be united with God is the greatest of all gifts. Do as God does: Elect yourself for the benefit of others.

Is there an artist, anywhere in the world today capable of representing a similar truth about the current Palestinian genocide in Gaza, and with such compassionate restraint?

**FIN**