

Events:

Scholasticism

- Named for the Greek *scholasticos*, which means, “that [which] belongs to the school”.
- It was a method of learning taught by the so-called academics in the medieval universities starting around 1100 and lasting until around 1500.
- It was never intended to be a philosophy or theology itself but rather a tool for teaching by dialectical reasoning – a form of dialog between two people as a means of expressing ideas
- It was originally designed to:
 - Reconcile Christian doctrine with human reason or philosophy
 - Arrange the teaching of the church into an orderly system
- The movement was patterned after much of the early works of Ambrose and Augustine who also worked to reconcile doctrine with Greek philosophy
- The modes of teaching included:
 - Lectio – the teacher would read and expound on a work with no questions allowed from the students.
 - Disputatio – the teacher would announce a question to be disputed and a discussion between the teacher and the students would occur.
 - Quodlibetal – the students proposed questions to the teacher who would respond without prior preparation by citing authoritative texts such as the Bible to prove his position.
 - So, just how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?
- Important medieval scholastics include:
 - Peter Abelard (1079-1142)
 - Albertus Magnus (1193/1206-1280) – Dominican
 - Duns Scotus (1266-1308) – Franciscan
 - William of Ockham (1288-1348) – Franciscan
 - Bonaventure (1221-1274) – Franciscan
 - Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) – Dominican
- In the early scholastic period (11th and 12th centuries), the main effort was the recovery of the Greek language and the translation of many of the early church fathers (e.g., the Cappadocian Fathers) into Latin. These early scholastics also translated Islamic works of science and mathematics.
- In the high scholastic period (13th and 14th centuries), the main effort was the recovery of Greek philosophy. Translations and teaching continued with the main work being accomplished by the two monastic orders founded during that period: the Franciscans having a pronounced Platonic bent and the Dominicans having an equally pronounced Aristotelian bent.
- Summa Theologica by the Dominican Thomas Aquinas is generally accepted to be the major culminating work of the scholastic period.

Heroes:

Thomas Aquinas

- Born 1225 in Sicily to parents of Italian nobility. Died 1274.
- He enrolled at 14 in the general academy (university) in Naples where he learned of Aristotle, Averroes (Islamic scientist and philosopher) and Maimonides (Jewish theologian and scholar)
- His parents wanted Thomas to become a Benedictine monk, but Thomas wanted to become Dominican. When Thomas was 17 or 18, the Dominicans helped him escape to Rome, but on his way to Paris, his brothers kidnapped him and took him back to Sicily where his family detained him. Finally, his mother helped him to escape.
- At the age of 20, Thomas entered the College of St. James in Paris and was taught by Albertus Magnus. Thomas failed his first theological disputation, but Albertus declared that although he may be a “dumb ox” now, that someday his teaching would produce a “bellowing” that would be heard throughout the world.
- From around 1250 to 1259, Thomas taught in Cologne and later in Paris, where he was appointed as regent master of theology. He produced much of his major writing consisting of commentaries on many books of the Old Testament and on other early writers.
- He moved to Naples (1259) and then Rome (1265) where he continued to teach and write, including some works commissioned by Pope Urban IV.
- The Dominicans sent Thomas back to Paris as regent from 1269 until 1272. He had a difficult time there with both the Averroean and Franciscan camps.
- In 1272, he was given the opportunity to establish a school at the place of his own choosing – Naples. One day, he simply stopped teaching and declared all his previous work as “straw”. It is felt that this was the result of either physical problems (stroke or nervous breakdown) or a more commonly held belief that he had a spiritual experience leading him to doubt the efficacy of logic and reason in understanding God.
- In 1274, Pope Gregory X summoned him to make a presentation at the Second Council of Lyons. He struck his head on a tree branch on his way to the council, fell ill and finally died in a monastery in Sicily. He was only 49 years old.
- In 1277, a French bishop declared many of Thomas’ teachings as heretical along with various Aristotelian and Averroean propositions. This declaration damaged Thomas’ reputation until Pope John XXII canonized him in 1323.
- Some of his Thomas’ major teachings include:
 - There are seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, the Lord’s Supper, marriage, ordination, penance and extreme unction (last rights)
 - The Lord’s Supper is a true sacrifice, continuing the work of Christ on the cross. It is meritorious and predisposes God to be gracious to those who partake in it. The bread and wine are *really and actually* transformed to the body and blood of Christ (transubstantiation).

Heroes of the Christian Faith
Lesson 14 – 11/1/2009

- Sin is a remaining problem to the believer. God provides penance as a sacrament of spiritual healing in three steps: contrition (sorrow) for the sin, confession (including remedy and absolution), and satisfaction (carrying out the prescribed remedy).
- Indulgences are payments by Christians with insufficient merit of their own in order to draw from the “treasury of merit” filled by Christ and the saints
- There are three states of man after death: the wicked pass immediately to hell, those few who wisely used the grace given to them on earth pass immediately to heaven, and the masses spend some time in purgatory for further purification before passing to the joys of heaven.
- God’s revelation of can be general (through nature by reason), special (through grace by faith) or both (mixed) but where a dispute arises, special revelation takes precedence.
- Thomas wrote many books, commentaries, and sermons, and he gave many lectures, but his crowning works were his Summa Contra Gentiles and Summa Theologica
 - Summa Contra Gentiles is a Christian apologetic completed around 1264. His actual purpose in writing it is somewhat disputed, but is most likely a defense against heresies, a training manual for missionaries, a teaching guide for unbelievers, or a combination of all three
 - Summa Theologica is a systematic theology that he began in 1265 but did not complete before he stopped writing (see above). Theologians today, especially Roman Catholics, continue to study it. Thomas gives an orderly presentation of church doctrine and reconciles Christian theology with the scientific and philosophical teachings of Aristotle, the Muslims and the Jews.

Audio CD: #3 – Thomas Aquinas (Part I)

Discussion:

- What stories in Thomas’ life do you think point most as evidence of his having had the fruits of the Spirit?