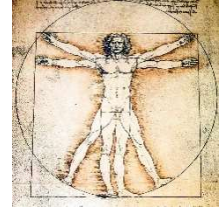




Aquinas 101: The Human Soul



Week 1: Faith and Reason, Intro to St. Thomas

Introduction

- What is philosophy? Disciplined questioning of the world around us.
- Cannot avoid basic questions: “Who am I? Where did I come from and where am I going? What is the nature of the world? Why is there something rather than nothing?”
- Why study the human soul? Essential for self-knowledge and a happy life. As Christians, helps us understand what human nature is, how Christ redeemed us, and how to live now.
- Goal is scientific knowledge, i.e. certain truth.

Truths of Reason

- Accessible to all people across the world and through time. The basis of communities and civilization.
- Divided into fields of inquiry, one of which is philosophy. Develop over time as a cumulative heritage, but transmission to each generation is imperfect.
- Subject to error and capable of causing great suffering (e.g. ideologies of 20th century). Constant controversies in every field of knowledge, but especially the human sciences and politics.
- Achieved by natural reason without supernatural aid (grace). Intellect cannot be compelled, but argumentation can lead one to accept conclusions.
- Includes natural religion and ideas about God

Truths of Faith

- Accessible only to those whom God grants through an intellectual gift, but possible for all who encounter communities of faith
- Constituted by one field, theology, divided into subareas
- Not subject to error in itself but can be misunderstood or distorted.
- Content does not change over time, but our understanding of it and the application to our lives do develop over the centuries.
- Received by our natural intellect through an elevation of grace but does not require any special religious experience.
- Liberates us from error and teaches us how to live now and in the future

St. Thomas Aquinas on Faith and Reason

- Born circa 1224 in Roccasecca, Italy. A Dominican friar, Doctor of the Church, and saint. Died in 1274 in Fossanova, Italy, on the way to the Council of Lyons.
- Known for ability to synthesize sources of knowledge: ancient philosophy, Scripture, patristics, scholastic commentaries, Church councils. Widely studied today by Catholics and non-Catholics.
- Opposed to both rationalism and fideism. Taught that no truths can ever conflict.
- Used philosophy within theology to make connections and refute objections to faith.
- *Summa theologiae* I q. 1, a. 8 ad 2: “Since therefore grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith.”