

7. The Theological Virtues

St. Paul tells us that there are three things that last: faith, hope, and love; and that the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Faith is intellectual, fiducial, and performative. It gives us knowledge about God, the power to trust in God; and the desire to serve God. Hope enables us to live in the "already-but not-yet" of the Christian journey; it helps us to avoid despair and steer clear of presumption. Love unites our will with God's. It enables us to live for others in a reciprocal manner. Jesus says, "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). These virtues relate to one another in a circular fashion. They are infused by the grace of God and orient the Christian community and its members toward their ultimate end in God.

I. Faith - Definitions of Faith: "Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith 'man freely commits his entire self to God.' For this reason the believer seeks to know and do God's will. 'The righteous shall live by faith.' Living faith 'work(s) through charity.'" (CCC 1814)

Models of Faith (Hebrews 11): The Purpose of These Models is to Give Expression to a Mystery; Seven Models: Propositional, Transcendental, Fiducial, Affective-Experiential, Obediential, Praxis (Performative), and Personalist. We Will Focus on Three: Propositional: Intellectual, The Content of Faith, Focuses on What - Fiducial: Trust, Relationship, Focuses on Who - Performative: Action, Living the Faith, Focuses on Doing - Each Model Limp(s) to Some Extent; These Models are Not Exclusive but Complementary; A Logical Web of Models to Capture the Mystery

Joseph Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997). 1. To Believe Someone and Something (p. 27): Two Essential Elements (p. 25); The Believer Cannot Verify It On His Own (Matter + Person) (ii) Unqualified Assent Christian Mode of Belief: Combines Greek (Propositional) and Judaic (Personal) Modes (p. 29); Belief vs. The Insight of Knowledge (The Possibility of Doubt)

Threefold Distinction (p. 57): Deo credere: To Believe that What God Says is True Deum credere: To Believe that He is God; In Deum credere: Believingly to God to Him, to Place One's Trust in Him; Man's Search for God/God's Search for Man (God Has Found Us); "The Christian Faith can be summed up in two words: Trinity and Incarnation." (p. 83); "Divine Revelation is not an announcement or a report on reality but the 'imparting' of reality itself. That imparting takes effect,

however, only upon the believer." (p. 85)

Pope Benedict XVI: *The Yes of Jesus Christ* (2005). (Based Largely on Pieper)
Faith as a Fundamental Human Attitude in Everyday Life; Is Agnosticism a Solution? The Foolishness of the Wise and the Conditions for True Wisdom. Natural Knowledge of God; "Supernatural" Faith and its Foundations; Developing the First Stages

II. Hope - Definition: "Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. 'Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.' 'The Holy Spirit... he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.'" (CCC 1817)

Continuation of the Models Theme: Circularity of the Virtues; Assurance of things Hoped For (Hebrews 11:1); Hope Has Content; Hope Is Relational; Hope Affects Our Actions in Daily Life

Josef Pieper: *Faith, Hope, Love* - Status viator is: state of being "on the way"
The inner structure of man's creatureliness, we are in time, but our spirits are above time; The visio Dei: (God's vision of us/our vision of God);

Hope is rooted in grace: The virtue of the status viatoris; The virtue of the "not yet"
Man Affirms that He is a Creature; Therefore, He Presupposes in Faith in God

Hope and Prayer: Are naturally ordered to each other; Prayer is the expression and proclamation of hope; Hope and Youth: God's Eternal Youth; Jesus: The Eternal Child of the Father; The Youthfulness of the Saints

Pope Benedict XVI: *The Yes of Jesus Christ*; The Optimism of the Modern Age and Christian Hope; Optimism: A Cover for Despair; Ruse to Change the Church into Something Else; Liberal Faith in Progress; The Trinity of Progress: History, Revolution, Optimism

Three Biblical Examples of the Nature of Christian Hope: The Prophet Jeremiah: Facing Reality, The Pessimism of the Prophet; The Revelation of John: Man is Not the Only Actor on the Stage of History; The Sermon on the Mount: God's Hidden Presence Will Be Made Manifest, Ultimately in Christ

Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas on Christian Hope - Bonaventure: To Hope is to Fly; Aquinas: Prayer is the Language of Hope

III Love (Charity) - Definition: "Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God." (CCC 1822); Continuation of the Models Theme; Circularity of the Virtues; "The Greatest of These is Love" (1 Corinthians 13:13) (i) Love Has Content; Love is Relational; Love Affects Our Actions in Daily Life

The Four Loves (C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 1960) Storge (Human Affection); Eros (Romantic Love); Philia (Friendship); Agape (Charity, Selfless Love)

Pope Benedict XVI: *The Yes of Jesus Christ* - Hope and Love in the Mirror of Their Antitheses; Despair {Acedia: The Noonday Devil}; Presumption (Bourgeois Pelagianism; Pelagianism of the Pious); The Essential Nature of Love; Affirmation and Assent; Gift Love/Need Love; Antithesis: Hatred and Isolation; The Nature and Way of Agape; A Union of Wills; A Divine Indwelling; A Process of Divinization;

Agape vs. Eros: A tension in the tradition; The union of all the loves in God; Charity as "a certain type of friendship with God"; Deus Caritatis Est: Threefold Responsibility of the Church; Proclamation of the Word (koinonia); Celebration of the Sacraments (liturgia); Service of Charity (diakonia)

Reflection Questions

1. Why are models important for understanding the mysteries of the faith?
2. How do faith, hope, and charity interrelate?
3. Why are faith, hope, and charity called the three things that last?