1 **Necessity in St. Anselm's Notion of Method in Theology**

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In this little reflection, I would like to speak about St. Anselm's interest in trying to find necessary reasons for things in the context of his philosophy and theology. Since I am not deeply read in the corpus of St. Anselm's writings and am no authority in St. Anselm's thought, I will work from texts that I am already familiar with and which have come to be seen as numbering among his most important works. In looking at St. Anselm's interest in finding necessarily true reasons, this paper is meant to be a purely speculative, tentative analysis which draws on later developments in the history of theology as this can be seen in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas and Fr. Bernard Lonergan S.J. From the context of our own day, one tries to come to a better understanding about what St. Anselm was able to do and not do in the context of his own time and era.

With respect then to the life and work of St. Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109), as a philosopher and as a theologian, St. Anselm is famous for more than one reason. He composed philosophical works about the human will, free choice, and truth.[1] He also composed many theological works which address difficult problems in theology. He wrote about the Trinity, the end of the Incarnation, the fall of the angels, original sin, divine foreknowledge and predestination, and grace and liberty.[2] He speaks about theology in terms of *fides quaerens intellectum* ("faith seeking understanding"): working from faith to seek a better understanding of the faith that one believes in (a principle or definition of theology which was later accepted and promoted by the First Vatican Council in the decree *Dei Filius*, which spoke about how faith and reason should be related to each other, how their relation should be understood).[3] But, perhaps most importantly, St. Anselm is famous for how he argues: the kinds of reasons which he looks for in the arguments and positions that he presents. For him, and most importantly, something is really

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[1]Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 206.

[2]Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 10.

[3]Matthew C. Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding: The Functional Specialty, "Systematics," in Bernard Lonergan's Method in Theology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), p. 136. As *De Filius* in the 4th paragraph of chapter 4 speaks about the relation between faith and reason and the kind of understanding which is the object of systematics in theology:

> Reason illuminated by faith, when it inquiries diligently, piously, soberly, reaches with God's help some extremely fruitful understanding of the mysteries both in virtue of the analogy of things it knows naturally and in virtue of the interconnection of the mysteries with one another and with man's last end.

Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Doctrinal Pluralism," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, eds. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004), p. 90.

true if necessarily true reasons can be favorably postulated on its behalf.

In this regard then and as a primary illustration, in the *Proslogion*, which takes up the question of God's existence, St. Anselm argues that God's existence should be regarded as self-evident. Since God can be understood as that than which "none greater can be thought" and since that than which "none greater can be thought" necessarily includes real existence (or else it would not be that than which "none greater can be thought"), God's existence immediately follows as a rationally deduced inference.[4] Given (or assuming) the truth of one's basic premisses, God's real existence is to be immediately admitted without further thought or argument since, here, nothing is being said which is not already being admitted in the truths that are constitutive of one's basic premisses. And so, if one wants to question the validity of St. Anselm's argument, one can only do this by questioning the basic assumptions that he makes. Does the conceptual being of a thing entail its real being? How does the order of thought in human cognition relate to an order of being, an order of reality, which transcends human thinking and thought?

For these reasons and because of these questions, St. Anselm's famous ontological argument for God's existence was disputed in his own day and, since its appearance (approximately in 1077-8), it has continued to excite controversy among philosophers and theologians who, to this day, try rationally to prove the reality of God's existence (without having to defer to the teachings of a given religious tradition). Like St. Augustine before him and St. Thomas Aquinas after him, St. Anselm, as a theologian, tried to present arguments which allegedly solely relied on the claims of human reason and which were intended to persuade persons who lacked any kind of religious faith or belief. As St. Anselm avers early on in the *Monologium* (written before the *Proslogion* in 1075-76):

> If any man, either from ignorance or unbelief, has no knowledge of the existence of one Nature which is the highest of all existing things, which is also sufficient to itself in its eternal blessedness, and which confers upon and effects in all other beings, through its omnipotent goodness, the very fact of their existence, and the fact that in any way their existence is good; and if he has no knowledge of many other things, which we necessarily believe regarding God and his creatures, he still believes that he can at least convince himself of these truths in great part,

[4]Anselm, *Proslogion*, 2. On inferences and the different kinds of inference, in Bernard Lonergan's *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli; rev and aug. by Frederick E. Crowe with the collaboration of Elizabeth A. Morelli, Mark D. Morelli, Robert M. Doran, and Thomas V. Daly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 157, Lonergan distinguishes three different kinds of inference or three different kinds of reasoning that have been used to posit a thing's existence. *A priori* inferences move from causes to effects although, with respect to arguments that try to prove the reality of God's existence, *a priori* arguments are irrelevant because nothing causes God. *A posteriori* inferences move from effects to causes and this type of argument can be aptly used to move back toward God as the first cause of all things. In contrast with *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments, *a simultaneo* inferences suggest a species of knowing which exists in the immediacy of an intuition. In this type of inference, in apprehending the concept or definition of a thing, its truth or reality is immediately apprehended. Truth or reality manifests itself merely in the meaning of a concept. Something is true, or real, by definition (as soon as a meaning is grasped by an act of understanding that grasps it and as soon as this meaning is put into words which one can repeat to oneself or say to others).

> even if his mental powers are very ordinary, *by the force of reason alone.*[5] (italics mine)

In attending then to St. Anselm's fashioning of arguments that can be accepted by anyone with a mind or intellect (whether one is religious or not), as one moves through some of the more well known works of St. Anselm, one finds transitions in a shift which reveals a favored form of argument which he employed in his work as a theologian. Early on, in the *Monologion* and the arguments which there are given for God's existence, St. Anselm employs a species of argument that works with *a posteriori* inferences. God is revealed as the first cause of all things when, by a reductive analysis, one moves from effects to causes: from effects to God's ultimate causality. The likenesses which exist in nature are interpreted as analogies. What qualities they possess presuppose an uncreated principle that supremely possesses all the qualities which exist among created things. In the traditional analysis that St. Anselm uses, he works from external, natural, contingent things to posit a prior, external cause which is to be understood as the first, uncreated principle of all things. This external primary principle is to be referred to as God since, as uncaused, God exists as an eternal being (with no beginning or end).

However, in turning to the kind of argument which one finds later in the *Proslogion* and the kind of inquiry which is suggested by it, one finds efforts to find a species of argument which differs from those constructed in the *Monologion*. In the *Monologion*, St. Anselm had worked from many different effects to construct a set of different arguments which, together, would suggest that sufficient reasons exist for rationally affirming the truth of God's existence. Since no one argument really suffices, by adding arguments together, one constructs a sufficiency which recalls how arguments function in judicial proceedings when circumstantial evidence is assembled into a favorable mass. A momentum is constructed and used to elicit a judgment (whether of guilt or innocence). On the basis of conjectures that are grounded in an analogical knowledge of things (or, in other words, from a limited knowledge that one already has about other things), a provisionally true judgment becomes possible. Something is rationally known although it is not known with more than probable certainty. An apodictically true argument is something else altogether and, as St. Anselm notes in the preface to the *Proslogion*, this is the kind of argument which has been missing and which he wants to construct: an argument which, by itself, fully suffices as a rational proof for affirming the reality of God's existence.[6] It would stand on its own and be irrefutable. It would not have to rely on any proof that would come from any other argument. In its self-sufficiency, it would present itself as a species of first principle from which everything else would follow.

Hence, in a change of focus, in seeking to construct a different kind of argument, St. Anselm changes his approach (his method) since in the *Proslogion* he now attends primarily to *a priori*, internal conditions that are inherent in human knowing with respect to the character of its operations: conditions which St. Anselm and every other human knower experiences within one's self as a would-be knower and which cannot be doubted in the self-experience that one has. External conditions are initially known only by acts of sense. They reveal an outer world that is charged with contingency. But, in attending to oneself as a inquirer and thinker, St. Anselm's new argument works from a point of departure which is a bit more immediate. It is an

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[5]Anselm, *Monologium*, 1 as cited in *St. Anselm Basic Writings*, 2nd ed., trans. S. N. Deane (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1988), pp. 83-4.

[6]*Proslogion*, preface.

inner datum of consciousness rather than a datum of sense. A concept or conception (as a word or meaning) presents itself as the term of an act of supposing and defining. An act of meaning (as an act of defining) terminates in a word or a meant which presents itself as a nominal definition on how "God" should be commonly understood and used in the language that one is speaking. A meaning or definition is not given in terms of an understanding which *fully grasps* who and what God is since only God possesses this kind of understanding. No created, restricted act of understanding (no human act of understanding) is able to understand an uncreated, unrestricted act of understanding. And so, for purposes of analysis and discussion, in the footsteps of the earlier work of Boethius,[7] God is defined by St. Anselm as the Being or One than which nothing greater can be conceived or thought about.[8] *Deus est quo maius cogitari nequit*.[9] An analytic proposition expresses a definition. "That than which none greater can be thought" exists as a predicate or property which naturally pertains to God as a proper constitutive. God's greatness is such that he is to be conceived as greater than anything that has been created. In his transcendence, God differs from anything else which exists in our common human experience of things. From a transcendence which already exists within our human souls, by this transcendence, in some way, God is reached. Spirit touches spirit.

To identify more precisely what St. Anselm appears to be doing, instead of engaging in arguments that begins with sense and its first principles, and which move toward God through an interaction between our sensing and thinking (between what is first known by our sense and what is then known by our minds), St. Anselm wants something that is much more simple: an argument that is grounded in what is believed to be a first principle of reason. The human mind by itself, because of its spiritual nature, is able to think about anything. Nothing cannot be thought about by it. And so, if the human mind is able to distinguish between something which exists only as an idea or notion and something which also exists in more than a mental way, it should follow that, from the greatness or profundity of an idea, its reality is immediately suggested. As St. Anselm argues his case, it is possible to conceive of a being which can possibly not exist and it is also possible to conceive of a being which cannot not exist.[10] And so, as one thinks about it, one is brought to realize that God is to be viewed as a necessarily existing being. God necessarily exists. He is as he is because he is both a species of being (a necessary being as opposed to a contingent being) and also because he is the only being who cannot be conceived not to exist (and so he is quite unlike any other being). In a move that St. Anselm makes as he develops his argument, beyond an initial act of defining which first provides a nominal definition for God, he goes on to say that if some kind of understanding of God's nature is given to us (even, obviously, if it is but an inkling), it is necessary for us to realize that God's nature is such that he necessarily exists.[11] While one can conceive of contingent things as existing or not existing, one cannot conceive of a non-contingent thing as not existing. From a self-reflection that thinks about what one's mind is able to conceive and not conceive, a rational argument for God's existence is produced which pretends to be less complex than any kind of argument which tries to move from contingent causes (that are externally known) toward a necessarily existing cause which is inferred although it is not known in an external way as

[7]*Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1994 ed., s.v. "ontological argument," by Simon Blackburn, p. 269.

[8]*Proslogion*, 2.

[9]Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 693.

[10]*Proslogion*, 3.

[11]*Proslogion*, 4.

contingent causes are themselves known.

In other words, as one reads through the text of St. Anselm's argument, one finds a simple statement of his argument which is to be contrasted with more complex statements which suggest that he is perhaps offering another kind of argument. The first, as stated in *Proslogion* 2, emphasizes the self-evidence or obviousness of God's existence once a notion or conception is understood which thinks about God as that than which "none greater can be thought." Existence is granted as soon as one grasps a notion or idea about who or what God is, God as "none greater can be thought." Intuitively and immediately (instead of by reason and the labor of reason), God's existence is recognized by a type of inference where, simultaneously, in apprehending the concept or definition of a thing, one immediately apprehends its truth or reality. As succinctly stated, this argument has become widely known as the primary thesis of St. Anselm's argument. Its wording has assumed a standard, classical form.[12] Something is true or real by definition. Truth or reality manifests itself merely in the meaning of a concept as this meaning is grasped or apprehended by an act of understanding.

However, as one attends to St. Anselm's arguments which attempt to justify the reasonableness of this basic thesis, one finds modes of reasoning that recall *a posteriori* arguments (arguments which move from effects to causes through a way of inquiry or discovery which resolves things into their causes as, by analysis, one moves from the hazy data of one's sense experience toward intelligibilities which reveal how the data of one's experience can be related to each other in a manner that is grounded in some kind of overarching, transcendent, intelligible unity).[13] When St. Anselm speaks about necessary being and the difference between necessary and contingent being (a difference which allows one to go from possibly not existing being to necessarily existing being), he adverts to the necessity of our beginning from some kind of initial familiarity with contingent being if we are to come to an adequate notion of necessary being. A discursive element is necessarily introduced since, by an initial familiarity with contingent being and our conceptions of it, we can then move to a second consideration which recognizes a species of being which is never contingent: non-contingent, necessary being. This shift accordingly suggests that the intuitiveness of St. Anselm's basic thesis is not as thorough or as conclusive as one might intuitively, initially assume. The arguments which St. Anselm attempts to make are more complex than what he had first hoped or thought. The ratiocination that he engages in cannot escape from an ongoing interaction between one's sensing and thinking which necessarily occurs if human knowing is to move from lack of understanding and knowledge about something toward increments in understanding and knowing. A tension obtains between the kind of necessary reason which St. Anselm is looking for in his thinking and reasoning and the kind of necessity which necessarily functions in the operations of human cognition with respect to all the different things that it must do (if human knowing is to move from an experience of privation in understanding and knowing to an experience of actual understanding and knowing). A necessity which is determined by a notion or meaning which thinks in terms of impossibility is to be contrasted with a second notion or meaning which says that, given how something happens to be or exists, it must operate in a certain way and in no other.

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[12]Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 693.

[13]Aquinas, *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, Prologue; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 9; Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, eds. Robert M. Doran & H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 61.

To enter now more deeply into St. Anselm's understanding of necessity, a useful place presents itself in St. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?* ("Why a God-man?") for two reasons. This seminal work in the history of Christology purportedly offers only necessary reasons to explain the why of Christ's incarnation and suffering death and, at the same time, it also presents more than one notion of necessity which cautions against adopting simple views on how St. Anselm uses necessity as a heuristic for the explanations that he tries to provide in his theology.

With respect then to a search for necessary reasons in St. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?*, there can be no question of the fact that, throughout the work and in St. Anselm's arguments, St. Anselm often speaks of necessity and of things having to happen in the way that they do. In the opening preface, St. Anselm notes that man's salvation (the effecting of man's eternal happiness) cannot be brought about "unless God became man, and unless all things were to take place which we hold with regard to Christ."[14] And, more bluntly, in the concluding chapter of *Cur Deus Homo?*, he notes that his arguments should prove that "God became man by necessity."[15] While St. Anselm admits, early on, that God could have done things differently,[16] he declines to elaborate and speak more about this issue. He makes no references to St. Augustine, who had espoused traditional Catholic teaching to the effect that other means could have been used by God to effect our salvation but, in fact, as things turned out, they were not used.[17]

To speak a bit here about the traditional Catholic teaching on this point, in the *De Trinitate* St. Augustine had argued that other ways existed for effecting our salvation since, for God, "all things are equally within his power."[18] For reasons about why it was decided that Christ should become incarnate and undergo suffering and death, the best or most suitable explanation lies in the depth of God's understanding and wisdom. Admittedly, God could have set things up differently but, in the end, he "judged it better to bring good out of evil, than not to permit evil to exist."[19] Through Christ's suffering and death, a greater good is brought about than would otherwise have been possible by using other means and so, by following and walking in the wake of Christ's footsteps, for us, in our human lives, more good is brought about than can be realized

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[14]*Cur Deus Homo?*, Preface.

[15]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 22.

[16]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 1, 1. See also 1, 6 where St. Anselm again notes that Christ could have done things differently although, for reasons that are not yet clear, it was necessary that Christ should do it in the way that was chosen.

[17]Bernard Lonergan, "The Redemption," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, eds. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 8.

[18]Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 13, 4, 13, as cited in Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill OP (Brooklyn, New York: New City Press, 1991), p. 353.

[19]Augustine, *Enchiridion*, c. 27, as cited by Bernard Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, unpublished manuscript translated 1989 by Charles C. Hefling, Jr. from the Latin of the *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press *ad usum auditorum*, 1964), p. 386. As Aquinas argues in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2 and in q. 46, a. 1, God has ends and purposes of his own which know the good which he wishes to accomplish and as this good is present to him in his unrestricted understanding. The transcendence of this good in turn explains why it cannot be directly known by us as we engage in our created acts of human cognition. God's intended good surpasses any good that we can accomplish on our own.

through any other means. In the *De agone Christiano*, 11, 12, with some abruptness, St. Augustine reiterates his thesis that an order of redemption could have been created by employing other means: "God could have done otherwise but if he had done otherwise, your foolishness would be just as unhappy with that."[20] In the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, St. Augustine's teaching is reiterated although in a context which avoids mentioning St. Anselm's thesis that speaks about the necessity of the means chosen and the absence of other reasonable, rational means that could have been used to effect man's salvation.[21]

In the argumentation that St. Anselm provides, before giving or delving into any reasons, he begins by noting that necessity itself needs to be understood.[22] However, as one works through St. Anselm's text, one finds that discussions about the meaning of necessity occur in different places at different times throughout his text. The issue is not fully clarified at the beginning of things and a situation is presented where, here and there, certain distinctions are made: some clearly and others implicitly. At the same time, their context is a series of arguments which speak about the necessity of man's salvation by God,[23] the necessity of a divine remission of sins,[24] the necessity of Christ's saving mission and deeds,[25] the necessity of Christ's incarnation (Christ's ontological status as both perfect God and perfect man),[26] the necessity of Christ's saving death,[27] and the necessity of the Father's rewarding his Son as a final and ultimate result.[28]

With respect then to the meaning of necessity in St. Anselm, in an initial meaning that St. Anselm provides, he first speaks about necessity in terms of rational compulsion.[29] Reason, every reason, is associated with necessity.[30] Certain reasons naturally and obviously compel the doing of certain deeds; others, the avoiding of certain other deeds. And so, on the basis of rational demands, it is said that Christ had to act in the way that he did. For purely rational reasons, mankind could not have been saved in any other way. Subtract reason from the equation and, as St. Anselm suggests, only then would it be possible to say that God could have acted differently: operating "merely by his will."[31] Hence, from a Socratic take on the relation between intellect and will, St. Anselm looks at willing or doing as a function of understanding and knowing and of what reasons are grasped within understanding and knowing. The lack of a clear real distinction between knowing and willing in God in turn reveals a simple inner unity within Christ which suggests a certain inevitability in God's, Christ's actions. God could not

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[20]Augustine, *De Agone Christiano*, 11, 12, as cited approximately by Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, p. 366.

[21]Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, p. 329.

[22]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 1, 2.

[23]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 1, 5.

[24]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 4; 1, 10.

[25]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 1, 25.

[26]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 7; 2, 22.

[27]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 17.

[28]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 19.

[29]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 1, 4.

[30]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 1, 10.

[31]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 1, 1.

have acted in any other way than in the way that he chose to act given the kind of being that he happens to be.

Christ's inner unity accordingly serves as one point of entry for understanding certain distinctions that St. Anselm makes when speaking about necessity. In St. Anselm, one does not find a clear real distinction that one finds later in Aquinas, who speaks about two different kinds of necessity: absolute necessity, on the one hand, versus conditional necessity, on the other. The one kind of necessity belongs to one order of being (God as he exists in himself) and the other, to another (all things except God). And so, while, yes, admittedly, "God's knowledge is the cause of things,"[32] and St. Anselm would agree with this thesis, if this causality is to be properly understood, absolute necessity needs to be clearly distinguished from conditional or conditioned necessity. Examples of absolute or natural necessity refer to the necessity of God's own existence as the first cause of all things and the necessity of God's knowing, willing, and loving himself.[33] God's necessity is such that, within him, nothing contingent exists.[34] In God, it is not possible for things either to be or not be. It is not possible for things to exist in any way other than what is. God necessarily wills his own goodness since this everlasting goodness is the object of his eternal willing. The willing is always perfectly joined to divine understanding and knowing.[35] God is not a contingent being and he does not function as a contingent being since his nature is such that he exists and operates outside of time. In the absence of any contingency, he necessarily exists and necessarily exists in a certain way in the operations that he performs. The necessity is absolute and also completely natural.[36]

With respect to God then, other related examples of absolute necessity can be postulated to reveal a wider view. In a very primary way, one can also refer to the basic laws of reason which refer to intellectual operations wherever these exist (whether one speaks about God, angels, or men).[37] With respect to the principle of non-contradiction, nothing can be true and false at the same time in exactly the same manner. And so, it is properly said of God that "God cannot make contradictories to be true at the same time."[38] God's actions are never irrational. In a similar way, with respect to another law of reason, analytic truths are such that certain truths are always true by definition. A predicate is included or contained in a subject (the meaning of a subject in terms of what it is and what it does) or, in another sense, a subject, given its nature or what it is, participates in a particular predicate.[39] As one thinks too about the nature of metaphysical principles and the properties of being, in the existence of any given thing (whether it is created or uncreated), certain things, certain features are absolutely necessary because of the forms or

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[32]Aquinas, *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1, cited by Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 108, n. 72.

[33]Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 15, 5; 1, 86, 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3.

[34]*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 3; Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. Michael G. Shields (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 95.

[35]Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 23, a. 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 25, a. 5, ad 2.

[36]*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 41, a. 2.

[37]*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 1.

[38]Aquinas, *De Potentia*, q. 1, a. 5.

[39]*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3.

natures that certain things have.[40] Forms, for instance, always specify the proper operations or acts of a given being. As Aquinas had spoken of it, "absolute necessity belongs to a thing by reason of something that is intimately and closely connected with it, whether it be the form or the matter or the very essence of a thing."[41]

However, as one turns to conditional or hypothetical necessities, when certain conditions must be fulfilled or given before certain ends can be achieved or, in other words, as one thinks about what can be best brought into being if an appropriate, prior set of conditions is first brought into being, conditional, relative, or hypothetical necessities present themselves as a clearly distinct species of necessity which is not to be confused with absolute or natural necessities. And so, in the world which exists in the way that it exists, God operates with both sets of necessity: absolute necessities with regard to himself (God with respect to his self-understanding, self-knowing, and self-loving),[42] and conditional necessities with regard to everything else.[43] The everything else refers to contingent predications which are made about God, but which add nothing nor detract from the simplicity of God's necessary self-subsistent being.[44] It is not absolutely or unconditionally necessary, for instance, that God should create anything although, if, in fact, he wills things apart from himself, by a conditional or suppositional necessity, he cannot not will what he thus wills. In this context, a term is necessarily willed. It is to be understood as a necessity though it is a contingent necessity.[45] Once done, no changes can be later made in what God has willed. The created order of things accordingly presents itself as an external, contingent term with respect to a contingent, conditioned predication that is made with reference to God and God's activity. No contingent or relative predication about God (referring to extrinsic denominations) can be made without an appropriate external contingent term (referring to extrinsic denominators).[46]

However, and in addition *per se* to creating, God could have created things with different natures (creatures unable to sin) and he could have also created a different world order which operates with respect to a different set of ends other than the one which he has in fact created although, in the end, he has selected an order on the basis of what he has judged to be most wise and prudent. In such a context, if certain ends are to be achieved, or if a certain scheme of things is to work, then such and such a thing should exist or occur.[47] If a certain means is not used, a certain end is not reached or an end is not achieved in the best possible way. In the same vein, with respect to the order of redemption, God could have created an order where it was not necessary, for instance, that Christ should have been incarnated nor have suffered death as a fit means for

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[40]Aquinas, *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 5.

[41]Aquinas, *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 6, 833.

[42]*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 184, a. 2.

[43]*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3; q. 25, a. 5 & ad 1; 3a, q. 1, a. 2.

[44]Lonergan, *Ontological and Psychological Constitution*, p. 95; *Triune God: Systematics*, pp. 707-709.

[45]*De Potentia*, q. 1, a. 5; Leo V. Serroul, *"Sapientis est ordinare": an interpretation of the Pars Systematica of Bernard Lonergan's De Deo Trino from the viewpoint of order*, p. 35 (unpublished dissertation, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, 2004), p. 186.

[46]Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, p. 278; *Grace and Freedom*, p. 105; Serroul, p. 185.

[47]*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 86, 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 46, aa. 1-2.

effecting man's salvation.[48] Citing Aquinas's argument here:[49]

> ....absolutely speaking, God could have freed man otherwise than by Christ's passion...But once a certain hypothesis is granted, there was no other way. For...granted that Christ's passion was known and willed in advance by God, it was not at the same time possible for Christ not to suffer, or for man to be freed otherwise than through his passion. This same reason holds for everything foreknown and foreordained by God, as the *Prima pars* has shown.

In the order of things which thus exists, God's creative and salvific activity evinces a relativity and contingency which does not belong to God *as God exists in himself*, but a relativity and contingency that is exhibited by the contingency of things which God has contingently created and the contingency of means which God has contingently chosen to effect man's salvation,[50] although, from the human point of view, acts and operations existing in the created order of things evince an absolute or natural necessity to the degree that they are all limited and determined by forms, natures, and essences which God has freely and conditionally created. From a human viewpoint, for example, food and drink are both necessary in an absolute sense for organic human life but, from a higher divine point of view, these same things are only necessary in a conditional or hypothetical way since God could have created the world with a different set of forms. In the order of God's providence, the divine direct willing of the good, the divine indirect willing of physical evil and the evil of punishment, and the divine permitting of moral evil all together manifest the operation of a divinely ordained, conditional necessity which is experienced by human beings within their history as "a necessity of the present."[51] Whenever anything happens, it always happens with a degree of necessity, but the degree of necessity is always joined to the free activity of created secondary causes. Necessity and freedom continually interact in a dialectical union of relations which gives to each term a fuller, richer meaning.

With respect then to the distinctions that St. Anselm makes with regard to necessity (and using Aquinas's order of distinctions as an explanatory heuristic), St. Anselm employs distinctions that suggest different species of necessity although these different species are not too clearly identified. Here and there too, different words are used to speak about necessity in a way which suggests that only verbal distinctions are being made (verbal distinctions as opposed to mental or real distinctions). Mental, conceptual distinctions refer to different objects of thought (different ideas) though all refer to the same reality or being.[52] Real distinctions refer to different beings or different elements that are constitutive of a thing's being or reality. In speaking then about different kinds of necessity, somewhat late in his *Cur Deus Homo?*,[53] St. Anselm does distinguish between different kinds. An unqualified, unspecified notion of necessity is initially distinguished from "compulsory necessity" since St. Anselm wants to speak about God's saving

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[48]*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 46, a. 1.

[49]*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 46, a. 2, as quoted by Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, p. 370.

[50]Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, pp. 283-284.

[51]Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 47.

[52]Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 513-514.

[53]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 5.

actions in Christ in a way which does not detract from the freedom of God's acts. If God is simply compelled to save our souls in the way that was put into effect by Christ's incarnation and death, our gratitude would not have much of a rational basis. And so, in order to try to get around this problem, St. Anselm speaks about God's personal integrity which is referred to early on as an "infinite unchangeableness"[54] or, later, in other words, in the context of soteriological discussions, he speaks about the "necessity of [God] maintaining his honor."[55] Given who God is and what he has already done as Creator, in order for God to be consistent with himself in his "unchangeable goodness," God must also act salvificly and so create an order of redemption.

However, when St. Anselm speaks about divine necessity, he clearly notes that this necessity is not properly to be called necessity. God always acts freely and not under compulsion but, in trying to speak of God's salvific actions in a way that retains the reality of God's benevolent freedom, necessity is predicated of God and then it is not predicated of him. At best, if necessity truly properly implies compulsion, the term can only be attributed to God loosely or analogically (although, in his arguments, St. Anselm does not speak directly about analogies as tools that can be properly used in theology to make positive statements about God and divine operations). A certain kind of inner necessity exists in God, but this necessity is not distinguished as one species of necessity among other species of necessity. A commonly received meaning for necessity is retained and applied without a technical differentiation being made which would allow one to speak about necessity in terms of a set of different meanings that are more nuanced and precise.

In a manner which reveals a prolongation of this type of analysis, when, later on, St. Anselm goes on to speak about Christ's incarnate life and his death, he notes, on the one hand, that Christ "lays down his life not of necessity but of free authority."[56] However, when he tries to explain what is meant by "free authority," he mates necessity with the reality of God's own unchangeableness. The ramifications of God's inner unchangeableness extend into the created order as one turns to speak about Christ's earthly life and the manner of this life. Yes, God's choice is not subject to necessity.[57] It is never, strictly speaking, subject to necessity. But, given the constancy, the "unwavering" steadfastness of God's "disposition," the unchangeableness of God's understanding and willing, what God does in Christ is done as if it were necessary. The reality of necessity (in terms of a meaning which says that things have to happen in the way that they do) is a conclusion that cannot be denied. It needs to be admitted even as the word "necessity" in terms of its common significance is rejected by St. Anselm as an anthropomorphic predicate which cannot be properly applied to God.

In the clearest, most detailed explanation which St. Anselm gives with respect to this issue, since the compulsion of necessity implies an external cause which acts on another cause which is secondary to it, and since nothing exists as an "antecedent" with respect to God (an external cause that is somehow prior or before God), for this reason, one cannot talk about God and any of God's actions in terms of necessity.[58] Necessity accordingly exists only when created causes

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[54]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 1, 10. In very many places in his text, St. Anselm refers to God's infinite personal unchangeableness.

[55]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 5.

[56]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 17.

[57]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 18a. See also 2, 19.

[58]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 18a.

are being considered where, in the relations which exist between causes and effects, given the action of a certain cause, something must therefore exist or happen in a certain way and not in some other kind of way. In this context, one understands what St. Anselm means when he clearly distinguishes between a necessity of compulsion and a necessity of restraint.[59] Because of the action of an external cause, either one is forced to do something or one is forced to refrain from doing something. A distinction is postulated but the difference is only verbal or material since a common meaning applies in both cases. As in the doing of a given act, the not doing of an act in restraint is something which is also being compelled.

However, in a break with a dominant pragmatic notion of necessity which derives from our commonsense understanding of things, St. Anselm proceeds to speak more fully about what he refers to as a "necessity of existence."[60] In explanation, St. Anselm cites Aristotle for the first and only time in *Cur Deus Homo?*. Something exists or operates in a certain way out of necessity given its nature: what a thing happens to be. St. Anselm illustrates by referring to the extraterrestrial cosmos ("the heavens") which necessarily turn about the sky since, given their nature, it is not possible for them to do anything else. This type of necessity he strongly contrasts with other kinds of actions which, for example, can be found among human beings. While our form or nature specifies certain things that we must do, our form or nature also specifies certain actions that are strictly optional. Not everything that we do is forced or compelled. Our nature gives us some choices. In fact, and as St. Anselm strongly suggests, our nature is such that we are forced to make decisions about how and what we are to do with our lives. And so, as Aristotle's distinction is applied, it allows St. Anselm to speak about necessity in another kind of way: a necessity which one might regard as a species or form of ontological or metaphysical necessity. With respect to God then, since nothing outside God causes anything in God, God's actions are to be explained by a willing and doing in God that is totally self-sufficient. God's necessary existence obviously precludes saying that God causes himself. But, the nature of God's willing for St. Anselm is such that everything which is done by God *ad extra* is done with necessity. God's unalterable will explains everything. In St. Anselm's own words: "whatever has been, necessarily has been; whatever is, must be; whatever is to be, of necessity will be."[61]

In conclusion then, in the end, it is not the reasonableness or the wisdom of God's understanding which is key but, rather, a divine willing which does what is does because it unalterably wills what is does. St. Anselm's search for a specific type of reason leads him to reduce all things to a prime mover which is the un-potential actuality of God's will. And so, as one attends to this search of St. Anselm in terms of the kind of cause or explanation that it seeks, one comes to understand initially why the result is a necessarily existing first cause that acts in the way that it acts. The search itself *in the kind of understanding which it seeks* determines the kind of understanding which is reached. Exclude other kinds of reasons and, as a result, these other reasons will probably never be found in the inquiry that one is conducting.

In pondering this situation thus, one might well ask why a search for necessary reasons was so important for St. Anselm. He admits, early on for instance in his Preface to *Cur Deus Homo?*, that he wants to find reasons that are entirely persuasive and convincing. No one should be able

[59] *Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 18a.

[60] *Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 18a.

[61] *Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 18a.

to say that things could have happened in some other way. St. Anselm wants to prove something. And so, to the extent that he wants to prove the truth of Christian beliefs about the reality of Christ's incarnation and saving death, he argues in ways that try to leave no room for doubt. In this way and for this reason, his *Cur Deus Homo?* presents itself as a work of dogmatic theology. In dogmatic theology, one attempts to marshal as many arguments as possible which can convince another about the truth of a given dogmatic position.[62] The arguments no doubt reveal some depth of understanding but, if the object is evidence that can trigger a rationally compelled judgment (an act of reflective understanding) which can affirm the truth of a given belief, scant concern is given to trying to understand things for their own sake. Shades or spheres of meaning are not fathomed or discovered. Little or no attention is given to how different beliefs can be related to each other in a way that can reveal a grand design which manifests an order in the universe that, in turn, reveals the wonderful operation of an understanding that is infinitely wise, powerful, and divine. Apologetic concerns limit the scope of St. Anselm's analysis and the understanding that he can come to.

However, even if as one admits that, within theology, St. Anselm was working from a perspective which limited his thinking to searching for a specific species of reason that is given in necessary reasons or necessary causes, one can also speculate about the influence that was then being exerted on St. Anselm by the state and condition of philosophy as this existed in his day. With respect to the question of method in scientific reasoning, Aristotle's logical works were not unknown in western Europe in the 11th century, although only two of his works were known: the *Categories* and the *On Interpretation*.[63] In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine had explicitly spoken about Aristotle's *Categories* and the early influence which it had exerted on him, an influence that he later regretted and repented of since it encouraged him to try to apply attributes to God which cannot be applied to things which cannot be sensed by us in our acts of sense.[64] From Aristotle's analysis of predication as this exists in ordinary linguistic usage (how subjects and verbs are related to each other), ten categories were identified which serve as a basic set of attributes for exhaustively describing anything that is given to us in our sensible experience.[65] After first speaking about things in terms of substance, each thing or substance is

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[62]See Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, pp. 31-59, where he speaks about the truth of theological understanding in a context which compares systematic theology with the different purposes and aims of dogmatic theology. In the analysis which Lonergan presents, he argues in *The Triune God: Systematics* that, in the life of the Church, systematic theology was essentially a 13th century achievement. However, without the prior development of dogmatic theology, systematic theology could not have arisen as a distinct discipline and form of inquiry within theology.

[63]Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1963), p. 345. As Haskins notes, the *Analytics*, *Topics*, and the *Sophistical Refutations* "reappeared in various forms soon after 1128."

[64]Augustine, *Confessions*, 4, 28-29.

[65]As Bernard Lonergan explains the gist of St. Augustine's criticisms in *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, p. 420, Aristotle's ten categories are to be viewed as descriptive categories. Their delineation and application serves as a heuristic for effecting an exact scientific description of things:

> A naturalist will assign the genus, species, and instance (substance) of an animal, its size and weight (quantity), its color, shape,

then identified in terms of its quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, place, time, posture, and habit. However, in this context, Aristotle says nothing about necessity.

On the other hand, however, necessity appears in Aristotle's *On Interpretation* and with a frequency which suggests that this work perhaps best explains why St. Anselm tried to look for necessary reasons in his inquiries that he undertook. While, in his writings, Augustine had spoken about the influence and early value (for him) of Aristotle's *Categories*, his writings had not mentioned other texts of Aristotle's that would have also touched on questions dealing with the appropriate kind of reasoning which should be employed whenever one engages in any kind in scientific investigation.[66] Hence, when the presence of Aristotle's *On Interpretation* in St. Anselm's day and its frequent mention of necessity (on how affirmative and negative judgments or propositions are to be understood and evaluated) is combined with St. Anselm's reflective praxis (and his citation of texts from Aristotle's *On Interpretation*), it suggests that this work of Aristotle's might well best explain why St. Anselm was so very much interested in focusing on the necessary reasons of things in his thinking and understanding.

Directly, in his *Cur Deus Homo?*, St. Anselm cites texts from Aristotle's *On Interpretation*. The context in Aristotle is a section that is devoted to necessity, necessity as it applied to understanding the principle of non-contradiction which is used as a criterion for judging the truth

> abilities, propensities (quality), its similarities to other animals and its differences from them (relation), its performance and susceptibilities (action and passion), its habitat and seasonal changes (place and time), its mode of motion and rest (posture), and its possession of such items as claws, talons, hooves, fur, feathers, horns (habit).

Then, as Lonergan more fully explains in *Understanding and Being*, p. 199 (which was composed as an introduction for the readers of Lonergan's *Insight*):

> We arrive at Aristotle's categories most simply by going into the woods, meeting animals, and asking, What kind of an animal is this? How big is it? What is its color? What relations does it have? and so on. They are categories of descriptive knowledge, and descriptive knowledge is science in a preliminary stage. It is something entirely different from science that has reached its explanatory stage. Aristotle himself had a very clear idea of the difference between these descriptive categories, which he sets up in an elementary work, and causes; consequently, he thinks of science as knowledge through causes. However, there has been a tendency to conceive of metaphysics as knowledge, not through causes, but through the predicaments. On the other hand, if one conceives metaphysics as concerned with the total heuristic structure of proportionate being [being defined as what of reality can be known by human acts of experiencing, understanding, and judging], one must be concerned with causes and not at all with predicaments, because a heuristic structure aims at what is known through understanding.

[66]*Augustine through the Ages,* 1999 ed., s. v. "Aristotle," by Michael W. Trace, p. 57.

or falsity of a given proposition (although Aristotle does not explicitly refer to the principle of non-contradiction).[67] In Parmenidian terms, reality (Being) necessarily is or exists or, necessarily, it does not exist.[68] One cannot have it both ways. It is impossible for reality (or Being) both to be and not be. "What is, is, and cannot not-be."[69] In the more exact wording and analysis that Aristotle provides, in making an affirmation and then affirming its negation, "these two cannot be true together."[70] Something cannot be and not be at the same time in the same way. No alternative exists. Either something exists or it does not exist; or, in other words, existentially, either something will come to pass or it will not come to pass.[71] Truth always excludes falsity and falsity, truth, just as, metaphysically, being excludes non-being and non-being, being. And so, when Aristotle says that "if something cannot not happen it is impossible for it not to happen," when St. Anselm, in turn, thinks about the necessity of God's existence and the actuality of God's divine nature which can know no change or potentiality in the existence which it has and the actions which it does, it is an easy step for him then to argue as Aristotle himself argues that "everything that will be, therefore, happens necessarily."[72] To repeat St. Anselm's wording, "whatever has been, necessarily has been; whatever is, must be; whatever is to be, of necessity will be."[73] While, admittedly, Aristotle does speak about the contingency of contingent causes, and while he admits that "not everything that is, necessarily is; and not everything that is not, necessarily is not,"[74] the absence of contingency in the things of God points St. Anselm in a direction which does not encourage him to look for reasons that are other than necessary. Things could not have really occurred in any other way even if, in words, one says that they have.

In conclusion then and by way of summary, Anselm's notion of necessity lacks an explanatory meaning which would have allowed him to put the different kinds of necessity into an order, an ordering which would have allowed him to speak about different kinds of necessity and how they relate to each other in terms of real and conceptual distinctions. Created nature in St. Anselm is not clearly distinguished from uncreated nature in a way which clearly distinguishes between nature as an abstract principle of explanation and nature as an historical manifold (referring to nature as it once existed before original sin and nature as it has come to exist after original sin).[75] The theorem of the supernatural appeared after St. Anselm in the 13th century. Approximately in 1230, Philip, the Chancellor of the University of Paris, argued that a hierarchy should be distinguished within the order of being, a hierarchy which should be understood in terms of a distinction between nature and supernature which, as a distinction, can be used to distinguish different orders of being from each other and different sets of laws which respectively belong to

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[67]Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 9.

[68]*Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1994 ed., s. v. "Parmenides of Elea," by Simon Blackburn, p. 278.

[69]W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Presocratic tradition from Parmenides to Democritus*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 16

[70]Aristotle, 7.

[71]Aristotle, 9.

[72]Aristotle, 9.

[73]*Cur Deus Homo?*, 2, 18a.

[74]Aristotle, 9.

[75]Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 17.

different orders or grades of being.[76] In understanding this theorem according to how Bernard Lonergan analyzed and spoke of it,[77] for every grade or order of nature, a higher order or grade of being exists which is supernatural (relative to the lower order or grade of being that it transcends) until, finally, one comes to an order of being which is absolutely supernatural. This last order is utterly transcendent since it exists or lies beyond the proportion of any finite, contingent being. Although each order of being has its own distinct laws or principles, each set is ordered to laws and principles that belong to a next, higher order. Laws and principles belonging to a higher order of being explain events and occurrences which cannot be understood on the basis of laws and principles that belong to a lower order of being. "Thus what is natural and specific to a human being is relatively supernatural to a dog or horse."[78]

On the basis of this distinction, necessity can be understood in a manner which recognizes different meanings for it as one attends to different orders of being or reality. Instead of trying to work with meanings that, to some extent, are all grounded in a common notion of necessity which thinks in terms of force or compulsion (as external causes compel other agents to do things that are not really desired by these agents), a new notion of necessity now manifests itself which thinks in terms of freedom (the freedom of rationally informed actions). The different sets of meaning which exist for necessity (whether one speaks about absolute or conditional necessity) are all conditioned by rational principles which indicate which actions are to be regarded as proper for a given being: actions which should be done, or which are necessarily done, if a given being is to manifest or to realize itself in terms of what it happens to be. Hence, beyond an understanding of things in terms of disjunctions between freedom and necessity, an explanatory understanding of the same things reveals an unexpected inner unity. In each grade of being or reality, necessity and freedom are to be regarded as correlatives. In each grade of being, necessity and freedom each have a different meaning. The absence of a well thought out explanatory perspective in St. Anselm combined with a focus on apologetical concerns accordingly best explains why St. Anselm was so focused on trying to determine necessary reasons for things and why he worked from an incoherent understanding of necessity. Later developments were needed to help bring out the possible value and merit of what St. Anselm had been attempting to do in his search for convincing reasons that could move the minds of any of his readers having a like interest in the philosophical and theological questions that he was addressing in the context of his own day and time.

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[76]Stebbins, pp. 54-56; p. 68.

[77]Stebbins, p. 55-56.

[78]Bernard Lonergan, Working notes for *De ente supernaturali* (A 168, Batch II, File 29), p. 5, cited by Stebbins, p. 315, n. 62.