

Dominican Institute

School of Pastoral and Religious Education

Lecturer: Fr. Emeka Nwosuh, OP

Course: **Faith and Reason**

Lecture Days: Fridays 7pm-9pm

February 2021

Fides Quaerens Intellectum (Faith seeking understanding)—St. Anselm of Canterbury
Credo ut Intelligam (I believe so that I may understand)—St. Augustine of Hippo

Course Description

*Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves. John Paul II, **Fides et Ratio***

The human person is a unique and complex being that has several interconnecting dimensions. Thus, the human person has been variously described as a social being and a political being. But the human person is also described as a rational being. Rationality (intelligence) is one of the essential properties of the human nature. This is one of the qualities that distinguishes us from other creatures. But the human person is also said to be a spiritual or religious being. Thus, the knowing subject is also the same as the believing subject. As a spiritual being, the human person is sometimes required to exercise an act of faith in matters that, sometimes, seemingly go against his/her reason or at best challenges or stretches the limits of his/her reason. And so, the human person seems to oftentimes finds him/herself caught up in a conflict between the act of reason and the act of faith in the quest for truth, which is the object of the human mind or intellect.

This introductory course explores the relationship between faith and reason within the Catholic Tradition. The course will explore the meaning of human rationality and faith. It will expose and critique the various views regarding the relationship between faith and reason. And it will expound how one can be a firm believer, that is, a person of faith and yet an intelligent or rational person.

Course Objective & Goals

The course aims at helping candidates understand how human reason and faith can harmoniously work together in seeking truth and knowledge. Hence, at the end of this course, candidates will be in a better position to understand how the various truths of our Christian faith are not an assault on human intelligence but are indeed meaningful. This hopefully will help them attain a greater maturity in their faith as Christians and in that way become better bearers and teachers of the Gospel of Christ.

Class Weekly Schedule

Week One

General Introduction: The Human Person-Subject of Faith and Reason

- Created in the image and likeness of God
- The multidimensional nature of the Human Person
- Truth as the Object of the Human Intellect
- Good as the Object of the Human Will
- Faith and Reason as Vehicles of Apprehending Truth

Week Two

Discourse on Human Reason

- What is Reason
- Can the Human Mind Know?
- The Limits of the Human Mind (What Can the Human Mind Know?)

Week Three

Discourse on Faith

- What is Faith
- The Nature of Faith (cf. Swinburne)
- The Characteristics of Faith
- The Language of Faith
- Misconceptions About Faith (cf. Crosby, Preface)

Week Four

Discourse on Faith Continued

Week Five

The "Conflict" Between Faith and Reason

- Rationalism/Scientism
- Fideism

Week Six

Faith Seeking Understanding

- Synthesis of Faith and Reason

Bibliography

Recommended Texts

1. The Bible (New Jerusalem Bible or The African Bible)
2. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 142-184, 286.
3. Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio: On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason*

Other Texts

4. Dick Sztanyo, *Faith and Reason*, (Montgomery, AL.: Apologetics Press, 1996)
5. Donald A. Crosby, *Faith and Reason: Their Roles in Religious and Secular Life*, (Albany: State of New York University, 2011)
6. Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason*, 2nd edition, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981/2005)