



SACRED HEART
MAJOR SEMINARY

TO: Prof. Klára Jandová,
FROM: Dr. Robert Fastiggi
RE: Evaluation of Ph.D. thesis, "Reading Teresa of Avila through Aquinas on the Soul, Spiritual Development, and Knowledge" by Kateřina Kutarňová.

Dear Prof. Jandová,

I enjoyed reading the Ph.D. thesis by Kateřina Kutarňová entitled "Reading Teresa of Avila through Aquinas on the Soul, Spiritual Development, and Knowledge." I believe this thesis is to be commended for its structure; its knowledge of the primary texts of Teresa of Avila and Thomas Aquinas; and its familiarity with leading scholars of mysticism, Teresa of Avila, and Thomas Aquinas.

I certainly believe the thesis is passing and perhaps worthy of distinction. Kutarňová explains clearly what she intends to do in her thesis and what she does not intend to do. She also explains why she has chosen to read Teresa of Avila's understanding of the will, the intellect, and mystical knowledge through the categories of St. Thomas Aquinas. In doing so she takes note of the Dominican, Domingo Bañez (1528-1604), who was one of the leading Thomist scholars of his day and also a confessor of Teresa of Avila.

Kateřina Kutarňová manifests an impressive familiarity with leading philosophers of mysticism, including William James, Evelyn Underhill, Bernard McGinn, and Louis Dupré. She also draws upon Catholic Thomist philosophers such as Reginald Garrigou-LaGrange and Jacques Maritain to interpret the mysticism of Teresa of Avila through a Thomistic lens. Her footnotes refer to sources in multiple languages, especially English, Spanish, and German. In addition she draws upon leading contemporary scholars of Teresa of Avila—such as Gillian Ahlgren and Mary Frohlich—and leading contemporary scholars of Aquinas, such as Kevin O'Reilly and Michael Wadell.

The question might be raised whether Teresa of Avila is a fitting subject for a doctoral thesis in philosophy. I think Kateřina Kutarňová answers this question very well. As she explains, she is examining Teresa of Avila as a case study for understanding the mystical in a rational way. Philosophy, moreover, is concerned with the relation of the soul to the body and the relation of the will to the intellect. Kutarňová examines how Teresa of Avila understands the body, the soul, the will, and the intellect, and she compares Teresa's understanding of these realities to that of Thomas Aquinas.

The thesis covers many important topics. Some of the most noteworthy are: the relation of the soul to the body; the difference between *entendimiento* and *pensamiento* in Teresa; the relation of the natural and the supernatural in correspondence to the different dwelling places of the *Interior Castle*; the three stages of purgation, illumination, and union in Teresa and Aquinas; the different types of prayer and the meaning of contemplation; the will and its end in Aquinas;

prayer as a habit in Teresa and Aquinas; the meaning of contemplation, mystical knowledge and divinization (*theosis*); the joining of the soul to Christ in baptism and mystical marriage; the beatific vision and participation in the divine essence. All of these topics (as well as others) are treated with clarity and intelligence.

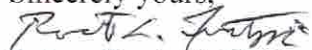
I really don't have many criticisms. In the discussion of the body-soul relation, the author might have discussed a bit more the notion of hylomorphism, which understands the soul as the form of the body. This understanding is not only found in Aquinas, but it's also endorsed by the Catholic Church at the Council of Vienne in 1312 and Lateran V in 1513. Another possible criticism is that the thesis ends too abruptly. It might have been good to have a conclusion that summarizes the main points of the thesis.

These minor criticisms do not detract from the high quality of the thesis. It is well-written, especially by someone whose mother tongue is not English. The thesis is also filled with many fine insights that display an intimate knowledge of the philosophy of mystical knowledge, the writings of Teresa of Avila and those of Thomas Aquinas.

I hope these comments are helpful. I certainly recommend this dissertation as worthy of a passing grade. In fact, I believe it might merit a pass with distinction.

Thank you again for asking me to serve as an outside examiner of this thesis.

Sincerely yours,



Robert Fastiggi, Ph.D.

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