

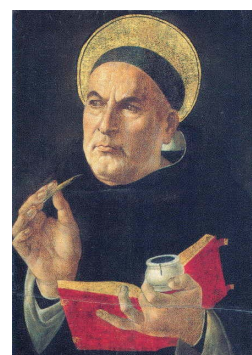


# Saint Mary's College

Spring Semester, 2015

Religious Studies 370

## Aquinas's Search for God: Faith Meets Philosophy



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### Course Description

When Philosophy is used in the service of Theology, wrote St. Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century, “water is turned into wine.” An important strand of the Christian tradition turns the discerning and sometimes critical eye of reason toward the mysteries of faith. For some, this examination occasions strong objections to traditional understandings of whether God is and what God is. For others like Aquinas, rational inquiry is but a way of continuing the journey towards God, a desire of the understanding to lovingly embrace the truths of faith. The meeting place between theological thought and philosophical reflection is where this course takes place. We shall orient our focus around the writings of Aquinas, one of the great minds of history and a man proclaimed by numerous popes “The Universal Doctor of the Church” and celebrated in St. John Paul II’s 1998 encyclical, *Faith and Reason*, as “a master of thought and a model of the right way to do theology.” Accordingly, we seek to participate in an ancient conversation that tries to probe the limits of what we can know about God and how we can know it: How can we use language to speak truthfully of God? What attributes or powers does God have? How does God relate to the world? Is it possible for those who believe in God to make sense of the evil and suffering in creation? And how—for all these questions and many more—can human reason be employed with utmost sophistication to bring light to faith?

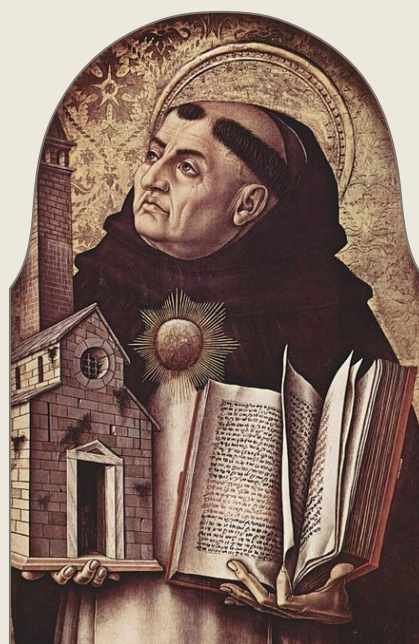
## Course Goal

***This class seeks to enlarge your mind by having you consider the biggest questions there are.***

The ultimate goal of the course, to which all of your other work will point forward, is your production of a sustained treatment of the theological issue that fascinates you most. Course readings, your own writing, and seminar discussion will help you discover what that is and come to understand it better in conversation with Aquinas and your classmates.

“Even if someone who reverently seeks the infinite ways of God never reaches the end of the search, the search will always have profit.”

—St. Thomas Aquinas



“The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God.... There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity.... No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind, than thoughts of God.... But while the subject humbles the mind, it also expands it. The person who often thinks of God, will have a larger mind than the one who simply plods around this narrow globe.... Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity.”

—C.H. Spurgeon

## Course Requirements & Grading

Completing this course successfully entails:

- ① **contributing regularly and responsibly** to the seminar and assessing individual and group performance after just about every class meeting,
- ② **preparing for class** by submitting Voicethreads on the assigned readings or media before just about every class meeting,
- ③ **working corporately** as a class to have effective seminar discussions, and
- ④ **composing** 2 papers that point forward toward a culminating semester media project.

### How will your final grade be calculated?

①

#### Participation & Assessments (25%)

**Participation:** Since this class will be run as a seminar, your primary day-to-day responsibility will be to do the readings carefully and contribute significantly to our discussions. You should come to class having read the assigned material for that day and with something to say about it. For each day on the syllabus, you will also find learning outcomes for you to work towards on your own (“Homework Learning Outcomes”) and more advanced learning outcomes we will work on together in class (“Seminar Learning Outcomes”). Look at each class’s learning outcomes *before* you read, and think about them *as* you read; as they will form the basis for class discussion. I try to combine lots of different kinds of learning activities to make class engaging, informative, and fun.

**Assessments:** For just about every class, you will receive a class participation grade, *which you yourself will help determine*. That is, after every class with a 🗓️ next to its date, you will be self-assessing your participation based upon a form available at the course website and an accompanying rubric which provides a scoring guide. ***If you do not submit a self-assessment, you will receive no credit for that particular class.*** This is your responsibility. All assessments are due by **midnight** on the days we have class. This is so that what we did that day will still be fresh in your mind. Anything that comes in after that will not receive full credit. (I reserve the right to adjust your own evaluation either up or down, however, based upon my own observation of your contributions.) I will drop your two lowest grades to allow for two unexcused absences. Beyond this, this work cannot be made up because it involves your presence in class. When you self-assess, *you learn about your learning; and that makes your learning deeper*. That’s why I’m asking you to do this. Note that in these assessments, you will also be assessing the group’s performance for that particular class (see ③ below). The link to the assessment form is found under the course banner on the class website. A mobile version of this form is available through the class app.





## How will your individual participation be graded?

Individual participation will be graded on a 4-point scale based upon your daily self-assessments.

0 points for no assessment or attendance

-or-

1 point for a completed assessment in on time



3 points for a √+ (based upon rubric), or

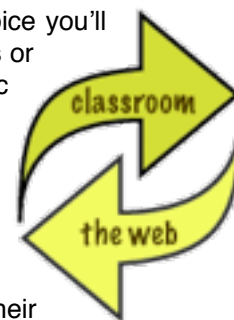
2 points for a √ (based upon rubric), or

1 point for a √- (based upon rubric)

2

## Voicethread Contributions (20%)

Voicethread is a group audio blog that we'll be using as a warm-up for our face-to-face discussions. I'll be asking you to contribute an entry for every class in which 🗨️ appears next to the date. You'll find the Voicethread by selecting its date in the Sidebar of the main page of PBWorks in the same place you find online readings. After clicking the date under "Online Assignments & Voicethreads," you'll see at the top of the page any online readings assigned for that day, and then as you scroll down, you'll see that day's Voicethread. Log in with the same information with which you signed up on the **New Students** page. Click the Play button at the bottom left of the page ▶, and the first voice you'll hear will be mine. I might have some commentary (either summarizing the previous class or providing a mini-lecture on the issues for the next one). I want you to have a basic understanding of the material *before* class, so that we can explore the text and discuss its implications *during* class. This is what's sometimes called *flipping the classroom*.



Each Voicethread will ask you a question in a prompt on the final slide. It might be about something that I explain on a slide or about a video I'll ask you to see. Or it might be about something in the reading you were to do for the upcoming class. You will listen to any other students who commented before you, as the Voicethread will cycle through their comments. Then it's your turn. Click on ➕ to add your contribution. You have several options from which to select how to verbalize your ideas and respond to your classmates. Most laptops and computers have built-in microphones. But you can also use the phone or even a webcam to leave your Voicethread comments. In this way, students will come to class having said something about the issues we'll be discussing the following day; and that will give us all a foundation on which to build. Voicethread allows us to value *all* voices, especially those that challenge, raise questions, or provide something with which to disagree. It's been said that the Millennial Generation of students gravitates toward social learning that connects them to their peers. Voicethread enables that kind of learning, and meaningful interaction with others and careful consideration of their views form one of the performance criteria of your daily self-assessments. Moreover, when you're dialoguing with your peers and responding to them, you're involved in the communal creation of scholarly knowledge. *You may even end up quoting what your classmates say in your papers or semester project.*

**Deadline:** Voicethreads will need to be completed by (at the latest) 8:00 pm on the *night before* the class where we take up the particular issue on which you're posting. **No contributions that come in past the stated deadline will receive full credit.** Make your posting earlier that day if you have a previous commitment for that evening.



## How will your Voicethreads be graded?

Each Voicethread assignment should be 2-4 minutes of spoken comments in length. This can come in more than one comment if you wish. Voicethreads will be graded on a 4-point scale.

- **1 point** for a posting that is in on time (8:00 pm). A Voicethread that comes in *after* 8:00 pm but *before* 9:00 pm can receive up to 3 points if it satisfies the remaining rubric items below. *Any Voicethread that comes in after 9pm will receive no points at all.*
- **1 point** for posting the required length (no less than 2 minutes, no more than 4 minutes) that engages your classmates on the issue(s) in the prompt.
- **1 point** for respectfully commenting on what someone else said (or something I said in the prompt if you're the first person to contribute). You could raise a question, ask for clarification, point out an implication of what the person said, or constructively disagree with it. *When you're referring to your classmates, make sure to use their names!*
- **1 point** for referring to specific passages from Aquinas (or one of the other assigned readings or media) in a way that demonstrates accurate understanding and thoughtful appropriation of the material

I will drop your two lowest grades to allow for two unexcused absences. Beyond this, these postings cannot be made up because they involve collaboration with others.

### 3

## Corporate discussion (10%)

Since more is needed for a good discussion than the same two or three people contributing, you will also be giving yourself a corporate (class) grade based upon how all of us do in the discussion for that day. Because at least part of what makes a good discussion is a variety of voices and perspectives, as well as the ability of the participants to make comments or ask questions that invite the contributions of others and involve every student in the room, we will fail as a learning community if we don't approach our task communally. We are here to collaborate, not to compete; and collaboration means that we strive, collectively, towards a greater truth than any one of us has as an individual.

In his book *The Catholic University as Promise and Project*, Fr. Michael Buckley states, "'Discussion' indicates a collaborative inquiry, either by the mutually supportive labor of human beings concentrated upon a single problem, exchange, or project, or by their mutually critical debate in the testing and verification of variant positions and resolutions" (p. 136). This course aims for such collaboration and will be conducted as a seminar in which my main responsibility is to steer the discussion in productive ways and assist you in the process of discovering your own theological insights and ideas. Certainly I will also be on hand to try to explain especially complicated ideas in Aquinas (there are a few!) and to prompt you to make connections between seemingly disparate points that come up in his writings. But my hope is that most of what gets said during class will be said by you.



It may take awhile to reach that goal, since familiarity with Aquinas sufficient to carry a discussion isn't something that happens overnight or even very quickly. But that's where we want to get to by the end of the semester.

When you turn in your individual self-assessments, you'll also be giving a group grade based upon how well our most recent discussion went. I'll average these grades (and I get a vote too) after dropping the high and low marks, and that's what the class will get for that day. **Note:** We won't start doing this until the second week of the semester to give everyone a chance to warm up to the subject matter and to each other. Also, previous experience suggests that I tend to do most of the talking in the early classes as we go through some texts fairly methodically.

### How will our seminar discussions be graded?

Each of our class discussions will be evaluated on a 4-point scale.

- **1 point** for participation (meaning: every student in the seminar spoke at some point during the class period)
- **1 point** for preparation (meaning: students demonstrated preparation by making regular references to the text or assigned material for that day to cite evidence, raise questions, debate meaning, etc.)
- **1 point** for collaboration (meaning: students spoke *to each other*—not just to the instructor—and regularly and respectfully picked up on each other's comments or questions to advance the discussion)
- **1 point** for organization (meaning: staying on task and addressing all the seminar learning outcomes for the day so that students got what they were supposed to get out the class without getting sidetracked or becoming preoccupied with irrelevant matters)

*I will drop the group's two lowest grades of the semester.*

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Paper #1 (due Feb. 6 by 5pm) (10%)

Paper #2 (due Mar. 20 by 5pm) (15%)

Final Project (due May 8 by noon) (20%)

You will also submit one ungraded written assignment: a Position Paper due by 5pm on Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. This paper will form a foundation for your other work under #4 above. Your graded papers and final project will be spread out fairly evenly throughout the semester, with the project due during Finals Week. All of these assignments will build upon one another in complexity to allow progressive refinement of your questions and conclusions. You'll start out **imitating** Aquinas's method. Then you will move to **summarizing** Aquinas's positions. Finally, you'll move to **evaluating** Thomas's views through your own scholarly research and the incorporation of secondary sources in your final project. More information will be provided about how to conduct your research.

Your final project is toward what the whole class will be pointing: a sustained exploration of identifying and analyzing the theological issue that fascinates you most. **That is, I'm going to ask you**

**not only to read theology, but to do it as a scholar—albeit in conversation with Aquinas and others.** Ultimately, learning theology is like learning to swim. There's only so much you can do from outside the pool observing others in the water and no substitute for diving in and immersing yourself.

**Format:** The first two papers should be approximately 6-7 pages typed and double-spaced. *Number your pages. Your first two papers should be turned in, and will be returned, online through a Google Drive shared folder.* The final project will be in the form of a Voicethread or some alternate media presentation such as a video. You are welcome to use outside sources in more than just your final project, but please footnote appropriately in MLA or Chicago style. References to Aquinas's writings should be placed in parentheses in your paper according to the format presented at the beginning of the semester. References to any other course reading (or to your own previous writing) can also be placed in parentheses.



Your papers will be due by 5:00 pm on Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, and Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. The semester project will be due by noon on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> (Finals Week). You are welcome to submit drafts for my review prior to the due dates. I will promise to read and return (with comments) anything that comes in at least a week before the due date so that the author may revise and resubmit. Depending on my schedule for a particular week, I *may* be able to do the same with things turned in less than a week before the due date, but you'd be taking your chances. So it's to your advantage not to wait until the last minute. *On the last day of class (Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>), each student will be asked for about a 10-minute presentation summarizing your exploration of the theological issue from your final project.*

### How will your papers and project be graded?

Individual rubrics will be available for your papers and final project. You are expected to use them as you prepare each assignment. I will use them to evaluate your work. Those rubrics will all be based on the following criteria:

- ★ ***Understanding of Text/Author:*** demonstrated interpretive skills and accurate grasp of Aquinas's (or another author's) ideas, concepts, and theories (= you stay close to the texts in the ideas you pull from them, you present those ideas accurately, and you refrain from unfounded interpretations.)
- ★ ***Development/Organization:*** structured thinking, careful organization, orderly presentation of ideas, understandable progression of your points, including self-assessment of your own intellectual growth (= your points build on each other and assemble coherently into a unified whole. You are clear in what you say, and the relationship between your ideas is coherently spelled out. Your paper's structure—beginning, middle, and end—should be apparent and easy to follow. You are able to narrate how your current thinking has evolved; because in this course, 'development' refers not just to ideas but also to *your own scholarly development* as a theologian.)
- ★ ***Reasoning/Evidence:*** rational manipulation of ideas and dexterity in handling them in relation to the weight of your reasons, keen and fair assessment of contrary views (= you understand what the readings say and you do something with them by engaging the texts intellectually and responsibly to demonstrate clarity of perception and critical analysis. You support your assertions with evidence, examples, or appropriate detail. Remember that an opinion is only as good as the reasoning on which it is based—*even in theological writing.*)



- ★ **Originality/Creativity:** personal appropriation of what the readings and class say to formulate some ideas of your own. Support for your ideas is drawn from your own insights, examples, illustrations, analogies, or reasoning rather than only borrowed from class or the text. ***I should be able to hear your own voice in your work*** (which means that it's perfectly acceptable to use "I"). You take some chances with the material and show creativity by—in the words of Prof. Barbara Walvoord—"making unusual connections, looking at something in a fresh way, noticing unusual relationships or aspects of the topic, pushing beyond surface observations, challenging what others take for granted, or taking a risk with ... a difficult topic.")
- ★ **Professionalism:** sound grammar, spelling, writing style, sentence structure, punctuation, and adherence to the referencing scheme I provide for Aquinas's works; proper acknowledgement and documentation of sources (excessive instances of poor grammar, poor spelling, or poor proofreading or general sloppiness will lower your grade. Good writing is precise writing—*especially about the issues in this class*, and mistakes in grammar, spelling, or proofreading do not contribute to precision. In general, I expect the *professionalism* of an adult learner in all the work you submit.)

These criteria correspond, in general, to the following letter grades (*individualized rubrics for each submission are available through the course website*).

- A** Excellent in all or nearly all of the above aspects. The interest of the reader/viewer is engaged by the ideas and presentation. Style and organization seem natural and easy. Your work is marked by originality of ideas and keen theological analysis. You provide evidence that you see complexities and can confront inadequate explanations and that you can answer questions and question answers. I can hear a lively, intelligent, interesting human voice speaking to me.
- B** Good, technically competent, but with a lapse here and there. The submission is clear and the prose is generally effective. There may be some gaps or flaws in the argument or some deficiency in one or two of the five criteria listed above. But these tend to be redeemed by the paper's good points.
- C** A competent piece of work, but not yet good. C work is more or less adequately organized. In some C work, very good ideas are marred by poor presentation—in development, organization, or technical errors. In other C work, the organization, structure, and grammar are not flawed, but the ideas and how they are developed need a lot of work. Basically, C work contains problems with two or three of the five criteria listed above without the good points of a B paper to raise it to that level.
- D** A piece of work that demonstrates some effort on the author's part but that is too marred by technical problems or flaws in thinking and development of ideas to be considered competent work.
- F** This grade is reserved for work demonstrating minimal effort on the author's part. Perhaps the author has drastically misinterpreted the assignment or left it almost completely underdeveloped. There are serious problems in just about all of the above 5 criteria.

### How to calculate your grade:

For your final grade and for your paper and project grades, this class uses the regular 4.0 Saint Mary's grade-point scale.

A	4.00
A-	3.66
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.66
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.66
D+	1.33
D	1.00
F	0.00

## Learning Outcomes

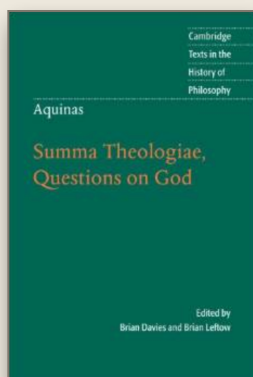
The course requirements described above are designed to help you meet the following **course-wide** learning outcomes listed in the left column below. These learning outcomes describe the *knowledge, skills, or abilities that you will acquire as a result of this course*. In the right column, you'll see how each assignment or activity is tied back to those things that you should be able to know or do better after completing it.

The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:	This outcome is intended to be achieved by the following requirements described above and listed below:					
<b>READ</b> portions of the <i>Summa Theologiae</i> with sufficient understanding to be able to put Thomas's ideas into your own words	✓	✓		✓		
<b>USE</b> common Thomistic vocabulary with facility both in speech and in writing	✓	✓		✓	✓	
<b>EXPLAIN</b> how basic concepts in the <i>Summa</i> relating to God, creation, and humanity build off of each other	✓	✓			✓	
<b>DEVELOP</b> her own nuanced theology in conversation with St. Thomas and others		✓	✓			✓
<b>IDENTIFY</b> places where Aquinas's theology can be challenged or extended	✓	✓	✓			✓
<b>RELATE</b> the contemporary relevance of St. Thomas Aquinas's thought and method to a variety of modern debates		✓	✓			✓
	①	②	③	④		
	Participation	Voicethreads	Group	Paper #1	Paper #2	Final Project

For each day's assignments listed on the syllabus, you will see *two sets of learning outcomes*. The first set are those you are responsible for on your own *outside of class* and which you will achieve through your reading, viewing, study, and dialogue with your classmates over Voicethread. In short, this is what you should be able to do before you come to class. The second set are more complicated, and those are what we will accomplish *together* during our face-to-face time in the seminar. These are what you're supposed to get out of each class session.



## Course Materials



1. **Book:** Davies, Brian, and Brian Leftow, eds. *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. (ISBN: 0-521-52892-5)
2. **Course Reader:** this will be provided to you and is also available in PDF on the course website
3. **Class handouts:** also provided to you and in PDF on the course website
4. **Internet assignments on the course website:** designated on the syllabus by ONLINE ASSIGNMENT, ONLINE READING, or VIDEO. In the Sidebar at the right of the course website (•) click the date on which the particular assignment is *due*, and you'll be brought to where you need to be.

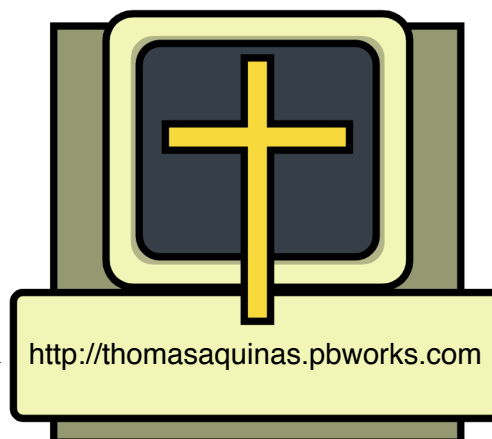
### Where to get the book (new!):

- Saint Mary's Bookstore (\$51)
- Amazon.com (\$41)



## Electronic Resources

We will be using PBworks as our classroom management system. You should have received an email invitation from me to join. The course syllabus, handouts, online readings, and assignments are available through this site, as well as some videos that I'll ask you to view for class. In addition, you will be able to view your current grade. *No one outside our class has access to anything on this site.* I provide video tutorials for how to use different elements of the website should anything be unclear (see the "HOW TO..." folder in the "Navigator" box at the middle of the right side of the website listed below):



This course also has **its own app**, available for *free* on both the iTunes app store (for iOS devices) and on Google Play (for Android devices). It features access to the syllabus, course website, reader, assessment form, as well as the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. To locate the app, go to [tinyurl.com/fmpitunesapp](http://tinyurl.com/fmpitunesapp) or [tinyurl.com/fmpandroidapp](http://tinyurl.com/fmpandroidapp) or the QR codes below. Note that Voicethread also has a mobile app available for free download.



iOS (iTunes)



Android (Google Play)



## Class Policies & Resources

**Academic Honesty:** The College's policy on academic honesty is in effect. This policy may be found on pp. 65-67 of the 2014-2015 *Saint Mary's College Bulletin* (<http://tinyurl.com/SMC-Academic-Honesty>) or via the QR code to the right. You are responsible for knowing and following it. Failure to do so will result in an F for the individual assignment. Repeated instances of academic dishonesty may merit an F for the course depending upon their frequency and severity.



**Attendance policy:** You are expected to attend class regularly. Your presence in class is a kind of participation. Therefore, more than 2 unexcused absences will lower your grade. More than 4 such absences may result in failure of the course. In rare circumstances, even an excessive number of total (unexcused + excused) absences (7 or more) may not allow you to pass this course. *It is your responsibility to inform me of any extenuating circumstances affecting attendance or class performance.*

**Cellphone policy:** Cellphones may be brought to class, but please remember to silence them. If you are expecting an urgent call about a private matter, you are exempt from this policy; but please let me know about this ahead of time.

**Class cancellation policy:** If I ever need to cancel a class at any other time for unexpected reasons, I will email you all or make arrangements for you to be notified of the cancellation. We would make up the work as best we can in our remaining class meetings.

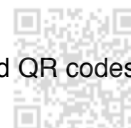
**Gender-inclusive language:** I prefer you use it, especially of God; but I will not enforce it. As you'll see, Aquinas is hardly a model in this regard.

**Laptop policy:** You may feel free to bring laptops or tablets to class. Because many of our readings (include the whole *Summa Theologiae*) are online, having internet access might be handy. It could also allow more efficient searching for particular passages or even help in looking up questions that arise in our discussion. If your computer becomes a hindrance to your active participation in discussion or a distraction for others, I will ask you not to bring it to subsequent classes.



**Late Papers:** Papers not turned in by the time listed on the due date will be considered late. One-day extensions are possible, but they must be approved in advance. Unless you have some emergency, I will not accept a late paper unless you have previously asked for an extension or told me ahead of time (= at least 1 day before the due date by noon) that it will be late. Ordinarily, no extensions on the semester project will be possible.

**QR Reader:** Search on iTunes or Google Play for free phone apps to read QR codes such as the one above, and those on pp. 1 & 10 of the syllabus.



**Students with Disabilities:** Any student who is eligible for accommodations based upon a learning disability should contact Iris Giamo in the Disabilities Resource Office (103C Madeleva Hall, phone 284-4262, e-mail [igiamo@saintmarys.edu](mailto:igiamo@saintmarys.edu)) for an appointment to review documentation and arrange for appropriate accommodations. Students who suspect they may have a disability are also encouraged to contact the Disabilities Resource Office.

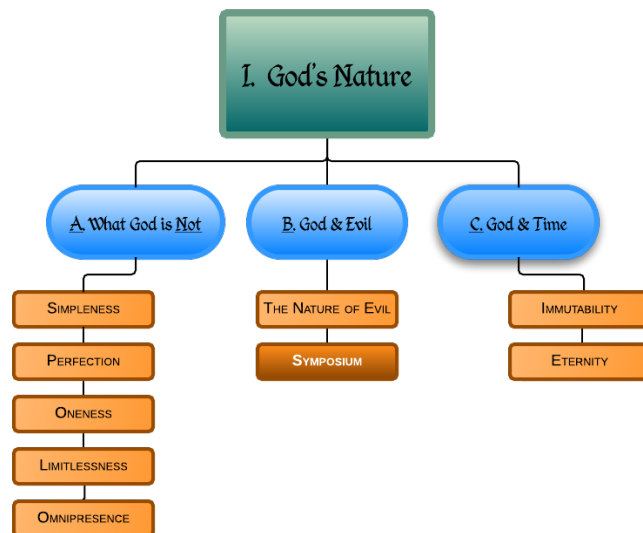
**Students who are Victims of Sexual Assault:** Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking is encouraged to contact Connie Adams, Director of the Belles Against Violence Office (33 Holy Cross Hall, phone 284-4081, email [cadams@saintmarys.edu](mailto:cadams@saintmarys.edu)). These three Saint Mary's departments have confidential staff: (1) BAVO (director), (2) Campus Ministry (pastoral ministers), and (3) Women's Health (counselors, nurses, and nurse practitioner). If your experience is directly impacting your academic performance, you may also consider contacting the Office of Academic Affairs (121 Le Mans Hall, phone 284-4594).

## The Structure of the Course

To get the most out of this course, you'll need to keep in mind its structure into four main parts and how the different elements of Aquinas's writings and thought that we will study fit together and build upon one another. The diagrams below show you how the course is laid out chronologically in terms of its main parts. You should review this concept map and the narrative accompanying it periodically to help you place each new topic we encounter within a wider organizational framework.

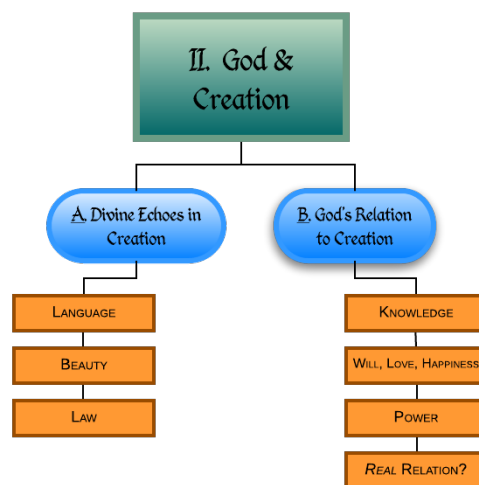
### I. *The Unknowable Nature of Divinity* (Syllabus, p. 16):

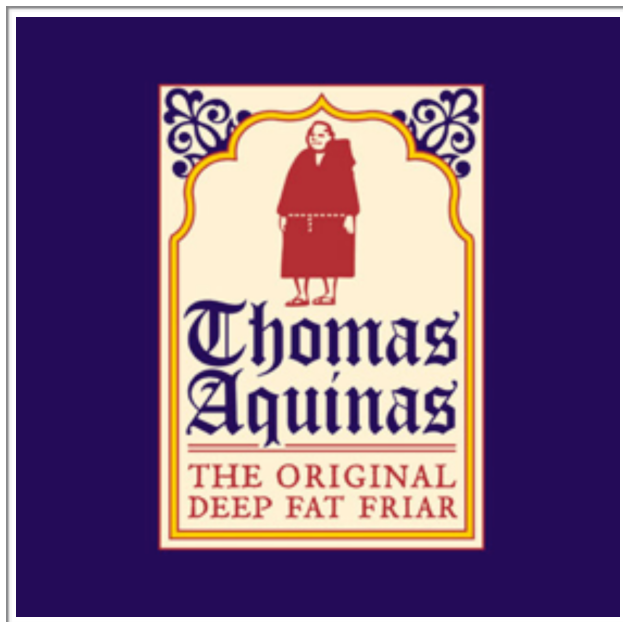
We'll begin, as Aquinas himself did, with God as God is in God's self. Namely, what is it for God to be God? Here we'll study how the frequently neglected theological concept of divine simplicity is the key to unlocking what Aquinas is up to in the first 13 questions of Part I of the *Summa* and to much else after that. We'll show how Aquinas builds on this concept of simplicity to get to God's perfection, oneness, limitlessness, infinity, omnipresence (= existence everywhere), unchangeableness, and eternity. All of these underscore *the absolutely central role Aquinas ascribes to God as creator*. Taken together, they have the cumulative effect of distinguishing God from the world—distinguishing the creator from the creation. As Aquinas will show, God's distinction from the world will deliver up a God we cannot know on our own terms. Accordingly, Aquinas's task through the *Summa* will always be to use reason in the attempt to know what's unknowable. Because of the scheduling for this year's Aquinas Symposium talk by Fr. Brian Davies, we'll insert two classes that consider the topic of God's relation to the evil in the world. Can Aquinas's all-powerful and perfectly good God be reconciled with the kind of suffering prevalent in our world today?



### II. *God & Creation* (Syllabus, p. 22):

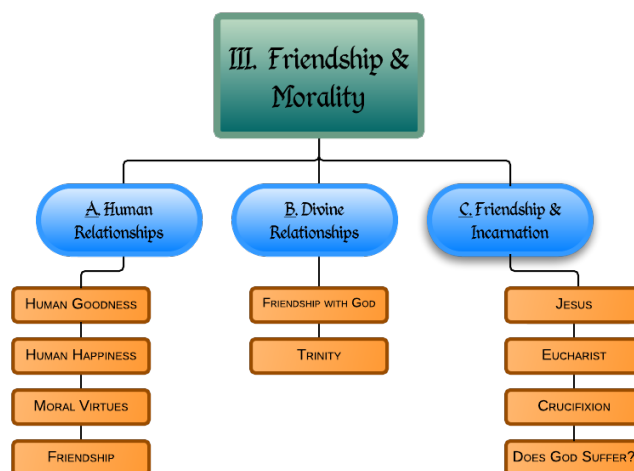
So much of what we explored in the first section of the course was dependent on the notion of God as creator. The idea of creation, and of God as creator, is really the main hinge of the *Summa Theologiae*. Everything else turns on it. We pick up here by looking at various 'echoes' of the creator in the creation. We'll begin with an inquiry into the language we use to speak of God. If indeed God is so distinct from the world and from creaturely experience, how can we hope to use words that make any real contact at all with (and deliver any truths about) the creator of all things? On the other hand, if God is completely 'other,' how can we ever say anything truthful about God using words as they mean to us? We'll then look at the beauty of creation in light of the beauty of the creator. Can the former tell us anything about the latter? Finally, we'll examine a famous Thomistic topic of the natural law in creation, which is an echo of the eternal law put there by God, a kind of moral code built into human beings by God their creator. The idea, in brief (!), is that when we act in accord with the natural order of things, we're behaving properly. But to violate that order, and by definition to do the unnatural, is to go against the plan by which God created all things.





We'll next move from considering the eternal law as the law in the mind of God to an analysis of God's knowledge in general. This also takes us from our consideration of what God *is* (Section I) to what God *does*—namely, how God *acts* towards creation. As we'll see St. Thomas explain, what God does follows from who God is, just as what *you* do follows from who *you* are. In particular, we'll ask how what God knows, what God wills, and how God loves follow from who God is. Topics to be addressed here include the relation between God's knowledge of the future and free human action (e.g., if God knows what you'll have for lunch tomorrow, do you still choose your meal freely?); what kind of power God has and whether that power is consistent with God *not* being able to do certain things (such as sin); the kind of relationship God has towards creation—we'll see the Thomistic response to this as well as an important critique of that response from Sr. Elizabeth Johnson that arises out of feminist theological concerns; and the significant theological problem of how to make room for (and sense of) human freedom in light of a God who is all-powerful. Ending this section with the topic of human freedom will lead to the next part of the course on morality.

**III. Friendship & Morality** (Syllabus, p. 29): Aquinas's writings about morality are grounded in divine goodness and God's role as both the source and *goal* (*telos*) of all creatures. The dominant theme of this part of the course will be *friendship*. We'll see that theme emerge in many of the individual issues we'll consider here. We'll begin by looking at Aquinas's understanding of the moral life and read the very first questions in the ST I-II. That will lead us to the topic of virtues, or good moral habits that develop our character in particular directions and lead us to love and delight in goodness. If the natural *law* gives us various rules that tell us what to *do*, then the virtues give us various strengths of character or good habits that tell us how to *be*. St. Thomas, following Aristotle, will argue that friendship is necessary for a life of virtue. At this point, we'll read a section of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, from which Aquinas got so much of his thinking about friendship. We'll see what Thomas takes over, and also what he *transforms* from within his Christian context. One area where this will be particularly noticeable is what Thomas says about friendship with *God*, something that Aristotle seemed to think impossible because of the difficulty of basing true friendships on very unequal relationships. This is where grace for Thomas becomes crucial to so much of his ethics, since grace elevates human nature to create the kind of equality with God necessary to sustain a

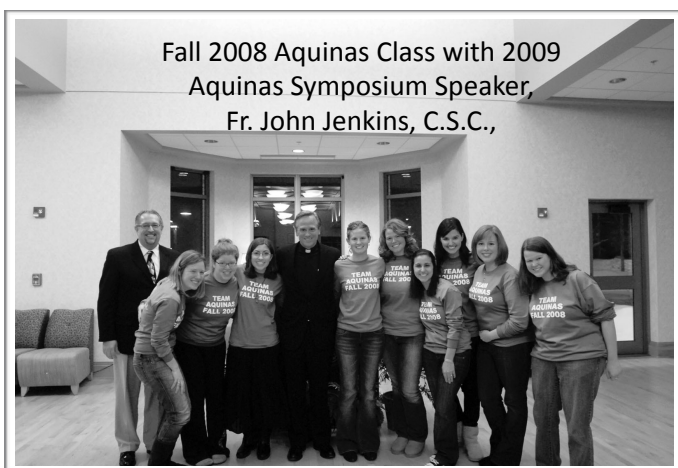
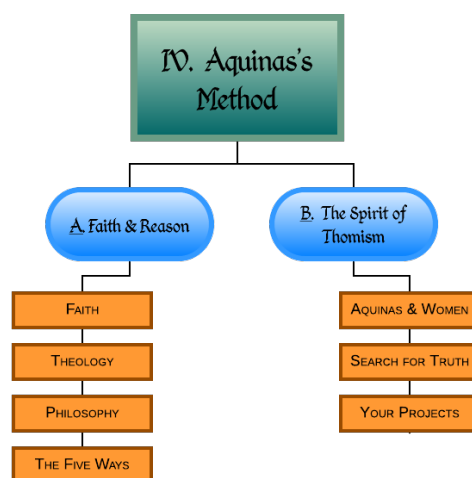




friendship. Because Aquinas is very clear that the Holy Spirit infuses grace into human souls, that will take us to look at the trinity (namely, the *real* relations that God has *within Godself*) and why St. Thomas thinks that's one of the central beliefs of Christian faith. The trinity is a perfect community of divine friendship, a community into which all are invited through Jesus and the Eucharist. We'll see how each of these beliefs and practices converge around the theme of friendship. This section will conclude with taking these same questions to the crucifixion and debating what it means for *God* to suffer. Does God suffer with those who grieve, as many have said? Or does it diminish God if God is capable of suffering in God's divine nature? Aquinas will say the latter. We'll explore some critiques of this position, which underscore a significant modern way of trying to make sense of belief in God in light of evil in the world. We'll also study a Thomistic response to this.

**IV. The Thomistic Method** (Syllabus, p. 36): Finally, we'll step back and ask broader questions about the foundations for Thomas's theology, and especially for how Aquinas considers the relationship between faith and reason. We'll begin by looking at faith as a theological virtue and contrast it with the two other theological virtues: hope and charity. That will take us to an exploration into how Aquinas understands theology and philosophy, where each begins, what level of authority each claims, and how much certainty each can deliver. What can we finally *know* about God? What *sources* should we consult? Is *human reason* an adequate source? Can it *prove* God's existence? This provides the context for looking at Aquinas's famous Five Ways, the subject of extensive attention and scholarly scrutiny over the years. Are those *Thomas's* proofs for *the existence of God*? If so, do they work?

As the course comes to a close, we'll step back and look at the spirit of Thomism in the search for truth. Any complete assessment of Thomas must consider his views on women and ask what those views mean for how we regard both him and his theology. Can feminists *possibly* claim Aquinas as an ally? Or is he the ultimate proponent of an androcentric, patriarchal theology? Here we'll consider the 2012 Aquinas Symposium lecture by Prof. Lisa Sowle Cahill on this topic.



Finally, to help us understand what St. Thomas is trying to say about the search for truth, we'll consider Thomism as, in Josef Pieper's words, an "attitude." We'll conclude with a fascinating illustration of this attitude in an essay by Fr. Thomas O'Meara, O.P., entitled "Aquinas in Africa," that describes how Aquinas can be translated into a very different cultural setting with all sorts of implications for theological diversity and pluralism. As such, these essays provide a fitting finale to "Aquinas's Search for God."

# Course Outline



Jan 12

## Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas's Life & Writings

- ◆ **ONLINE READING:** John Cavadini, “Why Study God?” [course website]
- ◆ **ONLINE READING:** Papal statements about St. Thomas Aquinas [course website]
- ◆ **VIDEO:** Fr. Robert Barron, “Thomas Aquinas and the Argument from Motion” (10 minutes, 21 seconds)
- ◆ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [hereafter, **ST**], I.3.1, in *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God* [hereafter, **QoG**], pp. 29-31.



Sister Madeleva spoke of Saint Mary's as “the home in which we honor his *Summa*.”

### HOMWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Describe the subject matter of theological study
- ✓ Locate theology in relation to other disciplines in a “dialogue with reason”
- ✓ In light of the above, explain in a preliminary way who Thomas was and why he was an important figure in Christian theology

### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Identify the main components and organization of an article in the *Summa*
- ✓ Distinguish actuality from potentiality in Aquinas's discussions of God's simplicity and whether God has a body
- ✓ Construct an intellectual foundation for future learning in this class about what it means to study God

# I. The Unknowable Nature of Divinity

## A. What God is Not: Divine Simplesness and Its Implications

Jan 14

### 1. Simplesness

"We cannot know what God is,  
but only what He is not."

—St. Thomas Aquinas

- ◆ **ST** Prologue to Part I, Q. 3 [**QoG**, pp. 28-29]
- ◆ **ST** I.3.2—7 [**QoG**, pp. 31-41]
- ◆ **ONLINE ASSIGNMENT**: Look up definitions of form & matter, essence & existence [course website]
- ◆ **ONLINE ASSIGNMENT**: Also—if you have not already done so—sign into the PBworks course website and complete the work found at the "**New Students**" link under the "Aquinas's Search for God" banner. A video tutorial is available on that page to help you introduce yourself over Voicethread to the rest of the class.

#### **HOMESCHOOL LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Define matter & form, essence & existence
- ✓ Identify where these concepts are used in I.3
- ✓ Express in your own words what Thomas is asking as he moves through I.3

#### **SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Use new definitions for today to evaluate what Aquinas means by God's simplesness
- ✓ Assess the role that simplesness plays at the beginning of Thomas's exploration of divinity
- ✓ Establish the link between God as *simple* and God as *creator*



Position Paper due by 5:00pm on Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>





## Jan 19 🌟 2. Perfection and Oneness

◆ST I.4.1 & 2; I.11.3 & 4 [QoG, pp. 44-48; 109-112]

### HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Recognize how what Thomas says about divine perfection follows from what he said about divine simpleness (go from creator → simple → perfect)
- ✓ Explain why if God is perfect, there can be only one such being (perfection → oneness)

### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Formulate the relationship between perfection and change and simpleness
- ✓ Trace all of those ideas back to God as creator
- ✓ Assess whether God must be perfect to be God



## Jan 21 🌟 3. Limitlessness and Existence in Things

◆ST I.7.1 & 2; I.8.1—4 [QoG, pp. 69-72; 78-86]

◆ST I.104.1 & 3 [Course Reader, pp. 1-5]

“God must be, and be intimately,  
in everything.”

—St. Thomas Aquinas

### HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Describe how Thomas gets from God as form to God as limitless (I.7)
- ✓ Summarize the argument for why the creator has to be present in all things (I.8)
- ✓ Restate what Aquinas says about whether God *has* to keep all things in existence (I.104)

### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Illustrate with *a really big piece of string* the relationship between God’s immanence (existence *in* the world) and transcendence (existence *‘outside’* or *‘above’* the world)
- ✓ Formulate the connection between God as

- creator and God as limitless/infinite
- ✓ Evaluate what it means to say that God is everywhere (omnipresent)

## B. An Application: God & Evil

Jan 26 📅

### 1. St. Thomas on Evil in the World



- ◆ **ONLINE READING:** Interview with Fr. Richard Leonard: "What's God got to do with it?: Keeping the faith in times of suffering" [course website]
- ◆ **VIDEO:** Fr. Robert Barron, "The Problem of Evil" (9 minutes, 35 seconds)
- ◆ **ST I.14.10; I.19.9; I.22.2 [QoG, pp. 184-186, 234-236, 261-265]**
- ◆ **ST I.47.1; I.48.2 [Course Reader, pp. 6-9]**
- ◆ **SCG III.71 [Course Reader, pp. 10-12]**

#### HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Restate the problem of evil as presented by Fr. Barron in the opening of this video
- ✓ Identify some *less* successful responses to this problem (see Fr. Leonard) and some *more* successful ones
- ✓ Summarize what Aquinas is saying about God and evil

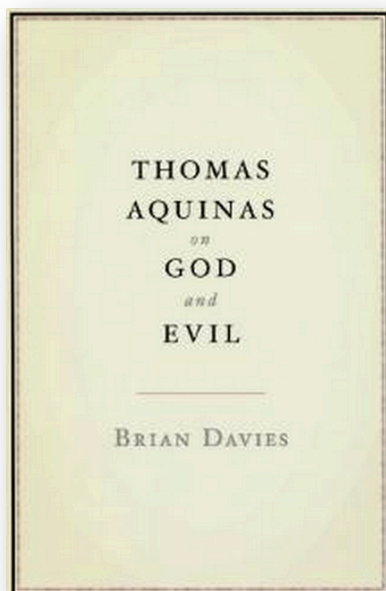
#### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Probe what Aquinas is saying about the world, the evil in it, and God's relationship to both
- ✓ Evaluate this in response to the other ways to address the problem of evil found in the online reading and video for today
- ✓ Suggest examples that defend *or* challenge Thomas's view of how God relates to the world's evil

Jan 28

2. FR. BRIAN DAVIES ON GOD AND EVIL

- ◆ Fr. Herbert McCabe, O.P., "Evil" [handout]
- ◆ ST I.6.1 [QoG, pp. 63-64]
- ◆ ONLINE READING: Interview with Fr. Brian Davies, "Philosopher-Priest Revisits an Age-Old Question" [course website]
- ◆ Fr. Brian Davies, *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil* [excerpt handout]

**HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Distinguish evil *suffered* from evil *done* (Fr. McCabe)
- ✓ Predict the jury's verdict in the trial that Fr. McCabe creatively stages with God as the defendant
- ✓ Contrast what Fr. Davies means by God being good vs. God being *morally* good

**SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ As a class, weigh the theological evidence and reach a verdict in the case against God
- ✓ Make Fr. Davies a surprise witness in this case and predict how his testimony would or would not sway the jury
- ✓ Following from this courtroom drama, formulate questions to ask Fr. Davies tonight

**Symposium on St. Thomas Aquinas**  
**On his Feast Day,**  
**Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 7:00 PM**  
**with lecture "Thomas Aquinas on God & Evil"**  
**by FR. BRIAN DAVIES, O.P. of Fordham Univ.**



## C. God & Time: Eternity as the Address of the Ultimate

Feb 2 ♣

### 1. Unchangeableness (Immutability)

- ◆ **ST** I.9.1–2; I.14.15; I.19.7 [**QoG**, pp. 87-91; 195-197; 230-232]
- ◆ **ST** III.16.6 [Course Reader, pp. 13-14]
- ◆ **ONLINE READING:** Fr. Michael Dodds, O.P., “Of Angels, Oysters, and an Unchanging God: Aquinas on Divine Immutability” [handout]

#### **HOMWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Connect the notions of being changeable, composite (having parts), potential, and temporal (existing in time)
- ✓ Put in your own words what Thomas is saying about how an unchangeable God relates to a changeable creation (in terms of what God knows or wills, and how to understand God becoming human)
- ✓ Come up with some examples of what God could *not* do if God *cannot* change and think whether this is compatible or incompatible with God being perfect (Fr. Dodds)

#### **SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Assess whether Aquinas’s way of relating God to time (and all creation in time) makes sense
- ✓ Apply your examples of those things God cannot do if God cannot change to Fr. Dodds’s statement that “an inability to change may also betoken a higher level of being”
- ✓ Evaluate whether an unchangeable God is more or less worthy of worship





## Feb 4 2. Eternity

◆ST I.10.1—4 [QoG, pp. 92-99]

“Eternity and God are the same thing.”

—St. Thomas Aquinas

### **HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Distinguish the two components of eternity found in the definition “the instantaneously whole perfect possession of interminable life”
- ✓ Explain the link between simpleness and eternity (ST I.10)

### **SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Compare existence in time with existence in eternity
- ✓ Construct analogies or examples of what it would be to be eternal
- ✓ Analyze the relationship between God being the creator and God being eternal so that it's apparent why Aquinas thinks the creator of all things must be eternal



*Paper #1 due by 5:00pm on Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>*

## II. God & Creation

### A. Divine Echoes of the Creator in the Creation

Feb 9 ☩

#### 1. Speaking about an Utterly Simple God: St. Thomas and Analogy

- ◆ Fr. Herbert McCabe, O.P., “Signifying Imperfectly” & “Analogy” [handout]
- ◆ ST I.13.1—6, 8, 11 [QoG, pp.138-152; 156-157; 162-164]

“We see the necessity of giving to God many names. For, since we cannot know Him naturally except by arriving at Him from His effects, the names by which we signify His perfection must be diverse.”

—St. Thomas Aquinas

#### **HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Identify the difficulties in speaking about God
- ✓ Restate Aquinas’s position on whether we can say anything literally about God
- ✓ Differentiate *analogical* language of God from *univocal* and *equivocal* (I.13.5)

#### **SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Suggest reasons why Aquinas devotes a question of the *Summa* to *language*
- ✓ Recognize how God’s role as creator affects how we use language about God and what we can mean about what we say
- ✓ Evaluate where this leaves us

Feb 11 ☩

#### 2. Divine Beauty

- ◆ ONLINE READING: Fr. Robert Barron, “To Evangelize Through Beauty” [course website]
- ◆ ONLINE READING: Peter Chojnowski, “The Catholic Notion of Beauty” [course website]

- ◆ **VIDEO:** “Care of Creation: Seen Through the Eyes of Beauty” (4 minutes, 47 seconds)
- ◆ **ST I-II.47.1 (Reread) & 2; I-II.27.1 & 2** [Course Reader, pp. 6-7, 15-18]



Sister Madeleva called beauty the most tangible manifestation of divinity, “God’s *visibility*.”

#### **HOMWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Connect the notion of the good with the notion of the beautiful (Barron & I-II.27)
- ✓ Summarize the points in the material for today about how beauty is a way to God, and especially how it functions as a cause of love
- ✓ Identify the three criteria of the beautiful (video & Chojnowski)

#### **SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Consider those things we call ‘beautiful,’ and what they have in common
- ✓ Reflect on why diversity in creation is beautiful (I-II.47)
- ✓ Assess the theological benefits of speaking about the beauty of God



## Feb 16 ☛ 3. Natural Law

“How does one determine whether 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 law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality.”

—Dr. Martin Luther King,  
“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

- ◆ **VIDEO:** “What is Natural is Good: Natural Law Ethics” (10 minutes)
- ◆ **ONLINE READING:** “St. Thomas Aquinas and the Natural Law” [course website]
- ◆ **ST I-II.91.1 & 2; I-II.94.2 & 4** [Course Reader, pp. 19-25]

#### **HOMWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Restate Aquinas’s understanding of law
- ✓ In light of that definition, distinguish the eternal law from the natural law (ST I-II.91 and online reading)
- ✓ Distinguish the different levels of natural law and what Aquinas says about them (I-II.94 and video)

**SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Provide examples of moral rules that you'd want to claim belong to the natural law
- ✓ Analyze factors that could affect human apprehension of the natural law
- ✓ Identify the pros and cons of creating a moral code around the idea of what's natural

## B. God's Knowledge, Love & Power

Feb 18 🌟

### 1. Divine Omniscience: God's Knowledge

- ◆ **ST** I.14.1. 2, 4, 5, 11 [**QoG**, pp. 167-177, 186-188]
- ◆ **VIDEO**: William Lane Craig, "How Could God Know the Future?" (11 minutes, 30 seconds)
- ◆ *Summa Contra Gentiles* (hereafter: **SCG**) I.60, 66 [7], 67 [Course Reader, pp. 26-29]

**HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Draw the connection between God's knowledge and God's causality in creation
- ✓ Apply our previous discussion of eternity to what Aquinas is saying about how God knows the future
- ✓ Devise another analogy or illustration beyond the ones Aquinas suggests to depict God's knowledge of the future

**SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ *Experience* the problem of omniscience vs. human freedom with an amazing coin trick
- ✓ Analyze the theological consequences if God did *not* know the future
- ✓ Evaluate whether the way Aquinas tries to reconcile human freedom and divine omniscience makes sense

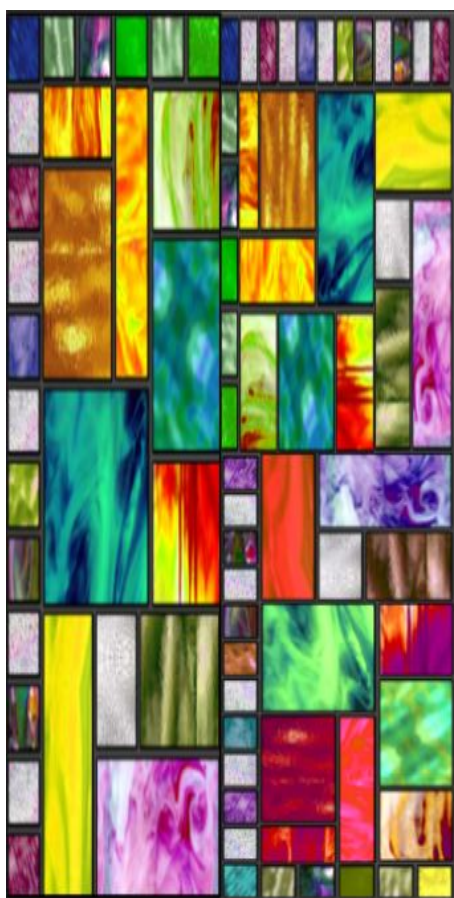


Feb 23 🍷

## 2. Divine Will, Love, and Happiness



- ◆ **ST** I.19.1–2; I.20.1–3; I.21.3 & 4; I.26.1 [QoG, pp. 217-220; 241-247; 255-258; 283-284]
- ◆ **ST** I-II.79.3 [Course Reader, pp. 30-31]
- ◆ **SCG** I.90 [Course Reader, pp. 31-32]
- ◆ **ONLINE ASSIGNMENT:** By the end of the week, I'd like you fill out the mid-semester feedback form which you can find on the course website either in today's class or in the Sidebar.



### **HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Trace the steps from God's knowledge → God's will → God's love → God's love of other things
- ✓ Paraphrase Aquinas's argument that God doesn't love all things equally (ST I.20)
- ✓ Locate the source of God's happiness (SCG I.90 & ST I.26)

### **SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Evaluate Aquinas's move from God willing God's self to God willing things other than God's self (ST I.19), including willing the good for those other things (namely, *loving* them) unequally
- ✓ Investigate the relationship between God's goodness and God's happiness
- ✓ In light of previous discussions we've had about the evil and suffering in the world, consider what to make of God's eternal happiness

Feb 25 🍷

## 3. Divine Omnipotence: God's Power

- ◆ **ST** I.19.3, 10; I.25.1–6 [QoG, pp. 221-223; 236-237; 269-282]
- ◆ **SCG** I.89; I.95; II.25 [Course Reader, pp. 33-38]

**HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Summarize the difference between passive and active power, and explain why Aquinas holds that God has the latter but “does not have passive power at all” (I.25)
- ✓ Derive a list of things that God *cannot* do, and explain why God cannot do them (try to come up with some that go beyond Aquinas’s list)
- ✓ Decide whether Aquinas’s God has free will (ST I.19)

**SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Define omnipotence based upon what Aquinas says in the readings for today
- ✓ Determine whether it still makes sense to call God [a] all-powerful (omni-potent) and [b] free if God *cannot* do certain things
- ✓ Construct a picture of a God who is bound by *nothing*—namely, one who could do anything that can be spoken



Mar 2

**4. Creation as *Real* Relation?**

- ◆VIDEO: Fr. Barron on a God who doesn’t need us (9 minutes, 47 seconds)
- ◆St. Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, Question 3, article 3 [Course Reader, pp. 39-41]
- ◆ST I.45.2 [Course Reader, pp. 42-43]
- ◆SCG I.37 [Course Reader, p. 44]
- ◆Sr. Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J., “One Living God: She Who Is” (ch. 11 from *She Who Is*) [handout]

**HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Summarize what Aquinas is saying about whether God has a *real* relationship to creation and why Fr. Barron is so happy God doesn’t
- ✓ Explain how Aquinas reasons to the goodness of God, and what it means that “the good is diffusive of itself” (SCG I.37)

(continued)

- ✓ Restate in your own words why Sr. Elizabeth Johnson thinks that the God of “classical theism” (roughly: Aquinas’s God) is patriarchal

#### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Figure out why God created the universe (!)
- ✓ Assess Sr. Elizabeth Johnson’s claim that a God without real relationship to the world is patriarchal and turns God into a ‘solitary, narcissistic being’
- ✓ Weigh who makes a stronger case about the nature of a loving God: Fr. Barron, who says that “The best news we can hear is that God doesn’t need us,” or Sr. Elizabeth, who says that exactly that view of God “invites widespread repugnance today”



MAR 4 🕯️

## 5. God's Power and Human Freedom

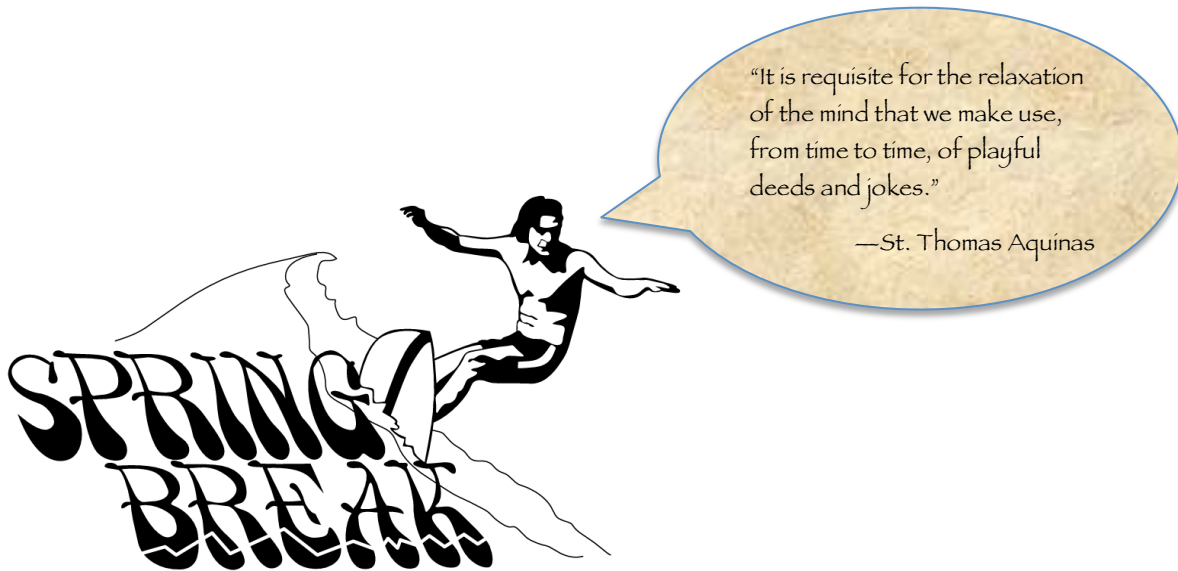
- ◆ Fr. Herbert McCabe, O.P., “Predestination” [handout]
- ◆ ST I.19.6 & 8 [QoG, pp. 227-230; 232-234]
- ◆ ST I.82.1; I.83.1; I-II.79.1 & 2 [Course Reader, pp. 45-51]
- ◆ SCG III.89; III.159 [Course Reader, pp. 51-53]

#### HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Distinguish according to Aquinas where the will is free and where it is not free (ST I.82 & I.83)
- ✓ Distinguish according to Aquinas in what way God is the cause of the *act* of sin, and in what way God is not the cause of the act of *sin* (ST I-II.79 & SCG III.89)
- ✓ Explain according to the analogy Aquinas uses for this, how human beings can be responsible for turning away from God (SCG III.159)

**SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Take a position and defend it with reasons drawn from the readings for today whether human beings really are free in light of the infinite power of God
- ✓ A popular contemporary notion of freedom is that the will must be completely sovereign over its own choices and free of outside influences so that it is *autonomous* (literally: a law unto itself)—this came up in the Barron video from last time. Predict what Aquinas would say about this notion of freedom
- ✓ In light of this, determine what Aquinas really thinks about sin and whether it's a legitimate exercise of human freedom





## III. Friendship & Morality

### A. Human Relationships & the Moral Life

#### Mar 16 ☛ 1. Human Goodness and Happiness

- ◆ I-II.1.1, 4, 6; I-II.2.8; I-II.3.2 & 8; I-II.4.7 [Course Reader, pp. 54-63]
- ◆ Fr. Brian Davies, "Happiness" [course website]

"Sorrow can be alleviated by good sleep, a bath, and a glass of wine."

—St. Thomas Aquinas

#### HOMESCHOOL LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Before doing any of this reading for today, write a definition of happiness
- ✓ After doing the reading, compare your definition with Aquinas's
- ✓ Describe *why* Aquinas thinks happiness does *not* consist in riches, honor, fame, power, etc.

#### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Establish why Aquinas starts his discussion of morality by asking about "man's last end" (I-II.1) and happiness (I-II.2 & Fr. Davies)
- ✓ Analyze the consequences for morality if there is indeed "one last end of human life" (I-II.1.4 & I-II.3.8)
- ✓ Interpret what Aquinas means when he says that happiness is "an operation" (I-II.3.2)—that is, an *activity*



#### Mar 18 ☛ 2. Virtue Ethics

- ◆ VIDEO: Ralph McInerney, "Introduction to Moral Philosophy" on the virtues (7 minutes, 20 seconds)

- ◆ Fr. Paul Wadell, C.P., *The Primacy of Love* [excerpt handout]
- ◆ ST I-II.1.7; I-II.4.4; I-II.5.7; I-II.49.4; I.62.8 [Course Reader, pp. 64-70]

#### HOMESCHOOL LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ The first thing that Prof. McNerny says in his video is that "Moral virtues are acquired by repeated acts of a given kind." For "moral virtue," substitute *athletic ability* or *musical ability* and then explain (perhaps from personal experience) what this means
- ✓ Review what *virtues* are and why they are necessary for the moral life (Fr. Wadell)
- ✓ Summarize why Aquinas thinks that happiness requires goodness, or what he calls "rectitude of will" (I-II.4.4 & 5.7)

#### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Take what Aquinas is saying in I-II.1.7 about people with different last ends and translate it into talk about virtues and vices
- ✓ Describe what it would be like to be a person of virtue, especially in relation to the last line of I-II.49.4.ad 3 ("habits are necessary that the powers be determined to good"), and especially the last line of I.62.8.ad 3!
- ✓ Critique what Aquinas is saying in I-II.4.4 & 5.7 by making the strongest case you can that virtue is *not* necessary because *vices* can bring happiness too

"The things that we love tell us what we are."

—St. Thomas Aquinas



Paper #2 due by 5:00pm on Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>

### Mar 23 3. Friendship

- ◆ ONLINE READING: Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII, chapters 1-7; Book IX, chapter 12 [course website]

◆ST I-II.4.8; I-II.28.1; I-II.32.5 & 6; I-II.38.3 [Course Reader, pp. 71-76]

“There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship.”

—St. Thomas Aquinas

#### HOMESCHOOL LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Identify in the reading from Aristotle (who is Aquinas’s source in much of what he says about friendship), the 3 kinds of friendship and the characteristics of friendship, including “the essence of friendship”
- ✓ Describe how friends help one another according to the readings from Aquinas for today (ST I-II.32 & 38)
- ✓ Summarize what Aquinas says about what love is and what love does (I-II.28)

#### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Analyze how good friendships make us better people
- ✓ Interpret the role and necessity of friendship in heaven (ST I-II.4)
- ✓ Apply what Aristotle says about the characteristics of friendship, and especially what he says about unequal friendships (chapters 6 & 7) to whether we can be friends with God

## B. Divine Relationships

### Mar 25 ☛ 1. Charity, Friendship with God, and Grace

- ◆Fr. Paul Wadell, C.P., “Growing Together in the Divine Love: The Role of Charity in the Moral Theology of Thomas Aquinas” (“Charity as Friendship with God”)
- ◆ST I-II.65.5; I-II.112.1; II-II.23.1; II-II.23.2; II-II.24.2 [Course Reader, pp. 77-83]
- ◆SCG IV.22 [Course Reader, pp. 83-85]

**HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Define grace (ST I-II.112)
- ✓ Explain why charity requires faith (I-II.65)
- ✓ Explain why charity requires the action of God to confer grace (that is, why it *cannot* come about by our natural powers), and describe how (and specifically by whom) that action produces charity as Aquinas sets it out here (ST II-II.23, ST II-II.24, SCG IV.22)

**SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Analyze what grace does to overcome the obstacles we identified last time in applying Aristotle's categories to friendship with God
- ✓ Play out the linkage between charity and faith in the context of friendship (I-II.65) and draw conclusions about what Aquinas is saying about the nature of faith.
- ✓ In light of these passages from St. Thomas, predict what he will say about the persons of the trinity (particularly the Son and the Spirit) as it pertains to this theme of friendship

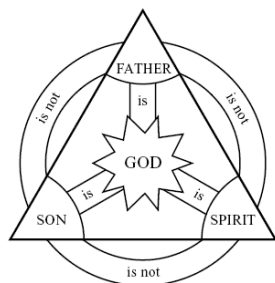


Mar 30 🕯️

## 2. The Trinity: Real Relations within God

◆VIDEO: Fr. Robert Barron, "The Trinity"

◆ST I.27.5; I.28.1—4; I.30.1; I.39.1; I.45.6 & 7  
[Course Reader, pp. 86-99]

**HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Restate why Fr. Barron says that the trinity is central to the claim that God is love
- ✓ Assign 'roles' to the persons of the trinity based upon God's knowledge and will/love (Barron's discussion of St. Augustine's analogy of the human mind as "mirror" of the trinity & ST. I.45.6 & 7)
- ✓ As we saw in a previous class, Aquinas said



that God lacks a *real* relationship to creation. 'Within' God, however, *real* relations exist according to Aquinas. Diagram the 4 relations and 2 processions of the 3 persons.

### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Decide whether Aquinas's appeal to relations to explain the three persons of the trinity ultimately preserves the simpleness of God (ST I.30.1.ad 3)
- ✓ Relate Fr. Barron's point that the trinity means that God is essentially *communal* ("a play of lover, beloved, and shared love")—or as Sr. Elizabeth Johnson said, "for God as God, divine nature is fundamentally relational"—to the theme of charity as friendship
- ✓ In light of all this, assess Aquinas's statement to the left about the centrality of the Trinity to Christian faith

"The Christian faith chiefly consists in confessing the holy Trinity."

—St. Thomas Aquinas

## C. Friendship & Incarnation

Apr 1 🕯️

### 1. Jesus and the Eucharist

#### a. **The Incarnation**

- ◆ **VIDEO:** Fr. Robert Barron, "How Can Jesus Be Both God and Human?"
- ◆ **ST** III.1.1 & 2; III.2.2, 4, 7, 9; III.16.4 & 5 [Course Reader, pp. 100-112]
- ◆ **SCG** IV. 46 [2] & 54 [6] [Course Reader, pp. 112-113]
- ◆ Fr. Paul Wadell, C.P., "Growing Together in the Divine Love: The Role of Charity in the Moral Theology of Thomas Aquinas" ("Why Friendship with God is Inseparable from Christ") [handout]

#### b. **The Eucharist**

- ◆ **ST** III.75.1 [Course Reader, pp. 113-114]

**HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Summarize what it means for Christ to be 'two natures but one person' (= *hypostasis*)
- ✓ Explain what God 'communicated' through the Incarnation (ST III.1.1 & 2) and refer back to the importance of communication for friendship in II-II.23.1 (Reader, pp. 79-80)
- ✓ Related to this, note the places where the theme of friendship appears in these passages (SCG IV.54 [6] and ST III.75.1) and state what these mean in relation to the Incarnation and the Eucharist

**SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Come up with a summary or some rules that capture what Thomas says about how to speak about the Incarnation (ST III.16.4 & 5)
- ✓ Analyze what Aquinas is saying about Christ and the Eucharist when read in the context of the theme of friendship to understand Fr. Wadell's statement that "Christ makes friendship with God possible"
- ✓ Discuss what the placement of Aquinas's Christology in Part III of the *Summa Theologiae* might mean: is Jesus an afterthought for Thomas or the summit of the *Summa*?!



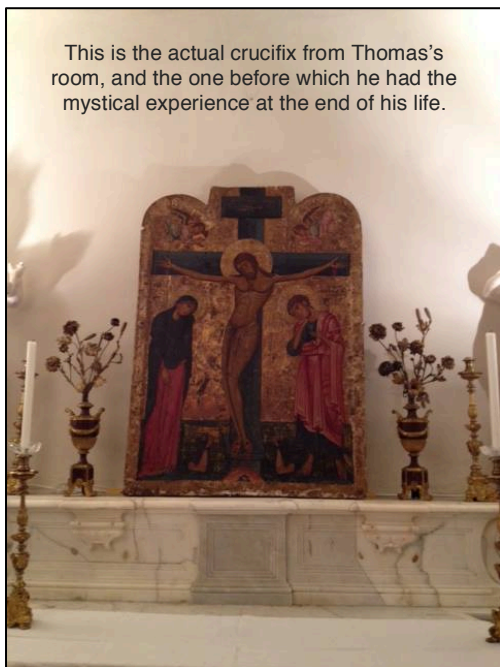
Apr 8 ☩

**2. A Suffering God and Jesus's Crucifixion**

- ◆ST III.46.3 & 6; III.48.2 [Course Reader, pp. 116-121]
- ◆SCG III.158 [7] [Course Reader, p. 122]

- ◆ Fr. Michael Dodds, O.P., “Thomas Aquinas, Human Suffering, and the Unchanging God of Love” [handout]
- ◆ Fr. Herbert McCabe, O.P., “The Involvement of God” [excerpt handout]
- ◆ Sr. Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J., “Suffering God: Compassion Poured Out” (ch. 12 from *She Who Is*) [excerpt handout]

This is the actual crucifix from Thomas's room, and the one before which he had the mystical experience at the end of his life.



#### HOMWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ As you might expect by now, the theme of friendship appears in Thomas's discussion of the crucifixion (SCG III.158, but see also ST III.46 & 48). Explain how this theme functions to illustrate the saving power of Christ's death on the cross
- ✓ Summarize what Frs. Dodds and McCabe maintain about Aquinas's God *truly suffering* in the person of Jesus
- ✓ Restate Sr. Elizabeth Johnson's claim that the impassible (viz., unsuffering) God of classical theism is "intellectually inadequate and religiously repugnant"

#### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Assess what Sr. Elizabeth says is *gained* theologically by saying that God, *as God*, literally suffers alongside creation
- ✓ Assess what Fr. Dodds says is *lost* by holding onto this same position
- ✓ Debate the views about the suffering of God as found in Fr. Dodds and Sr. Elizabeth Johnson

## IV. The Thomistic Method

### A. Faith and Reason

Apr 13

#### 1. Faith and the Theological Virtues

◆ **ST I.12.13 [QoG, pp. 135-137]**

◆ **ST I.32.1; I-II.62.3 & 4, II-II.1.1, II-II.1.4, II-II.2.3, II-II.4.1, II-II.6.1 [Course Reader, pp. 123-135]**

#### **HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Distinguish theological virtues from natural virtues in terms of how we get them and where they take us; and distinguish faith from hope and love
- ✓ Trace how faith depends on God's revelation in Scripture (ST I.12.13, I.32.1; II-II.2.3, 4.1, & 6.1)
- ✓ Explain why faith depends on the will's choice, helped by grace (II-II.1.1, 1.4 & 6.1)

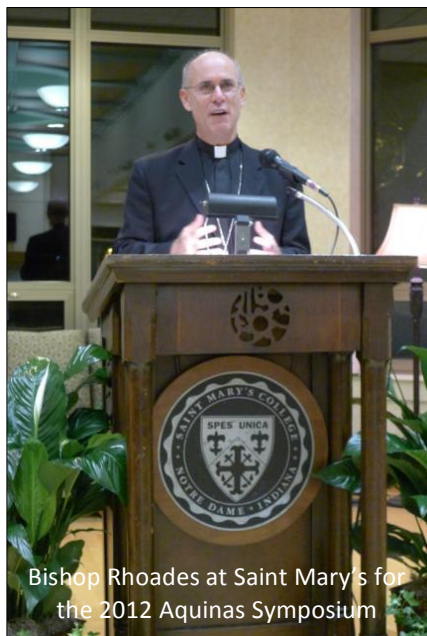
#### **SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Compare and contrast faith and reason using the trinity as an example (I.32.1)
- ✓ Aquinas offers a much richer notion of faith than just belief in the existence of God. Describe some of these deeper textures and nuances in terms of the source of faith and the choice of the believer
- ✓ Related to this, draw out the implications of Thomas's definition of faith as "a habit of the mind, whereby eternal life is begun in us, making the intellect assent to what is non-apparent" (II-II.4.1)



## Apr 15 2. How Do We Know God? Philosophy and Theology

- ◆ **VIDEO:** Bishop Kevin Rhoades (Bishop of Fort Wayne/South Bend), “St. Thomas Aquinas, Blessed John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI on Faith and Reason” (17 minutes, 11 seconds excerpt)
- ◆ **ONLINE READING:** St. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §§43-44
- ◆ **ST I.1.1—2, 5, 6, 8 [QoG, pp. 3-6, 8-15]**
- ◆ **SCG I.7 [Course Reader, pp. 136-137]**



Bishop Rhoades at Saint Mary's for the 2012 Aquinas Symposium

### HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Explain what Thomas means when he describes theology as a “science” (ST I.1)
- ✓ Rank the three levels of theological authority that Aquinas describes in ST I.1.8.ad 2
- ✓ Describe the relationship between faith and reason that comes out in these readings and especially in Bishop Rhoades’s presentation

### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Suppose Thomas’s nieces were going off to college. One wanted to study philosophy, and the other wanted to study theology. Give avuncular advice as Uncle St. Thomas about what each should gain from their respective courses of study
- ✓ Predict the consequences if faith and reason become completely separated—what happens to faith? And what happens to reason?
- ✓ Contrast this separation with the method proposed by Aquinas—sometimes called ‘the *scholastic* method—and assess whether theology is truly a *science*

## Apr 20 3. The Five Ways

- ◆ Rudi te Velde, “On the Five Ways” [handout]
- ◆ ST I.2.1–3 [QoG, pp. 20-27]
- ◆ ST I.46.2 [Course Reader, pp. 138-141]
- ◆ VIDEO: “Three Minute Philosophy – St. Thomas Aquinas” (2 minutes, 48 seconds)
- ◆ VIDEO: “The 5 Ways in Context” (6 minutes, 31 seconds)
- ◆ See the depiction to the right of St. Thomas in Sacred Heart Basilica at Notre Dame on an east nave spandrel mural (fourth one from the front on your right side as you’re facing the altar)



### **HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Decide which of the 5 Ways makes the most sense to you as a proof for God
- ✓ Compare what Aquinas is saying about what reason can prove in ST I.46.2 with what he seems to be saying in the first 3 of the 5 Ways
- ✓ Summarize two contrasting interpretations of the 5 Ways (te Velde) and why he thinks that for Aquinas, “natural [that is, philosophical] knowledge of God is even mandated by Scripture” in Romans 1:20 (cf. ST 1.2.2). On this, see also “The 5 Ways in Context” video.

### **SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Locate the 5 Ways against the backdrop of Aquinas’s theological project (that is, consider what the proofs in ST I.2.3 mean when read against what we’ve been discussing in previous classes about faith and revelation)
- ✓ Place a reading of the 5 Ways into historical context in light of the above depiction of Aquinas in Sacred Heart Basilica, whose cornerstone was laid in 1871
- ✓ Decide whether the 5 Ways are meant as *philosophical* proofs for God “preceding the theological exposition of faith” (te Velde)

## B. The Spirit of Thomism

APR 22 ☛

### 1. Aquinas's Views of Women

- ◆ Elizabeth A. Clark and Herbert Richardson, "Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastic Woman" [handout]
- ◆ **ONLINE READING:** Thomas's views of women [course website]
- ◆ **ST** I.92.1; I.93.4; II-II.26.10 & 11 [Course Reader, pp. 142-146]
- ◆ **SCG** III.123 [6] [Course Reader, p. 147]
- ◆ **VIDEO:** Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Thomas Aquinas and Natural Law: Resources for Women's Equality" (25 minutes, 27 seconds excerpt)



Fall 2012 Aquinas Class with 2013 Aquinas Symposium Speaker, Prof. Lisa Sowle Cahill

#### **HOMWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Make a list of the views of women you see coming out of Aquinas's writings
- ✓ Identify any bad biology (that is, incorrect knowledge of science) appearing in these readings
- ✓ Summarize the order of charity that comes out in II-II.26

#### **SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- ✓ Evaluate what the list of statements you made above do to your understanding (let alone, your *appreciation*) of everything else we've seen Thomas say this semester
- ✓ Assess whether the glass is half-full (Cahill) or half-empty (pretty much everything else!) on Aquinas's view of women
- ✓ Identify areas in Aquinas's writings or thinking (about anything we've looked at *prior* to today) that you'd argue could or would have been different had he taught at Saint Mary's College in the year 2015

## Apr 27 2. Aquinas & the Search for Truth

- ◆ ST I-II.32.8 [Course Reader, pp.148-149]
- ◆ Josef Pieper, “Thomism as an Attitude” [handout]
- ◆ Fr. Thomas O’Meara, O.P., “Aquinas in Africa” [handout]

“All truth, whoever utters it, is from the Holy Spirit.”

—St. Thomas Aquinas

### HOMEWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ View ST I-II.32.8 as an important summary of the spirit of Thomism
- ✓ Summarize how Pieper describes the “attitude” of Thomism
- ✓ Explain how Fr. O’Meara’s African students saw Aquinas as someone open to new ideas who accepted the diversity in life

### SEMINAR LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Assess how O’Meara’s essay and ST I-II.32 display the Thomistic attitude Pieper describes
- ✓ Interpret the closing image of Fr. O’Meara’s essay
- ✓ Defend a position whether women in college should find Thomas Aquinas worth studying in the 21st century

## Apr 29 3. Scriptum Pulsum Sancti Thomae de Aquino (= Aquinas Project Jam)

- ◆ ONLINE READING: Fr. John Kavanaugh, S.J., “Aquinas, Go With Me” [course website]

“If anyone wants to write against what I have said, it would be most welcome. There is no better way to open up the truth and to refute falsity than to answer opponents....”

—St. Thomas Aquinas

✍️ The one-page online reading from Fr. Kavanaugh is something to take with you as the course concludes. It represents one person’s attempt to distill into a list the important things he’s learned from St. Thomas. Your presentations today will provide your own version of what ideas from the course will go with you. *There is no individual or group assessment due today.* You’ll get a grade based upon your presentation, which will be your



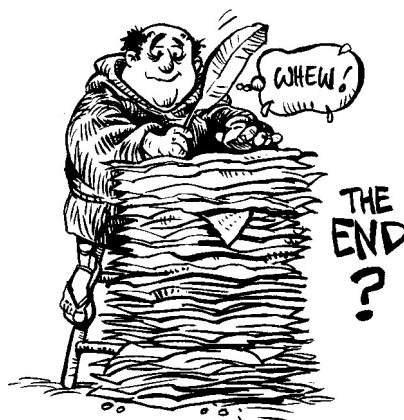


individual grade for today: **1 point** for the quality of your presentation as engaging, focused, organized, and accurate; **1 point** for the audio-visuals attached to it that are attractive and supportive of the topic; **1 point** for it being apparent that you worked to prepare a polished presentation; and **1 point** for being under 10 minutes but over 8. I'll supply the group grade based upon how well the class does in interacting over each other's presentations by asking questions, offering feedback or comments, etc.

**Today in Class we will:** bring things to a close today by hearing from everyone (for approximately 10 minutes apiece) about their projects and the particular topics on which they've focused their research for the final version of their theology.



*Final Project due by noon on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>*



Drawing by Ron Hill, in Timothy Renick,  
*Aquinas for Armchair Theologians*  
(Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

## The Tomb of St. Thomas Aquinas



Church of the Jacobins  
Toulouse, France



Stay Tuned for the 2016  
Symposium on St. Thomas Aquinas  
On or About January 28, 2016