

Group 3 Virtue and the Human Soul

OVERVIEW

- Meeting 1: Introduction and Philosophical Anthropology
- Meeting 2: The Emotions, Questions 1-5
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- Meeting 6: True Human Freedom, VI – VIII Pg. 56-75 Questions 6-10
- Meeting 7: Appendix 1: Faith and the Emotions
- Meeting 8: Appendix 2: A Note on Repression

RESOURCES

Primary

1. The Nature of the Human Soul, Sr. Mary Angelica Neenan
2. My Way of Life, Walter Farrell

Introductory

3. Free E-Book: Thomas Aquinas in 50 Pages
4. Aquinas 101 Videos online

Supplementary

5. Summa Theologia: Online at New Advent

Meeting 1 – Introduction and Philosophical Anthropology

Questions

1. What is unique about the nature of the human person? How do we differ from other parts of creation?
2. In your own words, explain the relationship of the body and the soul. How does the classic Thomistic emphasis on the unity of man differ from the way most people imagine the body and soul to be relations?
3. What is the human person created for and how can an understanding of the powers of the human soul help us to understand our purpose and dignity?
4. Create a list or a chart that helps you to identify and explain the faculties of the human soul. Indicate which faculties we share with animals and which faculties set us apart.
5. Why does the interaction of the intellect and will form the foundation of freedom?

Introduction:

Primary Reading:

- The Nature of the Human Soul
 - Introduction: vii - viii
 - Chapter One: 1-8

Supplementary Reading:

Meeting 2 – The Emotions

Questions

1. Why are the emotions also called passions? In your opinion, does our society see emotions as helpful or harmful? Give an example.
2. What are emotions and how do they come about? Identify emotions that you regularly experience. What seems to be their cause (when/why do they come about)?
3. How can the intellect and the will affect the emotions? Give an example from your own life of a time when your negative, or positive, thoughts about something influenced your emotions.
4. Explain how love is the cause of the emotions. How might this love differ from love as a choice of the will?
5. If emotions are not bad in themselves, how is the goodness or evilness associated with the emotions determined? Can emotions influence the goodness or evilness of an act? Explain.

Meeting 3 – The Emotions

6. Why does anger not have a contrary emotion? If someone is angry, what might help them?
7. Is it wrong to feel any of the emotions? Are there bad emotions?
8. Oftentimes we feel guilty for our emotions. For example, sadness can be a cause of embarrassment and isolation. What are unhealthy ways that we try to deal with sadness? What are some healthy remedies?
9. What is repression of the emotions and how does it differ from subordination? Explain a situation when you have experienced (in yourself or in others) a repression and/or a subordination of the emotions.
10. What is the relationship between a healthy ordering of the emotions and freedom?
11. What does it mean to say that the emotions belong to the perfection of moral goodness? How do emotions contribute to happiness on earth? In heaven?

Introduction:

Primary Reading:

- The Nature of the Human Soul
 - Chapter Two: 9-28

Supplementary Reading:

Meeting 4 – The Intellective Faculties

Questions

1. What is the intellect? What is its function?
2. What is the will? What is its function?
3. How do the intellect and will work together to choose? How is choice not simply a function of the will (i.e.: how is it that neither the intellect nor the will ever act alone)?
4. “If loving you is wrong, then I don’t want to be right,” country singer Barbara Mandrell stated (Moods, 1978). What conflict between intellect, will, and emotions is set up in this situation? How would you respond?
5. What is the nature of human freedom? How does this understanding of freedom illuminate the meaning Saint Augustine’s statement that “The good man is free, even if he is a slave; the evil man is a slave, even if he is a king: (City of God, IV.3)

Introduction:

Primary Reading:

- The Nature of the Human Soul
 - Chapter Three: 29 - 40

Supplementary Reading:

Meeting 5 – True Human Freedom I

Questions

1. In what way(s) is the will both free and not free?
2. We are told that man is made in the image and likeness of God. Based upon this chapter, explain what this means. How does the reality of this relationship relate to freedom?
3. Is God's grace a threat to freedom? Why or why not?
4. When we pray the Our Father what are we asking for? How is conformity to God's will liberating? Give an example of a time when seeking God's will, and not your own, did not seem freeing. Why was this the case?
5. Summarize the major differences between the Freedom for Excellence and the Freedom of Indifference. Which view of freedom is most prevalent among your peers? Give an example.

Introduction:

Primary Reading:

- The Nature of the Human Soul
 - Chapter Four: 41 - 56

Supplementary Reading:

Meeting 6 – True Human Freedom II

Questions

6. How do the intellect and the will work together in the act of choice? What is each power seeking? What is the role of virtue in the act of choice?
7. Which theory of “wrong type of exultation of freedom” is most common today? Explain.
8. Which theory of “denial of free choice” is most common today? Explain.
9. Which “other aberrations of free choice: is most common today? Explain.
10. Use section VIII, “the truth about Freedom,” to create a rebuttal to the theories that you selected in questions #7-9.

Introduction:

Primary Reading:

- The Nature of the Human Soul
 - Chapter Four: 56 - 74

Supplementary Reading:

Meeting 7 – Faith and the Emotions

Questions

1.

Introduction:

Primary Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Meeting 8 – A Note on Repression

Questions

1.

Introduction:

Primary Reading:

Supplementary Reading: