

*International Thomistic Symposium:*

*Thomas Aquinas on  
Creation and Nature*



INSTITUTUM  
THOMISTICUM

*Angelicum, Rome  
October 3-5, 2019*

*Thomistic Institute – Angelicum*

## Themes:

**Thurs., Oct. 3: Creation, Metaphysics and the Hierarchy of Being**

**Fri., Oct. 4: Doctrine of Creation and Modern Natural Sciences**

**Sat., Oct. 5: Philosophy of Nature and the Foundations of Natural Law**

## Daily Schedule:

9:00 AM to 10:00 AM:	Session 1
10:30 AM to 11:30 AM:	Session 2
12:00PM to 1:00 PM:	Session 3
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM:	Lunch Break (Free time)
2:30 PM to 3:30 PM:	Breakout session 1 ( <i>three locations</i> )
4:00 PM to 5:00 PM:	Breakout session 2 ( <i>three locations</i> )
5:30 PM to 6:30 PM:	Session 4

## Main Speaker Schedule:

### October 3: Creation, Metaphysics and the Hierarchy of Being

Session 1: Harm Goris (Utrecht)

“Aquinas on the economy of grace, sin and the non-existence of a state of ‘natura pura’”

Session 2: Marta Borgo (Leonine Commission)

“Tommaso d'Aquino interprete dell'Exameron: prospettive filosofiche”

Session 3: Marco Salvati, OP (Angelicum)

“Trinità e creazione. Bellezza e attualità della prospettiva tommasiana”

Session 4: Paul Clavier (Lorraine, France)

“The relational account of creation”

## **October 4: Doctrine of Creation and Modern Natural Sciences**

Session 1: Mariusz Tabaczek, OP (Warsaw)

“Reinterpretation of Augustine’s Concept of rationes seminales within the Context of the Contemporary Debate on Thomistic Evolution”

Session 2:

Karin Öberg (Harvard University)

“A Brief History of the Cosmos”

Thomas Davenport, OP (Providence College)

“The Natural Philosophy of a Historical Cosmos”

Session 3: Juan José Sanguinetti (Santa Croce)

“Can we Compare Aquinas’ Philosophy with Modern Science?”

Session 4: Eleonore Stump (St. Louis University)

“Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: Creation, Science, and the Second-Personal”

## **October 5:**

### **Philosophy of Nature and the Foundations of Natural Law**

Session 1: Emmanuel Perrier, OP (Toulouse)

“The Role of Natural Law in the Divine Government of the Universe towards Divine Goodness”

Session 2: Enrique Martínez (Barcelona)

“C'È NATURA? I fondamenti dell'ordine morale e della vita personale”

Session 3: Anthony Akinwale, OP (Ibadan)

“Political Philosophy and Human Nature in Thomas Aquinas”

Session 4: Serge-Thomas Bonino, OP (Angelicum)

“Creazione ex nihilo e dottrina di Dio”

## **BREAK OUT SESSIONS SPEAKERS FOR OCTOBER 3, 2019**

(This schedule may be subject to changes. Please see the final schedule at the conference itself.)

### **Oct. 3, 2019, Aula 10 (coordinated by Joseph d'Amecourt, OP)**

**2:30 pm Emmanuel Durand, OP**

“Who delineates the Impossible?”

In this talk, I will attempt to bring omnipotence and almightiness together. Searching for integration and unity relies on the assumption that reason and faith aim at the very same truth who is God's Wisdom, embodied in the created order and in the Paschal mystery. Instead of fostering a sharp divide between almightiness and omnipotence, I will argue that the very same attribute of the One God might be approached by both philosophers and theologians, relying on their different kinds of judgement. The key to this epistemological argument will be provided by Thomas Aquinas analysis of the possible and the impossible.

**3:00 pm Gaston LeNotre**

“On the Merely Metaphysical Impossibility of the Annihilation of Creatures”

Since the predicate in the statement, “the creature does not exist at all” does not contradict its subject, Thomas argues that God must be able to reduce the creature to nothing (*De Potentia* q. 5, a. 3). Thomas nevertheless also affirms that the created universe will never be annihilated. In the same texts where he talks about God’s ability to annihilate creatures, Thomas also outlines the reality that God does not and would not annihilate creatures. The distinction sometimes relies upon considering God’s power absolutely and considering God’s power in relation to His wisdom or foreknowledge (*Quodlibet* IV, q. 3, a. 1). I suggest that the necessity Thomas admits in God’s non-annihilation of creatures, although

conditional, is truly a metaphysical necessity because it is based on the insights into the created nature of being and so arises directly from a science of being-as-Being.

**3:30 pm Break**

**4:00 pm Martín F. Echavarría**

“La sustancialidad del alma humana como fundamento de su inmortalidad y de su creación inmediata por Dios”

En esta ponencia nos proponemos exponer la concepción de Tomás de Aquino sobre la sustancialidad del alma humana, destacando la importancia que esta doctrina tiene en la antropología tomista, y muy en particular su papel en las demostraciones de la inmortalidad del alma y de la creación del alma humana directamente por Dios. Responderemos también a las críticas de autores como Bazán, quienes sostienen que la posición del Aquinate es inconsistente.

**4:30 pm Carmen Cortes Pacheco**

“El orden jurídico a la luz del orden divino del mundo”

La presente comunicación tiene por fin poner en evidencia como la filosofía jurídica que descubrimos en la obra de Santo Tomás de Aquino radica y se descubre en el contexto de la naturaleza creada del hombre. Coherentemente, el orden jurídico es el resultado de la participación del conocimiento racional que hombre alcanza a partir de la naturaleza de las cosas creadas y, a su vez, una participación del gobierno divino del mundo.

El orden jurídico, como el orden de la vida moral, se funda y debe adecuarse a la ley natural como “participación de la ley eterna en la criatura racional”, no sólo en sus aspectos normativos, sino también en aquello que es la causa formal del fenómeno jurídico: lo recto en el orden de las relaciones de justicia, lo debido a otro como objeto de la justicia particular.

Tal consideración colabora y hace factible el descubrimiento de lo que se expresa como derecho natural, en sentido propio, respecto de aquellos bienes y facultades que corresponden al hombre como criatura y que, por lo tanto, son anteriores a cualquier relación de justicia.

## **Oct. 3, 2019, Aula 12 (coordinated by Enrique Martínez)**

**2:30 pm    Stefano Abbate**

“Contingenza e bontà divina”

La contingenza di ogni ente creato è un problema metafisico di gran importanza a tal punto che la postmodernità ha usato questa precarietà dell'essere per affermare che l'essere e il niente coincidono per sprofondare così in un vortice di nichilismo. La stessa risposta gnostica è una reazione a questa realtà della creazione: tutte le cose potrebbero non essere e non esiste un essere sussistente nella natura. La risposta di Santo Tommaso su questo quesito è illuminante: pur essendo vero che la parte, ovvero le cose create, non hanno ragion d'essere nella loro stessa natura, queste sussistono perché Colui che le ha create ha voluto che partecipassero della Sua perfezione. È quindi per la sola bontà divina che tutto il creato sussiste quando potrebbe non essere. Perché se è pur vero che *ens et bonum convertentur*, il bene, nell'ordine della creazione è previo all'ente.”

**3:00 pm    Santiago Sanz**

“La nozione di creazione in San Tommaso e il problema dell'estrinsecismo fra natura e grazia.”

In questa comunicazione cercherò di mostrare che una visione estrinsecista del rapporto fra natura e grazia ha come base un'insufficiente nozione di creazione, e che alcune critiche a tale estrinsecismo, che sono andate all'estremo opposto dell'intrinsecismo, non sono riuscite a superare tale insufficienza. A mio modo di vedere, una giusta idea della creazione come partecipazione all'essere, in linea con

Tommaso, può restituire una visione equilibrata del rapporto fra natura e grazia, senza estrinsecismi né intrinsecismi.

**3:30 pm Break**

**4:00 pm Lucas Prieto**

“Causalidad creadora y participación instrumental”.

Al tratar el tema de la creación santo Tomás frecuentemente se pregunta si la criatura puede o no participar en la causalidad creadora. La respuesta, salvo un pequeño *impasse* en el *Comentario a las Sentencias*, fue siempre negativa. Al estudiar, sin embargo, su justificación descubrimos que late un problema más complejo: ¿cómo se relaciona la causalidad de la criatura y la causalidad del Creador? La tesis que defiende en esta ponencia es que la criatura no puede nunca crear en sentido estricto (es decir, nunca puede producir una substancia *ex nihilo*); sin embargo, sí puede participar como instrumento en la causalidad del *esse*. Más aún, su operación solo es posible en la medida en que es elevada por Dios a producir este efecto (*esse*) que está más allá de sus posibilidades.

**4:30 pm Xavier Prevosti Vives**

“Creación y libertad: sobre la libertad de Dios en la creación”

La naturaleza comunicativa del acto de ser, uno de los principios capitales de la síntesis metafísica de santo Tomás de Aquino, plantea ciertas dificultades cuando se aplica a la bondad divina. Se podría pensar que la naturaleza comunicativa del bien, que tiende a su propia difusión, conduce a una comprensión del acto divino de creación por modo de necesidad de naturaleza. Sin embargo, en el Doctor Angélico, la difusividad del bien, comprendida a modo de fin, constituye el fundamento de la libertad de Dios en el acto creador.

**Oct. 3, 2019, Aula Minor (coordinated by Dominic Langevin, OP)**

**2:30 pm Christopher Tomaszewski**

“Thomistic Classical Theism, Neo-Theism, And the Contingency”

One of the primary and most powerful objections to the traditional doctrine of Divine simplicity is that it is inconsistent with the doctrine that God freely chose to create (the doctrine of Divine creative freedom). And since the doctrine of Divine creative freedom is even more traditional and more central to the Abrahamic religions, we should accept it and reject the doctrine of Divine simplicity, or so the objection goes. In a recent paper, I showed that a popular argument for the conclusion that DDS entails a “modal collapse” is not only unsound, but invalid.

**3:00 pm Lee Jaeshin**

“Introductory study on Thomistic cosmogony in early modern China and Korea”

This paper aims to sketch how Thomistic creation and nature influenced China and Korean scholars in early modern ages. First of all, I will try to show the example of Thomistic language of creation in Chinese Jesuit documents such as *Xin bian Xizhu guo tian zhu shi lu* (1584), *Tian zhu shi yi* (1603), *Huan you quan* (1628), *Wanwu zhenyuan* (1628) and *Chao xing xue yao* (1654-1677) etc.

The reception of Thomistic creation and nature in East-Asia can be categorized by four types, believers, Scientists, Anti-Christians, and Critical acceptors. The believers such as Xu Guangqi (1562-1633), Li Zhizao (1565-1630), and Yang Tingyun (1562-1627) accepted science and Thomistic theology. The scientist such as Xiong Mingyu (1579-1649) was interested in western cosmology and calendar, anti-christian such as Yang Guangxian (1597-1669) refuted every western learning. However, some Korean scholars critically



accepted the creation of Aquinas and natural theology from the Neo-Confucianism perspective.

Jesuit documents circulated into Joseon through officials visit Beijing and Influenced Joseon Scholars. Among them, Yi Ik (1681-1763) and Jeong Yak-Yong is representative Joseon scholar influenced by Thomistic creation and nature. Mateo Ricci's Tianzhishiyi undeniably influenced Jeong Yak-Yong's formation of cosmogony. Meanwhile, Thomistic cosmology shaped Yi Ik's cosmology. These Chinese versions of Thomistic works show diversity in the reception of Thomistic creation and cosmology in Early modern China and Korea.

**3:30 pm Break**

**4:00 pm Austin Stevenson**

“The Participatory Structure of Human Cognition: *Creation and Aquinas's Doctrine of Intelligible Species*”

While recent studies have expertly examined the impact of Aquinas's hylomorphic anthropology on his theory of cognition, there has been less detailed exploration of the impact of Aquinas's participatory ontology (i.e., his metaphysics of creation) on that most central aspect of human nature: the intellect. Leen Spruit notes that ‘the metaphysical framework of Thomas’ doctrine of the intelligible species is constituted by his theory of participation, which eliminates any radical cleavage between the material and spiritual realms, as well as between the ideas of mental receptivity and activity.’ I follow up Spruit's contention and explore the ways that Aquinas's participatory ontology structures the relationship between spirit and matter, act and potency, and receptivity and spontaneity, and their impact on his doctrine of intelligible species. At the same time, I nuance Spruit's claims, emphasizing that participation is not a matter of blurring distinctions, but of recognizing that all things exist according to their proper mode of being. In so doing, I illuminate one of the most concrete and significant ways in which the doctrine of creation shapes Aquinas's understanding of human nature.

**4:30 pm Thomas Aquinas Pickett, OP**

“Nature abolished? The Virtue of Religion and the Challenge of Secularism”

A dramatic rise in secularism marks the recent and ongoing history of the West. The phenomena of the “Nones” (those who profess no religious affiliation) and of declining attendance at Sunday services across denominations exemplify this widespread cultural shift. This movement appears to contradict a key anthropological claim of St. Thomas Aquinas: there is in human nature a natural inclination to worship God. This follows, for St. Thomas, from the foundational argument that all of creation is ordered to God as to its end. Humans, in particular, share in this ordering through the natural law which, St. Thomas argues, includes the necessity of offering sacrifice to God. St. Thomas’s inclusion of the virtue of religion as a natural, acquired virtue further underlines this point.

So how are we do understand the rise of secularism and of the “Nones” in Thomistic terms? Has the natural law been abolished or changed? Or did St. Thomas err in his account of the naturalness of worship? This paper will resolve the problem through an examination of how social structures, practices, and ideas endemic to secularism (as highlighted, in particular, by Charles Taylor) can hinder the fruitful living out of the natural law. This hindrance, in turn, leads to consequences affecting the pursuit of happiness in individuals and in societies. This paper has relevance not only for those interested in speculative matters concerning human nature, natural law, social forces, and the virtue of religion, but also for those concerned with the pastoral care and evangelization of secularized demographics.

## **BREAKOUT SESSIONS SPEAKERS FOR OCTOBER 4, 2019**

**Oct. 4, 2019, Aula 10 (coordinated by Emmanuel Perrier, OP)**

**2:30 pm Matthieu Raffray**

“La relation de création: relation réelle ou relation transcendente ? Enjeux philosophiques et théologiques”

On sait que pour saint Thomas, la création est une “relatio quaedam” au Créateur, dans la créature (Ia pars, qu. 45, a. 3). Lorsqu'on tente d'identifier, néanmoins, la nature de cet objet métaphysique qu'est la relation de création, les avis divergent: des interprétations contradictoires ont été données dans les écoles thomistes. S'agit-il seulement, en effet, d'un accident dans la substance créée, donc d'un prédicament? Ou bien faut-il envisager une relation de la substance en tant que telle, sans l'intermédiaire d'un accident, comme l'entendent ceux qui parlent de “relation transcendentale”? Faut-il encore ajouter l'un à l'autre ces deux types de relations pour décrire la création?

L'objet de notre communication sera de faire la part des choses entre ce qui se trouve dans les textes de Thomas, et ce qui est le fait d'intrusions postérieures, puis d'évaluer la conformité de ces ajouts à la pensée de l'Aquinate. On montrera ainsi que cette question n'est pas un simple détail anecdotique, mais que c'est la cohérence même de la métaphysique de Thomas qui est en jeu: cette question revient à s'interroger sur la possibilité même de penser l'autonomie du créé, avec les conséquences philosophiques et théologiques que cela implique.

**3:00 pm Ghislain-Marie Grange, OP**

“Le commencement du monde chez Albert le Grand et Thomas d'Aquin”

La position de Thomas d'Aquin dans le débat sur l'éternité du monde est bien connue : la raison peut accéder au fait que les

créatures dépendent de Dieu mais leur commencement est accessible seulement par la révélation. Thomas distingue ‘avoir un principe d’origine’ (être créé) et ‘avoir un principe de durée’ (commencer). Or pour Albert le Grand, le maître de Thomas d’Aquin, ces deux caractéristiques sont liées : être créé, c’est nécessairement commencer.

Le débat sur l’éternité du monde engage donc le rapport entre la raison et la foi ; mais il engage aussi la signification du commencement dans la théologie de la création. C’est ce deuxième aspect qui sera développé. En effet, depuis la controverse avec l’arianisme, le commencement est la marque propre des créatures par rapport au Fils éternel. En ouvrant la possibilité (conceptuelle) d’un monde éternel, Thomas d’Aquin semble mettre en péril le statut créé du monde. En réalité, en comparant sa réflexion avec celle d’Albert, on observe que la percée de Thomas provient d’un approfondissement de la Seigneurie divine sur toutes choses.

**3:30 pm Break**

**4:00 pm Michel Bastit**

“Comment Einstein répond à Suarez: la recherche d’un moyen terme”

Si l’on applique *la prima via*, la recherche concrète d’une cause première oblige à rechercher un médium logique et physique permettant d’aboutir à la cause immobile du mouvement. Saint Thomas et les aristotéliens, comme Aristote lui-même, utilisaient à cette fin le premier ciel. Suarez, au nom de la nouvelle physique galiléenne met en doute cette possibilité. La difficulté s’accroît avec Newton, puisque celui-ci se cantonne au système solaire et laisse indéterminé l’infini temporel et spatial ou l’identifie avec le *sensorium Dei*.

Avec la relativité la situation change complètement. La relativité - et spécialement la relativité générale - permet de passer, grâce aux transformations de Lorentz, d’un espace temps à un autre. Elle débouche donc sur une conception cosmique qui assume dans son projet même une unité

cosmique. Cependant, elle fait aussi naître certaines difficultés : effacement possible du temps et du mouvement ainsi que des entités particulières, confusion du cosmos dans son entier et de ses parties ultimes.

Cette dernière difficulté peut être résolue en se référant aux trois sens du cosmos proposés par Aristote : le premier ciel, tous les cieux, l'univers entier. C'est cette dernière conception qui est récupérée par la relativité. Il est alors possible de considérer l'univers lui-même en son entier comme le medium à partir duquel peut se développer une preuve par le mouvement.

En outre, la théorie de la relativité n'est pas la cosmologie relativiste. Au niveau de la cosmologie relativiste, il redevient nécessaire, en raison des singularités, de distinguer diverses parties de l'univers en fonction de la distribution et de la densité de la matière-énergie. Il est ainsi possible d'obtenir de nouveau un moyen terme, par exemple entre une partie de l'univers et son premier moteur. Evidemment la démarche redevient beaucoup plus difficile dans l'hypothèse d'un multivers, mais peut-être pas impossible.

**4:30 pm Frère Jean-Polycarpe Seys, C.S.J.**

“L'homme comme medium entre Dieu et les créatures corporelles chez saint Bonaventure”

Sur fond de crise écologique, notre but est d'interroger la place de l'homme dans l'univers selon Bonaventure. Du point de vue de sa dignité, l'homme est une créature moyenne dans l'échelle des êtres. Pour le théologien franciscain qui assimile totalement la structure hiérarchique dionysienne, bien que cette position médiane – comparable à celle du Verbe au sein de la Trinité – ne soit pas dévalorisante, elle est pourtant une place d'humilité. Cet accent semble contraster avec l'idée que l'homme est la « fin de toutes les choses qui existent » (Breviloquium, II, 2). Celui-ci est-il centre ou medium ? Enfin, si la loi divine fait que les choses d'en-bas sont reconduites au sommet par les choses intermédiaires,

l'homme ne serait pas seulement une créature médiane mais médiatrice : il jouerait un rôle dans la manière dont les créatures corporelles parviennent à leur fin. Or dans la perspective exemplariste de Bonaventure, la créature sensible a été faite pour manifester le premier Principe et que par elle « l'homme puisse être reconduit au Dieu créateur pour le louer et pour l'aimer » (Idem. II, 11). La créature corporelle et l'homme chemineraient donc ainsi dans une sorte d'alliance réciproque, se faisant remonter l'un l'autre vers Dieu.

## **Oct. 4, 2019, Aula 12 (coordinated by Harm Goris)**

**2:30 pm Manuel Ocampo Ponce**

“Metaphysical Notes on the Concept of Nature in Saint Thomas Aquinas”

Given the applicability of the notion of nature to any philosophical, theological, moral, juridical, or cultural, discussion, this brief exposition is an attempt to delve into the essential metaphysical notes of the concept of nature in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. The precious legacy that St. Thomas has left us in regard to the concept of nature helps us to understand reality in a way that is not only clear and deep, but with great rigor and precision. Here we can see the passage Saint Thomas makes from the physical plane to the metaphysical, showing that the source of all dynamism cannot be other than the being of beings and ultimately the Being (in other words, that being and ultimately God are necessary to the understanding of nature as the operating principle of creatures). Thus, the purpose of this brief work is to present the essential metaphysical notes of the concept of nature. The work seeks to transcend the physical plane to enter into the metaphysical plane, taking as its reference a position of Saint Thomas Aquinas, namely that God is the ultimate cause of operation, in order to show the true meaning of nature when considered as a principle of motion.

**3:00 pm Michael A. Hoonhout**

“The Order of Creation and Orders in Nature: The Wisdom of God Manifested in a Thomistic Interpretation of Scientific Cosmology”

This paper seeks to give a Thomistic theological context to today’s scientific cosmology through the notion of order found in both. The paper will begin with his theology of creation and his metaphysical understanding of how the world depends upon God’s active wisdom and goodness. The “good of order existing in things created is itself created by God” (*ST I*, 22, 1), and this order is the fundamental context for both understanding nature and how God acts in creation to accomplish his good purposes. Discussion will then turn to how modern science distinguishes different operative orders in nature—i.e. the physical-chemical, biological, and anthropological—which due to different natural dynamics engender specific scientific disciplines.. These orders are distinct and non-reducible, yet clearly interrelated, with the lower orders ‘fine-tuned’ to serve the higher orders which sublimate their dynamics for higher purposes. The overall argument is that Aquinas’s understanding of the one universal created order (*ST I*, 47, 3) needs to be informed by the scientific account of the distinct intelligibilities and dynamics of the physical-chemical, biological and anthropological orders by which God in his wisdom brings about the development of the universe from an initial singularity to mankind.

**3:30 pm Break**

**4:00 pm Matthew Ramage**

“Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger on Human Origins in Light of Evolutionary Biology”

This paper will compare and contrast the approaches of Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger on the topic of human origins in Genesis 1-3. The extent to which their respective views of the first human’s origin are compatible with

evolutionary biology will be examined. In particular, Ratzinger's view that Genesis "declares no less about us than it does about the first man" and that "each of us is Adam" will be advanced as a hermeneutical key that can allow Thomists to account for evolutionary biology's account of gradual human origins without fear of compromising fundamental principles of the faith handed on to us by the Angelic Doctor. Additionally, Aquinas and Ratzinger will be put into dialogue on the distinction between body and soul and what the special creation of the human soul means in light of evolutionary biology. In the end, this paper will aim to show that, while Aquinas and Ratzinger certainly differ in particulars of their approach to Genesis 1-3, their principles are fundamentally consonant with one another, with a hylomorphic conception of the human person that avoids being overly dualistic, and with a non-reductive engagement with evolutionary biology.

**4:30 pm Xu Ke**

"Thomas Aquinas on Intelligible Species in the Human Intellect"

"Intelligible species" originates with Cicero's translation of the Platonic idea with "species" or "forma", and is widely used in the middle ages<sup>1</sup>. In Plato's system, "idea" is an ontological notion, while "form" is understood as a principle and an epistemological concept in Aristotle. The "intelligible species" in Thomas Aquinas not only inherits the doctrine of Aristotle, but also influenced by the Arabic theories of abstraction and intention, which absorbs both Neoplatonism and Peripateticism. The formal mediation of sensible reality in intellectual knowledge is one of the crucial problems in the medieval theory of knowledge, and the "intelligible species" plays an important role in connecting sensible perception and intelligible knowledge in the epistemological system of Thomas Aquinas.

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<sup>1</sup> Spruit, L. (1994) *Species intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge*. Leiden: Brill, 96.



It is admitted that Thomas Aquinas is a realist who refuses the idealism in his epistemology. However, the problem how one accepts the nature of the sensible reality in his intellect becomes a controversial point nowadays. The traditional view holds that Thomas Aquinas is a direct realist insisting on the direct acceptance of the essence of the sensible reality in human intellect<sup>2</sup>, while the representative realism<sup>3</sup> holds that since Thomas Aquinas raises the human intellect understands the nature of extramental beings through intelligible species as the mediation, the way we understand the nature of the reality is not immediately but through subjective representations<sup>4</sup>. Undoubtedly, the clarification of the notion of the intelligible species in the theory system of Thomas Aquinas is the best way to solve this problem.

## **Oct. 4, 2019, Aula Minor (coordinated by Brian Doyle, OP)**

**2:30 pm    Piotr Roszak**

“In prima rerum conditione. Emerging Natural Order by Thomas Aquinas”

Scientific data seem to indicate that the emergence of life on Earth is associated with expense, suffering and violence. Today it is explained on the basis of the “free process” or “only one way” theory. At the same time, the idea of nature by Thomas is not so much static as dynamic (as suggested by Mariano Artigas). Does it imply the acceptance of the postulates of Open Theism or Process Theology? How does Aquinas perceive ‘paradise’ and original sin? Does the *rectitudo* which describes this condition explain the theological perception of nature? The paper will present these aspects of understanding nature by Aquinas which seem to fit perfectly in the modern scientific mentality, especially taking

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<sup>2</sup> See Gilson, E. (1986) *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*.

<sup>3</sup> See Panaccio, C. (2001) “Aquinas on Intelligible Representation.” *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, ed. Perler, D., Leiden: Brill, 185-202.

<sup>4</sup> Sandro R. D’Onofrio, *Aquinas as Representationalist: The Ontology of the Species Intelligibilis*, 222.

into consideration the aspect of the relationship between God and creation.

**3:00 pm    Dominic Langevin, OP**

“Good Intentions Are Not Enough: How the Nature-Grace Distinction and Physical Contact Are Essential to Sacramental Salvation”

The distinction between nature and grace is a foundational condition for the structure of the sacraments. This distinction is not an absolute separation. In the dynamic movement that is a sacrament, the natural is animated by and used for supernatural ends. Certain twentieth-century proposals in sacramental theology aimed to highlight the anthropological dimension of the sacraments by articulating them as symbols that are transformative without recourse to the language or reality of efficient causality. However, these attempts have the effect of dehumanizing the sacraments, for they do not take sufficient account of man’s physicality. In contrast, as this conference paper will explore, the Thomistic understanding illustrates how physical contact is essential to personalized salvation and to the efficacious signification that is a sacrament.

**3:30 pm    Break**

**4:00 pm    Piero Benvenuti**

“Cosmology and *Cosmologia*: Towards a new theology of Nature on the footsteps of Thomas Aquinas”

Thomas Aquinas had the great merit of building his theology on the basis of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmology, demonstrating, among other things, that there is no possible conflict between the revealed truths and the rational truths (or, in modern terms, between Christian faith and Science). Although the cosmic spheres of the Aristotelian cosmology were destroyed in 1610 by Galilei and subsequently by Newton, no credible alternative cosmology was available for about three and a half centuries. Consequently, Christian

theology continued to be developed along Thomas tradition, therefore assuming an Aristotelian concept of Nature. Actually, with the introduction of the modern scientific method, theology together with philosophy, completely abandoned the philosophy of nature as a discipline, on the wrong assumption that it was a subject to be solely investigated by the new Science.

Today the situation has dramatically changed, first because we do have a credible cosmology and secondly because the evolutionary characteristic of the universe and the quantistic nature of the physical reality urge for a philosophical (and therefore theological) interpretation of nature. Abandoning the classical division of nature in “kingdoms” (inanimate matter, biological matter, vegetables, animals and conscious beings) may be dramatic, but a radical revision of this paradigm is becoming unavoidable. The theological and Christological consequences may be even more traumatic, but, on the other end, the Christian revelation may be revitalized once it is realized that Creation is not only *Creatio continua*, but also it is not yet complete and we, as co-creators, should drive it towards the realization of the Kingdom of the heavens.

Thomas Aquinas did not fear to be accused of heresy when he married the Aristotelian cosmology: we should follow his footsteps in developing a new theology of nature based on modern cosmology, starting from a clear distinction between the “scientific cosmology” that is proposed and experimentally verified by the scientific method, and “cosmologia” that, based on the findings of the scientific cosmology, proposes its theological interpretation.

**4:30 pm**

**Luke Doherty, OP**

“Prudence as an ethical foundation for the technological appraisal of alternative energy sources”

With concerns over climate change and the sustainability of energy resources, there is a growing interest in replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. However, the scale of this

endeavour is not always appreciated, since major changes to energy infrastructure will be necessary within a relatively short timeframe. Alternative energy technologies can assist in developing such a sustainable energy infrastructure in the long term. However, there are often ethical objections to such technologies and the potential risks they pose to human health and the natural world. This paper discusses how the work of St Thomas on the virtue of prudence provides an ethical foundation for assessing the risks and benefits of energy technologies. Some examples are given as part of a brief literature review of two specific technologies: hydraulic fracturing and nuclear fission reactors. The conclusions are that both nuclear energy and ‘fracking’ have the potential to contribute towards a transition to a more sustainable energy infrastructure. However, there are also reasons why these technologies may not be appropriate in certain conditions. The parts of prudence as highlighted from the *Summa Theologiae* should assist with other ethical assessments of alternative energy technologies and their potential application in specific situations.

## **BREAK OUT SESSIONS SPEAKERS FOR OCTOBER 5, 2019**

**Oct. 5, 2019, Aula Minor (coordinated by John O’Callaghan)**

**2:30 pm Candace Vogler**

“Human Nature as a Basis for Moral Agency”

**3:00 pm Wojciech Golubiewski, OP**

“Aquinas on the wisdom of moral life according to nature”

For St. Thomas Aquinas, the intelligibility of nature and its order secure the intelligibility of the order of moral life. Morally good life “according to nature” requires practical reasoning whereby we order and direct our actions. To live morally well “according to nature,” we do not merely follow the order of nature but also make an order congruent with it. Principles of good agency, which analogically apply to

different kinds of agents and their proper actions, also apply to human agents and moral actions directed by reason, shaped by virtues and grace. Aquinas says that reason, virtue, and grace imitate nature. Divine wisdom directs all things to their proper goodness through their natures and moral life “according to nature” complies with the divine wisdom by the imitation of nature.

**3:30 pm Break**

**4:00 pm John O’Callaghan**

"Creation as Primeval Act of Divine Mercy."

Discussing the justice and mercy of God, Aquinas argues that these attributes of God are displayed in all of His effect. The effect of creation however poses a problem, since it seems that both justice and mercy presuppose the existence of a subject toward which justice and mercy are extended. Aquinas solves the problem of divine justice displayed in creation fairly straightforwardly and can avoid the charge of being ad hoc. His solution concerning mercy, however, is much more problematic, appears to be ad hoc, and perhaps even incoherent. I propose an account of Aquinas' argument that may avoid those charges.

**4:30 pm Kevin Flannery, SJ**

“The intertwining of natural law and the laws of nature in Thomas Aquinas”

The paper attempts to understand better the relationship between the laws of nature and the natural law. The first part is about Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, question 64, article 7 [ST 2-2.64.7], on the permissibility of killing another in self-defense. In this article it becomes apparent that for Thomas, although certainly man's instinct towards self-preservation is rooted in nature, the morality of killing in self-defense is ultimately determined by laws issued by humans. This brings the morality of killing in self-defense,

rooted as it is in the laws of nature, into the realm of natural law, which has specifically to do with what is humanly reasonable or (in other words) with what constitutes good law. The direction of the paper's second part is exactly the opposite. It has to do with human sexuality and argues that, although certainly our laws and customs regarding sexuality are part of natural law, they are determined ultimately by laws of nature. The third part argues that the subjects of the first two parts, the morality of self-defense and sexual morality, are not as disparate as they may seem. They fit in a coherent manner into the organizational scheme that Thomas sets out in ST 1-2.94.2, where he argues that, although the precepts of the natural law are plural, they are also one.

## **Oct. 5, 2019, Aula 12 (coordinated by Martín F. Echavarría)**

**2:30 pm    Antoni Prevosti Monclús**

“Nature, chance, and Providence in Thomas Aquinas”

Nature, chance, and Providence, being they all causal concepts, can be deemed to enter into mutual conflict, or either to harmonize in concordance. Following a thesis already advanced by Boethius, St. Thomas asserts that an effect which is called casual or fortuitous in respect to the order of particular causes, if we regard the universal cause, which is God, is said to be the effect of Providence. On this basis, the question arises, whether the alleged incompatibility between certain scientific explanations or theories that introduce chance, such as the Darwinian theory of evolution, and Christian creationism, is not immediately excluded. With this question in mind, we will study the Thomist concept of chance and its aristotelian root, trying then to establish two points. The first one: how should we understand the thesis that “chance doesn't exist for God”. The second point shall be to discuss the plausibility of the idea that random or indeterminate events in nature might be considered a privileged target for God’s providential government of His creation.

**3:30 pm Arturo Gonzalez de Leon Berini**

“Crime, Guilt and Punishment regarding the polis. A Thomistic approach to basic concepts of the Criminal Law”

Modern Criminal Law has been reduced, for more than 200 years, to ideas and dogmas courtesy of the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, almost all of the core vocabulary about guilt and punishment in the political level cannot keep from perspiring principles and notions that are inherited from Christian medieval wisdom and tradition, especially regarding Catholic moral theology.

In relation to this, the goal of my Paper is to rediscover and recover a Thomistic approach to the basic concepts of the Criminal Law. In several works of the Doctor Angelicus, mainly the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, the core moral issues of crime, guilt and punishment are addressed, also from the perspective of the political community.

Therefore, I will explain the Thomistic doctrine of evil and sin, together with his basic distinction between the evils of punishment and of guilt, whereas the first is imposed to coerce and to order the latter. In that respect, state sentencing of an offender would be assessed as a due restitution of the natural order in the polis, analogous to the jurisdictional aspect of penance.”

**3:30 pm Break**

**4:00 pm Miguel Angel Belmonte Sanchez**

I wish to show how the Aristotelian link between physics and politics is understood by Aquinas especially in his Commentaries to Aristotle’s Ethics and Politics. Both authors offer a practical vision of politics which is quite different from ancient and modern political rationalism. This is why Aristotelian-Thomistic view of political action’s natural roots

should be considered to cope with the contemporary effects of rationalistic politics.

**4:30 pm Joan Juanola Cadena**

“Thomistic Considerations on Procreation: Mental Health and Morality”

Contraception is, nowadays, one of the most polemical moral issues, also amongst Catholics. Despite *Humanae Vitae*'s aim to clarify the principles concerning matrimonial moral sexuality, unitive and procreative aspects of human conjugality are judged from different criteria. While procreation is considered an undesired consequence, conjugality is seen as necessary to keep the couple physically and psychologically healthy. Thus, chastity is seen as a source of matrimonial psychopathology. Thomas Aquinas can enlighten the moral judgement concerning these situations, from the discovering of the nature of conjugal life. From that point of view, it can be defended that matrimonial chastity is neither *contra natura* nor potentially unhealthy, but the most adequate form of naturally contributing to God's creation.

**Oct. 5, 2019, Aula 10 (coordinated by Thomas Davenport, OP)**

**2:30 pm Hannah Hemphill**

“Saint Thomas on Sacrifice as an Act of the Natural Law”

This paper explores developments in Saint Thomas's conception of sacrifice as an act of the natural law, from the *Scriptum* to the *Summa*. Key aspects of development will be outlined by attention to Thomas's use of sources and his identification of sacrifice as an act related to recognition of God as principle (Creator) and end of the human creature. This paper will also attend to Thomas's placements of his discussions of sacrifice in his *summae* and consider the reasons for the differences and what they might suggest about the development of his conception of sacrifice.



**3:00 pm Euan Grant**

“Questioning the *debitum naturae*: the significance of the ‘historic nature’”

Drawing on Henri de Lubac and his recent critics, I analyse the concept of *debitum naturae* and its relevance to his ‘natural desire for the supernatural’. The *debitum naturae* has a twofold significance, requiring both an ‘internal’ order of natural structure, and a final order of natural orientation. Both forms of ordering are problematised by Thomas’ account in the *Summa Theologiae* of human creation, original justice, and original sin. Thomas understands both forms of order in the initial human creation as dependent on a properly supernatural gift of grace. This presents both difficulties for de Lubac and his opponents, and an opportunity for rapprochement.

Thomas’ commitment to the creation of human nature shows that the concept of *natura pura* refers to a hypothetical ordering and history as well as the real structures of the human being considered *in puris naturalibus*. Equally, however, Aquinas’ account of creation allows for a retrieval of de Lubac’s fundamental theological commitments without his likely-incoherent analysis of natural desire and ends. *Nouvelle théologie* and neo-Thomism can be synthesised by recognising that the *debitum naturae* cannot be understood without further reference to the concrete historicity of human nature within the real order of God’s creation and calling.

**3:30 pm Break**

**4:00 pm Dominic Legge, OP**

“Natural Law, Natural Inclinations, and Divine Grace: The Trinitarian Pattern of Man’s Ordering to God.”

It is an architectonic principle for Aquinas that the pattern of the Trinitarian processions is at the very foundation of the world, characterizes creation itself, and marks all of the Triune God’s actions in it – and is likewise the pattern by which the rational creature is ordered back to the Trinity, by

nature and by grace. This paper will show how this is so, beginning from the fact that God creates changeable creatures not with a static similitude to him, but by giving them a nature imprinted with a dynamic inclination towards returning to God, so that each moves towards a more perfect assimilation to him – and more specifically to the Divine Word as the exemplar of all creation – according to the natural capacity of each. The paper will then discuss how this inclination functions in man on two levels: with respect to nature and man’s natural inclinations according to the precepts of the natural law; and with respect to grace, according to the New Law of the Holy Spirit, whereby the rational creature is assimilated more perfectly to the Word and the Spirit according to the pattern of their processions. The paper thus underscores the deep connection of Aquinas’s natural law teaching with his theology of the divine mission and of grace, including the strongly theocentric character of his teaching on law and its harmony with his teaching on grace.

**4:30 pm [No speaker in Aula 10]**