

2: The Holy Spirit

In the previous lecture, we gave an overview of Thomas Aquinas's life, context, and basic ethical structures. The seven traditional virtues of love, hope, faith, wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance are central to the ethical life, as understood through the mediating, second-personal relationship of God to the person. When a person comes to faith, he or she is infused with all virtues - albeit in small portion or degree. In this lecture we will examine the role of the Holy Spirit in the ethical life of faith, and the role that the Holy Spirit plays in the development of the life of virtue for the Christian.

1. The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit: Union with God in the fullest sense is only possible in heaven. Nonetheless, partial union with God is possible for the believer in this life, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. When a person comes to faith through surrender to the love of God, God instills all of the virtues to some degree in that person (as discussed in the previous lecture). Contemporaneously, God, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, indwells the person of faith as well. Aquinas, taking a page from Augustine, emphasizes the gift of the Holy Spirit, even saying that the Holy Spirit can be called "Gift."

Aquinas explains this indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as follows: "God is in all things by his essence, power, and presence, according to his one common mode, as the cause existing in the effects which participate in his goodness. In addition to this common mode, however, there is one special mode belonging to human beings, [because God is said to be in them the way] something known is in the knower and [the way] the beloved is in the lover. Since in knowing God and loving God, a human being attains to God himself, then according to this special mode God is said not only to exist in a human being but even to dwell in that human being as in God's own temple." - Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*.

It is important for Aquinas that this process is instantaneous. At the exact point of justification when one surrenders to the love of God and receives the gift of grace necessary for faith, the person is imbued with all the virtues and also receives the Holy Spirit. In this, union (incomplete) with God is achieved, and God is available to know and love.

II. Intimacy and Friendship with God: This is not meant to be a dense or cerebral theological construct. Rather, this union with God through the Holy Spirit has direct implications for our relationship namely that we are friends with God. We are to know God intimately, and also to have a relationship of friendship with God. As with any friendship, we are to converse with God and to simply take

pleasure in God's company. It is through this sense of friendship with God, enabled by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that we are able to take consolation in God throughout our sorrows. The result of this relationship is a sense of joy stemming from the dynamic interaction with a beloved friend. Indeed, for Aquinas, this sense of joy is one of the profoundest effects of the Holy Spirit.

The next lecture will investigate the changes that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit brings to the life of a person of faith (e.g., the fruits of the Spirit).