

Objection 1. It would seem that gratuitous grace is nobler than sanctifying grace. For “the people’s good is better than the individual good,” as the Philosopher says (*Ethic.* i, 2). Now sanctifying grace is ordained to the good of one man alone, whereas gratuitous grace is ordained to the common good of the whole Church, as stated above (*Aa.* 1,4). Hence gratuitous grace is nobler than sanctifying grace.

Objection 2. Further, it is a greater power that is able to act upon another, than that which is confined to itself, even as greater is the brightness of the body that can illuminate other bodies, than of that which can only shine but cannot illuminate; and hence the Philosopher says (*Ethic.* v, 1) “that justice is the most excellent of the virtues,” since by it a man bears himself rightly towards others. But by sanctifying grace a man is perfected only in himself; whereas by gratuitous grace a man works for the perfection of others. Hence gratuitous grace is nobler than sanctifying grace.

Objection 3. Further, what is proper to the best is nobler than what is common to all; thus to reason, which is proper to man is nobler than to feel, which is common to all animals. Now sanctifying grace is common to all members of the Church, but gratuitous grace is the proper gift of the more exalted members of the Church. Hence gratuitous grace is nobler than sanctifying grace.

On the contrary, The Apostle (1 Cor. 12:31), having enumerated the gratuitous graces adds: “And I shew unto you yet a more excellent way”; and as the sequel proves he is speaking of charity, which pertains to sanctifying grace. Hence sanctifying grace is more noble than gratuitous grace.

I answer that, The higher the good to which a virtue

is ordained, the more excellent is the virtue. Now the end is always greater than the means. But sanctifying grace ordains a man immediately to a union with his last end, whereas gratuitous grace ordains a man to what is preparatory to the end; i.e. by prophecy and miracles and so forth, men are induced to unite themselves to their last end. And hence sanctifying grace is nobler than gratuitous grace.

Reply to Objection 1. As the Philosopher says (*Metaph.* xii, text. 52), a multitude, as an army, has a double good; the first is in the multitude itself, viz. the order of the army; the second is separate from the multitude, viz. the good of the leader—and this is better good, since the other is ordained to it. Now gratuitous grace is ordained to the common good of the Church, which is ecclesiastical order, whereas sanctifying grace is ordained to the separate common good, which is God. Hence sanctifying grace is the nobler.

Reply to Objection 2. If gratuitous grace could cause a man to have sanctifying grace, it would follow that the gratuitous grace was the nobler; even as the brightness of the sun that enlightens is more excellent than that of an object that is lit up. But by gratuitous grace a man cannot cause another to have union with God, which he himself has by sanctifying grace; but he causes certain dispositions towards it. Hence gratuitous grace needs not to be the more excellent, even as in fire, the heat, which manifests its species whereby it produces heat in other things, is not more noble than its substantial form.

Reply to Objection 3. Feeling is ordained to reason, as to an end; and thus, to reason is nobler. But here it is the contrary; for what is proper is ordained to what is common as to an end. Hence there is no comparison.