

QUESTION 60

The Distinctions among the Moral Virtues

Next we have to consider the distinctions of the moral virtues from one another. And on this topic there are five questions: (1) Is there just a single moral virtue? (2) Are the moral virtues that have to do with actions or operations (*circa operationes*) distinguished from the moral virtues that have to do with the passions? (3) Is there just a single moral virtue that has to do with operations? (4) Do diverse moral virtues have to do with diverse passions? (5) Are the moral virtues distinguished in a way that corresponds to the diverse objects of the passions?

Article 1

Is there just a single moral virtue?

It seems that there is just a single moral virtue:

Objection 1: Just as, in the case of moral acts, directing them belongs to reason, which is the subject of the intellectual virtues, so, too, the inclination [toward them] belongs to the appetitive power, which is the subject of the moral virtues. But there is a single intellectual virtue, viz., prudence, which does the directing in the case of all moral acts. Therefore, there is likewise just a single moral virtue that does the inclining in the case of all moral acts.

Objection 2: Habits are distinguished by the formal character of their objects and not by their material objects. But there is a single formal character of the good toward which moral virtue is ordered, viz., the mode of reason. Therefore, it seems that there is just a single moral virtue.

Objection 3: As has been explained (q. 1, a. 3), moral entities (*moralia*) take their species from their end. But there is a single common end of all the moral virtues, viz., happiness (*felicitas*), whereas there are infinitely many proper and proximate ends. But it is not the case that there are infinitely many moral virtues. Therefore, it seems that there is just a single moral virtue.

But contrary to this: As was explained above (q. 56, a. 2), a single habit cannot exist in diverse powers. But the subject of the moral virtues is the appetitive part of the soul, which, as was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 80, a. 2 and q. 81, a. 2), is distinguished into diverse powers. Therefore, there cannot be just a single moral virtue.

I respond: As was explained above (q. 58, aa. 1-3), moral virtues are certain habits of the appetitive part [of the soul], and as was also explained above (q. 54, a. 2), habits differ in species according to the specific differences among their objects.

Now the species of a desirable object, just like the species of anything else, has to do with the form of the species, which comes from the agent. However, we must take into consideration that there are two ways in which the matter that is acted upon is related to the agent:

For sometimes the matter receives the form of the agent with the same definition (*secundum eandem rationem*) that it has in the agent, as occurs in the case of all *univocal* agents. And if the agent is of a single species in such a case, then the matter must receive the form of a single species; for instance, nothing is generated univocally by fire unless it is something in the species of fire.

On the other hand, sometimes the matter receives a form that is not the same in definition as the agent's form; this is clear in the case of things that are *non-univocal* generating causes (*patet in generantibus non univocis*), as when an animal is generated by the sun. And in such cases the forms received in the matter from the same agent are not of a single species but are instead diversified in accord with the matter's diverse dispositions (*secundum diversam proportionem materiae*) toward receiving the agent's influence. For instance, we see that in accord with the matter's diverse dispositions, animals of diverse species are generated through putrefaction by the sun's single action.

Now it is clear that in the case of moral entities reason is like that which commands and effects

movement, whereas the appetitive power is like that which is commanded and moved. But it is not the case that the appetite receives reason's influence (*non recipit impressionem rationis*) in, as it were, a univocal way, since, as *Ethics 1* points out, the appetite is rational by participation and not through its essence. Hence, desirable things are established in diverse species by reason's movement, because they are related to reason in diverse ways. And so it follows that the moral virtues are diverse in species, and that there is not just a single moral virtue.

Reply to objection 1: The object of reason is *the true* (*obiectum rationis est verum*). But the character of the true is the same in all moral entities, which are contingent doable things. That is why there is just a single directive virtue among them, viz., prudence.

By contrast, the object of the appetitive power is *the desirable good*, the character of which is diverse in accord with its diverse relations to directive reason.

Reply to objection 2: The formal character in question is one in *genus* because of the oneness of the agent. But as has been explained, it is diversified in *species* because of diverse dispositions of the recipients.

Reply to objection 3: Moral entities have their species not from their ultimate end, but from their proximate ends, which are such that, even if they are infinitely many in *number*, they are not infinitely many in *species*.

Article 2

Are moral virtues distinguished from one another by the fact that some have to do with actions or operations, while others have to do with the passions?

It seems that moral virtues are not distinguished from one another by the fact that some have to do with actions or operations (*circa operationes*), while others have to do with the passions:

Objection 1: In *Ethics 2* the Philosopher says that moral virtue "does what is best (*est optimorum operativa*) with respect to pleasures and sorrows." But as was explained above (q. 31, a. 1 and q. 35, a. 1), pleasures and sorrows are passions. Therefore, the same virtue that has to do with the passions also has to do with operations, since it does something (*utpote operativa existens*).

Objection 2: The passions are principles of exterior operations. Therefore, if there are virtues that rectify the passions, then they must, as a result, likewise rectify operations. Therefore, the same virtues have to do both with the passions and with operations.

Objection 3: The sentient appetite is moved either well or badly with respect to every exterior operation. But the movements of the sentient appetite are passions. Therefore, the same virtues that have to do with operations have to do with passions.

But contrary to this: The Philosopher posits justice (*iustitia*) with respect to operations, and temperance (*temperantia*), fortitude (*fortitudo*), and gentleness (*mansuetudo*) with respect to certain passions.

I respond: There are two possible ways in which operation and passion can be related to virtue:

In the first way, *as effects* of virtue. And in this sense, as was explained above (q. 59, a. 4), every moral virtue involves (a) good operations that it produces and (b) some pleasure or sorrow, which are passions.

In the second way, an operation can be related to a moral virtue *as the matter that a moral virtue has to do with* (*materia circa quam*). And on this score, it is necessary for the moral virtues that have to do with operations to be distinct from the moral virtues that have to do with passions.

The reason for this is that some operations are good or bad in their own right (*secundum seipsas*), no matter what affections the man has with respect to them; more specifically, their goodness or badness

is taken from how they measure up to something else. And for operations of this sort there has to be a virtue that directs the operations in their own right—as, for instance, in the case of buying and selling and all operations of this sort that involve the character of what is owed or not owed to another. Because of this, *justice*, along with the parts of justice, have to do with operations properly speaking as their proper matter.

By contrast, the goodness or badness of other operations has to do solely with how they measure up with respect to the agent (*attenditur solum secundum commensurationem ad operantem*). And so these actions have to be thought of as good or bad to the extent that the man is affected well or badly with respect to them. Because of this, virtues with respect to such operations have to do mainly with the interior affections, which are called the passions of the soul; this is clear in the case of *temperance* and *fortitude* and other virtues of this sort.

Now in the case of operations that are directed toward another, it is possible for the good of virtue to be neglected because of a disordered passion of the soul. And in that case, insofar as the due measure of the exterior operation is corrupted, there is a corruption of justice, whereas insofar as the measure of the interior passions is corrupted, there is a corruption of some other virtue. For instance, when one man strikes another out of anger, *justice* is corrupted in the undue striking, whereas *gentleness* is corrupted in the immoderation of the anger. And the same thing is clear in other cases.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3: From this the response to the objections is clear. For the first objection is about the operation insofar as it is an effect of a virtue. The other two objections go through on the assumption that the operation and the passion concur with respect to the same thing. But in some cases the virtue has to do mainly with an operation and in other cases the virtue has to do mainly with the passion—in the way just explained.

Article 3

Is there just a single moral virtue with respect to operations?

It seems that there is just a single moral virtue with respect to operations:

Objection 1: The uprightness of all exterior operations seems to pertain to justice. But justice is a single virtue. Therefore, there is just a single virtue with respect to operations.

Objection 2: Operations that are ordered toward the good of a single individual seem to differ maximally from operations that are ordered toward the good of a multitude of individuals. But this sort of diversity does not diversify the moral virtues; for as the Philosopher says in *Ethics 5*, legal justice, which orders men's acts toward the common good, differs only conceptually (*secundum rationem*) from the sort of virtue that orders a man's act toward just an individual good (*ad unum tantum*). Therefore, it is not the case that there are diverse virtues for diverse operations.

Objection 3: If there were diverse moral virtues with respect to diverse operations, then the diversity of the moral virtues would have to correspond to the diversity of operations. But this is clearly false; for as is clear from *Ethics 5*, it belongs to justice to establish uprightness in diverse genera of transactions (*in diversis generibus commutationum*) and also in distributions. Therefore, it is not the case that there are diverse virtues for diverse operations.

But contrary to this: *Religion* is a virtue different from *piety*, and yet both of them have to do with operations.

I respond: All the moral virtues that are directed toward operations agree in a certain general conception of justice (*conveniunt in quadam generali ratione iustitiae*), which has to do with what is owed to another, and they are distinguished by diverse specific conceptions. The reason for this is that in the case of exterior operations, the order of reason is instituted in the way explained above (a. 2)—not

according to its relation to a man's affections, but instead according to the appropriateness of the thing in its own right. And the concept *what is owed*, on the basis of which the nature of justice is constituted, is taken from this sort of appropriateness; for it evidently pertains to justice that someone should render what is owed. Hence, all virtues of the sort that have to do with operations have the character of justice in one way or another.

However, what is owed does not have the same character in all cases (*non est unius rationis in omnibus*). For instance, something is owed to an equal in one way, to a superior in another way, and to an inferior in still another way; again, something is owed in different ways because of a contract or because of a promise or because of some benefit that has been received. And corresponding to the diverse sorts of debt there are diverse virtues—e.g., *religion*, by which one renders what is owed to God; *piety*, by which one renders what is owed to one's parents; *gratitude (gratia)*, by which one renders what is owed to a benefactor; and so on for the others.

Reply to objection 1: Justice is properly speaking a single *specific* virtue that has to do with the perfect notion of what is owed, which it is possible to repay in full (*secundum aequivalentiam*).

However, the name 'justice' is also used *in an extended sense (dicitur et ampliato nomine iustitia)* that includes any sort of rendering of what is owed. And in this sense justice is not a single specific virtue.

Reply to objection 2: The sort of justice that intends the common good is a virtue different from the justice that is ordered toward someone's private good, and this is why common right (*ius commune*) is distinguished from private right, and why Tully posits a special virtue, viz., piety, which orders one toward the good of the fatherland.

However, the sort of justice that orders a man toward the common good is general in its command, because all the acts of the virtues order one toward its end, viz., toward the common good. Now insofar as it is commanded by justice of this sort, virtue also receives the name 'justice'. And so *virtue* differs from *legal justice* only conceptually, in the sense that virtue that operates in its own right differs only conceptually from virtue that operates at the command of another.

Reply to objection 3: In all of the operations that belong to special justice one finds the same concept of *what is owed*. And so there is the same virtue of justice, especially with respect to exchanges. For *distributive justice* might perhaps belong to a species different from that of *commutative justice*. But we will ask about this below (*ST* 2-2, q. 61, a. 1).

Article 4

Are there diverse moral virtues with respect to diverse passions?

It seems that there are not diverse moral virtues with respect to diverse passions:

Objection 1: As is especially clear in the case of the sciences, there is a single habit with respect to things that agree in both their principle and their end. But as was established above (q. 25, aa. 1-4 and q. 27, a. 4), there is a single principle of all the passions, viz., love (*amor*), and all the passions terminate in the same end, viz., either pleasure or sadness (*ad delectationem vel tristitiam*). Therefore, there is just a single moral virtue with respect to all the passions.

Objection 2: If there were diverse moral virtues with respect to diverse passions, then it would follow that there are as many moral virtues as there are passions. But this is clearly false, since with respect to opposed passions there is one and the same moral virtue; for instance, fortitude has to do with instances of fear and daring, and temperance has to do with pleasures and pains (*circa delectationes et tristitias*). Therefore, there do not have to be diverse moral virtues with respect to diverse passions.

Objection 3: As was established above (q. 23, a. 4), love (*amor*), sentient desire (*concupiscentia*),

and pleasure (*delectatio*) are passions that differ from one another in species. But there is just a single virtue with respect to them all, viz., temperance. Therefore, it is not the case that there are diverse moral virtues with respect to diverse passions.

But contrary to this: As it says in *Ethics* 3 and 4, fortitude has to do with fear and daring, temperance has to do with sentient desire, and gentleness has to do with anger.

I respond: One cannot reply that there is just a single moral virtue with respect to all the passions. For there are passions that belong to diverse powers, since, as was explained above (q. 23, a. 1), the passions that belong to the irascible power are different from the passions that belong to the concupiscible power.

Yet neither does it have to be the case that every difference among the passions is sufficient to diversify the moral virtues. For, first of all, there are some passions that are opposed to one another as contraries (*opponuntur secundum contrarietatem*), e.g., joy and sadness, fear and daring, and others of this sort. And there has to be one and the same virtue with respect to passions that are opposed in this way. For since a moral virtue consists in a sort of mean (*in quadam medietate consistat*), a single mean (*medium secundum eandem rationem*) is set up with respect to the contrary passions, just as, in the case of natural things, there is a single mean (*idem medium*) that lies between contraries, e.g., between white and black.

Second, diverse passions are found to conflict with reason in the same way, viz., either with an impulse toward what is contrary to reason or with a drawing away from what is in accord with reason. And so the diverse passions of the concupiscible power do not belong to diverse moral virtues because their movement follows a certain ordering with respect to one another; for they are ordered toward the same thing, viz., toward pursuing something good or toward receding from something bad. For instance, sentient desire proceeds from love, and from the desire one arrives at pleasure. And the same thing holds for their opposites, since fleeing or abhorring (*fuga*) follows from hate (*odium*) and arrives at sadness or pain (*tristitia*). By contrast, the passions of the irascible power do not belong to a single ordering, but are instead ordered toward diverse things; for instance, daring and fear are ordered toward some big danger, whereas hope and despair are ordered toward some difficult good, and anger is ordered toward overcoming a contrary that has inflicted harm. And so there are diverse virtues ordered toward these passions, viz., *temperance* with respect to the passions of the concupiscible power, *fortitude* with respect to fear and daring, *magnanimity* with respect to hope and despair, and *gentleness* with respect to anger.

Reply to objection 1: All the passions share a single *common* (*commune*) principle and *common* end, but they do not share a *particular* (*proprium*) principle or end. Hence, this consideration is not sufficient for there being just a single moral virtue (*non sufficit ad unitatem virtutis moralis*).

Reply to objection 2: Just as, in the case of natural entities, the principle by which one recedes from the one endpoint is the same as the principle by which one approaches the other endpoint, and just as, in the case of beings of reason (*in rationalibus*), contraries involve the same concept, so, too, moral virtue, which consents to reason in the manner of a nature, is such that there is a single moral virtue with respect to contrary passions.

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained, the three passions in question are ordered toward the same object with a certain ordering, and for this reason they pertain to the same moral virtue.

Article 5

Are the moral virtues distinguished in a way that corresponds to the objects of the passions?

It seems that the moral virtues are not distinguished in a way that corresponds to the objects of the passions:

Objection 1: Just as there are objects of the passions, so, too, there are objects of operations. But the moral virtues that have to do with operations are not distinguished in a way that corresponds to the objects of the operations; for instance, buying or selling a house or a horse pertain to one and the same virtue of justice. Therefore, the moral virtues that have to do with the passions are not diversified by the objects of the passions, either.

Objection 2: The passions are certain acts or movements of the sentient appetite. But more diversity is required for a diversity of habits than for a diversity of acts. Therefore, diverse objects that do not diversify the species of passion will not diversify the species of moral virtue, with the result that there will be a single moral virtue with respect to all pleasures, and so on for the others.

Objection 3: Species are not diversified by *more* and *less*. But diverse pleasurable things differ only with respect to *more* and *less*. Therefore, all pleasurable things pertain to a single species of virtue—and, for the same reason, all fearful things, and so on for the others.

Objection 4: Just as virtue does what is good (*est operativa boni*), so, too, it impedes what is bad (*est impeditiva mali*). But there are diverse virtues with respect to sentient desires for the good, e.g., *temperance* (*temperantia*) with respect to sentient desires for the pleasures of touch and *wittiness* (*eutrapelia*) with respect to the pleasures of play. Therefore, there should likewise be diverse virtues with respect to the fear of bad things.

But contrary to this: *Chastity* (*castitas*) has to do with sexual pleasure, whereas *fasting* or *dieting* (*abstinentia*) has to do with the pleasures of food, and *wittiness* (*eutrapelia*) with the pleasures of play.

I respond: The perfection of a virtue depends on reason, whereas the perfection of a passion depends on the sentient appetite itself. Hence, the virtues have to be diversified by their ordering with respect to reason, whereas the passions have to be diversified by their ordering with respect to the appetite. Therefore, insofar as the objects of the passions are related in different ways to the sentient appetite, they cause diverse species of passion, whereas insofar as they are related to reason, they cause diverse species of virtue.

However, the movement of reason is not the same as the movement of the sentient appetite. Hence, nothing prevents (a) there being some difference of objects which causes a diversity of passions but which does not cause a diversity of virtues—as, for instance, in the case explained above (a. 4), when a single virtue has to do with many passions—or, likewise, (b) there being some difference of objects which causes a diversity of virtues but which does not cause a diversity of passions, as occurs when diverse virtues are ordered toward a single passion, e.g., pleasure. And since, as has been explained (a. 4), different passions that belong to diverse powers always belong to diverse virtues, it follows that the diversity of objects that corresponds to the diversity of the powers—viz., *something good absolutely speaking* and *something good involving some difficulty*—always diversifies the species of virtue. And since there is a certain order by which reason governs a man's lower parts and by which it likewise extends itself toward exterior things, it also follows that insofar as a single object of the passions is apprehended by the sensory power or by the imagination (or even by reason), and insofar as it belongs to the soul or to the body or to exterior entities, it will have diverse relations to reason and will as a consequence be apt to diversify the virtues.

Therefore, the good of a man, which is the object of love (*amor*), sentient desire (*concupiscentia*), and pleasure (*delectatio*), can be taken to pertain either (a) to the body's sensory power or (b) to the

soul's interior apprehension. And this in turn is ordered either (a) toward the man's good within himself, whether with respect to the body or with respect to the soul, or (b) toward the man's good in his relation to others. And all diversity of this sort diversifies virtue because of the diverse relations to reason.

So, then, consider some good. If this good is apprehended by the sense of touch and has to do with sustaining human life in the individual or in the species—as do the pleasurable goods of food and sexual intercourse—then it will pertain to the virtue of *temperance*. By contrast, since the pleasures associated with the other sensory powers are not vehement, they do not present any difficulty to reason, and so no virtue is posited with respect to them; for as *Ethics 2* says, virtue, like art, has to do with what is difficult.

On the other hand, there are goods, e.g., money and honor, which are apprehended not by a sensory power but by an interior power and which pertain to the man himself in his own right. Of these goods, money can of itself be ordered toward the good of the body, whereas honor consists in the soul's apprehension. Now these two goods can be considered either (a) absolutely speaking, insofar as they pertain to the concupiscible power, or (b) as involving some difficulty, insofar as they pertain to the irascible power. (This distinction has no place in goods that delight the sense of touch, since goods of this sort are the lowest and belong to man insofar as he shares something in common with brute animals.)

Thus, as regards money absolutely speaking, insofar as it is an object of sentient desire or pleasure or love, there is [the virtue of] *liberality* or *generosity* (*liberalitas*), while as regards this good thought of as involving difficulty, there is *magnificence* (*magnificentia*). On the other hand, as regards honor taken absolutely speaking, insofar as it is an object of love, there is a certain virtue that is called *philotimia*, i.e., the love of honor, whereas if honor is thought of as involving difficulty, in the sense that it is an object of hope, then there is *magnanimity* (*magnanimitas*). Hence, liberality and philotimia are seen to exist in the concupiscible power, whereas magnificence and magnanimity exist in the irascible power.

Now the good of a man in relation to another does not seem to involve difficulty, but is thought of as taken absolutely and as an object of the passions of the concupiscible power. This good can be pleasurable to someone insofar as he is related to another either in serious matters (*in his quae serio fiunt*), i.e., in actions that are ordered by reason toward some due end (*ad debitum finem*), or in playful matters (*in his quae fiunt ludo*), i.e., in actions ordered just toward pleasure and which are not related to reason in the same way that serious matters are. There are two ways one behaves toward another in serious matters: The first lies in being pleasant by fitting words and deeds (*ut delectabilem decentibus verbis et factis*), and this pertains to a virtue which Aristotle names *friendship* and which can be called *affability*. The other way in which one behaves toward another lies in being truthful in word and deed (*ut manifestum per dicta et facta*), and this pertains to another virtue, which Aristotle calls *truthfulness* (*veritas*). For being truthful (*manifestatio*) comes closer to reason than does pleasure, and serious matters come closer than do playful matters. Hence, as regards the pleasures of play there is another virtue, which the Philosopher calls *wittiness* (*eutrapelia*).

So, then, it is clear that, according to Aristotle, there are ten moral virtues that have to do with the passions, viz., *fortitude*, *temperance*, *liberality*, *magnificence*, *magnanimity*, *philotimia*, *gentleness*, *friendship*, *truthfulness*, and *wittiness*. And they are distinguished by diverse matters or diverse passions or diverse objects. Thus, if *justice*, which has to do with operations, is added in, then there will be eleven virtues in all.

Reply to objection 1: All the objects of that which is the same *operation* in species have the same relation to reason, but not all the objects of that which is the same *passion* in species. For operations conflict with reason in a way different from the way the passions do.

Reply to objection 2: As has been explained, the passions are diversified in a way different from the way that the virtues are diversified.

Reply to objection 3: *More* and *less* do not diversify species except because of diverse relations to reason.

Reply to objection 4: What is good is stronger at effecting movement that is what is bad, because,

as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, what is bad acts only in the power of the good. Hence, the bad does not create a difficulty for reason that requires a virtue, unless it is excessive, and there seems to be a single excessive evil in a single genus of passion. Hence, there is just a single virtue, viz., *gentleness*, with respect to every instance of anger, and, similarly, just a single virtue, viz., *fortitude*, with respect to every instance of daring. By contrast, the good involves the sort of difficulty that requires virtue even if it is not excessive in the genus of the relevant passion. And, as has been explained, this is why diverse moral virtues are posited with respect to sentient desires.