We live in an age that has elevated the individual to the status of the absolute measure of all things. Personal success, self-fulfillment, independence, and the satisfaction of one's own desires are often presented as the ultimate purpose of human existence. From childhood we are taught that we must "follow our dreams," "do what makes us happy," and "depend on no one." While these expressions contain legitimate elements, when they are absolutized they end up constructing a profoundly impoverished vision of the human person.

Paradoxically, never before has the individual been so highly exalted, and yet never before have so many people experienced such profound loneliness, anxiety, family breakdown, and the loss of a sense of community.

The Catholic Church, especially through Scholastic thought, offers an extraordinarily timely response to this crisis. Against modern individualism, Scholasticism proposes the **common good**, a profoundly Christian concept that does not diminish the person but instead leads him to his fullest perfection.

This is not primarily a political question before it is a religious one. Above all, it is an anthropological, moral, and spiritual question.

For the great question remains the same:

Do we live for ourselves, or for something infinitely greater?

The Human Person Was Never Created to Live in Isolation

From the very first pages of Sacred Scripture we encounter a fundamental truth.

God creates man in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26), but immediately declares:

> *"It is not good that the man should be alone." (Genesis 2:18)*

This passage is often interpreted solely in relation to marriage, but its meaning is far deeper.

Man was created for communion.

Not only with God.

But also with others.

The whole of Revelation revolves around a covenant.

There is no God who saves isolated individuals.

There is the People of God.

First Israel.

Then the Church.

Always a community.

Always communion.

Saint Paul magnificently develops this truth by describing the Church as one body.

> *"For just as the body is one and has many members… so it is with Christ." (1 Corinthians 12:12)*

No member lives for itself.

Each exists for the good of the whole.

The Birth of Individualism

Although selfishness has existed since Original Sin, modern individualism is something different.

It does not simply consist in thinking of oneself first.

It is a complete philosophy.

It claims that:

- individual freedom is the supreme value;
- each person defines his own truth;
- society exists solely to protect private interests;
- every authority must constantly justify itself before the individual;
- the common good is viewed with suspicion because it might limit personal freedom.

This mentality has even penetrated many Christian circles.

Today, some people live their faith as an exclusively private matter:

“I believe in my own way.”

“I don’t need the Church.”

“God knows what I’m like.”

“My conscience decides.”

But Christianity has never been the religion of the isolated “I.”

It is the religion of the “we.”

Our Father.

Not **My Father.**

The Scholastic Response

Scholasticism, especially in the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas, develops a profoundly harmonious vision of society.

For Saint Thomas, every creature has an end.

Nothing exists without a purpose.

Just as every organ works for the benefit of the whole body, every person participates in a higher good.

That higher good is called the **common good**.

But be careful.

The common good does not simply mean the benefit of the majority.

Nor does it mean that the individual should blindly sacrifice himself for the State.

The common good is the set of conditions that enables every person to attain moral and spiritual perfection.

In other words,

the common good benefits each individual precisely because it seeks the good of all.

The Common End Surpasses Private Interest

Saint Thomas teaches an idea that today seems almost revolutionary.

The common good is superior to private good.

Why?

Because God Himself governs the universe according to an ordered design.

Everything is directed toward a common purpose.

The individual reaches his perfection by participating in that order.

Not by fighting against it.

A simple comparison helps us understand this.

Imagine an orchestra.

Each musician may play his instrument perfectly.

But if every musician performs a different melody, seeking only to express his own individuality…

the result will be unbearable chaos.

Beauty appears only when everyone participates in a higher harmony.

Society functions in exactly the same way.

Selfishness Never Builds Civilization

History confirms this teaching.

The great civilizations flourished when there was a strong sense of duty.

The family.

The parish.

The municipality.

The guilds.

The universities.

The monasteries.

All functioned because people understood that they belonged to something greater than themselves.

Individualism breaks these bonds.

When everyone seeks only his own interest, the inevitable consequences appear:

- broken families;
- declining birth rates;
- isolation;
- loss of commitment;
- corruption;
- social distrust;
- crisis of authority;
- the culture of disposability.

Not because society is imperfect.

But because each person begins to live only for himself.

Original Sin and the Rupture of the Common Good

Theology explains this reality with remarkable depth.

Original Sin did not merely destroy friendship with God.

It also shattered harmony among human beings.

Adam blames Eve.

Eve blames the serpent.

Sin always destroys communion.

That is why Christ came precisely to restore the unity that had been lost.

He did not merely forgive individual sins.

He formed a new people.

A Church.

A Body.

A Communion.

Salvation never consists in spiritual isolation.

It always leads toward communion.

Christ: The Perfect Model of the Common Good

Our Lord never lived for Himself.

He Himself declares:

> *"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)*

His entire existence was an act of self-giving.

From Bethlehem to Calvary.

The Cross represents the exact opposite of individualism.

Selfishness says:

"My life comes first."

Christ answers:

> *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)*

The Christian logic always transforms the “I” into the “we.”

The Church as a School of the Common Good

Every sacrament educates us to go beyond ourselves.

Baptism incorporates us into a people.

Confirmation strengthens us for our mission.

The Eucharist forms us into one Body.

Penance restores the communion broken by sin.

Marriage creates a community of life.

Holy Orders exists for the service of the People of God.

The Anointing of the Sick unites personal suffering with that of the entire Church.

Nothing in Christianity encourages isolation.

Everything leads toward communion.

The Principle of Subsidiarity

Scholasticism, and later the Church’s social doctrine, teaches another essential principle.

Not everything should be done by the State.

Families.

Associations.

Parishes.

Municipalities.

Intermediate bodies.

All have their own proper mission.

The common good is built from the ground up.

Not only from the top down.

A healthy society does not eliminate small communities.

It strengthens them.

When the family, the parish, and voluntary associations disappear, the individual is left alone before political or economic power.

And an isolated individual is always more vulnerable.

The Common Good Begins at Home

Many people imagine that the common good is a concept reserved for politicians.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

It begins in the home.

Every time parents sacrifice their own rest for their children.

Every time a son or daughter cares for elderly parents.

Every time someone forgives.

Every time a neighbor offers help.

Every time an employer pays a just wage.

Every time a worker fulfills his duties honestly.

Every time a priest visits the sick.

Every time someone prays for others.

There, the common good is being born.

The False Freedom of Individualism

Contemporary culture identifies freedom with the absence of limits.

But Saint Thomas teaches something entirely different.

True freedom consists in choosing the good.

Not just anything.

A pianist is not free because he plays any random note.

He is free because he has mastered his art.

Likewise, the Christian attains authentic freedom when he loves the good.

Individualism makes desire the criterion.

Scholasticism makes truth the criterion.

And only the truth makes us truly free.

As Christ teaches:

> *"You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32)*

The Common Good and Charity

The virtue that makes the common good possible is charity.

Not sentimentalism.

Not a passing emotion.

Charity is willing the true good of another for the love of God.

That is why Saint Paul writes:

> *"Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor." (1 Corinthians 10:24)*

Charity breaks the circle of selfishness.

It makes the family possible.

It makes the Church possible.

It makes society possible.

It even makes civilization possible.

A Church That Thinks in Generations

Individualism lives obsessed with the present.

Christian tradition thinks in centuries.

The builders of cathedrals began works they would never live to see completed.

Monks copied manuscripts for people they would never meet.

Parents educate children whose future they cannot foresee.

The saints sowed seeds whose fruits we still harvest today.

The common good always thinks about those who will come after us.

How Can We Live According to the Common Good Today?

The answer begins with a conversion of the heart.

Every day we can ask ourselves:

- Do my decisions benefit only my own interests?
- How can I better serve my family?
- Do I contribute to the unity of my parish, or do I create division?
- Do I work honestly even when no one is watching?
- Do I seek the truth, or merely confirmation of my own opinions?
- Do I pray only for my own needs, or also for the needs of others?
- Do I actively participate in the life of the Church and of my community?

Each of these questions helps us leave behind the prison of the “I” and orient our lives toward the “we” desired by God.

Heaven: The Fulfillment of the Common

Good

The Scholastic vision reaches its greatest depth when contemplating man’s ultimate destiny.

The temporal common good is important, but it is not our final end.

Our destiny is eternal communion with God and with all the saints.

Heaven will not be a collection of individual happinesses.

It will be the perfect communion of the redeemed in the Beatific Vision.

There, selfishness, rivalry, and isolation will disappear forever.

Each person’s glory will increase the joy of all, because every glorified soul will participate fully in the very Love of God.

In this sense, the whole Christian life is a preparation for Heaven.

Every act of charity.

Every sacrifice offered.

Every humble service.

Every renunciation of selfishness.

All of these prepare us for that perfect communion.

Conclusion: Recovering the Wisdom of Scholasticism to Heal Our Times

The crisis of our age is not merely economic, political, or cultural. At its root, it is a crisis in the understanding of the human person. When man makes himself the absolute center of his own existence, he ultimately becomes imprisoned within himself. Individualism promises

autonomy, but often produces loneliness; it promises limitless freedom, yet gradually destroys the very bonds that sustain a truly human life.

Scholasticism, and above all the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas, offers an answer of extraordinary relevance: the human person finds his fulfillment when he directs his life toward the common good, because that good does not oppose personal dignity but perfects it. The family, the Church, and society flourish when each person understands that he has received gifts not merely for himself but to place them at the service of others.

Ultimately, the common good finds its foundation in God Himself, who is the Supreme Good and the source of all communion. The closer we draw to Him through grace, the sacraments, and the practice of charity, the more capable we become of building reconciled communities, strong families, and a society in which justice and mercy walk hand in hand.

In a world that constantly repeats, “Think of yourself first,” the Gospel continues to propose a far more demanding—and precisely for that reason, far more liberating—path: to love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. This is the great lesson of Scholasticism and the Church’s perennial answer to the fragmentation of modern man. Only when we cease living exclusively for ourselves do we discover that we were created to participate in something infinitely greater: communion with God and with our brothers and sisters, anticipating already on earth the unity that will reach its fullness in the Kingdom of Heaven.