

FRANCISCO SUÁREZ

METAPHYSICS, POLITICS AND ETHICS

MÁRIO SANTIAGO DE CARVALHO
MANUEL LÁZARO PULIDO
SIMONE GUIDI
(EDITED BY)

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O presente volume publica as Atas do I^o Encontro Internacional “Pensar o Barroco em Portugal” (26-28 de Junho de 2017), que se ocupou do pensamento metafísico, ético e político de Francisco Suárez. Contando com a colaboração de alguns dos maiores especialistas internacionais na obra e no pensamento deste famoso professor da Universidade de Coimbra no século XVII, este volume celebra os 400 anos da sua morte e assinala a produtividade do seu legado filosófico-teológico.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LISTA DE ABREVIATURAS

THOMAS AQUINAS

ST: Summa theologiae cum Supplemento et commentariis Caietani, Roma, 1888-1906, in *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. Edita*, Ex Typographia Polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, vols. 4-12.

DUNS SCOTUS

Or.: Ordinatio, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Wadding, Vivès, Paris, 1891-1895, vols. 8-21.

OpW: Opera Omnia, ed. Wadding, Vivès, Paris, 1891-1895, 26 vols.

FRANCISCO SUÁREZ

CDA: De Anima, texto inédito de los doce primeros capítulos, introducción y edición crítica por S. Castellote, Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, Madrid, 1978-1992, 3 vols.

DF: *Defensio Fidei Catholicae aduersus Anglicanae Sectae Errores*, in F. Suárez, *Opera Omnia*, Vivès, Paris, 1856-1878, vol. 24 (1859).

DM: *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, in F. Suárez, *Opera Omnia*, Vivès, Paris, 1856-1878, vols. 25-26 (1866).

LEG: *De Legibus ac Deo Legislatore* in F. Suárez, *Opera Omnia*, Vivès, Paris, 1856-1878, vols. 5-6 (1856).

OpO: *Opera Omnia*, Vivès, Paris, 1856-1878, 28 vols.

RENÉ DESCARTES

AT: *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. by Ch. Adam and P. Tannery, Cerf, Paris, 1897-1909, new edition 1969-1974, 11 vols.

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RETHINKING NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL BELLARMINE, SUÁREZ AND CARAVAGGIO'S CALLING

Costantino Esposito¹

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Abstract: The essay deals with the post-Tridentine debate on nature, Grace, the natural and the supernatural, focusing on the works of Bellarmine and Suárez as well as on Caravaggio's iconic synthesis in his masterpiece, *The Calling of Saint Matthew*. Bellarmine's view is that the supernatural is already present within the natural from the time of creation. Sin breaks, therefore, the relationship with God, but without denying to nature an essential capability to receive Him again. Supported by the controversial *De auxiliis* and contrasted with Báñez's idea of a true 'physical pre-determination', Suárez (*De concursu et efficaci auxilio Dei ad actus liberi arbitrii necessario*, 1599) writes of a necessary dependence of the free will upon God. He claims that God's causal determination in Grace coincides with self-determination on the part of the human free will. In order to perform supernatural acts, the help of Grace is needed, at the least, as God's «cooperation».

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Suárez explains this with the concepts of ‘sufficient aid’ and ‘effective aid’. With the latter, especially, he avoids falling into Báñez’s idea of a ‘physical pre-determination’, considering, instead, ‘effective aid’ as an ‘action or performance of man’, which is, in fact, the very exercise of freedom. The mystery and the circularity of the relationship between freedom and the supernatural, thus, are perfectly portrayed by a structural ambiguity of Caravaggio’s scene, which stages the Jesuit’s choice of nature as capable of the supernatural and, at the same time, of thinking of the supernatural as virtually introjected in the natural.

Keywords: Natural/Supernatural, Roberto Bellarmino, Caravaggio, Grace, Divine Will, Human Freedom

One of the most important issues for shedding light on the assumptions and verifying the developments of ‘Baroque’ thought in Europe between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the relationship between natural and supernatural speech as the relationship between human freedom and divine grace. Indeed, we might even go so far as to say that this concept is the true keystone supporting the very possibility to talk about philosophy or theology that is specifically *Baroque*, if we use this term not only to draw an analogy with the artistic and political context of that time period, but also to an original characteristic of European thought (along with ‘American’ or ‘colonial’) including the scholastic tradition, confessional dialectic, and modern philosophy².

² On this historical and interpretative issue, see: C. Esposito, M. Lamanna (eds.), *Esiste una filosofia barocca? / Is there such a Thing as “Baroque Philosophy”?*, «Quaestio», 7 (2017), with essays by P. R. Blum, D. Cellamare, S. Di Bella, S. R.

Above all, it is important to define the context in which this issue arose and developed. 1563 marked the conclusion of the Council of Trent, perhaps the most important event of the modern age concerning the Catholic Church. There the truth of the doctrine of faith and justification was re-defined and, in a certain way, also reclaimed after the fracturing operated by Lutherans between an irreversibly fallen human nature and a divine grace that was unfathomable and almost 'impossible' for human reason. In the front row at the Council, with the aim of shaping its outcomes, were the 'young lions' of the Society of Jesus, who sensed that the really urgent need of their time was to understand in new ways (or more original ways) the relationship between the natural and the supernatural. These had to be viewed as two realities, or two poles that were not disconnected from (or worse, opposed to) one another and in need of reconciliation, but rather as part of a constitutive whole, consistent with the creator-creature correlation between God and the human being³.

This posed a radical challenge – nearly an impossible one – because it was precisely the evidence of this relationship that had fallen into crisis. And the sign of this difficulty lies in the very terms used to define the relationship: the *concursus* and *cooperatio* (the passing of one along with the other) highlight the fact that it was now two specific 'words' or 'poles' in relation with each other. In other words, the task of post-Tridentine Catholic thought was to 'represent' the possible harmonization of natural

D'Onofrio, O. Gal, M. Lázaro Pulido. See, in particular, the editors' *Premise*, pp. 419-426.

³ On this context, see: R. García-Villoslada, S. I., *Manual de Historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, Editorial Aldecoa, Madrid, 1941, Sección III, Generalatos de Aquaviva y Vitelleschi (1581-1645); P. Broggio, F. Cantù, P. A. Fabre & A. Romano (a cura di), *I gesuiti al tempo di Claudio Acquaviva. Strategie politiche, religiose e culturali tra Cinque e Seicento*, Morcelliana, Brescia, 2007.

and supernatural, of freedom and grace, starting from the idea that they can be, or must necessarily be, both designed from the start as constituted in themselves, and only later addressing the order of the relationship.

More precisely, according to the theological canon (and the ontological one) the creature was dependent on and subordinate to the creator, and it was the very recognition of this order of dependence that had become problematic. Human nature had to be considered according to its inherent laws, and these laws were certainly given by God (nature still remained 'created' and 'wanted' by the creator!), but humans could *also* be theoretically conceived as an autonomous system capable of being understood independent of the relationship with the source of their being. From the perspective of causality, the second causes could be seen as permanently dependent on the first cause; however, the latter tended to be understood as an action present not *inside* the action of the secondary causes, but rather *concurrent* with them. The presence of the divine action, of course, continued to be an *influxus*, but only in terms of a *concursus*⁴.

It is as if, after this fracturing or disconnection, an account of the relationship between nature and grace needed to be described in terms of re-gaining or re-claiming. Among the many thinkers who appeared on the Baroque scene I will be focusing on only two of them, from the last two decades of the seventeenth century: Robert Bellarmine and Francisco Suárez.

⁴ Cf. J. Schmutz, *La doctrine médiévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure (XIII^e-XVII^e siècles)*, in S.-Th. Bonino (éd.), *Surnaturel. Une controverse au cœur du thomisme au XX^e siècle*, Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut Sain-Thomas-d'Aquin les 26-27 mai 2000 à Toulouse, «Revue Thomiste», 101 (2001, 1-2), pp. 217-264.

1. Bellarmine: Supernatural within Natural

If we wanted to summarize in a single, concise expression the Baroque 'genius' of Cardinal Robert Bellarmine – the Prince of Catholic apologetics, committed to the highest levels in the 'controversy' with the Protestants⁵ – we would say that the 'supernatural' is already present within the natural, from the time of the creation and because of the creation alone. And when nature is corrupted by sin, even though it breaks the relationship with God, it still has in itself the essential capabilities to be able to receive Him once again. This capability is necessary, but not yet 'enough', because it needs the initiative of liberating divine grace.

This thesis emerges, for example, from one of the most interesting controversies of the Catholic faith against the heretics of that time (the late sixteenth century), dedicated to «The grace given to mankind in our ancestor»⁶. The issue was whether Adam was created with any sort of supernatural gift by God. In more detail, the question was whether righteousness (*rectitudo*), or a certain honesty of which men seem to be capable, could be a simple natural endowment or rather a kind of a supernatural gift.

Now, for the Pelagians, but also for Lutherans, it was a simple natural endowment. For both, the first man was constituted with an integrity that was perfectly natural. What changes then is the interpretation: for the Pelagians, in fact, men can reach

⁵ See G. Galeota, *Genesi, sviluppo e fortuna delle Controversiae di Roberto Bellarmino*, in R. De Maio, A. Borromeo, L. Giulia, G. Lutz, A. Mazzacane (a cura di), *Bellarmino e la Controriforma*. Atti del Simposio intern. di studi, Sora 15-18 ottobre 1986, Centro di Studi sorani «Vincenzo Patriarca», Sora, 1990, pp. 5-48. Cf. P. Broggio, *La teologia e la politica. Controversie dottrinali, Curia romana e Monarchia spagnola tra Cinque e Seicento*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze, 2009.

⁶ R. Bellarmino S. J., *De gratia generi humano in primo parente collata. Unico libro explicata (Prima controversia generalis)* in: *Roberti Cardinalis Bellarmini Opera Omnia*, t. 4, *De controversiis christianae fidei adversus hujus temporis haereticos*, Apud Josephum Giuliano Editorem, Neapoli, 1858.

salvation by natural means, that is, thanks to their autonomous cognitive and moral capability, while for Lutherans the integrity and freedom that originally belonged to human nature were definitively lost after the sin.

Bellarmino chose another way: the supernatural gift was already present – constitutionally – in natural creation, and, for this reason, it remains (virtually, so to speak) even after the fall. Against the Pelagians, Bellarmine supported the idea that man is *capax Dei* by nature, that he is thus able to be in relationship with God, and that it is precisely in this capacity that the supernatural dimension of his human nature consists. But on the other hand, against the Lutherans, he said that this ‘being-capable’ of God is an indelible, creaturely mark that remains even after sin. Let us briefly focus on the question raised by Luther, who, in the Commentary on chapter 3 of the Book of Genesis, said that original justice is not a gift that comes from outside (*ab extra*), separate from human nature, but it is purely natural (*vere naturalem*). In other words, it is by nature that Adam loves God, believes in God, and knows God, in the same way that it is natural for the eyes to see light. From this, it follows that, «original justice belongs to human nature, but once it has been lost because of sin, what is natural does not remain intact, as absurdly says the Scholastic (*ut scholastici delirant*)»⁷.

Bringing original justice back to the supernatural gift of God, as Bellarmine does, means that sin decreases this gift, of course, but does not radically compromise the integrity of nature. In other words, sin does not get to delete the possibility that the creature

⁷ M. Luther, *In I. Cap. Genesis*, cap. 3, 7, in *Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimarer Ausgabe), Bd. 42 (1911), Akademischen Druck – u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz, 1964, pp. 124-125. See J. A. Möhler, *Symbolik, oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten nach ihren öffentlichen Bekenntnisschriften* (1832), J. Hegner, Köln, 1958, esp. I Buch, I Kap: «Differenzen in der Lehre von dem Urstande des Menschen und dem Ursprunge des Bösen».

is capable of a relationship with the creator. The creature has lost the gift, but it can get it back again, thanks to a new gift from God, obtained «through the merits of Christ» (*per Christi merita*)⁸. The supernatural gift being lost, it can be received again; but if (as the ‘heretics’ say) it is the nature that is lost in its original state, this will no longer be restored, but will be lost forever.

In this, Bellarmine relied on the excommunication of the following thesis, by two Popes (Pius V in 1567 and Gregory XIII in 1579): «The elevation and exaltation of human nature in union with the divine nature was due to the integrity of the first human condition, so it’s called natural, not supernatural».

To explain how justice and righteousness were supernatural gifts to the first man, Bellarmine clarifies four distinct meanings of ‘natural’:

- 1) First, ‘natural’ means anything that is by birth or native (*quod habetur a nativitate*), and in this sense it is not opposed to the supernatural, since «natural things can be by birth as much as supernatural ones», as we said about Adam’s original justice.
- 2) Second, ‘natural’ means what conforms to nature (*naturae consentaneum*), as when Paul says that the Gentiles do not have the law, but do by nature what the law says (*Rom 2*). In this case it is not opposed to the supernatural but to what is ‘against nature’.
- 3) Third, a gift of grace can be called ‘natural’ if, even before elevating men to supernatural works, it allows them to complete and perfect their own nature as such.
- 4) Finally, what is part of nature, or flowing from the principles of nature, is called ‘natural.’ In this sense,

⁸ R. Bellarmino, *De gratia generi humano...*, p. 22 B.

the body and the soul are called natural, as well as the sensitive faculties and the intellectual ones, and the activities that follow. It is only in this sense that 'natural' in the proper sense is opposed to 'supernatural'⁹.

In light of this articulation of the meaning of 'natural', Bellarmine offers two interpretations of 'supernatural': *per se* and *per accidens*. Supernatural 'in itself' (*per se*) is «what could never be derived by the principles of nature, due to its very constitution» (such as the ascension into heaven of the prophet Elijah on a chariot of fire, or the prodigious strength of Samson). The supernatural 'by accident' (*per accidens*) is «what sometimes happens for a divine miracle, even though it usually derives from natural principles», as when God restores sight to the man born blind or gives wisdom to Salomon¹⁰.

Now, according to Bellarmine (who, in this, recalls Thomas Aquinas), natural uprightness (thanks to which what is 'lower' depends on and submits to what is 'superior', like the body to the soul, sensitivity to reason, and reason to God) is a supernatural gift, and not 'by accident' but 'per se', «because is not derived

⁹ «Quarto: Naturale vocatur, quod aut est pars naturae, aut fluit a principiis naturae. Qua significatione corpus et animus, facultates quoque sentiendi, tum intelligendi, et operationes, quae ab eisdem facultatibus exercentur, naturalia esse dicuntur. Atque haec significatio, de qua hoc loco proprie disputamus, et naturali, hoc modo considerato, valde proprie opponitur supernaturale», R. Bellarmino, *De gratia generi humano...*, p. 24 A-B.

¹⁰ «Potest autem duobus modis dici aliquid supernaturale, per se e per accidens. Per se, dicitur supernaturale, quod ex genere suo non est aptum fluere ex principiis naturae, qualis fuit ascensio Eliae igneo curru in coelum, robur Sampsonis, et alia id genus. Per accidens supernaturalem vocatur, quod interdum obtinetur divino miraculo licet alioqui ex naturae principiis fluere soleat. Talis fuit sensus videndi quem Deus caeco nato restituit, sapientia divinitus Salomoni tributa, et alia non pauca, in Scripturis leguntur», R. Bellarmino, *De gratia generi humano...*, p. 24 B.

from natural principles, nor could it ever arise from them»¹¹. «And if this gift were removed [as happened with sin], all that would remain would be nature as it would be if it were established in the purely natural sense [*in puris naturalibus*], and the lower parts would not be ordered to the superior ones»¹². And so,

the difference between the state of man after the sin of Adam and the state of pure nature is equal to the difference between a man who was undressed and a naked man [*Quare non magis differt status hominis post lapsum Adae a statu ejusdem in puris naturalibus, quam differat spoliatus a nudo*]¹³.

Thus, we can say that, in Bellarmine, the pure nature is not identified with the whole or intact one, for intact nature has the supernatural gift already incorporated in itself. Here is the 'baroque' paradox of Bellarmine: in order to be itself, human nature needs a supernatural gift. Or inversely, *without grace, nature cannot continue to be nature*. Its being is not self-referential but relational. In short, pure nature is not assumed as a 'neutral' with respect to the supernatural order, but as a lack, as a non-integrity of nature itself. However, behind these considerations a hidden, epic problem lies: here, when we talk about a pure

¹¹ «Nos vero existimamus rectitudinem illam etiam partis inferioris, fuisse donum supernaturale, et quidem per se, non per accidens, ita ut neque ex naturae principiis fluxerit, neque potuerit fluere. Et quia donum illud supernaturale erat, ut statim probaturi sumus, eo remoto, natura humana sibi relicta, pugnam illam experiri coepit partis inferioris cum superiore, quae naturalis futura erat, idest, ex conditione materiae secutura, nisi Deus justitia donum homini addidisset», R. Bellarmino, *De gratia generi humano...*, p. 24 B.

¹² «Omnes enim communi consensu docent, rectitudinem primi hominis effectum fuisse doni cujusdam supernaturalis, et eo dono remoto mansisse naturam, qualis esset, si in puris naturalibus condita fuisset, quod attinet ad motus inordinatos partis inferioris»: R. Bellarmino, *De gratia generi humano...*, p. 25 B.

¹³ R. Bellarmino, *De gratia generi humano...*, p. 24 B.

nature (*in puris naturalibus*), we are referring not to an absurd or impossible hypothesis, but to a condition that is possible (even if only theoretically possible), a sign that the experience of the relationship is always at risk. It is not an obvious ‘given’, but rather an open question¹⁴.

The Council of Trent affirmed with clarity that the first man was endowed with his own ‘holiness’ due to a supernatural principle (the *gratia gratum faciens*):

If any one does not confess that the first man, Adam, when he had transgressed the commandment of God in Paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice wherein he had been constituted; [...] let him be anathema.

If any one asserts, that the prevarication of Adam injured himself alone, and not his posterity; and that the holiness and justice, received of God, which he lost, he lost for himself alone, and not for us also; or that he, being defiled by the sin of disobedience, has only transfused death, and pains of the body, into the whole human race, but not sin also, which is the death of the soul; let him be anathema¹⁵.

¹⁴ On this question: H. de Lubac S. J., *Surnaturel. Études historiques* (1946), Lethielleux, Paris, 2010, chapt. 5; Id., *Augustinisme et théologie moderne*, Aubier, Paris, 1965, chapter VI, «Nature pure et désir naturel», pp. 183-223; J. Milbank, *The suspended Middle. Henri de Lubac and the Renewed Split in Modern Catholic Theology*, 2nd edition, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids (MI), 2014.

¹⁵ Council of Trent, Session V (17 June 1546), First Decree concerning Original Sin, nn. 1-2: «Si quis non confitetur, primum hominem Adam, cum mandatum Dei in paradiso fuisset transgressus, statim sanctitatem et iustitiam, in qua constitutus fuerat, amisisse [...]: a.[nathema] s. [it]. [...] Si quis Adae praeverbationem sibi soli et non eius propagini asserit nocuisse, acceptam a Deo sanctitatem et iustitiam, quam perdidit, sibi soli et non nobis etiam eum perdidisse; aut inquinatum illum per inobedientiae peccatum mortem et poenas corporis tantum in omne genus humanum transfudisse, non autem et peccatum, quod mors est animae: anathema sit»: in *Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque Decreta*, «Corpus Christianorum», III, curantibus K. Ganzer, G. Alberigo & A. Melloni, Brepols, Turnhout, 2010, p. 18.

And Bellarmine concludes:

In Paradise Adam was not only right, but holy too;
but only the Holy Spirit, through grace, makes a man
holy, by dwelling in his heart [...] Therefore Adam in
Paradise had the Holy Spirit dwelling in himself¹⁶.

2. Suárez: Divine Will within Human Freedom¹⁷

In a pamphlet entitled *De concursu et efficaci auxilio Dei ad actus liberi arbitrii necessario*, published in 1599, Suárez speaks about a necessary dependence of free will upon God as the first cause, but, at the same time, he says that this causal determination on the part of God coincides with self-determination on the part of the free will. On the one hand, «God causes the determination of the will, since such determination is something that could not happen without God [*Deus efficit determinationem voluntatis, nam illa determinatio aliquid est, quod non potest fieri sine Deo*]». But, on the other hand, the human will, as free will, «has in its power all that is necessary to its own determination». Another consequence is that «the influence or concurrence of God is in the power of the will [*ille influxus vel concursus Dei esse in potestate voluntatis...*]: the will, in fact, may give its assent to divine co-operation, but it can also reject it [*...quia in manu ejus positum est vel facere, ut ille*

¹⁶ «Fuit igitur Adam in paradiso non solus justus, sed etiam sanctus: sanctus autem non facit, nisi Spiritus sanctus per gratiam inhabitans corda hominum [...]. Quare habuit Adam in paradiso Spiritum sanctum inhabitantem», R. Bellarmino, *De gratia generi humano...*, p. 21 A.

¹⁷ Among the recent books focusing on Suárez see: D. Schwartz (ed.), *Interpreting Suárez. Critical Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011; B. Hill & H. Lagerlund (ed.), *The Philosophy of Francisco Suárez*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012 and V. M. Salas & R. L. Fastiggi (ed.), *A Companion to Francisco Suárez*, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2015.

*concursum in actu secundo ponatur, cooperando, vel ut non ponatur, suspendendo suam cooperationem»]*¹⁸.

The issue of the particular dependency of the human will – as free will – upon divine providence was particularly urgent in view of the extreme hypothesis of the Dominican Domingo Báñez, according to which divine action as the primary cause was a ‘physical pre-determination’. Therefore, it was absolutely necessary, with respect to man’s voluntary decisions, designated as secondary causes. In this case, how would we effectively explain the evil actions of human beings? If God predetermines everything, he is also responsible for the evil done by us. Even God himself, the supremely good, could be considered ‘the author of sin’¹⁹.

Following this opinion (an absurd one for any Christian theologian), one might reach this paradoxical conclusion:

God may not only have wanted to allow Judas to sell Christ, but he may also have wanted him to do it and actually ordered it in advance, before even knowing that Judas would have wanted it in the future. So, then, Judas

¹⁸ F. Suárez, *De concursu et efficaci auxilio Dei ad actus liberi arbitrii necessario*, in *Opuscula theologica sex, materia de auxiliis gratiae absolventia quaestionesque de scientia, libertate et iustitia Dei elucidantia*, in *OpO*, vol. 11 (Vivès, Paris, 1858), lib. I, c. 17, §§ 8 and 10, pp. 89-90.

¹⁹ F. Suárez, *De concursu...*, lib. II, c. 2, § 10, p. 96. On the famous controversy *De auxiliis* between the Dominican Domingo Báñez and the Jesuits Pedro da Fonseca and Luis de Molina (the latter author of the famous book *De concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis*, 1588) about the help of the divine grace to human freedom, see J.-H. Serry, *Historia Congregationum de Auxiliis Divinae Gratiae sub Summis Pontificibus Clemente VIII. Et Paulo V. in Quatuor Libris Distributa...* Venetiis 1740 (reprint: Nabu Press, Charleston, SC, 2012). See V. Aubin, “Aussi libres que si la prescience n’existait pas”: Molina et la science moyenne au secours de la liberté, in J.-Ch. Bardout & O. Boulnois (éd.), *Sur la science divine*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 2002, pp. 382-411. An excellent summary of the dossier on grace-freedom remains the article “Molinisme” written by E. Vansteenbergh in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Paris, 1929, vol. 10, coll. 2094-2187 (esp. coll. 2154-2166: «IV. Les congrégations ‘De auxiliis’»).

wanted to sell Christ because God willed that he should want it, and he also made him want to²⁰.

In Suárez's view, this reasoning was to be rejected not only because it concerned sinful acts. Even if it referred to good acts, it would fail to take into account the free nature of human acts.

And the problem is radicalized in the opposite case to sinful acts, namely in voluntary actions of a 'supernatural' order, done by man, such as «believe, hope, love, repent, as it is required to receive the grace of justification» (according to the formula used by the Council of Trent).²¹ These acts *necessarily* require the «effective help of God», and this is demanded not only from the outside (for instance, someone who preaches the good doctrine), but also from within the same voluntary act as a genuine «inner aid».

But the real problem is to explain how these supernatural acts can be considered in themselves to be free acts. Suárez rejects the two standard models of the discussion:

- a) On the one hand, he wants to avoid the position of the Lutherans (and 'Catholic para-Calvinists', as some Dominicans were accused to be), according to which divine intervention and the help of grace in supernatural acts would be, even more than in natural acts, a true

²⁰ F. Suárez, *De concursu...*, lib. II, c. 2, § 21, p. 101: «...Sequelam probo, quia Deus non solum voluit permittere ut Judas venderet Christum, sed etiam id definite voluit ; imo praevoluit et praeordinavit, priusquam praesciret Judam id volitum ; ideo enim id voluit Judas, quia Deus voluit ut id vellet, et fecim etiam ut vellet».

²¹ «If any one saith, that without the prevenient inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and without his help, man can believe, hope, love, or be penitent as he ought, so as that the grace of Justification may be bestowed upon him; let him be anathema [*Si quis dixerit, sine praeveniente Spiritus Sancti inspiratione atque eius adiutorio hominem credere, sperare et diligere aut poenitere posse, sicut oportet, ut ei iustificationis gratia conferatur: a. s.*]: Council of Trent, Canon III On Justification, in *Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque Decreta*, «Corpus Christianorum», III, cit., p. 34.

physical pre-determination. If it is true that, as Jesus says in the Scripture, «without me you can do nothing» (Jn 15,5), then without this *concursus* we are simply «all bad» (Mt 7,11).

- b) But, on the other hand Suárez also wants to carefully avoid the reduction made by the Pelagians (or semi-Pelagians, as some radical fellow Jesuits were accused to be), according to which, «man, according to his natural will, and thanks to the natural light [of reason], is enough unto himself to believe and operate what is necessary for salvation»²².

Therefore, to perform supernatural acts the help of grace is definitely needed, and, more precisely, according to the mode of «cooperation» (*per modum concursum*). But much of the problem lies in the meaning to be given to this «*concursum*» of grace. The solution for Suárez consisted first in distinguishing two levels of divine help for free will, and then in connecting them closely with each other.

The first level is the «sufficient aid» (*auxilium sufficiens*), given by God as a condition of possibility for the exercise of freedom. This exercise is not necessarily made; in fact, it is as much open to the possibility of merit as it is open to negligence on the part of man. In short, the *gratia sufficiens* gives man the power to be free, but it still does not guarantee that he actually is free. The fulfillment of freedom depends on the fact that man, who is capable of having the power to do something, also wants to do it as a matter of fact. To this it is to be linked the second kind of divine help, namely «effective aid» (*auxilium efficax*). This was, according to Suárez, «the specific objective of and the fundamental

²² Cf. F. Suárez, *De concursu...*, lib. III, c. 2, § 2, p. 158.

reason for the current dispute among [Catholic] theologians, arisen from previous disputes between Catholics and heretics [Lutherans and Calvinists]»²³.

Of course, all Christian theologians «admit that we are given some effective help from God». But what does this ‘effectiveness’ mean? The Lutherans, for example, «not only admit the *auxilium efficax*, but even exaggerate it so much as to deny that, in addition to it, there may be some *auxilium sufficiens*»²⁴. In other words, according to the Lutheran theory, effective help is a divine action that moves the will in a necessary way, and that obliges the will to want whatever it wants. In short, for ‘heretics’ no act of man’s free will could be accomplished if God himself did not determine the ‘effectiveness’ that belonged to that act. Freedom would be ‘real’ only because the divine action was ‘effective’.

Suárez continues to use the concept of *auxilium efficax*, although not calling it a «physical pre-determination», but rather «the principle of grace that possesses a strength and particular effectiveness to induce the human will to give its consent [*illud gratiae principium, quod peculiarem vim et efficaciam habet ad inducendam humanam voluntatem, ut consentiat*]»²⁵. But what is the real effect of this divine help? Nothing other than the same «action or performance of man»²⁶, which is the exercise of his freedom.

²³ F. Suárez, *De concursu...*, lib. III, c. 6, § 8, p. 180.

²⁴ «...difficultas tota et dissensio consistit in esplicando in quo consistat hoc auxilium efficax, et efficacia ejus. Nam hujus temporis haeretici non solum fatentur auxilium efficax, verum etiam ita illud exaggerant, ut negent praeter illud esse posse aliquod sufficiens. Vocant enim auxilium efficax motionem quamdam divi- nam, quae necessitatem infert voluntati ut velit quicquid vult sine qua negant fieri posse ut voluta consentiat; et ideo etiam negant esse aliquod auxilium sufficiens, quod hanc efficacem motionem non includat», F. Suárez, *De concursu...*, lib. III, c. 6, § 8, p. 181.

²⁵ F. Suárez, *De concursu...*, lib. III, c. 6, § 8, p. 181.

²⁶ «... [gratia] potest appellari efficax, non solum quia effectiva est, neque solum quia actu efficit ; sed quia ita est effectiva, ut semper habeat infallibiliter conjunctam actualem effectiorem. [...] nihilque aliud diceretur, quam gratiam,

Still a difficult issue remains open, one of Augustinian origin, concerning the action of divine grace that calls the human being to salvation. In a word, the problem of *vocation* (calling). In what sense is the action of God effective with respect to the free will of human beings? And can the latter resist this call, or is it 'irresistible'? In his infinite wisdom, God foresees what the human will choose to do at every opportunity, and, therefore, also knows what vocation that will gives its consent to, and when and if it will be given²⁷.

This divine effectiveness should not be understood, therefore, in the 'physical' sense, but in a 'moral' one (not because it refers to a duty, but because it refers to the intention of freedom). Its significance is that of an election as a «predestination to glory». This does not happen with regards to the actions that the human will actually accomplish in the future, and so not because a person deserved it because of his actions (*post praevisa merita*), but rather as an order of 'absolute' predestination, prior to any possible merit (*ante praevisa merita*). Grace is really undeserved; otherwise it would not be grace. And, at the same time, the place where grace reveals itself as effective is none other than our very freedom.

To better understand this issue, it is worth looking carefully at a painting by Caravaggio, painted in the same year (1599-1600) in which Suárez published his paper on the *concursus* of divine help to human free will. It is *The Calling of Saint Matthew*, located in Contarelli Chapel of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome.

The most interesting thing about the Suarezian solution to the problem is the attempt to rescue freedom not in spite of divine

quae actu operatur, infallibiliter habere conjunctam actionem, seu operationem hominis»: F. Suárez, *De concursu...*, lib. III, c. 14, § 4. p. 222.

²⁷ Cf. F. Suárez, *De concursu...*, lib. III, c. 14, § 9, p. 225.

predestination, but through it. The supreme and absolute will of God to call a human being to salvation becomes 'effective' because it provides a person with the means and assistance to perform an act of free will, by which to accept, or also to reject this call.

Predestination is, therefore, an act of prior knowledge on the part of God, the appropriate means to ensure that the human will shall be able to perform a supernatural act. Nevertheless, «in this divine decree there is nothing contradictory to freedom», since indeed God with his Decree wants nothing more than «the same act of the creature as a free act», and, to this aim, «he orders the appropriate means to cause a free determination»²⁸. The paradox of the Baroque thought is: God 'determines' the freedom (which would seem to be a contradiction in terms), but he determines it *precisely as free*, so ultimately he constitutes it, he guarantees it and protects it as freedom.

To this we must certainly add that freedom is fully realized when it gives its assent to the divine call, while rejecting it would be a form of reduction or impoverishment of freedom. But this must not make us forget that, on the other side, the same vocation with which God elects the human being, although absolute and not dependent on our own merits, can only be fulfilled through a free act of our will.

²⁸ Cf. F. Suárez, *De concursu...*, lib. III, c. 17, § 4, p. 251: «Quod vero in hoc divino decreto nihil sit repugnans libertati, patet ; quia per tale decretum vult Deus actum illum in ordine ad causam et ad medium, per quae libere futurus est, et ex vi talis decreti nullam aliam causam adhibet ad talem actum ; ergo non est unde possit libertatem laedere vel impedire ; nam potius eam maxime tuetur per talem decretum, quia et directe vult ipsum actum creaturae ut liberum, et ex vi ejus ordinat medium aptum ad liberam determinationem causandam. Nel per illud decretum aliter influit in voluntatem creatam».



There is one detail in the painting of *The Calling of St. Matthew*, which highlights this issue. Who is or where is Matthew, precisely? Traditionally, he has been identified as the bearded man, the one who, before the call (wonderfully expressed by Jesus' outstretched arm and hand pointing to the one who is called), seems to be asking: «Is it I ?». And, in fact, that figure seems to bring his index finger to his chest, just as if to indicate himself. But that same finger may also indicate the other character, the younger one sitting at the head of the table, trying to count the money. Who is the real Matthew? Without entering into the debate on the identities of the two characters²⁹, let me observe that the latter

²⁹ Cf. N. De Marco, *Caravaggio's Calling of Saint Matthew*, «Iris», 1 (1982), pp. 5-7; A. Prater, *Wo ist Matthäus? Beobachtungen zu Caravaggios Anfängen als*

hypothesis (Matthew as the young man with his head down) would make sense of all the tension and drama of the relationship between freedom and grace. Jesus is calling him, and the painting depicts the moment when everything happens: it is only a few seconds before Matthew raises his head; it is that very moment when he can say yes or no. And the fact that we know that he will say 'yes' at the end, does not cancel out the whole drama of freedom, since it is as if grace is waiting for the free response to spring from within.

And if instead we argue, as scholars regularly do, that the real Matthew can only be the bearded man, since his appearance corresponds to the one that returns in two other Caravaggio's paintings dedicated to him (*Saint Matthew and the Angel* and *The Martyrdom of Saint Matthew*, both also in the same Chapel of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome), we may assume that perhaps in *The Calling* both Matthews are represented, the mature one pointing towards the young one, indicating the precise moment when the *concursum* between predestination and free choice is happening.

The mystery of vocation – so stunningly depicted by Caravaggio – lies in this intimate implication between the «necessity of grace» and «the real use of freedom»³⁰. Of course, it is God who initiates our salvation: he «works in us without us, that is, without our merits and without our free cooperation or aptitude, but for his own freedom, and grace».

Monumentalmaler in der Contarelli Kapelle, «Pantheon», 43 (1985), pp. 70-74; Id., *Matthäus und kein Ende? Eine Entgegnung*, «Pantheon», 53 (1995), pp. 53-61. See also: M. Cecchetti (a cura di), *Caravaggio. Dov'è Matteo? Un caso critico nella Vocazione di San Luigi dei Francesi*, Edizioni Medusa, Milano, 2012 (with contributions of A. Prater, H. Kretschmer, A. Hass, H. Röttgen, I. Lavin).

³⁰ «Itaque gratiae necessitatem cum vero usu libertatis conjungimus, usumque libertatis, ut alicujus valoris et momenti sit apud Deum, a gratiae operatione et cooperatione nullo modo separandum esse docemus», F. Suárez, *Brevis resolutio quaestionis de concursu et efficaci auxilio Dei ad actus liberi arbitrii necessario*, in *OpO*, vol. 11 (Vivès, Paris, 1858), § 37, p. 384.

Nevertheless, it is not to be taken for granted that the divine call has the same effect on all those to whom it is addressed («... not all those who were invited to the banquet wanted to come...»: Mt 22, 3). Yet, even in those who do not accept the invitation, the divine vocation is «sufficient to give them the power» to come freely, if they want to.

God gives sufficient grace in order for humans to receive the «power of wanting to believe» (*potestas volendi credere*). But in this sufficient grace it is already *included* the effective grace which, from the inside, animates and sustains the fundamental vocation of the will. Using other technical terms from the theology of grace, Suárez holds the point that the «exciting grace», by which God calls us to operate well in a supernatural sense, is closely linked to the «operating grace» that moves the will from within. In actuality, they are «one and the same thing»³¹.

If the «heretics of our times» deny the existence of an *auxilium sufficiens* without *auxilium efficax*, Suárez instead absorbs the second type of help within the first. From this perspective, the effective help (*auxilium efficax*) appears to be an explication that comes from within the sufficient help, and is almost inherent or immanent to it. The order of sufficient grace, although it is something other and exterior in relation to nature (it is, in fact, supernatural) pervades and imbues of itself, so to speak, the order of nature, and it is thanks to it that the human free will can accomplish a supernatural act, like that of faith.

Divine help moves from sufficient to effective when the free will of man will assents to divine grace. This occurs as the unfolding of a virtual order already instilled in nature.

³¹ «Haec ergo vocatio per excitantem gratiam fit; et haec eadem est gratia operans, per quam Deus solus operatur in nobis, ut velimus»: F. Suárez, *Brevis resolutio quaestionis...*, § 38, pp. 384-385. Cf. *ivi*, § 39, p. 385 and § 46, p. 387.

Therefore, when the natural will, as a free cause, produces an effect of a supernatural kind (in the conversion due to faith and in the assent to God's initiative), it is not, strictly speaking, only a matter of divine action, but also and especially about human freedom that fulfills itself. But freedom can be self-determined, since precisely in this self-determination lies the influence of the first, divine cause on the second cause, that of the human will. The necessary cause acts on the free cause. Suarez writes:

it is said that God not only gives the power to operate, but also the will; Indeed, from this point of view it is said that He only works in us, in order for us to want, as Augustine clearly says in many places, because without doubts about this kind of moral cause [...] it is only God who teaches within, and it is only He who attracts man. However, the right of freedom remains intact within the man who gives his consent, and for this reason, although it is only God who works in order for us to want, nevertheless, it is not only He who operates this will, but He operates it with us. He is the main cause, but not the total cause of the will. And yet, because of this major influence, we say that God operates both the 'want' and the 'accomplish'³².

³² «...Deus dicitur dare non solum potestatem operandi, sed etiam voluntatem; imo sub illa ratione dicitur ipse solus operari in nobis ut velimus, ut Augustinus diserte explicat multis in locis, quia nimirum in eo genere causae moralis praevenientis, suadentis et inducentis, solus Deus est qui docet interius, et trahit homine; quanquam in praestando consensu semper homini relinquatur integrum jus libertatis suae, ratione cuius, licet Deus solus operetur ut velimus, non tamen Deus solus operatur ipsum velle, sed nobiscum illud operatur, et est principalis, non tamen totalis causa ejus; ratione tamen illius principalioris influxus dicitur operari velle et perficere»: F. Suárez, *Brevis resolutio quaestionis...*, § 56, p. 389.

God operates the 'want' precisely *because* the want must be performed by a human being. His concurrence to human will, and the same help of grace, do not constitute an addition, but rather the root of our freedom.

To gather all the internal tension of this theological-philosophical Baroque movement, it is interesting to compare the two positions of Philip Melanchthon (the one who more than anyone else tried to transform the Lutheran rupture into a new doctrinal canon) and Ignatius of Loyola.

In *Loci communes rerum Theologicarum* (1521) Melanchthon writes:

gradually philosophy has crept into Christianity and the impious dogma of free will was granted. [...] The term 'free will' is wrongly used, it is totally foreign to the sacred text, to the meaning and the spiritual judgment [...]. And the term 'reason', equally dangerous, was introduced by Plato's philosophy³³.

And later:

To the question whether the will is free, and to what extent it is free, I answer this: since all the things that happen, happen necessarily according to Divine predestination, there is no freedom in our will³⁴.

³³ P. Melanchthon, *Loci communes rerum Theologicarum*, ed. Aug. 1821, p. 10: «... sensim irrepsit philosophia in Christianismus et receptum est impium de libero arbitrio dogma [...]. Usurpata est vox liberi arbitrii, a divinis literis, a sensu et iudicio spiritus alienissima [...]. Additum est e Platonis philosophia vocabulum rationis, aequè perniciosum».

³⁴ P. Melanchthon, *Loci communes rerum Theologicarum*, p. 12: «Itaque in quaestionem vocatur sitne libera voluntas et quatenus libera sit? Resp-

On the other hand, in the *Spiritual Exercises*, among the «Rules to be observed to have the true sentiment in the militant Church» (particularly rule 17) Ignatius writes:

we should not to speak so much insisting on grace so that we might produce poison which will be able to expropriate freedom. Of course one can speak as much as it is possible about faith and grace, thanks the Divine help, for the greater praise of His Divine Majesty, but not in such way, nor in such manners that – especially in our so dangerous times – works and free will may receive any harm, or considered as nothing³⁵.

The Baroque Jesuits chose the ‘risk’ of a relationship, a tension that is never resolved nor pacified³⁶. They chose the drama of grace, which seeks freedom to occur, and nature that finds in itself the trace of the supernatural. Incurable balancing; polarity that never completely stabilizes; the insertion of the time-factor into the truth of doctrine. The result is a synthesis in which there is a permanent possibility that the unity will be broken, that the relationship will not be balanced, that a deep rift can re-emerge.

It is often said that the Jesuit style attempts to represent the *gloria Dei* as an empowering dynamic as well as an enhancement

Quandoquidem omnia, quae eveniunt, necessario juxta divinam praedestinationem eveniunt, nulla est voluntatis nostra libertas».

³⁵ I. Loyola, *Ejercicios espirituales*, n. 369: «Assimismo no debemos hablar tan largo instando tanto en la gracia, que se engendre veneno para quitar la libertad. De manera que de la fe y gracia se puede hablar quanto sea possible mediante el auxilio divino, para maior alabanza de la su divina majestad, mas no por tal suerte ni por tales modos, mayormente en nuestros tiempos tan periculosos, que las obras y líbero arbitrio resciban detrimento alguno o por nihilo se tengan».

³⁶ See C. Esposito, *Suárez and the Baroque Matrix of Modern Thought*, in V. M. Salas & R. L. Fastiggi (eds.), *A Companion to Francisco Suárez*, pp. 124-147.

of the natural through the supernatural (for the greater glory of God). But it is always a representation accompanied by a tacit acknowledgment, by a mournful *caveat*, namely that human existence and all of reality, including the very reality of the Church, can never be taken for granted, but must be re-gained.

Grace is needed to save freedom. The supernatural is needed to save nature. But the Jesuit choice was: freedom is capable of grace, and grace comes not only from the outside, but emerges from within nature itself. So nature, too, is *capax Dei*, capable of the supernatural, and, at the same time, the supernatural is introjected as a virtuality in the natural.

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