

Fr. Michael Hurley, O.P.

*St. Thomas Aquinas, the Ultimate  
“Summa” Wrestler*

Speaker Series at



ST. DOMINIC'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

# St. Thomas Aquinas: The Ultimate *Summa* Wrestler



“St. Thomas was a huge heavy bull of a man, slow and quiet; very mild and magnanimous but not very sociable; shy, even apart from the humility of holiness; and abstracted, even apart from his occasional and carefully concealed experiences of trance or ecstasy. St. Thomas was so stolid that the scholars, in the schools which he attended regularly, thought he was a dunce.” –G.K. Chesterton, *St. Thomas Aquinas*

Come, Holy Spirit, Divine Creator, true source of light and fountain of wisdom! Pour forth your brilliance upon my dense intellect, dissipate the darkness which covers me, that of sin and of ignorance. Grant me a penetrating mind to understand, a retentive memory, method and ease in learning, the lucidity to comprehend, and abundant grace in expressing myself. Guide the beginning of my work, direct its progress, and bring it to success completion. This I ask through Jesus Christ, true God and true man, living and reigning with You and the Father, forever and ever. Amen.

## A Prayer Before Study



# The Universal Doctor



- In 1879, Pope Leo XIII declared St. Thomas Aquinas to be the “Universal Doctor,” recommending that the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas be the foundation of seminary formation and theological study throughout the Church.
- But Aquinas did not always have this kind of official Church approval. The study of Aquinas and his popularity outside the Dominican Order has waxed and waned.
- In 1277, shortly after Aquinas’ death, the Bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier, issued a set of condemnations (219 in all), which included a number of propositions taught by St. Thomas.



# St. Thomas Aquinas:

## His Origins

- Aquinas was born around 1224-1226, the son of an aristocratic Italian family. The family home was the castle of Roccasecca, midway between Naples and Rome. Thomas was the youngest of 8 siblings.
- At the age of five or six, Aquinas was sent to study at the Abbey of Monte Cassino, where it was hoped his family connections would one day secure for him the position of abbot.



# Young Friar Thomas



- Early in 1239, young Thomas was sent to the University of Naples to continue his education there. It was while at the University of Naples—around 1243—that the young Thomas decided to join the Order of Preachers.
- Aquinas never explains in his writings why he chose to become a Dominican. But there are hints: In the *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas compares various religious orders, ranking those that teach and preach ahead of those that are engaged only in ministries attending to bodily needs, or only in contemplation. As St. Thomas puts it, “For even as it is better to enlighten than merely to shine, so is it better to give to others the fruits of one's contemplation than merely to contemplate.” (II-II, q. 188, a. 6)

# A Familial Interlude

- Friar Thomas' family was not pleased with this decision—they had already made definite plans for him. Aquinas was kidnapped and held under house arrest from 1245-1246.
- During his familial incarceration, Aquinas spent a lot of time reading and praying. So his family felt forced to take more drastic steps. They sent a prostitute to his room to tempt him from his religious vows.
- Thomas is said to have calmly got up, taken a brand from the fireplace, and waived it at the woman, causing her to flee from his room. Then angels came and placed a spiritual cincture around Friar Thomas' waist, so that he never had any further struggles with chastity.





# Albert and Thomas



- By 1246, St. Thomas' sisters staged a prison break and the rest of the family had gave him up as a lost cause.
- Thomas had returned to the friars and began studying under St. Albert the Great in Paris.
- In 1248, St. Albert the Great had moved to Cologne to establish a Dominican House of Studies there, and Aquinas went with him. At Cologne, Aquinas worked as Albert's student and secretary, and was ordained a priest in 1250. In 1251 or 1252, Aquinas began teaching at the University of Paris.
- Albert is said to have said regarding his best student, "We call this young man a dumb ox, but his bellowing in doctrine will one day resound throughout the world!"



# Master Thomas in Paris

- St. Thomas became a Master of Theology in 1256, largely due to the intervention of Pope Alexander IV and the Master of the Order. Friars were a recent but unpopular addition to the faculty at the University of Paris.
- Aquinas lectured on the Bible, as well presided over public disputations. Such disputations were organized debates focusing on arguments for or against a particular theological position. Students would present the arguments pro and con, and the Master would give his final opinion on the matter.
- St. Thomas Aquinas was at the University of Paris teaching from 1252-1259, and then returned to teach from 1268-1272.





## St. Thomas Spiritual Master

- St. Thomas Aquinas is responsible for some of the most beautiful prayers of the Church. In 1264, Pope Urban IV commissioned St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure to compose hymns and prayers for the newly instituted Feast of Corpus Christi. Upon hearing what Aquinas had written, Bonaventure is said to have torn up his own writing and declared that only Aquinas' work was worthy of the Feast.
- It is also told that when Aquinas had finished the portion of the *Summa* dealing with Christ's death and resurrection, he placed his manuscript before the crucifix. The Lord spoke to Thomas: "You have spoken well of me. What reward do you desire?" Thomas replied: "Non nisi te, Domine!"—"Only you, Lord!"



# Aquinas' Writings: Commentaries on Scripture

- Aquinas is best known, of course, for his *Summa Theologiae*. But it is important to note that Aquinas wrote many other things during his lifetime.
- For example, Aquinas wrote a number of biblical commentaries. In these works, Aquinas talks about the literal and spiritual meaning of Scripture in various books of Sacred Scripture, including the Psalms, Job, and Jeremiah, as well as commentaries on all four Gospels and every epistle of St. Paul.
- Aquinas also compiled a running commentary on the Gospels by the most famous Church Fathers. This work, entitled the *Catena Aurea*, or “golden chain,” commissioned by Pope Urban IV and completed in 1265, was meant to be a resource for scholars and preachers.





# Aquinas' Writings: Philosophy



- Aquinas also wrote a number of what we may call purely philosophical works. He wrote a number of small treatises on specific issues, or in response to particular errors: *On the Principles of Nature* (1255), *On Being and Essence* (1256), *On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists* (1270), and *On the Eternity of the World* (1271).
- Aquinas also wrote a number of commentaries on the works of Aristotle (11 in all), including *Commentaries on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics*, *De Anima*, *On Memory and Recollection*, *Physics*, *Meteorology*, *On Interpretation*, *Metaphysics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, *De Caelo (On the Heavens)*, and *On Generation and Corruption*. Most of these date from 1268, Aquinas' second Parisian period.



**DON'T ASK WHO  
SAID IT? ASK WHAT  
THEY SAID.**

THOMAS AQUINAS



# Aquinas' Writings: Disputed Questions



- Remember those public disputations that Aquinas would preside over as a Master of Theology? Many of these public disputations were transformed into written texts—no doubt extensively edited and compiled to systematically present a topic.
- Aquinas has a number of collections of disputed questions: *Disputed Questions on Truth* (also known as the *De Veritate*), *Disputed Questions on Evil* (the *De Malo*), *Disputed Questions on the Power of God* (the *De Potentia*), several different collections of disputed questions on virtue, and many others.



# Aquinas: The Hymns

- Remember those prayers composed by St. Thomas Aquinas for the Feast of Corpus Christi that were so beautiful St. Bonaventure ripped up his own writings?
- Those prayers include some of our most famous hymns, including “Panis Angelicus,” “Adoro te Devote,” “O Salutaris Hostia,” and “Pange Lingua.” The last two verses of “Pange Lingua” are the “Tantum Ergo,” which is commonly sung at the conclusion of Eucharistic adoration



# The Summa Contra Gentiles

- The *Summa Theologiae* is not the only Summa that St. Thomas composed. He also wrote the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, which most scholars date to around 1265.
- The *Summa Contra Gentiles* is an interesting work, for with the exception of its last book, it undertakes to defend basic aspects of the Christian Faith on purely rational grounds.
- It has been suggested that this work was composed by Aquinas for Dominican friars working in Islamic lands.





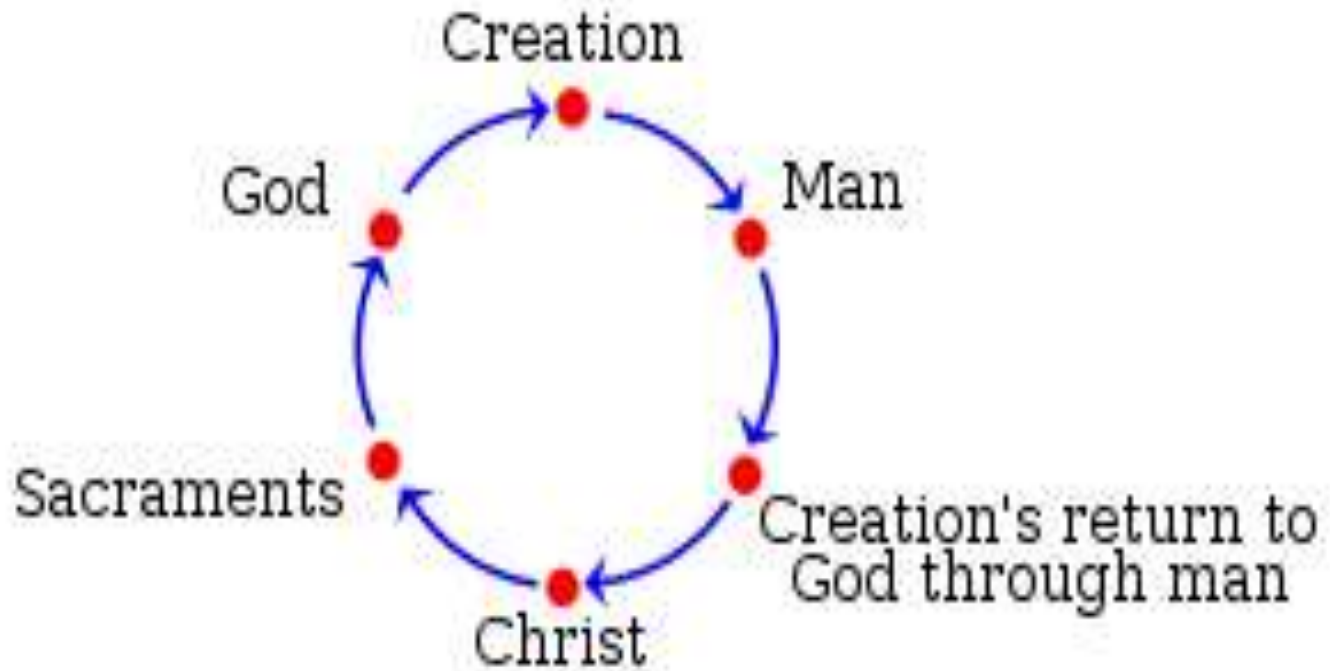
# The *Summa Theologiae*



- Aquinas began working on the *Summa Theologiae* around the time he was summoned to Rome to form an international Dominican House of Studies in 1265. He continued to work on it until his death in 1274, at which time it remained unfinished. *The Summa Theologiae* consists of 3 parts:
  - the **Prima Pars**: God, Creation, Angels, Man, and Divine Providence
  - the **Prima Secundae**: good or evil in human acts, passions and emotions, the virtues, sin, law and grace
  - the **Secunda Secundae**: particular virtues like prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude
  - the **Tertia Pars**: the incarnation, resurrection, and the sacraments



# The *Summa Theologiae* *Exitus/Reditus*



# Summa



**Part 1**

Sacred Doctrine. Why or because the

1. God  
(Threefold consideration)

1st Con  
2nd Co

3rd Con  
things  
the PR  
CREATI

**Part 2**

2. The ADVANCE of the RATIONAL CREATURE to God  
(Twofold consideration)  
Those things should be considered by means of which man attains or deviates from his end, i.e., HUMAN ACTS

But because singular things are the objects of operations and acts, therefore every operative science is perfected by the consideration of thin in particular. Therefore a moral consideration of human acts must be given:

in a SPECIAL MANNER to some men.

(a) Graces gratuitously given (*gratiae gratis datae*)  
(b) Active and contemplative life  
(c) The various offices and conditions of men

**Part 3**

3. CHRIST

Since Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, redeeming His people from their sins has shown in Himself the way to truth, by which man, arising from the dead, is able to arrive at the happiness of immortal life, it is necessary to attain the scope of all theology, after considering the final end of men and the virtues and vices, to consider the Savior of all the benefits He had conferred on man. Therefore, a consideration of:

1st The SAVIOR HIMSELF, i.e., the mystery of the Incarnation, what He did and suffered

2nd The SACRAMENTS, which have their efficacy from the Incarnate Word

3rd IMMORTAL LIFE, the end man attains through Christ, both God and man, suffering, dying, and rising from the dead

(a) In GENERAL

(b) In PARTICULAR

Baptism  
Confirmation  
Eucharist  
Penance  
Extreme Unction  
Orders  
Matrimony

	Question.
1. Sacred doctrine	1
2. The one God	2-26
3. The Most Holy Trinity	27-43
4. The creation	44-46
5. The distinction of things in general	47
6. The distinction of good and evil	48-49
7. The angels	50-64
8. The creature purely corporeal	65-74
9. On man spirit, i.e., man	75-102
10. The conservation and government of creatures	103-119
11. The end of man and beatitude	1-5
12. Human acts	6-21
13. The passions	22-48
14. Habits in general	49-54
15. The virtues	55-70
16. On vices and sins	71-89
17. On laws	90-108
18. On grace	109-114
19. Faith	1-16
20. Hope	17-22
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23. Justice	57-122
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26. Graces gratuitously given	171-178
27. The active and contemplative life	179-182
28. The various offices and conditions of men	183-189
29. The Incarnation	1-59
30. The Sacraments in general	60-65
31. Baptism	66-71
32. Confirmation	72
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36. Orders	34-40
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38. The Resurrection and Four Last Things	69-99

A chart of the *Summa Theologiae* showing the organization of all the treatises and the numeration of the questions for all three parts. Reprinted from *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 16, by permission of the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.



“Unbelievers are in ignorance of things that are of faith, for neither do they see or know them in themselves, nor do they know them to be credible. The faithful, on the other hand, know them, not as by demonstration, but by the light of faith which makes them see that they ought to believe them, as stated above.” (Summa Theologiae II-II, Q. 1, Art. 5, reply obj. 1)

*To one who has faith,  
no explanation is  
necessary. To one  
without faith, no  
explanation is possible.*

*- St. Thomas Aquinas*

# How to Read the *Summa*

- The *Summa Theologiae* is divided into sections, which then are divided into questions (general themes), that are then divided into articles, or specific questions, e.g., “Whether God Exists?”
- Aquinas structures every article in the *Summa* the same way. He begins by articulating the position he will argue against and the arguments in its favor. So he will say: “It seems that God does not exist . . .” and then he will give the reasons that seem to support this. Don’t be fooled! This is not Aquinas’ own position, but one that he will show is false, inadequate, or only partially true.





# How to Read the *Summa*



- Aquinas will then follow these initial objections with what is usually a single sentence (at most two), which begins, “On the Contrary . . .” This is Aquinas’ initial refutation of the viewpoint of the objections using an established authority—typically Sacred Scripture, a Church Father, or occasionally a philosopher like Aristotle.
- Aquinas will then go on to give his own account or answer to the question, a paragraph or series of paragraphs beginning with, “I Answer That . . .” This is the body of the article, where Aquinas pinpoints the issues at stake and gives his own position.

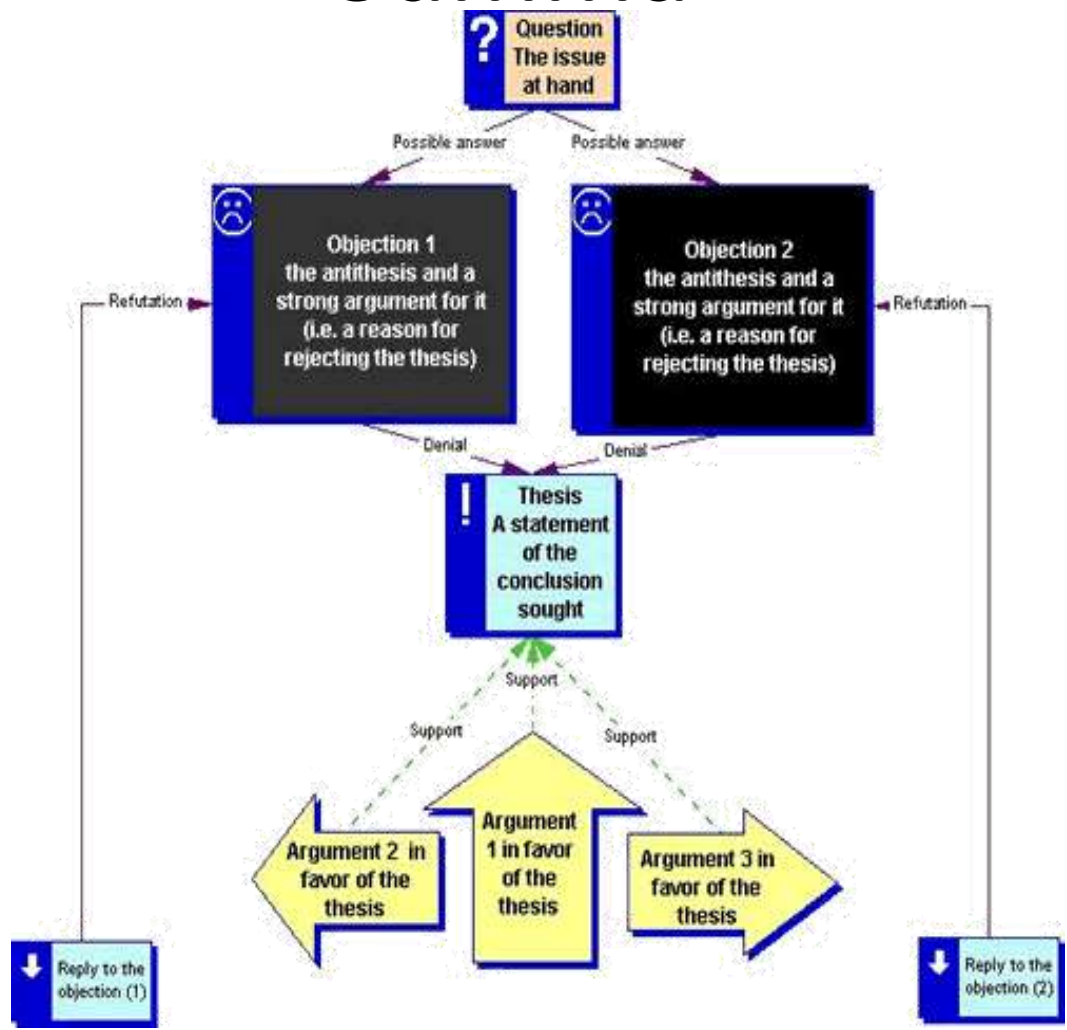
# How to Read the *Summa*

- Finally, Aquinas finishes the article and completes his treatment of the question before him by responding to all the objections given at the beginning of the article, the objections of the opposing side of the issue.
- Aquinas does not hesitate to acknowledge what is true in his opponents' arguments or position, but he likewise is not shy to point out where his interlocutors have gone wrong. And he always takes those who disagree with him seriously—their concerns and insights can frequently be discerned in Aquinas' own account.





# How to Read the Summa



# Article

## Statement of Question

1. Objections

2. Thesis (*Sed Contra*)

3. Response

4. Replies

**WONDER IS THE  
DESIRE FOR  
KNOWLEDGE.**

Thomas Aquinas

Because philosophy arises from awe, a philosopher is bound in his way to be a lover of myths and poetic fables. Poets and philosophers are alike in being big with wonder.

Thomas Aquinas



# Prima Pars: God, Creation, Angels, Man, and Divine Providence



# Can We Prove God's Existence?



"What do you mean 'it just happened'?  
Didn't we discuss cause and effect?"

- Can we prove God's existence? There seem to be some good reasons we cannot. Isn't it through faith that we know God, and isn't it beyond our reason to grasp God in His essence?
- There are two kinds of proof, according to St. Thomas: *demonstration propter quid* and *demonstration quia*. *Demonstration propter quid* reasons from causes to effects—like predicting the weather (effects) based on current conditions (causes). *Demonstration quia* reasons from effect to cause: You are hit over the head and you look for something that could have done it.
- When we undertake to prove God's existence, we are reasoning from effects (created things) to their possible cause (God). Because God's effects are never proportionate to God Himself, our knowledge of Him will be very imperfect, but real nonetheless!



# AQUINAS: FIVE WAYS

- Aquinas presents “Five Ways” to God’s existence. We could consider them proofs, but with a couple of important qualifications. First, they are *demonstrationes quia*. Secondly, they are very obviously meant to go together, and to be completed by St. Thomas’ treatment of God’s attributes in *Summa Theologiae* I, qq. 3-26. It is only at the end of question 26 that we arrive at a full account of the one Judeo-Christian God.
- All of Aquinas’ proofs have four steps:
  1. Aquinas points to something true about the world that can be verified through simple observation (an “observational datum.”)
  2. Aquinas shows that this is an *effect*.
  3. This effects demands a proper *cause*.
  4. The proper cause which exists to explain the effect is what we call God.







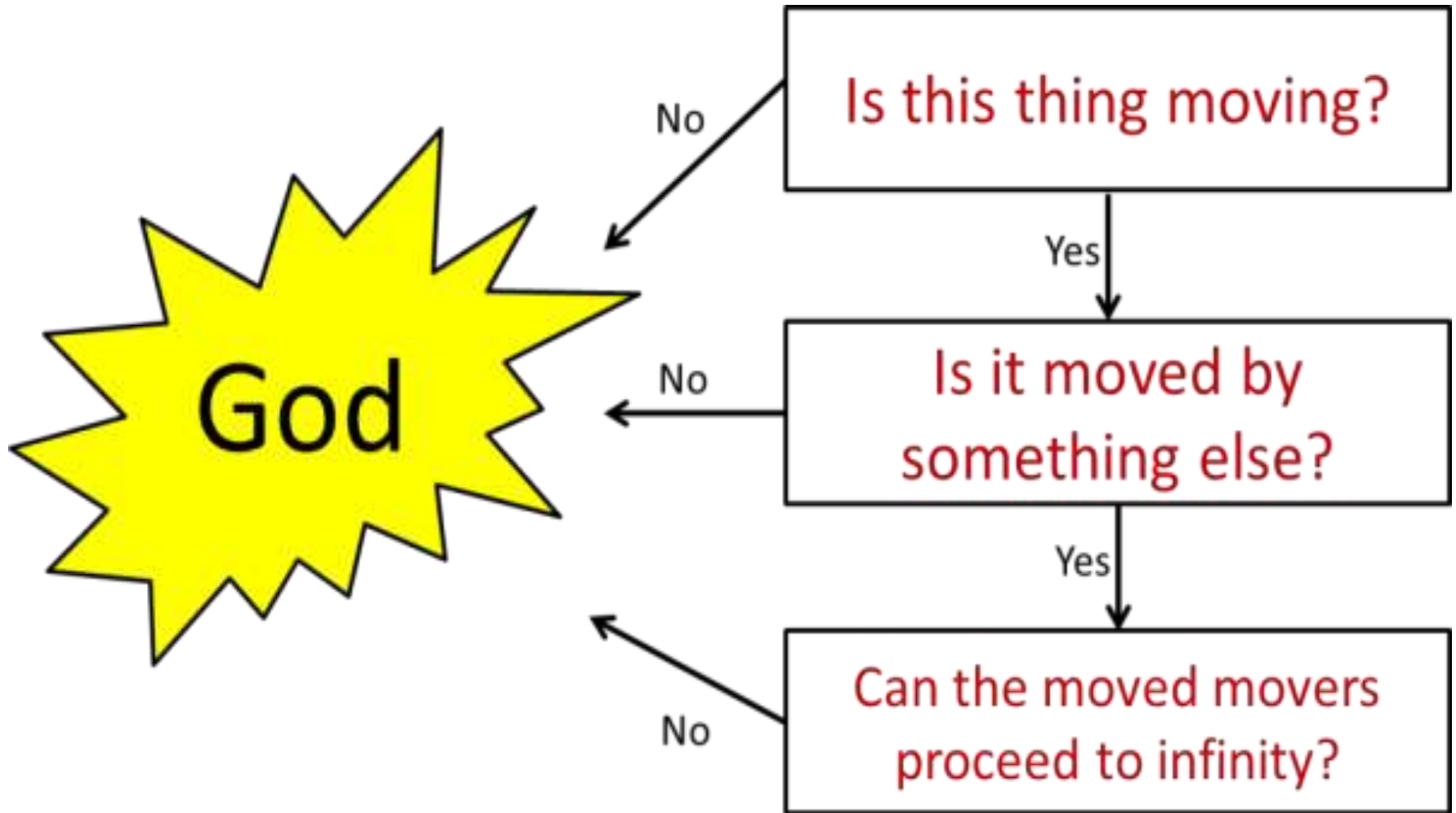








# God: The Unmoved Mover



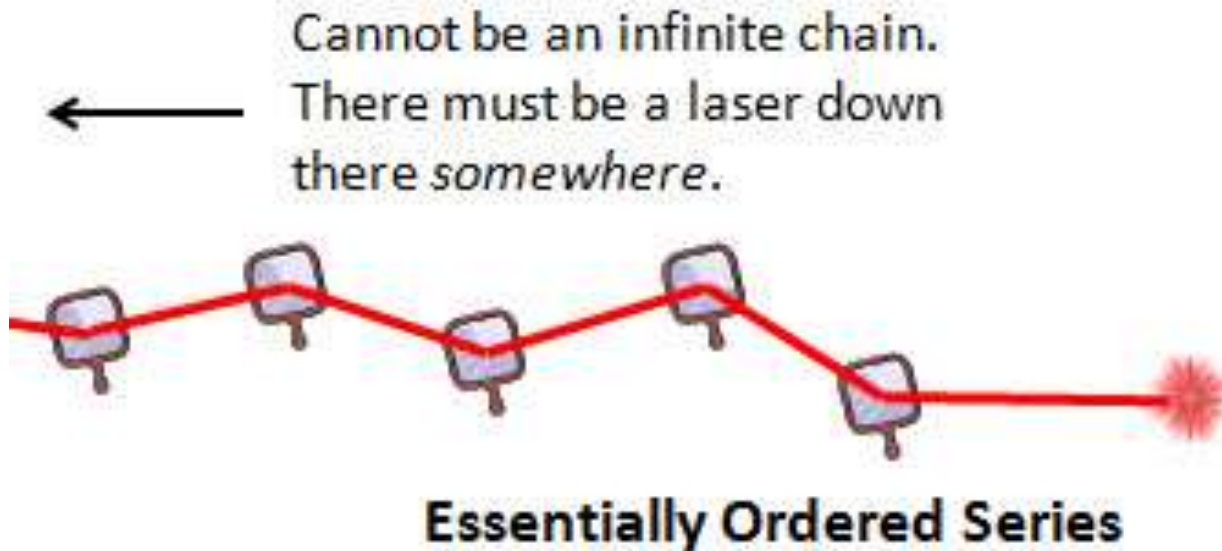
# Why can't there be an infinite regress?



- Aquinas thinks that you cannot prove that there was a temporal beginning to the universe



# Essentially Order Cause



- The effect that we see now demands a active cause NOW
- Absurd to say “The brush can paint by itself if it has a really long handle”

It is necessary to posit something which is necessary of itself, and has no cause of its necessity outside of itself but is the cause of necessity in other things. And all people call this thing God.

Thomas Aquinas



- Using the conclusion of these Five Ways, Aquinas reasons logically to Divine Attributes like simplicity, goodness, perfection, will and knowledge, oneness, mercy, and providence. Together with the Five Ways, these attributes form what is often called the “De Deo Uno” or Treatise on the One God, *Summa Theologiae* I, questions 2~26.
- Everything that is in God IS GOD.

**Overall Summary of the Essence of God:**

*Infinite nature:*

*Perfect character*

(independent)

(applied)

(independent)

(applied)

spirituality

omnipotence

goodness

love

eternity

omniscience

holiness

justice

immeasurability

omnipresence

truth

life

the One unique God

the One sovereign God



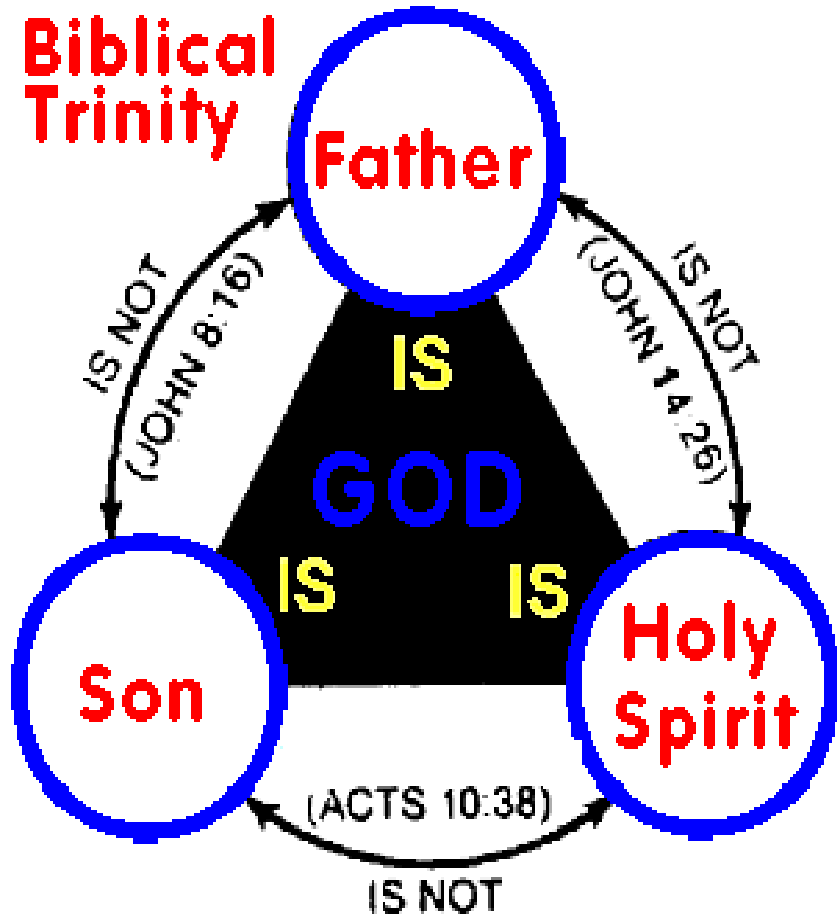
# *De Deo Uno* and *De Deo Trino*

- The Treatise on the One God is immediately followed by the Treatise on the Trinity (or the *De Deo Trino*), which comprise questions 27-43. In it, Aquinas speaks about the three Persons of the Trinity, and addresses how each of the Divine Persons are related to each other and the Divine Essence.
- Unlike questions 2-26, Aquinas is not confining himself to what can be known about God through reason alone. Quite the opposite: It is only through revelation that we are made aware of the Trinity at all. Creation can lead us to knowledge of the existence of a Creator, but since God's effects are never proportionate to Him, we cannot determine the Divine Essence—including the existence of three Divine Persons—from reason alone.



# The Persons and the Divine Nature

**Biblical  
Trinity**



- So the persons of the Trinity do not differ from one another by being different things, or by having some kind of material distinction. What differentiates each person from the other is the relationship itself, the relation to the other persons of the Trinity, which is a relation which follows from procession. So Aquinas can conclude: “Now distinction in God is only by relation of origin . . . therefore a divine person signifies a relation as subsisting.” (*STI*, q. 29, a. 4)

# Who is God?

God is one in three: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

And these three are one God

The same in substance, equal in power and glory



# The Trinity and Creation





# The Trinity and Creation

- The doctrine of the Trinity also underscores how we can say truly that “God is love,” and it gives us a correct view of God’s act of creation—namely that God, content in Himself and as a Trinity of persons, had no need of creating: “When we say that in Him there is a procession of love, we show that God produced creatures not because He needed them, nor because of any other extrinsic reason, but on account of the love of His own goodness.” (*ST* I, q. 32, a. 2, ad 3)

# Trinity & Creation

- Aquinas has already shown, via the five ways in question 2 of the Prima Pars, that God is cause of all that exists. But in question 44, Aquinas goes further to establish God as Creator, a biblical term that implies more than cause.
- For one thing, attributing creation to God is to identify God as the source of all things. This includes not only galaxies, stars, planets, people, trees, and animals, but even matter itself. There was nothing already existing from which God made things. God creates out of nothing (*ex nihilo*).
- **And the idea of creation not only includes making things to begin to exist, but also holding them in existence—God creates things by accounting for their existence for as long as they exist.** Thus, Aquinas concludes, “to create can be the action of God alone.” (*STI*, q. 45, a. 5)

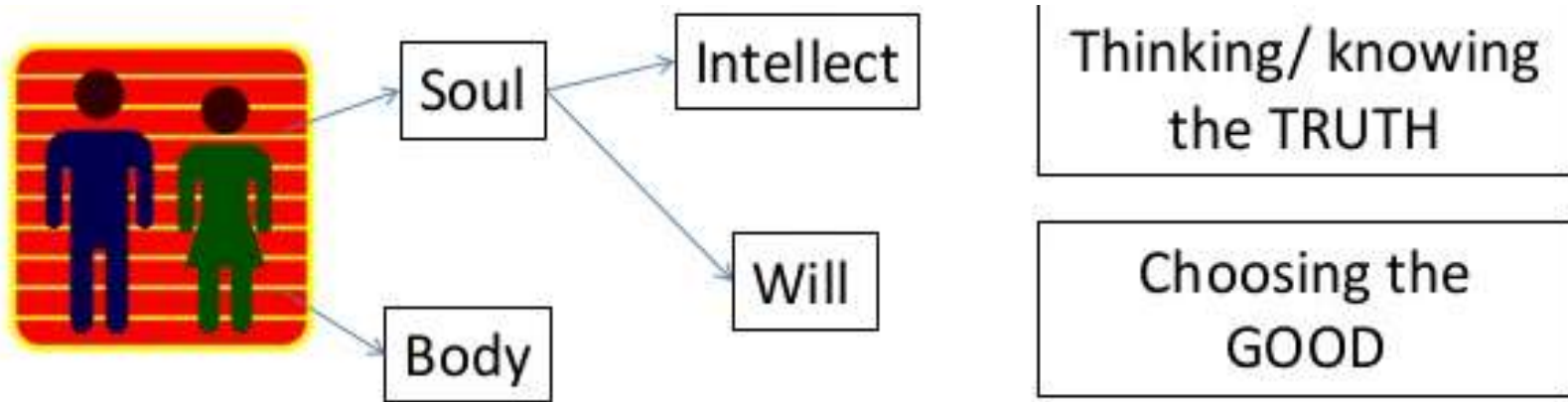




**Prima Secundae:** good or evil in human acts, passions and emotions, the virtues, sin, law and grace



# Human Freedom: Will and Intellect



- To “will” something, one has “to know” beforehand.
- Man cannot choose or act unless he knows which is a “better” good.
- When a person chooses to act according to what he knows is right – He acts freely
- Only man is capable of acting free – **HUMAN ACTS**
- But the intellect does not always determine the will.

The highest manifestation of life consists in this: that a being governs its own actions. A thing which is always subject to the direction of another is somewhat of a dead thing.

Thomas Aquinas

**REASON IN MAN  
IS RATHER LIKE  
GOD IN THE  
WORLD.**

Thomas Aquinas



**ALL THE EFFORTS OF  
THE HUMAN MIND  
CANNOT EXHAUST  
THE ESSENCE OF A  
SINGLE FLY.**

Thomas Aquinas

**HUMAN SALVATION  
DEMANDS THE DIVINE  
DISCLOSURE OF TRUTHS  
SURPASSING REASON.**

Thomas Aquinas

Perfection of moral  
virtue does not wholly  
take away the passions,  
but regulates them.

Thomas Aquinas

Happiness is secured  
through virtue; it is a  
good attained by  
man's own will.

Thomas Aquinas

Man should not consider  
his material possession  
his own, but as common  
to all, so as to share  
them without hesitation  
when others are in need.

Thomas Aquinas

**SORROW CAN BE  
ALLEVIATED BY GOOD  
SLEEP, A BATH AND A  
GLASS OF WINE.**

Thomas Aquinas



**Secunda Secundae:** particular virtues like prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude



Three things are necessary  
for the salvation of man: to  
know what he ought to  
believe; to know what he  
ought to desire; and to  
know what he ought to do.

Thomas Aquinas

Man cannot live without  
joy; therefore when he is  
deprived of true spiritual  
joys it is necessary that  
he become addicted to  
carnal pleasures.

Thomas Aquinas





"THE THINGS  
THAT WE  
LOVE TELL  
US WHAT  
WE ARE."

THOMAS AQUINAS

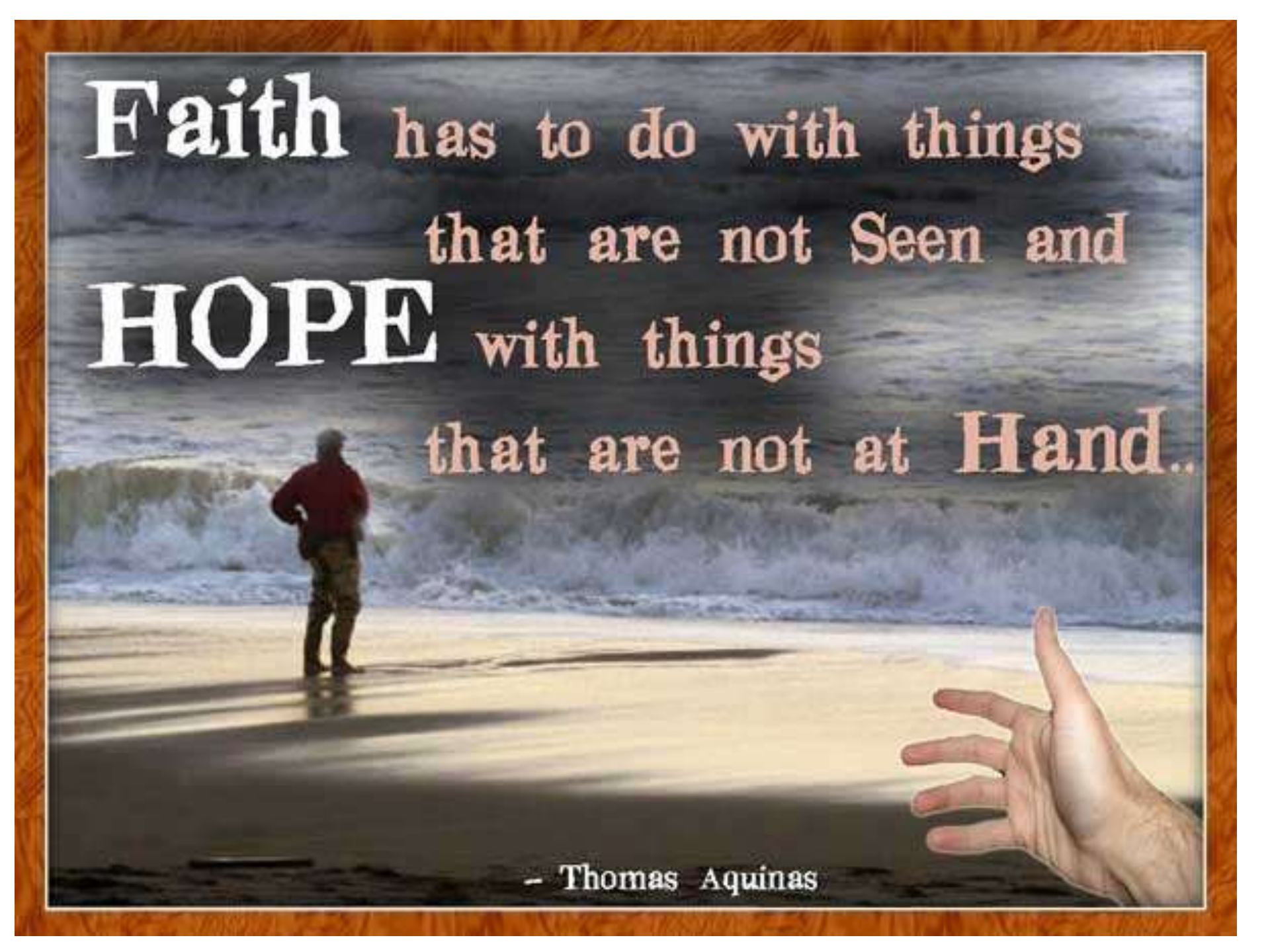
MADE WITH SPOKEN.LY

Justice is a certain rectitude of mind whereby a man does what he ought to do in the circumstances confronting him.

The principal act of courage is to endure and withstand dangers doggedly rather than to attack them.

(Thomas Aquinas)



A person in a red jacket stands on a sandy beach, looking out at the ocean waves. The scene is framed by a wooden border. In the bottom right corner, a hand is reaching out towards the viewer.

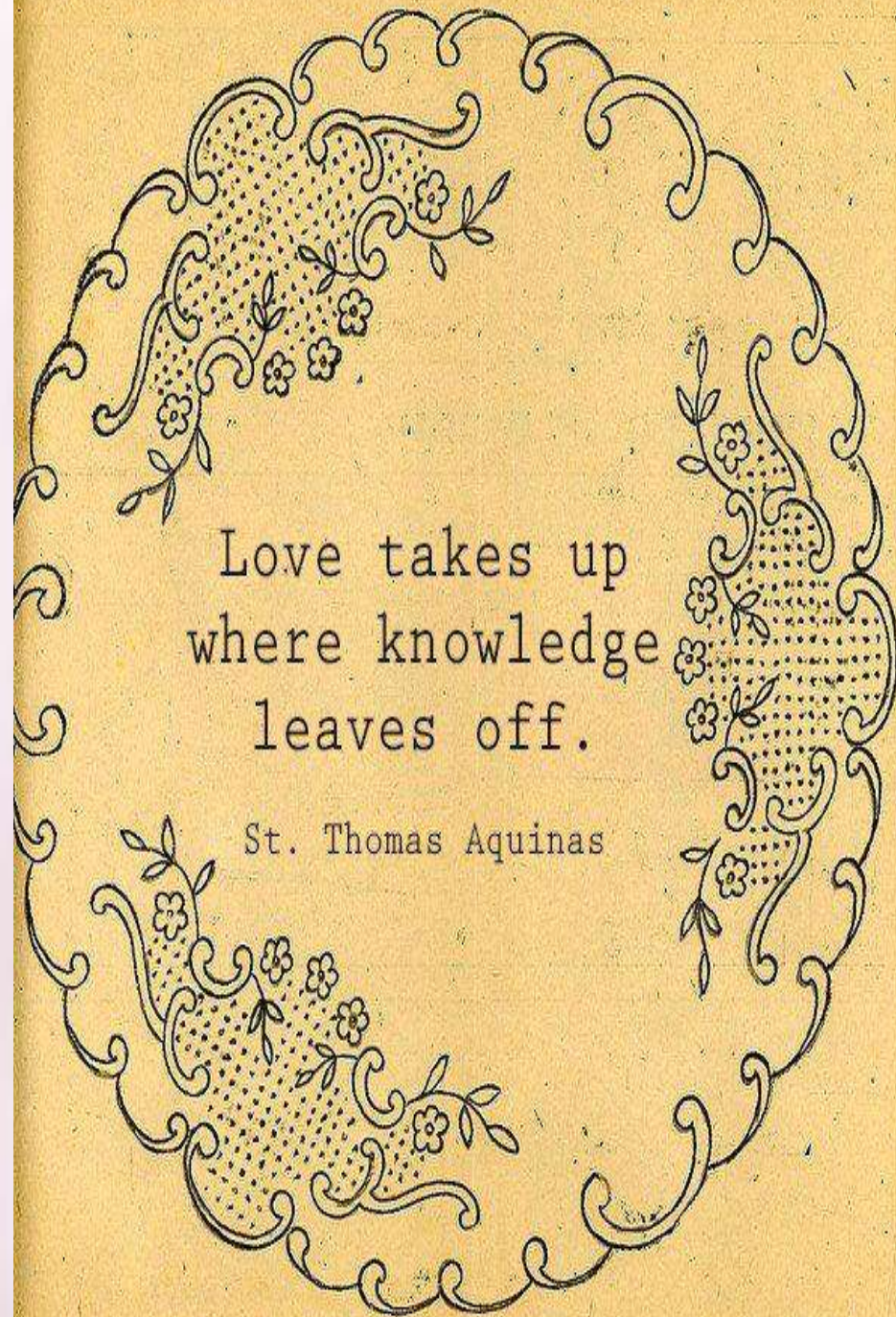
**Faith** has to do with things  
that are not Seen and  
**HOPE** with things  
that are not at Hand..

- Thomas Aquinas



Love is a binding force,  
by which another is  
joined to me and  
cherished by myself.

Thomas Aquinas



Friendship is the source of the greatest pleasures, and without friends even the most agreeable pursuits become tedious.

Thomas Aquinas

**THERE IS NOTHING  
ON THIS EARTH TO BE  
PRIZED MORE THAN  
TRUE FRIENDSHIP.**



How can we live in harmony? First we need to know we are all madly in love with the same God.

Thomas Aquinas

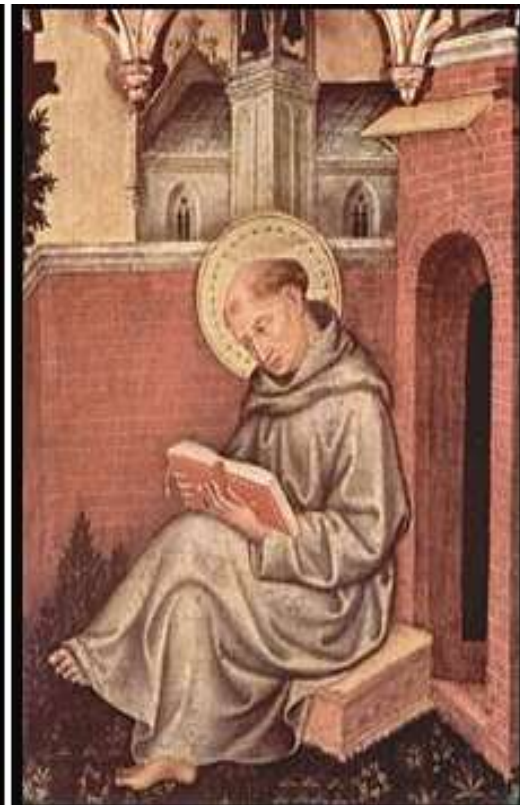
To convert somebody go and take them by the hand and guide them.

Thomas Aquinas

# Tertia Pars: the incarnation, resurrection, and the sacraments







If, then, you are looking for the way by which you should go, take Christ, because He Himself is the way.

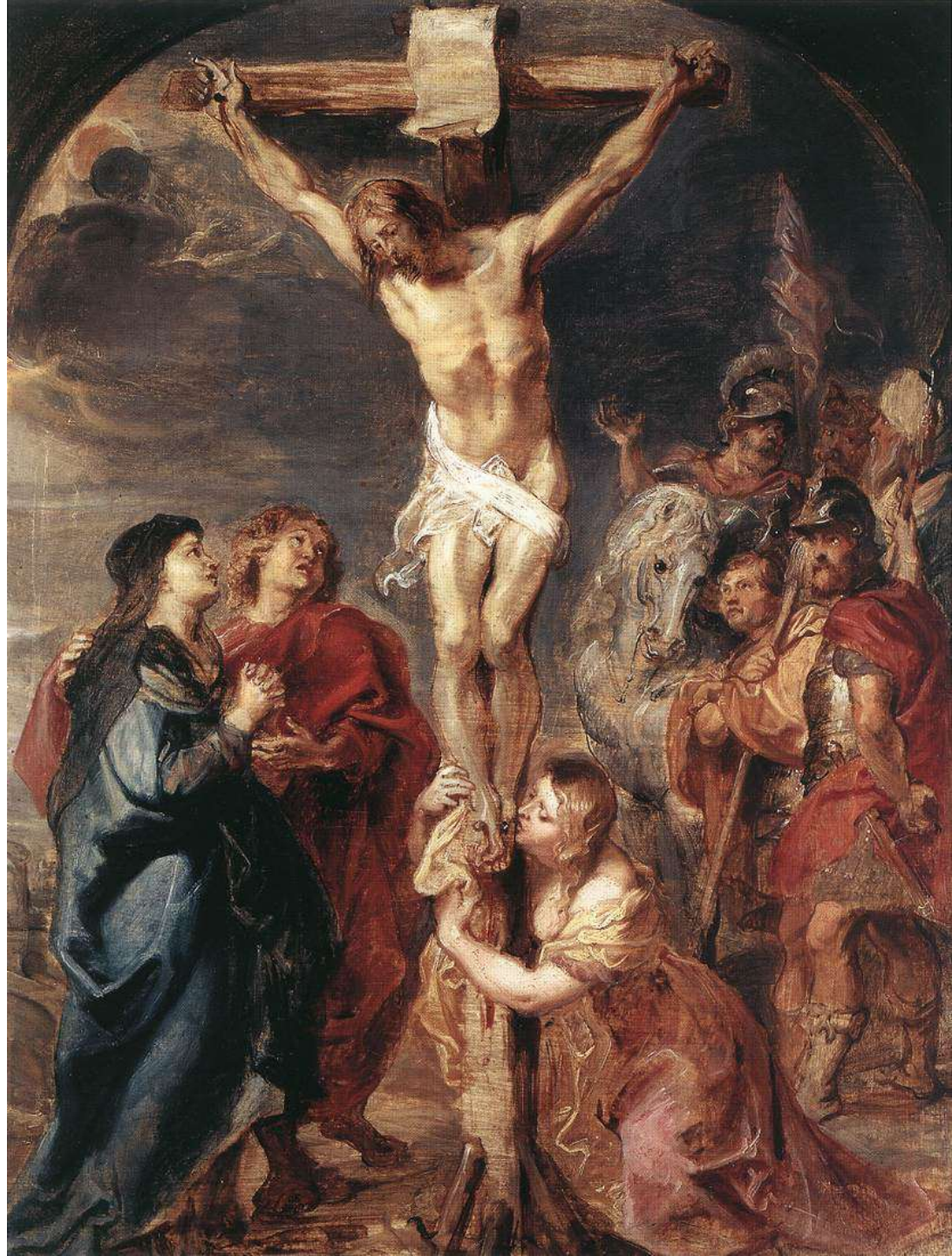
(Thomas Aquinas)



If you seek patience, you will find no better example than the cross. Great patience occurs in two ways: either when one patiently suffers much, or when one suffers things which one is able to avoid and yet does not avoid. Christ endured much on the cross, and did so patiently, because when he suffered he did not threaten; he was led like a sheep to the slaughter and he did not open his mouth.

Thomas Aquinas

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Thomas Aquinas



In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.

AZ QUOTES

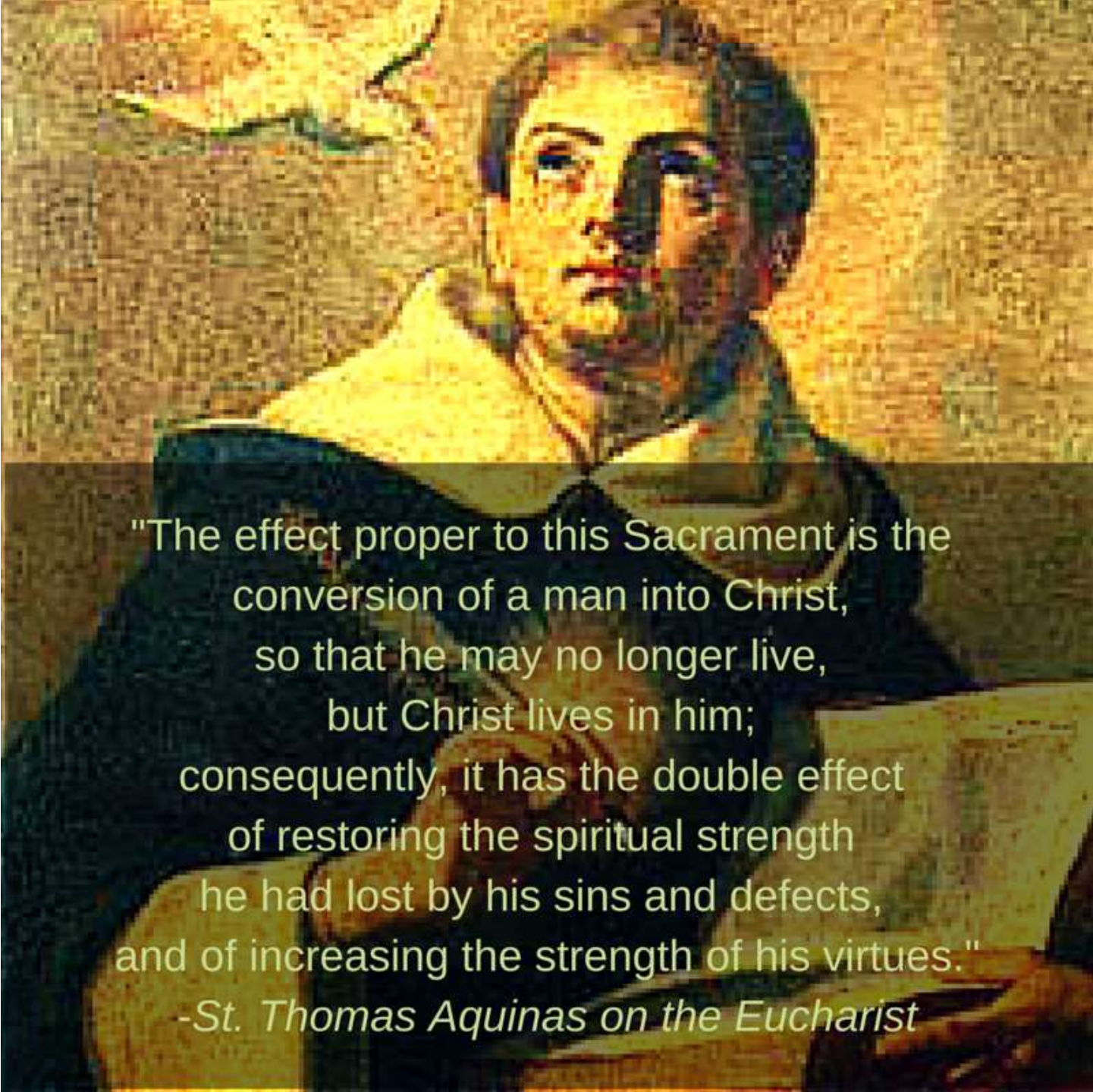


Three conditions are necessary for Penance: contrition, which is sorrow for sin, together with a purpose of amendment; confession of sins without any omission; and satisfaction by means of good works.

Thomas Aquinas







"The effect proper to this Sacrament is the conversion of a man into Christ, so that he may no longer live, but Christ lives in him; consequently, it has the double effect of restoring the spiritual strength he had lost by his sins and defects, and of increasing the strength of his virtues."  
-*St. Thomas Aquinas on the Eucharist*



# His Death



- In 1272 Thomas took leave from the University of Paris to establish a *studium generale* in Naples. While at Naples he began work on Tertia Pars of the *Summa Theologiae*. But in December 1273, St. Thomas ceased to write. When his secretary, Br. Reginald of Piperno, questioned St. Thomas, he replied that he could not continue his work, for “All that I have written seems to me like straw (*mihi videtur ut palea*).”
- St. Thomas was invited to the Second Council of Lyons in 1274, but on his way to the Council, he was struck on the head by a the branch of a tree and became seriously ill. He was take to Monte Cassino to convalesce and appeared to recover, but was forced to stop again at the Cisercian Abbey of Fossanova, where he died after receiving last rites.

# The Canonization of St. Thomas



- When the devil's advocate at his canonization process objected that there was no evidence that St. Thomas had worked any miracles, one of the cardinals answered, "There are so many miracles as articles in his *Summa*." On July 18, 1323, Pope John XXII declared Thomas Aquinas a saint.
- St. Thomas Aquinas' relics have been housed with the Dominicans of Toulouse (at the Church of the Jacobins) since 1369.
- St. Thomas Aquinas' feast day was originally March 7<sup>th</sup>, the day of his death. But when the General Roman Calendar was revised in 1969, his feast was changed to January 28<sup>th</sup>, the day his relics were transferred from Fossanova to Toulouse.



# The Condemnations of 1277

- In 1277, Étienne Tempier, the Bishop of Paris, issued a series of condemnations. The aim of these condemnations was to identify dangerous theological positions associated with various uses of Aristotle, especially those who were influenced by the interpretation of Aristotle put forth by Averröes, a Muslim commentator.
- It contained 219 propositions that the bishop had determined violated the omnipotence of God or the truth of Scripture. Some 20 propositions were associated with the name of St. Thomas or his teaching.



# A Dominican and a Jesuit Walk into a Bar



- For several centuries after his death—and due in no small part to the Condemnations of 1277—Aquinas’ thought was defended and preserved primarily by Dominicans.
- By the time of the Council of Trent, Aquinas’ theology was well-respected, even if it was only one of many theological influences on the council. Aquinas’ growing fame in the sixteenth century seems to have been owed not only to some savvy Dominican Thomists, but the central place that St. Thomas Aquinas occupied in the intellectual life of the Society of Jesus.
- Two centuries after the death of Thomas Aquinas, Pope St. Pius V (also a Dominican) declared him to be a Doctor of the Church.
- But it was not until Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*, that the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas was acknowledged to have an unparalleled place in the teaching of the church.



# St. Thomas: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- Since *Aeterni Patris*, St. Thomas Aquinas has continued to be a leading light in the Catholic Church. This does not mean that Aquinas is always and everywhere appreciated or popular. Still, papal encyclicals, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and Canon Law make constant reference to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas to expound the faith.
- And an extraordinary number of Catholic intellectuals have taken on the challenge of defending and expounding St. Thomas Aquinas for our contemporary world, great lights like Jacques Maritain, Étienne Gilson, Joseph Pieper, Elizabeth Anscombe, Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles De Koninck, William Wallace, Eleanore Stump and many, many others. These men and women have undertaken to show how St. Thomas can illumine everything from philosophy of science to politics to aesthetics to mysticism.





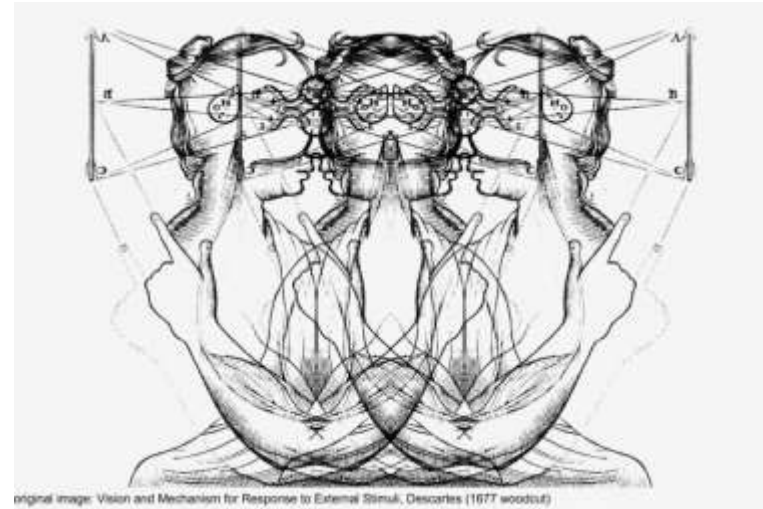
# The Relevance of St. Thomas



- Great interest is being paid to St. Thomas Aquinas' ethical theory: His account of Natural Law, his analysis of human acts, and his description of the virtues.
- “How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law, or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in Eternal and Natural Law.” –from “A Letter from a Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King, Jr.

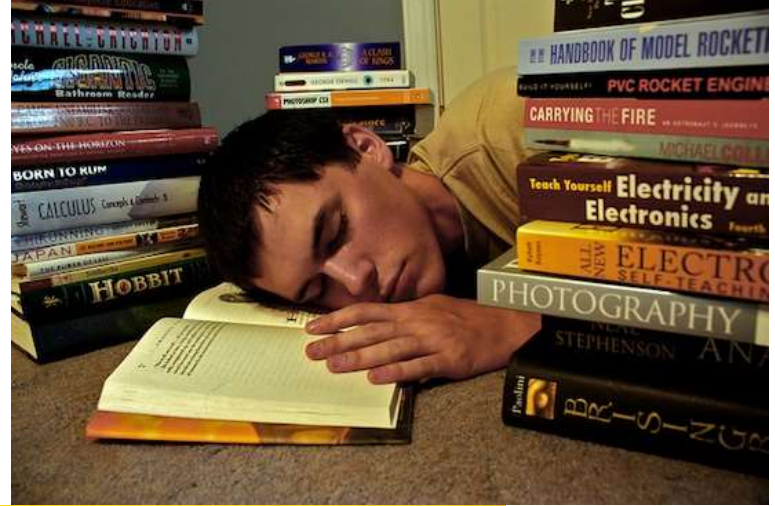
# The Relevance of St. Thomas

- St. Thomas Aquinas has also become more and more a part of contemporary discussions on what it means to be a human being, and in particular, the relationship between the soul and the body.
- For those who see an intimate relationship between mind and body, Aquinas is proving an attractive alternative to Descartes, who argued that the world consisted of 2 fundamentally different kinds of things, “thinking things” (souls) and things extended in space (bodies).

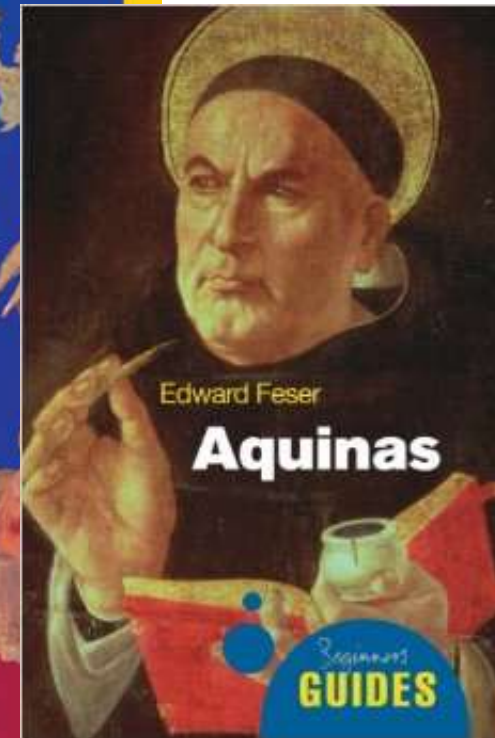
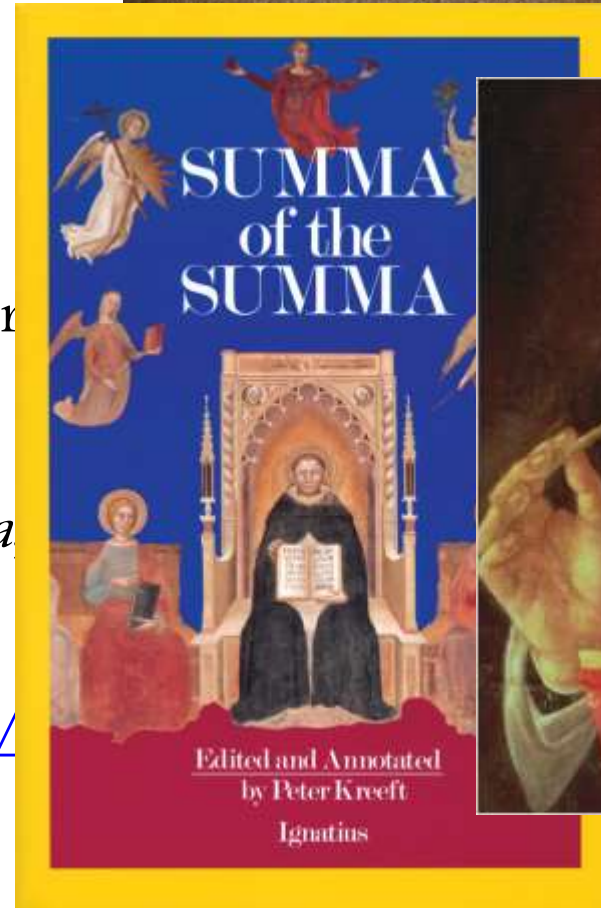


- For Aquinas, the soul and the body are intimately connected. There are no human bodies without souls, and although human souls can survive without the body, this is a temporary and unnatural state.

# Recommended Reading



- What presentation would be complete without a little recommended reading? I'd like to encourage you to read a little St. Thomas Aquinas on your own!
- Read *Summa Theologiae*, Part 1, Question 2. There are three articles, which shouldn't be too much. If you only have time for one article, however, go straight to article three, "Whether God Exists?"
- If you don't own a copy of the *Summa* don't worry! There are copies online. You can go, for instance, to <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/summa/>
- *Summa of Summa* Peter Kreeft
- *Aquinas Beginners Guide: Ed Fesser*





# Closing Prayer



O God, grant that whatever good things I have, I may share generously with those who have not, and that whatever good things I do not have, I may request humbly from those who do. Plant deep in me, Lord, all the virtues, that I might be devout in divine matters, discerning in human affairs, and burdensome to no one in fulfilling my own bodily needs. Order me inwardly through a good life that I might do what is right and what will be meritorious for me and a good example for others. Amen.