

MEDIEVAL UNIVERSITY

The problems discussed throughout this medieval period were:

- ❖ Relation of faith to reason
- ❖ The existence and simplicity of God
- ❖ The purpose of theology and metaphysics
- ❖ And the problem of knowledge of universals and individuation

Principles that underlie all the medieval philosophies are:

- ❑ Use of logic, dialectic and analysis to discover the truth known
- ❑ Respect for the insights of ancient philosophers particularly Aristotle and deference (respect and esteem due to a superior or an elder) to their authority
- ❑ Obligation to coordinate the insights of philosophy with theological teaching and revelation.

SCHOLASTICISM

Scholasticism is characterized by its emphasis on **dialectical reasoning or logic.**

Dialectic reasoning is the ability to view issues from multiple perspectives and to arrive at the most economical and reasonable reconciliation of seemingly contradictory information and postures. It is when two seemingly conflicting things are true at the same time.

Examples:

It is snowing and it is spring.

I feel happy and I feel sad.

I want to be loud and you need me to be quiet.

Things are very different now from a year ago, and every day feels the same.

I feel too tired to work and I can do my work anyway.

I love you and I hate you.

Dialectic refers originally to dialogue between people holding different views about a subject but wishing to arrive at the truth through reasoned argumentation. It resembles debate.

The dialectic was formed as follows:

- The question to be determined (It is asked whether...)
- A provisory answer to the question (And it seems that...)
- The principal arguments in favor of the provisory answer.
- An argument against the provisory answer traditionally a single argument (On contrary...)
- The determination of the question after weighing the evidence (I answer that ...)
- The replies to each of the initial objections (To the first objection... to the second objection... etc. I answer that...)

Scholastic works

1. examine problems from contrary points of views or objections.
2. The writer sets out a proposition usually in the form
of a question to be debated,
3. proceeds to present arguments on both sides,
4. answers each argument in support or opposition,
5. and finally comes to a conclusion.

Syllogism is a classical form of deduction that consists of a major and a minor premise and a conclusion

Here are some examples of syllogism logic

- **Major premise:** All men are mortal. **Minor premise:** Socrates is a man. **Conclusion:** Socrates is mortal.
- **Major premise:** Plants need to carbon dioxide to live. **Minor premise:** The oak tree is a plant. **Conclusion:** The oak tree needs carbon dioxide to live.
- **All mammals are animals. All elephants are mammals. Therefore, all elephants are animals.**
- **No mammals are frogs. All elephants are mammals. Therefore, no elephants are frogs.**

Scholasticism's two primary methods of teaching:

1. Lectio (Reading)

During lectio, the teacher reads a text aloud to students and expounds on words and ideas.

Disputatio (Disputation)

Students present a question to the teacher, wherein the teacher responds using citations from authoritative texts, followed by the students' rebuttal and so on. **Since the scholastic method involves a robust engagement with opposing views, students at medieval universities were expected to have a thorough knowledge of the ideas of previous authorities and be able to recall those ideas in debate.**

Scholastic disputation was not a personal contest in cleverness, nor was it "sharing opinions."

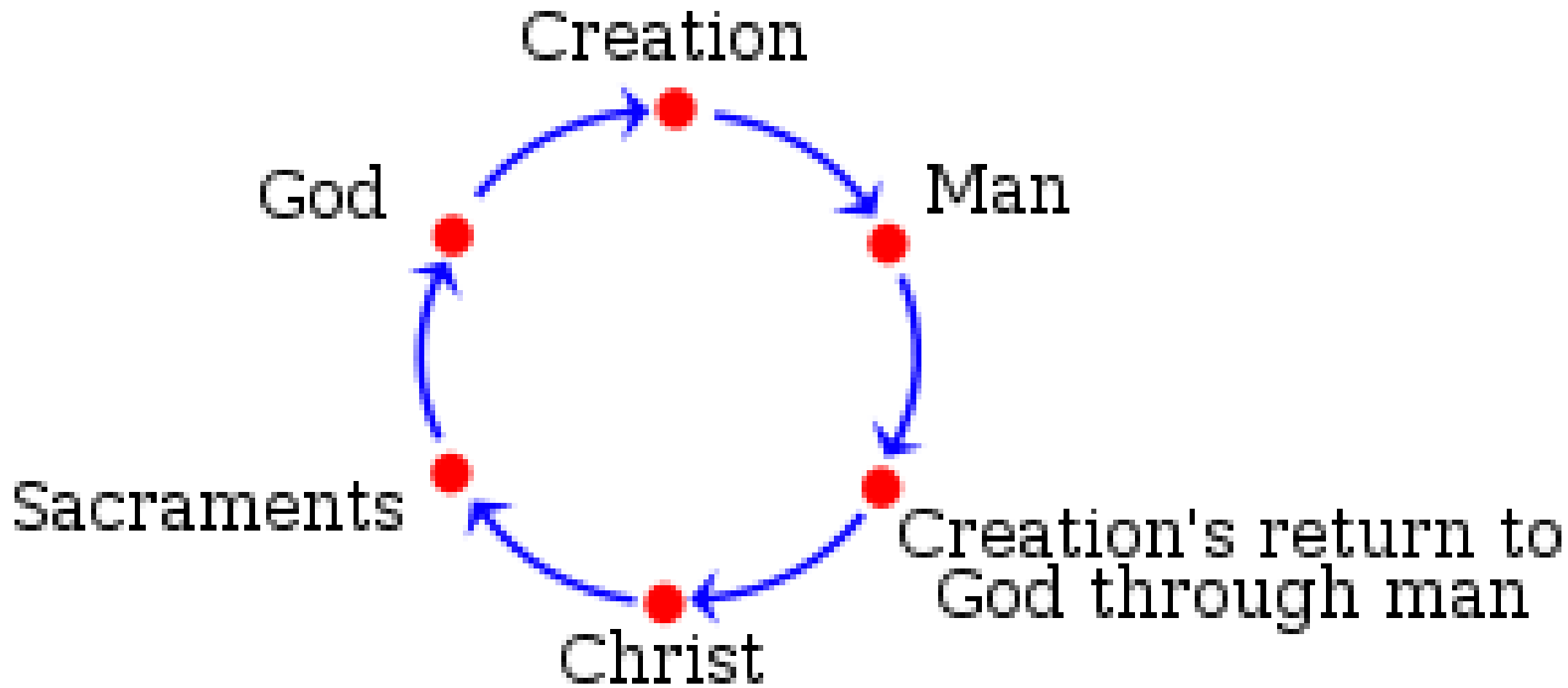
It was a shared journey of discovery.

What is a Summa?

A Summa is simply a summary. It is more like an encyclopedia than a textbook and it meant to be used more as reference library than a book. There is extreme economy in the use of words. There are no digressions .

A Summa is really a summarized debate. To the medieval mind, debate was a fine art, a serious science and a fascinating entertainment. The medieval believed like Socrates that dialectic could uncover the truth.

Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas



Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas

Prologue

"Because the Master of Catholic truth ought not only to teach the proficient, but also to instruct the beginners, we purpose this book to treat of whatever belongs to the Christian Religion, in such a way as many tend to the instructions of beginners."

Summa Theologiae
of St. Thomas Aquinas

38 Treatises divided into

631 questions that are discussed
in 3000 articles

10000 objections

QUESTION 1

The nature and extent of Sacred Doctrine

To place our purpose within proper limits, we endeavor to investigate the nature and extent of this sacred doctrine. Concerning this, there are ten points of inquiry:

1. Whether it is necessary?
2. Whether it is a science?
3. Whether it is one or many?
4. Whether it is speculative or practical?
5. How it is compared with other sciences?
6. Whether it is the same as wisdom?
7. Whether God is its subject- matter?
8. Whether it is a matter of argument?
9. Whether it rightly employs metaphors and similes?
10. Whether the Sacred Scripture of this doctrine maybe expounded in different senses?

First Article

Whether, besides Philosophy, any Further Doctrine Is Required?

Objection 1. It seems that, besides philosophical science, we have no need of any further knowledge. For man should not seek to know what is above reason.

“Seek not the things that are too high for thee” (Sirach 3:22).

But whatever is not above reason is fully treated of in philosophical science.

Therefore any other knowledge besides philosophical science is superfluous.

Objection 2. Further, knowledge can be concerned only with being, for nothing can be known, save what is true, and all that is, is true. But everything that is treated of in philosophical science -even God Himself; so that there is a part of philosophy called theology, or the divine science, as Aristotle has proved (Metaph, 6).

Therefore, besides philosophical science, there is no need of any further knowledge.

On the Contrary: It is written (2 Tim 3:16): *All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice.* Now Scripture, inspired of God, is no part of philosophical science, which has been built up by human reason.

Therefore it is useful that besides philosophical science there should be other knowledge i.e.. inspired by God.

I answer that, It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God, besides philosophical science built up by human reason.

Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason: *The eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee* (Isaiah 66:4)

But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. **Hence,** it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation.

Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors.

Whereas man's whole salvation, which is in God, depends upon the knowledge of this truth. Therefore, in order that the salvation of men might be brought about more fitly and more surely, it was necessary that they should be taught divine truths by divine revelation. It was therefore necessary that, besides philosophical science built up by reason there should be a sacred science learned through revelation.

Reply Obj 1.

Although those things which are beyond man's knowledge may not be sought for by a man through his reason, nevertheless once they are revealed by God, they must be accepted by faith.

Hence the Sacred text continues,

For many things are shown to thee above the understanding of man (Sirach 3;25).

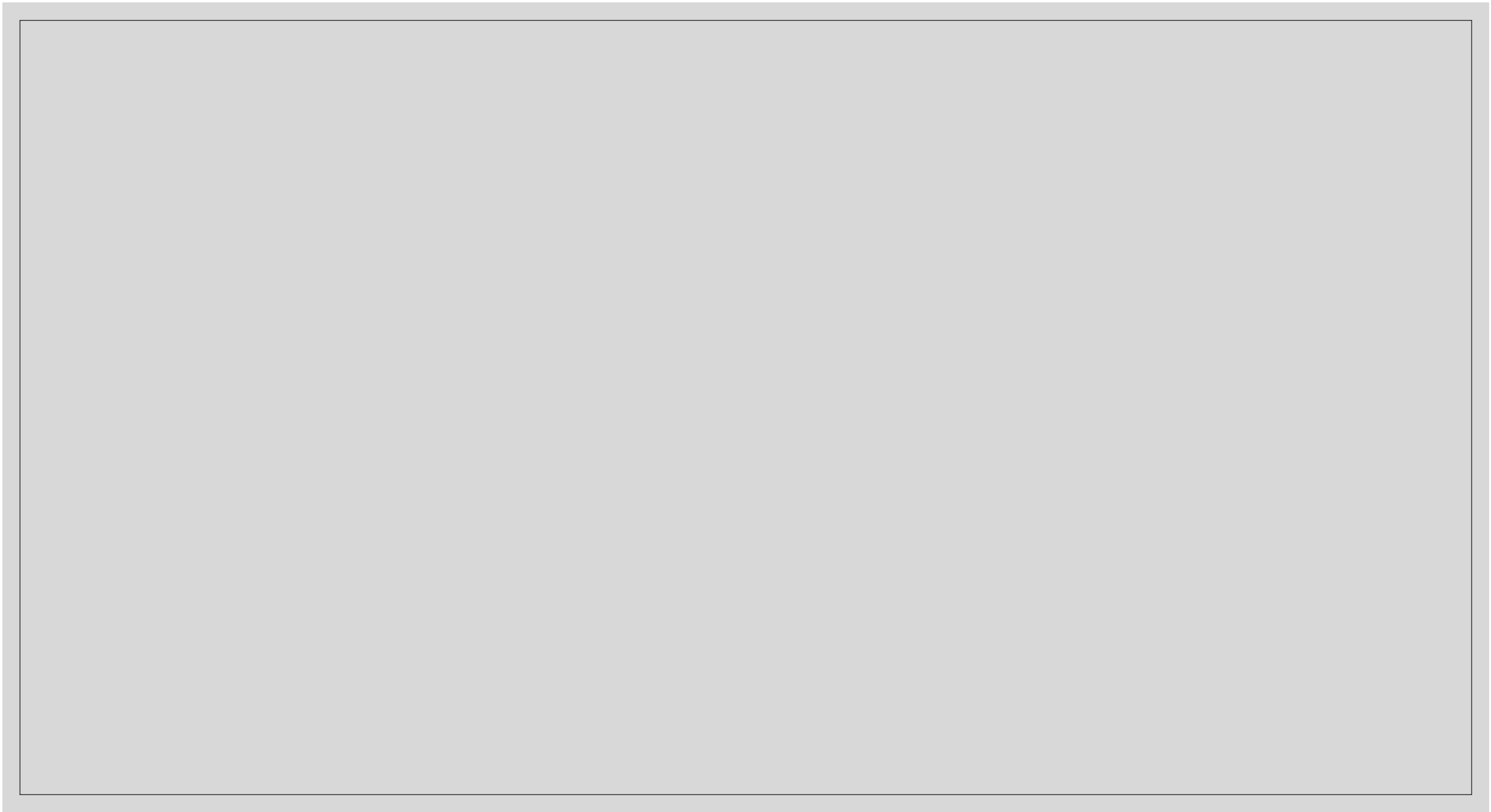
And in this the sacred science consists.

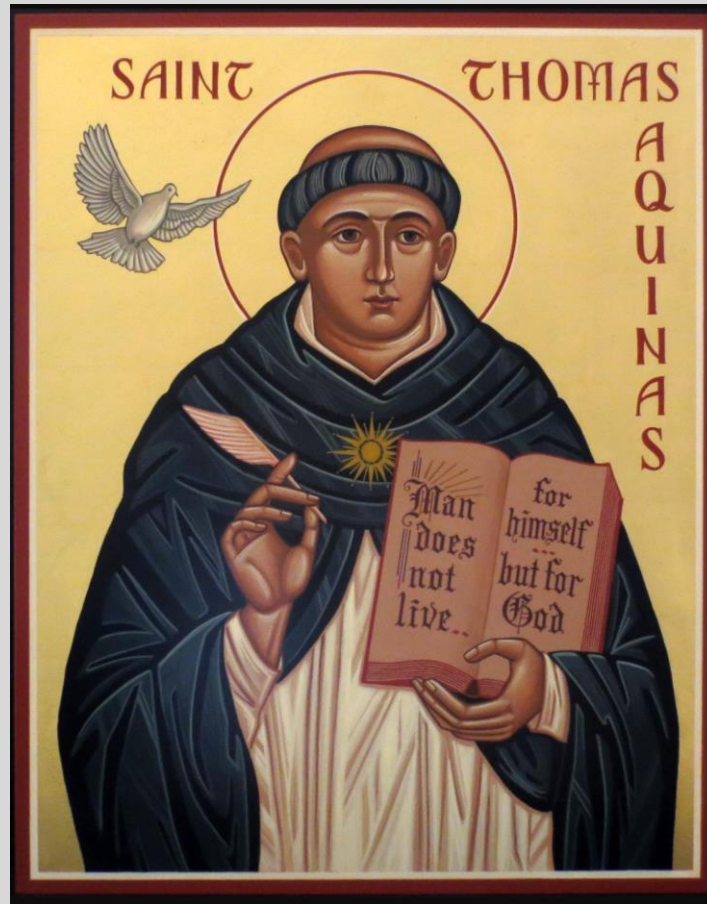
Reply Obj 2.

Sciences are differentiated according to the various means through which knowledge is obtained. For the astronomer and the physicist both may prove the same conclusion-that the earth, for instance is round: the astronomer by means of mathematics (i.e.. abstracting from matter), but the physicist by means of matter itself.

Hence there is no reason why those things which may be learned from philosophical science, so far as they can be known by natural reason, may not also be taught us by another science so far as they fall within revelation.

Hence theology included in sacred doctrine differs in kind from that theology which is part of philosophy.





St. Thomas Aquinas, pray for us.