

TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

HAPARARI C. TOGARASEI, O.F.M CAP

ID NO. 09133T

**A CALL TO LIVE THE GOSPEL WAY OF LIFE IN
PURSUIT OF ULTIMATE HAPPINESS ACCORDING TO
THOMAS AQUINAS**

Supervisor

Rev. Fr. Wiseman. O.P

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for a Masters Degree in Theology

NAIROBI 2014

DEDICATION

To all the individuals and families who are striving to live our Catholic faith wholeheartedly. I wish you all the blessings from Heaven.

EPIGRAPH

Psalm 16: 1-2, 9-11: “Keep me safe, O Lord; in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, you are my only good. Therefore my heart is glad, my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure, for you will not abandon me to Sheol, nor let your faithful servant see the pit. You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever” .

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I wish to express my profound gratitude to all the scholars whose works inspired me to write this paper. I express in a special way my deep sentiments of gratitude to my Supervisor Fr Wiseman OP who, through his careful direction and useful suggestions, contributed immensely to the successful completion of this work.

My sincere thanks to my Superior Rev Fr Lawrence O.F.M, Cap, all the Capuchin Friars in Zimbabwe and the Langáta Friary Community, Kenya Nairobi for their generosity and fraternal support during my four years of study. My heartfelt thanks are also due to Tangaza College University community, both Lecturers and Students who have given me unfailing support and encouragement which I deeply value as well as the library staff who were so helpful during my study and research at Tangaza College.

Last but not least I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my family: my mother, Beatrice Rocha Haparari and my brothers and sisters for their love and care. To my friends too, I thank you because of your love, support and encouragement that inspired me and kept me going. Thank You All!

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of S.T.B in Theology. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed: _____

Name of Student: _____

Date: _____

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

CONTENTS

DEDICATION	II
EPIGRAPH.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
STUDENT’S DECLARATION	V
CONTENTS.....	VI
ABBREVIATIONS	VIII
CHAPTER ONE:	1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. The Structure of the Study	1
1.1 The Purpose of the Study	2
1.2 The Rationale of the Study	5
1.3 The Central Question of Investigation	7
1.4 Methodological Considerations.....	9
1.4.1 Anthropological	10
1.4.2 Biblical.....	10
1.4.3 Theological	11
1.5 The Practicality of Theology in Aquinas’ teaching on Ultimate Happiness.....	12
1.6 Conclusion	13
CHAPTER TWO	15
AQUINAS’ TEACHING ON THE PURSUIT OF ULTIMATE HAPPINESS	15
2. Introduction	15
2.1 Sacredness of Human Life	17
2.1.1 Created in the Image of God.....	18
2.1.2 True Happiness entails reaching the sufficient Goodness.....	23
2.2 Aquinas’ Ethics and Ultimate Happiness.....	24
2.3 Aquinas on true source of Happiness	27
2.3.1 The Human Soul	29
2.4 The Trinity source of Ultimate Happiness	30
2.4.1 God our Alpha and Omega, the origin and purpose of our happiness	31
2.4.2 Jesus Christ the source and model of our Human Acts and Works	33
2.4.3 Holy Spirit inspires man into faith in action	36
2.5 Faith, Reason and Prayer in our journey towards God.....	38
2.6 Human Acts and Morality in the pursuit of Ultimate Happiness	41
2.6.1 The Grace of God in man’s life as he journeys back towards God.....	46
2.7 Formation of Conscience an essential task in order to pursue true happiness	51
2.8 Conclusion	53

CHAPTER THREE	55
Living the Gospel in pursuit of Ultimate Happiness and Necessity of the Church	55
3. Introduction	55
3.1 Commitment to Faith as the only way to Salvation	56
3.2 The Church a Community of belief and action	57
3.3 Doing the Gospels in pursuit of the Ultimate Happiness	61
3.4. The Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-10) call to Existential, True and Everlasting Happiness	65
3.5 The Love for God and Neighbor as the Greatest Commandment	70
3.6 The Virtue of Hope in search for Ultimate Happiness	75
3.7 Christian Life as lifelong worship	76
3.6.1 Sacraments calls for action	81
3.7 Human Freedom in his journey to ultimate happiness	82
3.8 Conclusion	85
CHAPTER FOUR.....	87
Suffering and Ultimate Happiness	87
4. Introduction	87
4.1 Suffering and Happiness	87
4.1.1 Commitment and Joy in Suffering	89
4.1.2 The virtue of Humility in Suffering	93
4.2 Suffering in Africa	94
4.3 Modern man's secular understanding of Joy and Happiness	97
4.3.1 The rich in worldly material goods and ultimate happiness	99
4.4 Some suggestions that should be carried out by the Church and all believers in promoting true happiness in our societies	101
4.5 Conclusion	104
GENERAL CONCLUSION	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY	109

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Al</i>	Other persons
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
Cf	Confer, Compare
Cor	Corinthians
DM	<i>Dives in Misericordia</i>
EG	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>
Eph	Ephesians
Ezk	Ezekiel
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
Isa	Isaiah
Jm	James
Jn	John
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
Lk	Luke
Mt	Mathew
OT	Old Testament
Phil	Philippians
Pt	Peter
Rom	Romans
SR	<i>Solitudo Rei Socialis</i>
ST	<i>Summa Theologiae</i>
Tim	Timothy
Trans	Translated
VS	<i>Veritatis Splendour</i>

CHAPTER ONE:

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. The Structure of the Study

In discussing on Aquinas' teaching on ultimate happiness, we will bring about the understanding on how this teaching is related to the gospel call for eternal happiness especially the Beatitudes. The project is all about trying to promote a living faith and faith in action among the believers as a way to attain ultimate happiness. The entire study has four chapters.

Chapter one gives us the general introduction, this includes the structure of the study; purpose of the study, the rationale of the study, the central question of investigation and the methodological consideration. Chapter two treats the teaching of Aquinas on ultimate happiness. We will explore how God is perceived in Aquinas' ethics and how Aquinas sees the unity between the ethical lives we live now and the life with God at the end of our life here on earth, which is the ultimate end. We will be interested more on the divine influence in one's moral life.

In chapter three we deal with the beatitudes and the necessity of the Church in the pursuit of ultimate happiness. The CCC teaches us that the beatitudes confront us with the decisive choice concerning our using of earthly goods as we prepare ourselves for the final end, eternal life. (cf CCC, 1726). We will look at how the church helps us to enter into the commitments of faith; the church will be depicted as the community of belief and action. The church helps and calls us to pursue this journey to ultimate end with conviction, vigor through the help and encouragement we receive from the community of believers. In the last chapter, chapter four, we will treat the topic on suffering and ultimate happiness. We will also look on how we should teach or preach about ultimate happiness to people who are suffering and who seem not to be experiencing the love and goodness of God in their life situations.

1.1 The Purpose of the Study

It is the teaching of the Church and the belief of all the Christians that we are all on a journey passing through this world to our home with God. The endless time with God in heaven is what we call the ultimate end or ultimate happiness (*beatitudo*). In this project we are trying to look on how we should walk to this end because it is not an easy journey and it demands man in his totality. However, this will be done with a mind to those who already believe in God and are called to put their faith in practice, it is a call to faith in action or in other words to living our faith. We do not refuse in any way that in human level, one does not need to be religious to be ethical. Society expects those who have no loyalty to any religion to be as diligent in their conduct just as those

who do live by their religious beliefs. There is option to good morality, everyone to behave in a way that is human and that promote human dignity universally. In human dignity, the poor and the rich and the elders and the young are all equal.

We are going to look on this journey mainly according to Thomas Aquinas who discussed, in his *Summa Theologica*, happiness as the last end. We will discuss this topic in line with Aquinas' divine aspect in human ethical life which prepares a Christian to take up a challenge to move towards his or her ultimate end. Like Aquinas, our hope is also to show that there is no gap that exists between faith and morality for Christians. Our goal is to know reality in order to live well and move together with others towards God in a confusing world full of ethical relativisms. We will link morality to faith, though, in the world of secularism, these are two different ways of living and each can do without the other.

The other point of interest is to show what we mean when we talk of the true faith. True faith implies faith in action. With this we will try to discuss how we can make our faith practical in all aspects of our lives in order to achieve our ultimate good and happiness. This journey is a faith journey and it can only be achieved by those who believe in Christ. "With faith guided by the word of God, we ought to be able to reach universal agreement about the truth or falsity of our moral claims".¹ This is true for us who are Christians. The perfect happiness we are talking about surpasses every created nature, so the activities of the human beings both intellectually and actively are necessary basics.

¹ R. M'GULA, *Reason informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality*, 17.

We will look at the importance of human action and work as essential for our journey towards God. Aquinas said that, “Works are necessary to man in order to gain Happiness; not on account of the insufficiency of the Divine power which bestows Happiness, but that the order of things be observed”.² This is a call to celebrate God’s saving presence and to contribute by word and action to the fullness of his presence. “Our actions and words are not performed or spoken into a vacuum or void. They can do good or harm; they bear responsibility; they carry the weight of life and death, good and evil”³. Our human actions take us back to our origin. By all means, we have to avoid evil dealings. Man is to act only in the way that guarantees human completion. Aquinas puts faith before good works because it is our faith that prompts us to search for the truth. We are justified by faith not by mere human acts.

With this, we can say that our motive is to challenge the modern Christians and the whole humanity to pursue the ultimate happiness, because nowadays people are busy looking for happiness but they end up falling into short lived happiness or pleasures of the body alone. Many people are not able to understand what real happiness mean, many people are losing the meaning of life especially when they are faced with difficulties in life. Aquinas’ teaching on ultimate happiness has a lot to offer to our modern societies and communities where pure human reasoning seems to overshadow the faith of the people. Aquinas writings still have wisdom to offer for our faith, knowledge and for our true existence in this modern world. In Aquinas’ way of explaining the ultimate happiness, one can easily discover that he is asking us to move

² ST.1-11, q. 5. a. 7, ad 1.

³ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 97.

from lukewarm faith to the point of living our faith or to faith in action. In dealing with this subject at hand Aquinas seems to encourage us to ask ourselves the purpose or work of our life, and for this bring true meaning, it should be asked first on personal level. This question will help us to go to the heart of things; that is the essentials of our lives.

1.2 The Rationale of the Study

There are three main reasons for the choice of the topic: The first reason for our study is to show the centrality of God, Christ, and Holy Spirit in our ethical life. True adoration of God demands the doing of the truth. In the beginnings of Aquinas sounds as only using speculative language but as we move on we see that Aquinas' language calls us to commitment to faith in action. He was not appealing to the power of intellect only but he contributed to the need of practical theology and practical faith. In Aquinas' discussion on ultimate happiness we see the aspect of human development in spiritual life and this development of man's faith entails that one comes to self-realization, and man's true self-realization is only possible when he discover God as his final end. Self-realization is only an important and necessary step in one's life but in itself it is not the final end⁴.

Cornelius J. Van der Poel said that, "Doctrinal understanding of God must be integrated into the norms of human behavior. The Scriptures cannot any longer be approached as sources where we can find commandments, but in the Scriptures we must

⁴ Cf. S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 61.

search for the revealed understanding of human life and of man's task".⁵ Human beings do not find fulfillment in themselves. Man finds fulfillment in God through his active and contemplative life.⁶ In Christian life there are no alternatives to make choices between theory and practice, both go together.

We should avoid by all means living a phantasized Christianity. Paul Ricoeur reminds us that "human action is a speaking action"⁷. The second reason is to show that believing has its purpose, which is to reach our home with God, where we will be happy for ever. So our point here is to show that belief and faith in Christ is not a theoretical metaphysical concept but a real and concrete spiritual reality. This also is a call for all of us to live what we believe and teach.

Last but not least, is to show that the life of faith cannot be achieved in isolation with other human beings. It is a life of love which calls each and everyone to be concerned about the neighbor and the society at large. This is a challenge in our world of today which has been invaded by individualism and egoism. This project is to help people not to lose sight of their faith and all its demands. Our faith is not a dead faith. In pursuing ultimate happiness, Aquinas is calling us to a practical faith that will help us to be the light to the world. This does look down upon the rituals that our faith demands us to make, but we need to make those rituals become true by living them in our society and different communities.

We are living in societies where people are even ready to use evil means in order to bring about goodness and happiness in their lives, for example; cheating in buying

⁵ C. J. Van der POEL, *The Search for Human Values*, 7.

⁶ Cf. ST.1-11, q. 3. a. 2.

⁷ P. RICOEUR, *Figuring the Sacred*, 305.

and selling and defending the unjust causes. Many Christians are also involved in this system. They have lost the sense of sin because of financial profit making strategies that are unjust to our fellow human beings. It is a world in competition for worldly goods; people are no longer searching for true goodness and life of sainthood. So, in this situation, there is need for a call to a movement from the limits of purely sense knowledge to the fullness of spiritual knowledge and this, is to be done in fulfilling God's will for humanity. Here on earth, people are to look for the goods and the happiness that remains connected to the human soul. It is through the soul's faculties that we are able to attain true happiness, the soul's faculties as knowledge and love⁸.

1.3 The Central Question of Investigation

The central question for discussion is: how one is to dispose himself or herself to God and other human being in order to be able to attain the ultimate happiness? The questions can be asked in different ways like; what is the value of our lives, the purpose of our lives, the work of our lives, or direction of our lives, what do we contribute in the world with our lives? So, by saying something on Aquinas ethics, we are not concerned with his principles of ethics but we will dwell more on the spiritual aspects of Aquinas' ethics. The question itself shows us that this journey to ultimate happiness demands each individual to decide on a radical personal decision to believe in Jesus and live in God. This personal decision will move one to love the neighbor and to live according to God's will. The moment we miss the right meaning of human life we also miss the

⁸Cf. S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 61.

purpose and right end of human life. We will not be able to live well with right motives. This is so because, for Aquinas, the end is the principle in human operations.

We have come from God and we are going back to God. The going back to God demands that we begin to handover ourselves to God now. This life here on earth is very important in our true relationship with God. Vatican II has strongly reminded us that: “They are mistaken who, knowing we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more than ever obliged to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation” (GS, 43).

The ultimate happiness is to be understood, lived, and experienced here on earth. Life here on earth is best place for the preparation of this life with God which we are calling ultimate happiness. It is challenging to talk of ultimate happiness, especially in our modern world where all aspects of human life are influenced by secularization which leads to the depersonalization of human beings. There is an urgent need to continue in different ways to insert the Gospel into our lives as well as for those whom we live with and those whom we serve in different ways.

We are very aware that this journey cannot be possible without first contemplating God. “This is eternal life; that they may know you, the only true God” (Jn 17:3). Contemplating God and having knowledge of God is the beginning of the journey towards ultimate happiness, so we cannot brush off the contribution of the human intellect in this journey though we will not say much about this in this project. Contemplation of God brings about the power in us and thereby, directs our human

actions and passions towards God.⁹ Contemplation of God also helps us to be able to live the challenge of existing in this world with unanswered questions without losing hope and faith in any way because of the faith and trust we have in God.

The importance of having time to contemplate God is shown in Dt 6:4 “Hear O Israel [...]” Terry Veiling says that, life is not only about active events. We need time to listen, we need to be addressed. Listening is a preceding state that is required of us in order that we enter into our dynamic life with something in our minds and hearts.¹⁰

1.4 Methodological Considerations

Our project will bring about the three aspects of understanding man’s journey and desire for ultimate happiness that is the anthropological aspect, biblical aspect and the theological aspect. These aspects help us to understand the human journey to eternal happiness. All the three aspects can be traced in Aquinas’ discussion on ultimate happiness. We may be tempted to say Aquinas discussed this issue on the level of a mind metaphysically ascending to God only. For us this is only one of the aspects, but we feel that the language that Aquinas used calls for practical and personal involvement and commitment. Georg Wieland says “Thomas can not immediately reach a conclusion concerning the unity of the final end. He must find instead the nature of the person and of human striving in order to unpack the essential unity of the person and the nature of the final end”¹¹.

⁹ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 3. a. 5.

¹⁰ Cf. T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 31-32.

¹¹ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 59.

1.4.1 Anthropological

David Tracy says “There is no theology which is not also anthropology, such that the doctrines of God and the human rise and fall together”¹². Christian norms of behavior are not impositions from the outside because this will easily reduce our morality to external performance only. With knowledge of God, man is invited to make his faith visible. This is so because, “Life means living, and living is preeminently what we do”.¹³ Heschel says “The Bible is not man’s theology but God’s anthropology”¹⁴. In it we learn what God want from us, a life he intended for us.

It is not enough to know that we exist or live, but we must live for a reason.¹⁵ “The anthropological and ethical significance of this line of thinking is obvious: despite the plurality and particularity of one’s striving and action, the person develops not only a natural, but also an intentional and practical unity, and due to such a unity, each person is able at all times to answer for his or her entire life”¹⁶. Our faith demands commitment to the world we live in.

1.4.2 Biblical

We will say something on the beatitudes as a call to experience true happiness here on earth through faith in action. Faith in action is practicing the truth we know and believe. “The practice of truth is not something added to truth; rather, the practice of

¹² D. TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, 435.

¹³ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 6.

¹⁴ A. HESCHEL, *Between God and Man*, 112.

¹⁵ Cf. A. UGENTI, *God and Happiness, 101 Questions and Answers*, 12.

¹⁶ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 58.

truth inheres in truth, such that without a living testimony or witness, truth would ring hollow [...]”¹⁷. It is God who created both heaven and earth. “God desires a social world characterized by justice and mercy”, and a Christian community which is “under biblical obligation to order our internal and our public life on behalf of the reign of God in history”¹⁸. Here, we are going to discuss more on the beatitudes as a way of being and an attitude towards life. They are a way of true love. “The purpose of the gospel is to permit the human race to achieve authentic humanity”¹⁹.

1.4.3 Theological

As our central question of investigation leads us to look for the practical ways to attain this ‘ultimate happiness’, we will use the theological insights that are applicable to existential situations. We need to have a concrete contact with the history of our salvation in our daily lives. There is need in our lives to always find our faith wanting, as the sign of growth towards the ultimate happiness through union with God our creator: “The goal of theology is the knowledge of God: in the first place knowledge of God in Himself, that is, in the unity of the divine essence, in the Trinity of His persons, and in the departure of creation from Him; next knowledge of God as the end of creation; finally knowledge of God as Redeemer”²⁰. Our intellectual knowledge should attract us to personal and total involvement in helping each other in our journey to eternal happiness.

¹⁷ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 147.

¹⁸ POLLAN, *The Botany of Desire*, 10-11.

¹⁹ J.M. O’CONNOR, O.P., *Becoming Human Together*, 75.

²⁰ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 57.

1.5 The Practicality of Theology in Aquinas' teaching on Ultimate Happiness

In practical theology we learn that the actual use of knowledge is praxis. In Aquinas' teaching on ultimate happiness we discover the call to serious practicing of Christian values and do away with our artificial distinction between our thinking and acting. Practicing theology is a call to enter into prayer, forgiveness, charity, justice, perseverance, tolerating, hospitality and many other human and Christian virtues. David Tracy refers to the dichotomy between theory and practice especially in theological fields as "fatal split"²¹. Both theory and praxis are important: "The interest in knowledge is identical with the interest in emancipative praxis, which is an enlightened praxis determined by scientifically explanatory interpretation"²². Understanding by doing is very important in faith matters. The validity of one's faith comes from a good understanding of both its theory and praxis. Aquinas said that "the act of the practical intellect is not sought for its own sake but for the sake of action: and these very actions are ordained to some end"²³.

There must be dialogue between our faith and life experiences. "Man will be blessed in his doing" (Jm 1: 25). In the Jewish tradition, it is said the right action is always followed by '*kavanah*': "*Kavanah* means that while we are living and acting on earth, we should keep our hearts turned toward heaven and attentive to the ways of God"²⁴. For Aquinas, we cannot say anything on perfect happiness without reference to God because man's perfect happiness can only be experienced by those who are united

²¹ D. TRACY, "On Theological Education: A Reflection", in PETERSON and ROURKE, ed., *Theological Literacy for the Twenty-First Century*, 15.

²² E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 114.

²³ ST. 1-11, q. 3. a. 5.

²⁴ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 95.

to the Uncreated, who is the last end²⁵. We can do a lot of charity and people will be happy with us but that happiness will not take them to their Creator, so the charity done by the Church should spring from evangelization of souls.

We are not teaching justification by human works in this project since we believe that we are justified by faith. Here we are only trying to show the importance of human actions in our relationship with God as we, in our everyday life, move towards him. The main message from Aquinas' way of explaining the ultimate happiness is that theology and faith are practical existential realities. Our main interest in this project is to show the practicality of the faith that Aquinas is proposing to us conjoined with the faith proposed to us in the beatitudes, all is for our ultimate happiness. "The Sermon of the Mount, of which the eight beatitudes may be considered the epitome, is to the Catholic Church what the Law of Sinai was to the Jewish people"²⁶.

1.6 Conclusion

This project is calling Christians to a greater faith development which is conjoined with practical moral development, a workable faith; this would help believers to develop the power and capacity to live loving lives. It will help us to know and deepen our knowledge and trust in God that he illuminates us to move on in this world with confidence, trust and hope. To achieve this, Terry Veiling says "[...] it is only in the practice or doing (acting upon) of theology that we begin to realize and understand

²⁵ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 3. a. 3.

²⁶ L.A. RANGIONE, O.S.A., *Conferences on the Beatitudes*, 19.

its meanings and workings more deeply”.²⁷ We learn that life is vocational and that the discovery of truth is never a purely theoretical undertaking, human action is necessary in order to discover the truth in its fullness.

Aquinas is inviting us to make our faith visible that is to have a deeper practical faith. The project also promotes attention, listening and understanding to the Church and scriptural teachings and thereby putting our faith into action. Thomas affirms, “Happiness is a state made perfect by aggregate of all good things, thus implying that the state of a happy man consists in possessing the perfect good”²⁸. Waiting to meet God in heaven is not an idle waiting, we wait in action, and faith is not idle. Through and in faith we become active in love of and for God.

²⁷ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 4.

²⁸ ST. 1-11, q. 3. a. 2, ad 2.

CHAPTER TWO

AQUINAS' TEACHING ON THE PURSUIT OF ULTIMATE HAPPINESS

2. Introduction

In this chapter, we will look at the topics like, the sacredness of human life; man created in the image of God; happiness and sufficient Goodness; Aquinas' ethics and ultimate happiness; the Trinity source of true happiness; the grace of God in man's life of moving towards true happiness; faith, reason and prayer in search of ultimate happiness and formation of conscience as an essential element in order to pursue true happiness. In Aquinas' teaching on ultimate happiness and his ethics, we are not dealing broadly with his ethics but looking for the divine aspects in human action. This is so because for Aquinas, the one with faith is seen by or through his way of life.

In this world we experience imperfect happiness, however, through the experiences of life we advance from the perfection of the lower part to the perfection of

the higher part.²⁹ Man is to decide his end from the beginning through his actions. However, in this we are not saying we get our salvation through our own actions. Our mere actions cannot bring us salvation but they are part of our response to the love of God. Our salvation totally depends on God's unfailing love for humanity. The union of man and God is to be taken seriously in life since it is not a myth, or a mere human imagination, but rather an accord with God's will, so man is to put the required effort to enter into union with God.

The advancement from the lower part of perfection to higher part of perfection entails movement or action towards that which gives us perfect happiness. Pope explains: "Since the person is disposed to happiness through reason and will, his or her happiness cannot depend on external causes that lie wholly or partially outside of human possibility".³⁰ Sensitivity is fundamental in the life of a Christian therefore for Aquinas morality is fundamental for those in pursuit for ultimate happiness. In his ethics we find the sacredness and value of morality for Christian life. Lucie-Smith said that: "Moral theology as opposed to simple ethics is about the transformation of the human person into the image of Christ through grace".³¹

To understand well the Christian movement towards God we need to first experience the sacredness of human life, otherwise without this we fail to ascent to true faith in God. This theological dimension in Aquinas' ethics, distinguishes the morality of persons who live by religious beliefs in God from those who do not. to clarify that it

²⁹ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 3. a. 3, ad 3.

³⁰ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 60.

³¹ A. LUCIE-SMITH., *Foundations of Moral Theology*, 23-24.

is not because of human acts that we get faith but in some instances they do lead to faith. Heschel says “We do not have faith because of deeds; we may attain faith through sacred deeds”.³² However, faith asks us to always take in action life.

2.1 Sacredness of Human Life

The sacredness of human life flows from God’s love for humanity, our origin is from him, His Spirit is in us and in that in His trust in human beings he gave us authority over all his creation. In his teaching on ultimate happiness, Aquinas is suggesting to us a spirituality that allows us to be always in conscious relationship with God, a spirituality that is not totally divorced from material levels of human existence. This becomes true to our catholic spirituality that that embraces the whole human life. It is desire, the knowledge and the love for our ultimate end that propels us to good action. Behind our conscious mind we think first of the end of our actions, though the end we act towards may differ. Aquinas said that: “Although the end be last in order of execution, yet it is first in the order of the agent’s intention”.³³ Here, God becomes the source and ultimate goal of all we do. However, Aquinas puts it clearly that:

One need not to always be thinking of the last end, whenever one desires or does something; but the virtue of the first intention, which was in respect of the last end, remains in every desire directed to any object whatever; even though one’s thoughts be not actually directed to the last end. Thus while walking along the road one needs not to be thinking of the end at every step.³⁴

In our human actions we are to answer to the love of God, we answer by our own life; that is by doing what God wants us to do through different services. (Cf James 2:14-18).

³²A. HESCHEL, *God in search of Man*, 282.

³³ST. 1-11, q. 1. a. 1, ad 1.

³⁴ST. 1-11, q. 1. a. 6, ad 3.

Velting says that to desire God cannot be done in half; so to desire Him is to desire all that is immeasurable and unconditional, this striving is undertaken here on earth.³⁵ There is no middle way in human relationship with God, either one is for God or not.

However, we need to be clear from the beginning that, to say morality is closely related to experiences of God and beliefs about God is for us Christians, but to say that faith in God is the sole source of moral knowledge or the only validation of moral activity may not be true to other people in the world. For us to make morality only depended on faith would require that one be a believer first in order to be able of arriving at the Christian level of understanding and living. For Aquinas human life is vocational, it is not life for the sake of its own, but for the sake of God's concerns for humanity and the whole creation. In Isa 43: 12 we are read that "You are my witnesses [...]" So, our lives should testify to God's living presence in our midst, lives that bind heaven and earth.

2.1.1 Created in the Image of God

As human beings, we are created in the image of God, and this implies that we have something of God within us. From his origin, man is capable of the truth and love of God because to be created in the image of God entails man's capacity to love and know God and this is the original duty assigned to man and the desire of God for man. It is this image of God in us that allows us to always be in a conscious relationship with God. Sheen says "The faculties which set man apart from the animals are the intellect (which naturally seeks to know all truth) and the will (which longs to embrace all

³⁵ Cf. T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 244.

goodness). But we know that Perfect Truth and Perfect Good are to be found only in God; the complete fulfillment of our natures is thus impossible except in Him”.³⁶ So, our will and intellect are part of this image of God in us. Our end is to be with the same God who created us in his own image, so our moral acts are to be directed by him and for Him.

Aquinas said that, “Morality is said properly of man, moral acts properly speaking receive their species from the end, for moral acts are the same as human acts”.³⁷ So, not believing in God is living a life of self contradicting, one contradicts himself from deep within himself because he fails to really live what he is, he misses what is his original duty, which is to know and to love God. Image and likeness of God gives man responsibility of becoming God’s representative on earth, he has to help other men and the whole creation to participate in God’s will since man participates to some extent in God’s power.³⁸

From the beginning of creation God wanted people to take the entire rule of their life from faith in Him and acknowledge the universal end of humankind. Other ends are accidentally, and Aquinas called those ends as several remote ends especially those ends we get from unnecessary pleasures.³⁹ By being created in the image of God and that God became man through Jesus Christ, the human nature becomes the intimate and dedicated tool of a special activity of God.⁴⁰ God is everything for humanity and the whole creation; he is our true origin and our final destination too. There is a great need

³⁶ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 107.

³⁷ ST. 1-11, q. 1. a. 3.

³⁸ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 34.

³⁹ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 1. a. 3, ad 3.

⁴⁰ Cf. T. McDERMOTT, *How To Read Aquinas*, 103.

for human beings to submit to the righteousness of God (Rm 10:3). Created in the image of God, means that, we received the breath of life from God, so we have the capacity to dialogue with God and to love him and all that he created.⁴¹

The *imago Dei* in us makes us sacred, which means in dealing with one another, we should do all in reverence. Gutierrez, Gustavo says “Whenever one tries to justify the failure to love the poor and the oppressed by claiming that one is worshiping, one is in fact doing evil. God is not bound to accept our religious works; if they are not inspired by the desire for life and justice, God is not present in them”.⁴² There is danger in our world today even in religious circles whereby people are forgetting that we are the ones created in the image of God, so with this many pretend to love God by trying to tame Him and domesticate Him to suit their own desires. This automatically leads us to begin creating God in our own image (false image of God) and thereby feel comfortable in our pretense that we know it all and move on to believe that we are holier than others. We have to take care that in our religious and Christian life, we should not reduce God to our mode of thinking, but we have to through our human existence express the mystery of God and his activities in human life and the whole creation as well.

Through the image of God in us, human beings have a spiritual nature; we are spiritual beings too, so we have a spirituality to live. Since we are created in the image of God, we have certain powers that surpass human nature. Our ultimate significance in the creation is because we are created in the image of God. God is the reference of our

⁴¹ Cf. A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 29.

⁴² G. GUTIERREZ, *Essential Writings*, 131

lives. So, Aquinas will say that, bodily pleasure is not happiness itself.⁴³ Our bodily pleasures and delights are not the supreme and essential good. However, some of them are good and they should result from that which is essential and supreme good. The presence of the Spirit of God in us from creation is the presence of the perfect happiness in us. We have not responded to it fully and still have an imperfect knowledge about it. Knowledge and desire for ultimate happiness remains in us as the source of our love and hope. We have already gained a certain relation to the end.⁴⁴ A proper goal in existing must take into account the nature of man: what he was made to do, what he longs to be in future life.

Created in the image of God does not make us equal to God but through the image of God, we always desire to be like him and we have the inherent potency to like God. S.J Pope says, “Due to the inherent potency of human life, this end cannot lie in the action or in the person”.⁴⁵ This means that there will be no one looking for ultimate happiness who will be satisfied by the bodily pleasures; one can only find genuine happiness in God. Yes, happiness is something belonging to the soul; but that which constitute happiness is something outside the soul.⁴⁶ This is true because, for Aquinas that which constitutes the life of happiness is to be loved for its own sake. We, as human beings, cannot love our own souls for their own sake but for the sake of God. For Aquinas human existence is never simply our own making but God’s making. Having the knowledge that we are created in the image of God, always poses a question

⁴³ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 6.

⁴⁴ Cf. ST. 1-1, q. 4. a. 3, ad 3.

⁴⁵ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 60.

⁴⁶ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 7.

to individuals. The question will be ‘What is required of me then?’ Rowan Williams said that “Whatever else is to be said, whatever further shifts and developments our language about God undergoes; this at least remains: God is not to be spoken of without humanity”.⁴⁷ We need to always live in the awareness that I am for God.

The human action done with the purpose and love for God is done with passion, so action and passion together for God lead us into faith in action; and thereby we are able to fulfill and witnessing to the image of God in us. When we discover the image of God in us, we will be surprised of ourselves. Sheen says, “Our happiness consists in fulfilling the purpose of our being”.⁴⁸ The whole humanity is a mystery. Veiling pointed out that: “Man encounters himself, he is surprised to know himself, in the words he utters, in the deeds he does, and above all in living as an answer”.⁴⁹ In this journey towards ultimate happiness, there is completely no place to use others for selfish gains, depersonalizing and dehumanizing of fellow human beings. To show the significance of man in creation, Buber said that: “I consider the human person to be the irremovable central place of the struggle between the world’s movement away from God and its movement towards God”.⁵⁰

Through being created in the image of God man is ordained for happiness. Aquinas said that: “[...] since man is ordained for happiness through principles that are in him; since he is ordained thereto naturally”.⁵¹ Here the word ‘naturally’ does not mean from our own mere human nature but because of that which God placed in us

⁴⁷ R. WILLIAMS, *On Christian Theology*, 288.

⁴⁸ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 6.

⁴⁹ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 87.

⁵⁰ M. BUBER, *Between Man and Man*, 70.

⁵¹ ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 4.

from the beginning; that is His image. We should not think that the image of God is something added to human nature, no, it is the beginning of it; it is intrinsic not extrinsic to human beings. Aquinas said that: “Since the end corresponds to the beginning; this argument proves that the last end is the first beginning of being, in Whom every perfection of being is [...]”.⁵² We are invited in our words and deeds to promote a humanity which is living in God’s image. We should reflect God’s wisdom, compassion and justice. In our capacity we are called to enter into partnership with God in His work of continuous creation.⁵³

2.1.2 True Happiness entails reaching the sufficient Goodness

For Aquinas, “happiness is a perfect and sufficient good; it excludes every evil, and fulfils every desire”.⁵⁴ Since God is good and man is created in the image of Good, man desire to be good and through this very desire he moves towards his creator so as to perfect his universal goodness in God. “And any good inherent to the soul is a participation good, and consequently a portioned good. Therefore none of them can be man’s last end”.⁵⁵ It is impossible to have true happiness in this life. S.J Pope says “Happiness is an uncreated good lying outside of the person, and its universality alone can quell human striving”.⁵⁶ For Antonio, happiness is love in this world, that is the

⁵² ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 5, ad 3.

⁵³ Cf. T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 101.

⁵⁴ ST. 1-11, q. 5. a. 3.

⁵⁵ ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 8.

⁵⁶ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 59.

love of God and neighbor. The love of neighbor for his or her own sake is the touchstone of the love of God.⁵⁷

For Aquinas the good is the foundation and the goal of Christian life. God is the only centre of our values: “Since everything strives toward its end insofar as that end is good, then the good must be the end insofar as it is good. The highest good is, accordingly in the greatest measure the end of all things. But the highest good can only be one thing, and that is God”.⁵⁸ So, with this, it is contradictory to accept several final ends. Our convictions about God ought to make difference in our life as Christians in the world. To say that our convictions about the good are based on our beliefs about God puts us at the level of relating faith and morality. Aquinas spoke of God, the divine goodness, as the final end of humanity and other realities.⁵⁹

2.2 Aquinas’ Ethics and Ultimate Happiness

In Aquinas’ ethics we do not only discover what morality is, but also what love is, since for him to be moral and to love imply one another. The capacity for love in Aquinas is the ability to appreciate and respond to love in all its forms. Here, authentic moral living is not possible until one is able to love, because where there is love there is care. Morality in Aquinas is seen as the foundational experience. Foundational moral experience is a matter of the heart. Moral life is not only a matter of avoiding sin; we need to look at it too on the perspective of doing good. For Aquinas, since happiness is

⁵⁷ A. UGENTL., *God and Happiness*, 17.

⁵⁸ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 59.

⁵⁹ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 1. a. 8.

man's supreme good, it is incompatible with any evil.⁶⁰ The nature of the good is the full actualization of any being's potential, or to achieve perfection.⁶¹

In Aquinas' Christian ethics, it is God's will commanding what is right and this can only be understood by those who have an authentic experience of God, however, this does not do away with objectivity of truth. The morality suggested by Aquinas calls for reflections and practical concerns of Christian living in the mysteries of faith. In Aquinas we learn that God created the universe for His own glory, to manifest His goodness and that He created man that he might give glory to Him and receive glory from Him.

Christian morality is not possible if it is done or lived isolated from the influence of the scriptures and other great mysteries of faith and spirituality. For Aquinas, the source of moral knowledge should not be reduced to the knowledge of the law only. In all his actions, man's mind should be always united to God. The question concerning the true final end can best be answered by the one who lives the most moral life centered on God's will for humanity.⁶² Pope Benedict XVI wrote that: "Ethics is not denied; it is freed from the constraints of moralism and set in the context of a relationship of love- of relationship to God".⁶³

This union with God in mind and spirit helps us to make the good part and parcel of our life. There will be no need to think of God before we act but this good becomes our way of life. This too helps us to always contemplate God. "[...] we cannot

⁶⁰ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 4.

⁶¹ Cf. R. M. GULA, *Reason informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality*, 43.

⁶² S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 59.

⁶³ J. RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 62.

separate knowing from being, thinking from acting; theological reflection from pastoral and practical involvement”.⁶⁴ The belief of the Church that God created man in His own image has a great influence on Aquinas’ teachings even his ethics. This fundamental value which is the sacred value of persons as the image of God, leads us to put more attention to relationships and responsibility and our Christian life becomes much more socially conscious than living in individualistic tendencies. R.M Gula said that: “The monotheistic faith of Christianity tolerates only one center of value”.⁶⁵ With this understanding, our Christian life becomes largely a matter of promoting positive human relationships which will allow full potential of one’s own and other people’s gifts to flourish.

Through our religious beliefs and conviction, we can wait for the perfect happiness in hope and joy. “Some are said to be happy in this life, either on account of the hope of obtaining Happiness in the life to come [...]”.⁶⁶ So, people can be happy in this life and this happiness becomes the source of hope for the true and perfect happiness. Rom 8:24, says that we are saved by hope. Sheen said: “The man who has integrated his personality in accordance with its nature, and oriented his life towards God knows the intense and indestructible pleasure the saints called joy. No outward event can threaten him or ruffle his happiness. But many men look outward for their pleasure and expect the accidents of their lives to provide their happiness”.⁶⁷ Existing in a good and God pleasing life here on earth is the beginning of happiness here and in

⁶⁴ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 6.

⁶⁵ R. M. GULA *Reason informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality*, 44.

⁶⁶ ST. 1-11, q. 5. a. 3, ad 1.

⁶⁷ F.J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 42.

future. It is living among other human beings, caring and having compassion on them. This will help the believers not to regret living here on earth and also not to feel disappointed and fear to die.

2.3 Aquinas on true source of Happiness

For Aquinas, the whole man that is body and soul came from God, and then the whole man is for God. Without any doubt, Aquinas is saying that this is the end for which man was created since for him happiness means the acquisition of the last end.⁶⁸ Christians are to work in order to achieve happiness; however some work more to achieve honor. For Aquinas, happiness is more excellent than honor. Happiness is man's perfect good and it is God alone who constitutes man's happiness.⁶⁹ In his teaching on happiness, there is no confusion or separation between thought and existence. For him, knowledge involves enthusiasm and personal commitment in order that we are able to live out our knowledge. He seems to suggest that we take the primacy of our future as our point of departure; we do so as we recover the present without denying the reality of the present life.

In understanding Aquinas well, we can again conclude that he is saying that, man is made for happiness. In human activities, people always strive for some good or perfection. For some people power is their good, for others it is money and for others it is a service of different kinds. However, our ultimate search is to experience our identity in the Divine and the interconnectedness of all life. We are searching for the

⁶⁸ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 1. a. 8.

⁶⁹ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 2.

supreme good (*summum bonum*). Ultimate happiness is called man's supreme good, because it is the attainment or enjoyment of the supreme good. In it all our appetites are fully quenched.⁷⁰ In Aquinas, the *summum bonum* is not just the best thing one could ever have but that good which contains in it or brings along with it all other good and desirable things. It is that which completely satisfies the desires of human heart. "Happiness is man's true good".⁷¹ The journey to perfect happiness is a journey where we move towards being united to the universal source of all good.

This true happiness cannot consist in human fame or glory but through man's knowledge and love of God that is put into practice. Being famous and having true happiness are two different things. S.J Pope says "Genuine happiness includes the character of self-sufficiency, that is, the happy person lacks nothing that he or she needs".⁷² So, no human good can be equaled or identified as ultimate end though the other human contributes in our journey to ultimate happiness. However, there is temporal happiness in other worldly things and happenings, but this sort of happiness will never satisfy human being fully.

Concerning riches, Aquinas said that, "[...] for when we already possess them, we despise them, and seek others [...]. The reason of this is that we realize more their insufficiency when we possess them: and this very fact shows that they are imperfect and that the sovereign good does not consist therein".⁷³ This can be supported by Jeremiah 9:24 "[...] but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and

⁷⁰ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 3. a. 1, ad 2.

⁷¹ ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 3.

⁷² S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 60.

⁷³ ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 1, ad 3.

knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the Lord. So, man’s final happiness is in the knowledge and possession of God. Aquinas is teaching us that man can reach his perfect happiness both by contemplating God and participating in His divine life. “Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence”.⁷⁴ The revelation of the Divine Essence fills the soul with all good things, since it unites it to the foundation of all goodness.⁷⁵

2.3.1 The Human Soul

It is good to have the contemporary understanding of the soul in order to understand more on the issue of the ultimate happiness. The soul is both body and spirit, so if we say the ultimate happiness is not in the soul, we mean it cannot be found in man, but man moves towards this very happiness. When we say that the soul yearns for ultimate happiness, we mean that man in his wholeness yearns for eternal happiness. This eternal happiness is something outside the soul (human being). What constitutes happiness is a good of the soul and happiness itself is the excellence of the soul.⁷⁶ The soul cannot be the man’s last end because the soul itself exists in potentiality. Potentiality is for the sake of act to its fulfillment, so the soul cannot be its own last end. So, the happiness we experience now is still to be perfected. Even those who do good, still desire to do more good: “It is impossible for any created good to constitute man’s

⁷⁴ ST. 1-11, q. 3. a. 8.

⁷⁵Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 5. a. 4.

⁷⁶ Cf. ST.1-11, q. 2. a. 7.

happiness. For happiness is the perfect good, which lulls the appetite altogether; else it would not be the last end, if something yet remained to be desired”.⁷⁷

Happiness is joy in truth, so the happiness we get from our unjust doings is false happiness and it has no place in our journey to perfect happiness. Both aspects of human being (soul and body) are necessary in order to acquire perfect happiness. Aquinas said that, “For man needs in this life, the necessaries of the body, both for the operation of contemplative virtue, and for the operation of active virtue, for which latter he needs also many other things by means of which to perform its operations”.⁷⁸ So, the external goods are necessary but not as belonging to the core of happiness; they serve as tools to ultimate happiness. The legitimate pleasures we experience here on earth are not to be our goals but pointers to our ultimate joy, so we cannot make a mistake of directly aiming at pleasures. Our lasting happiness cannot come from the things we have; it is manufactured by the soul as it purifies itself from selfishness business.⁷⁹ It is all about transformation nothing else.

2.4 The Trinity source of ultimate happiness

Taking into account that for Aquinas man in his or her totality body and soul came from God and is for God, we can see that there is a mystical insight in the service of moral life. Faith makes us move to authentic moral reflection and living. In Christian life, there is no way one can rule out the dualism between the inwardness of Christian life and its outward expression. Life of faith is a new way of life prepared for us by God

⁷⁷ ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 8.

⁷⁸ ST. 1-11, q. 4. a. 7.

⁷⁹Cf. F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 42.

in Jesus Christ and which we fulfill through the power of the Holy Spirit. In our journey to eternal happiness, we share in the life of the Trinity beginning from our life here on earth. The three persons of the Trinity effects something in us, in order to enable or make us capable of eternal happiness, because man left to himself, has no the power to reach eternity on his own capabilities.

2.4.1 God our Alpha and Omega, the origin and purpose of our happiness

It is only because of God's love that we exist; and looking at the history of Israel we find that the divine attentiveness to humanity is so significant. According to Aquinas, God is our Alpha and Omega because He is happy in and through Himself; His activity is His being, and He is Himself end and completion.⁸⁰ God is always involved in the human history; and the moment he decides to stop involving Himself, humanity will disappear on the face of the earth. Veling said that: "It is God's concern for humanity that lay at the root of the prophet's words".⁸¹ So, it is also Aquinas' concern that it should be God's concern for humanity that lies at the root of our moral acts. God is not outside human history, he is the true author of human history.

Those who are well disposed in the knowledge of their beginnings and their ultimate end take their entire rule of life in God. Sheen wrote that: "Only the God centered life gives us an adequate way of measuring the worth of this action versus that".⁸² When our true goal is God, everything we do is ordered by the law of love. This God is Emmanuel, God with us. For McDermott, "God exists not far out in the heavens,

⁸⁰ Cf. ST. 1- 11, q. 3. ad. 4.

⁸¹ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 12.

⁸² F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 107.

not deep in the mechanics of anything, but on the surface where things themselves exist”.⁸³ He is near and in us, so we are invited not to let our dreams become dust, but to look forward with hope to His intervention at His own time.

Man is not God and man can not satisfy himself and he does not reach perfect happiness within his own powers, but he needs grace. For Aquinas, “God is happiness by His Essence: for He is happy not by acquisition or participation; of something else, but by His Essence”.⁸⁴ In God there is happiness essentially but human beings are to be united to God in order to experience ultimate happiness, so in this present state of life, perfect happiness cannot be attained by man but we can participate and experience it or having a glimpse of it. Sheen too said that “We must seek for Pure Life, Pure Truth, and Pure Love – and that is the definition of God”.⁸⁵ We, as human beings, are happy by participation. We call men happy but only as men; but God has promised us perfect happiness in heaven.⁸⁶

By desire and participation, one enters into a particular mode of existence through which and in which Christians are to really experience salvation, which is the redemption, liberation, renewal of life, happiness and fulfillment. This is exactly what faith does to the ethical life of human beings. God is our life in its fullness, so when we deny God in our lives is just like we are rebelling against our very own lives. In faith, human beings are raised above their nature by God’s grace. So assenting to faith which is the chief act of faith is from God moving man inwardly by his grace.⁸⁷ God does

⁸³ T. McDERMOTT, *How To Read Aquinas*, 39.

⁸⁴ ST. 1- 11, q. 3. a. 1, ad 1.

⁸⁵ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 7.

⁸⁶ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 3. a. 2, ad 4.

⁸⁷ Cf. ST. 11a 11ae, q. 6, ad 1.

everything for us; man's work is to respond. In our weakness and sin we fail to recognize many gifts offered to us by God.

With and in faith, the love of God for all is continued by Christians in our earthly history. For Veling, "Just as God continually brings forth in existence in generous creativity, so do we".⁸⁸ Christian life itself calls for being and acting. It is a life that is not static but dynamic. R.M Gula wrote, "God becomes the horizon within which the believer sees and value things".⁸⁹ God's concern becomes the source of our human values. Our deeds are to be done in God. (Jn 3:21). As Christians we are to be good because God is good, and because the goodness of God is always and everywhere present to us, and enables us to be responsible for the goodness of the world at large. It is a call to strive to live a life informed by faith.

God is the one who authorizes the moral life of the believers. Our actions are judged wrong if they do not properly respond to what God wants from us. The actions of Christian believers are not only authorized by social conventions. This will help us to be humble; otherwise without this knowledge pride invades us. God is in control of everything. It is 'in' and 'through' faith that we are able to feel the nearness of the Kingdom of God. In faith we enter into a religious experience of God. Sheen says that, "When God is chosen as the Master Value, we have a yardstick by which to measure actions and to know how good or bad they are".⁹⁰

2.4.2 *Jesus Christ the source and model of our Human Acts and Works*

⁸⁸ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 24.

⁸⁹ R. M. GULA, *Reason informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality*, 45.

⁹⁰ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 107.

In his teaching on human actions in pursuit of ultimate happiness, Aquinas seems to suggest to us a working faith. A theological life is a working life that speaks to people even without saying a word. Jesus himself lived a theological life though he had to say a lot of words for the sake of all the generations that came after his ascension. In John 5:17 we hear Jesus speaking of doing God's work. God is always at work, so Christ too. Schnackenburg said that: "Jesus is the person in whom the power of God which drives out darkness and triumphs over the powers of death is present. It is in Jesus that God reveals himself in his power and helping nearness".⁹¹

Jesus is concerned in doing the work that pleases God not what pleased him personally. Our work is and should be pleasing to God. In John 8: 28, Jesus is doing the work that reveals the very nature and activity of God, so we too are called to be transformed into the mind and spirit of Christ, thereby called to do the same as he did. For Schillebeeckx, "The object of Christian faith is, of course, already realized in Christ, but it is only realized in him as our promise and our future. But future cannot be theoretically interpreted, it must be done".⁹²

The eschatological hope is not fulfilled only by the contemplation of it but by also doing it. Jesus is the teacher of truth, so all who are looking for eternal truth should be ready to learn from Christ. Again Schillebeeckx said that: "Jesus' human existence is meaningful speech about God's communication of himself. Jesus interprets his own

⁹¹ R. SCHNACKENBURG., *The Gospel According to St John, Vol 2.* 29.

⁹² E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 66.

human life and in so doing interprets God's revelation in an original manner".⁹³ With this we can say that a man, who understands Christ in this way and have full faith in him, will gain for himself a deeper understanding of his own existence. "We cannot have an authentic understanding of humanity unless we first know Christ".⁹⁴

Christians are to be the people of the Bible. We have to be asking ourselves regularly if our work testifies that we are sent by God. There is a purpose for us being in the world, and this purpose is to respond to God's purpose for the whole creation.⁹⁵ Our lives are meant to bear witness and to mirror God's goodness. To live a practical theological life is not easy because it demands a lot of self-sacrifice and self-denial. Veling says "[...] the birth of any new insight, behavior, or attitude is usually accompanied by the death of a preceding set of attitudes or behaviors that need to be changed and transformed".⁹⁶

In Jesus Christ, we learn that theory is not opposite of practice. Jesus' discourses were not merely for people to acquire purely abstract knowledge about God. P. Hadot when explaining about the many philosophical theories writes "Rather than aiming at the acquisition of purely abstract, these exercises aim at realizing a transformation of one's vision of the world and a metamorphosis of one's personality".⁹⁷ Through Jesus Christ humans have admittance to a dignified life and valuable standard of living. "It was through Christ's entry into the *profundiora humanitatis* that the *profundiora Dei*

⁹³ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 48.

⁹⁴ J. M. O'CONNOR, O.P, *Becoming Human Together*, 37.

⁹⁵ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 12.

⁹⁶ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 139.

⁹⁷ P. HADOT, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 21.

were revealed in him”.⁹⁸ Through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit given to us, we too, as Christ did, we can in our own different ways show something of God to the world.

The question now is that are we ready to cooperate and enter into this mystery of life with Christ. For J-B Metz, “All Christology is nourished, for the sake of its own truth, by praxis and particularly the praxis of the imitation of Christ. It is, in other words, expressed in practical knowledge”.⁹⁹ True faith is only possible when one is in Christ Jesus. In Christ man is illumined and guided by the divine life. Faith in Christ calls for an everlasting union with God in thought, will and action, as Jesus did with his Father God. Gaining divine sonship in and through Christ brings with it a moral duty in order to prove that we are really assimilated into this divine sonship. Veling says, “We must take on the form of Christ, as Christ took on our form”.¹⁰⁰ This is the way in which we can bring our own lives into conformity with the scriptures.

2.4.3 Holy Spirit inspires man into faith in action

The Holy Spirit has a part to play in our ethical life. He is the one who breathes charity in us (Cf CCC, 1979; 1 Jn 4:2). The fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, friendliness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and morality (Gal 5:22-23). It is well elaborated in 2 Tim 1:7 which talks of a Spirit of power and love and self-control. It is also a spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph 1:17). In these readings, we

⁹⁸ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 48.

⁹⁹ J-B. METZ, *Faith in History and Society*, 51.

¹⁰⁰ T. A VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 22.

clearly see that it is the Spirit that gives the believer the special knowledge of the spiritual or heavenly things and a knowledge of what is of God. It is the illumination of the inner eye (Eph 1:8; 1 Thess 5:20).

Through the power of the Holy Spirit Christians have the capacity to differentiate between what is ethical good and bad. They do so with and in hope and faith in the ultimate happiness as a gift of salvation from God: “By being born of the Spirit, Christians also receive a heavenly spiritual nature. This Spirit is therefore like a charism, an anointing of our humanity so that it takes on a spiritual mode of existence”.¹⁰¹ This agrees with what we read in Aquinas’ ethics, the power of God in us becomes the principle force of our ethical as Christians. *Gaudium et Spes* teaches us that:

The people of God believe that it is led by the Lord’s Spirit, who fills the earth. Motivated by this faith, it labors to decipher authentic signs of God’s presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires in which this people has a part along with other men of our age. For faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God’s design for man’s total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human.¹⁰²

Without the Holy Spirit, it will be impossible for one to reach the blessed vision of God that is the completion of the search of the believer for the goal that God has set for human fulfillment. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “This vocation to eternal life is supernatural. It depends entirely on God’s gratuitous initiative for he alone can reveal and give himself. It surpasses the power of human intellect and will, as that of every other creature” (CCC, 1998). Both the true worship of God and a life of holiness are possible by the Holy Spirit; but they are also a response to the grace of

¹⁰¹ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Christ the Christian Experience in the Modern World*, 470.

¹⁰² VATICAN 11, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, No. 11

God. With the Holy Spirit, man is given power and his life is raised to the level of spiritual dignity. Man in the Spirit is a new creation. This brings about a real change in his life, not only in his life situations but also his being. The work of the Spirit is recognizable through the effects which the Spirit produces in those who believe. The Spirit first of all gives us freedom from sin and all other works follow, especially life of holiness and brotherly and sisterly love. When we talk of the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God that sustains us in our faith, we can say that faith does not start from doing good works but first of all is a devotion of the heart; it begins in the very depth of human soul.

2.5 Faith, Reason and Prayer in our journey towards God

First of all, our faith in God makes us trust and depend on Him in everything. It even makes us ready to do whatever He tells us to do before we understand fully what he wants us to do; then it is in doing that we come to gradual understanding of God's ways. As we have said that the life to eternal happiness is a supernatural call. This entails that human beings cannot find comfort and be sure that we are saved by following our feelings and our works. We need above all to find refuge and power in faith and prayer. Even the preparation of human beings for the reception of grace is already the work of grace, so grace brings us to reception of faith in God, helps us to sustain our collaboration with God in and through faith. Faith is a reality in man's soul. Such type of faith brings with it a genuine worship of God. Our human actions are to spring from this devotion of the soul to God. M. Quoist says, "Reason can lead us in the

direction of faith but it can never confer it”.¹⁰³ Even those who deny that God exist, they are using the intelligence they have which belong to God to deny the existence of the source of their own existence, and this is a tragedy.

We work to develop our faith but in all this we are collaborators with God who works in us (cf. CCC 2001). It is through putting the knowledge we have into action that we are led to deeper understanding, just as we hear and learn¹⁰⁴. In moral and Christian life, mind and heart work together. For R. M Gula, “A heart sensitive to God is born in prayer and is nurtured by prayerful attention to the presence of God in the diverse experiences of living. A heart so sensitive is alert to the diverse ways of God and can read the signs of God’s presence and action in the world”.¹⁰⁵ This clearly shows us that prayer can take us to the mystical side of moral life. It is through the moral convictions that lead us to affective commitment. Through and in faith we begin to experience the true happiness but not in its fullness because, having faith does not mean one have exhausted the mysteries of God. Faith gives us hope and through God’s grace we gain the supernatural process of God but God remains a mystery and this is what exactly makes faith grow.

Christian morality is not metaphysical but it is based on reality. *Gaudium et Spes* says, “Faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God’s design for man’s total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions that are fully human” (GS,11). With faith informing reason of the good, the believer sees God as the fullness of being. In

¹⁰³ M. QUOIST., *The Meaning of Success*, 195.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 94.

¹⁰⁵ R. M. GULA, *Reason informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality*, 15.

Christian life, there are moments of learning, listening, contemplating and the moments of application of faith in real life situations. When Christian faith is authentic it does not mortify freedom or human reason, when they meet one another and dialogue, they express themselves in the best way.¹⁰⁶ To avoid entering into action that are not human; faith is necessary, for example Pope John Paul II wrote in his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* –“ Rich in Mercy” that “human action can deviate from justice itself, even when it is being undertaken in the name of justice” (DM. 12). So, justice goes with faith and mercy, without this the intended justice becomes a sin. “Bearing with one another in love” (Eph 4:2), is part and parcel of justice.

In Aquinas, we learn that faith informs reason, but it does not replace it. The two remain the principles that help us move towards the ultimate happiness. In teaching about Christian life, we need to stress more on covenant, vocation, responsibility, discipleship and conversion than to always appeal to the law. Law in Aquinas’ morality is integrated with the great mysteries of faith, thereby insisting that the journey to ultimate happiness begins now here on earth. To have life in its fullness one has to have thirst for God. Through this very thirst of God one lives for the ultimate meaning of life. Thirst for God helps us let our faith remain a living faith in a world of change. In our Catholic faith we need to learn to emphasize what we believe by teaching and doing or living our doctrine in our concrete lives.

For him, there is a great need to focus on the total human vocation of living in response to God’s self-communication to us in creation, in history and most fully in

¹⁰⁶ POPE BENEDICT XVI, Faith-Reason Split Is Schizophrenia, www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-faith-reason-split-is-schizophrenia. Date: 02-04-14.

Jesus. In Aquinas's morality, values are primary and law is secondary but working together. Christian life is an ongoing process of conversion so that; who we are and what we do becomes more and more a response to divine life. The one who holds religious beliefs has a sense that his beliefs ought to make a difference in the way one understands himself and conducts his life. This is so because human beings attain their last end by knowing, living and loving God.¹⁰⁷ Our material world expresses something of the spiritual things; that is why Aquinas said that we can prove the existence of God too from the contemplation of the created world. From the things we know, we may rise to the desire of things unknown. Faith makes us to come to the truth that God is sufficient for human being and that it is through his attractive power that lifts us up to union with Him.

2.6 Human Acts and Morality in the pursuit of Ultimate Happiness

Human acts lead us to our salvation though they are not the root or foundation of our salvation. Veling says, "Our relationship with God is more than a contemplated act; it is a performed deed".¹⁰⁸ There is difference between desiring the perfect happiness and the attainment of it, desire itself is not the attainment of the end but the desire puts us in motion or movement towards the end, so human acts are important throughout this movement.¹⁰⁹ Here, our new life in Christ must be fully developed and must grow progressively. Through Jesus, God created a world which he will infallibly bring to

¹⁰⁷ ST. 1-11, q. 1. a. 8.

¹⁰⁸ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 86.

¹⁰⁹ . Cf. ST. 1-11, q.3. a. 4.

fulfillment through the free actions of men.¹¹⁰ Not all acts we do are human according to Aquinas, for him, “[...] acts are called human, inasmuch as they proceed from a deliberate will. Now the object of the will is the good and the end. And hence it is clear that the principle of human acts, in so far as they are human, is the end”.¹¹¹

We are to practice our faith in love and so grow up in all things that are good. Paul Ricoeur reminds us that “human action is a speaking action”.¹¹² They speak to us personally, to our neighbors and to God who is our *Omega*. Our actions are to speak about the goodness of God to others. However, God does not force us into the gift of new life though He is the man’s last end; He is the uncreated good, who alone by His never-ending goodness can completely satisfy man’s will.¹¹³ We must freely accept His gift and willingly co-operate with Him to develop the divine life of grace in our souls. Quoiist said that: “Your every action is ultimately aimed in the direction of happiness. It is God himself who has planted this hunger for happiness in the very depths of the human heart”.¹¹⁴

For Aquinas, we are charged with a personal responsibility to direct our actions towards God. Our moral task as Christians can best be understood through serious consideration of a great truth and willingly accept the great gift of divine life given by Christ. The truth is that our salvation, therefore our true happiness is in Christ. By our human actions we hold the name of God holy; that is why hearing and doing is very important for Christians. Even if the world in which we live may be far from God, in the

¹¹⁰ Cf. T. McDERMOTT, *How To Read Aquinas*, 93.

¹¹¹ ST. 1-11, q. 1. a. 3.

¹¹² P. RICOEUR, *Figuring the Sacred*, 305.

¹¹³ . Cf. ST.1-11. q. 3. a. 1.

¹¹⁴ M. QUOIST., *The Meaning of Success*, 80.

spiritual sense, the hearts of the faithful should be very near to God. Staying far from God makes one to regret being born, especially in times of trouble. Others end up cursing God and commit suicide because they reach a point of seeing no sense for existing.

Aquinas is suggesting to us that salvation through existential faith is visible and experiential. Through human acts, our faith should have an influence on the world of human society and this faith should be historical. Through our human actions we move back to God where we came from; the return of creation to God takes the form of a practical return, not an inactive return. The desire or intention to meet God is not enough to make one reach his or her goal. S.J Pope quoted Georg Wieland who said that that: “One must therefore locate individual intention with a more comprehensive moral context [...]. Such a foundation is essential; without it, the movement of action could not be reached”.¹¹⁵

Velting says, “Many of the rabbinic and Gospel parables suggest that the Torah or God’s word is more concerned with what we do and how we live, rather than with what we know or what we believe”.¹¹⁶ He also beautifully said “It is not our knowledge or our beliefs on their own that anchor or secure our lives”.¹¹⁷ If our knowledge is not rooted in action, it can easily be swept away. It is when our knowledge and actions are put together that they provide us with the true foundation of faith in God. Human actions should entail a disposition towards an end. Man should not feel as if he is everything for himself. “The human being is not his or her own fulfillment and purpose,

¹¹⁵ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 58.

¹¹⁶ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 83.

¹¹⁷ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 84.

for the human being is not the highest good”.¹¹⁸ Human true fulfillment can only be searched in God, missing this we are prone to seeking false and empty fulfillment that in the course of turn to be sour and destructive.

The development of the divine life in us is chiefly God’s work; however, we are called upon to play our part in it, so here Aquinas calls us from the beginning to participate in God’s goodness by living a life worthy of people moving towards ultimate goodness and happiness. Here comes the importance of our human acts in search of ultimate happiness. “Accordingly perfect happiness cannot consist essentially in the consideration of speculative sciences”.¹¹⁹ Human acts in Christian life are to be consistent with the demands of the scriptures. Scriptures are not only theoretical; Don S. Browning said that, “Theory (*theoria*) is an abstraction from and reflection of practice (*praxis*). Praxis is the basic or prior reality. The test of good theory is largely the adequacy with which it guides practice”.¹²⁰ The movement towards attainment of the ultimate happiness calls for action in participating in the divine goodness.

Aquinas quoted St Augustine who brought out the teaching that as we wait for perfect happiness in the life to come, we begin to experience this happiness now because our bodies and bodily senses get hold of a certain overflow of God’s Spirit in us, so as to be perfected in their operations.¹²¹ The good disposition of our bodies is needed for true happiness. It is only through practical or active faith that we will be able to reach our real home with God.

¹¹⁸ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 61.

¹¹⁹ ST. 1-11. q. 3. a. 6.

¹²⁰ D. S. BROWNING, *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care. Theology and Pastoral Care*, 49.

¹²¹ . Cf. ST. 1 -11. q. 3. a. 3.

Human acts become a sign that something is happening in our journey towards God. The scriptures always encourage us to move forward in our journey of faith. “So run that you may comprehend [...]” (1 Cor 9:24). We are to run towards our goal, which is perfect happiness. It is not easy to run towards this goal; St Paul calls this journey a fight. He said, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; as to the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice” (2 Tim 4: 7-8). Human effort is necessary for the acquisition of perfect happiness. We should not be thoughtless in our actions. Veling said “Central to Judaism’s way of life are the ‘*mitzvot*’- the commandments of God, and our response to the divine call by way of action”¹²². Knowing, understanding and doing go together if we want to be true witness of God’s love to humanity. Heschel refers to Judaism as a “Science of deeds”.¹²³ This very same interpretation is true for Christianity. Knowing our destiny is a sign of the potentiality we have within ourselves and now we need to move from that potentially to actuality.

Through our human acts, we are to interpret the gospels in doing. This is the very interpretation of the word of God that the world is looking for now, that is witness of life. A living interpretation of the word of God gives this very word ultimate authority, so the sacred scriptures should be taken as deep sources of wisdom for encountering daily dilemmas and even positives in life.¹²⁴ Right action is not mere external performance or a mechanical act: “Action is not action without love, action is not action without faith and concern, action is not action without thoughtfulness and

¹²² T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 86.

¹²³ A. HESCHEL, *God in Search of Man*, 281.

¹²⁴ Cf. T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 68.

understanding, without reflection and contemplation, without the involvement of the heart".¹²⁵ This too is what Aquinas demands for an action to be human action. For him, there must be a point from which an action derives, because the action could not otherwise begin.¹²⁶

Veiling said "By whatever we do, by every act we carry out, we either advance or obstruct the drama of redemption; we either reduce or enhance the power of evil".¹²⁷ So, with this, there is no time one can say I will not speak to this one again because even if one stops speaking to the other through words, he or she communicates a message of hate even louder by his or her actions or through silence. However, both words and actions are important in living Christian life. S.J Pope said "It is by your words that you will be acquitted and by your words that you will be condemned" (Mt12:37). So, our words should be always building words, they should bear goodness. There are people too who speak what is in their mind but not in their hearts, some too act what is in their mind never in their hearts; and most of such people live hypocritical lives. S.J Pope would say that our human actions are to come from an inner, lasting foundation, not simply from external, contingent impulses.¹²⁸

2.6.1 The Grace of God in man's life as he journeys back towards God

It is quite clearly in Aquinas' discussion, that perfect happiness cannot be attained by purely human natural effort. God is in control of everything, though he does

¹²⁵ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 95.

¹²⁶ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 1, a. 4.

¹²⁷ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 101.

¹²⁸ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 58.

not force us into His principles and aim in creating man. Grace attracts us, attraction from God and man is to make effort in answering to this movement to faith. In the scriptures especially in Jn 1:12-18 and Rom 8:14-17, and in the Church teachings, we learn that grace is favor from God, a favor given freely and undeserved one that helps us respond to God and enables us to become partakers in the divine nature (cf CCC, 1996). So, we cannot participate in the life of the Trinity through our own mere efforts and works.

For Aquinas, “[...] this is done by the Divine, which raises man to the participation of eternity which transcends all change”.¹²⁹ To have a fulfilled life both here on the earth and in communion with God where he enjoys the perfect good of happiness, man needs the Divine assistance. For Schnackenburg “Prior to all human effort to attain to the Kingdom of God, God himself must create the basis of a new being in man, which will also make a new way of life possible”.¹³⁰ This is so because as we have seen that true happiness consists in knowing, loving and believing in God.

So, our mere human actions cannot bring us perfect happiness. They even cannot give us power to do more good, but by God alone human beings are made happy.¹³¹ Grace of God helps us to unlock the mysteries of the scriptures and to put them into practice; it is the power that makes us be open to humanity and the whole creation, even to things beyond us. S.J Pope wrote “Since what is proposed for their belief surpasses human reason, human beings would not know about the divine plan for

¹²⁹ ST. 1-11, q. 5. a. 4, ad 1.

¹³⁰ R. SCHNACKENBURG., *The Gospel According to St John, Vol 1.368.*

¹³¹ Cf. ST.1-11, q. 5. a. 6.

them unless God chose to reveal it to them”.¹³² Commenting on the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector praying under one roof to God, Ratzinger said that the tax collector prayed to God for God’s grace to help him, “The grace for which he prays does not dispense him from ethics. It is what makes him truly capable of doing good in the first place”.¹³³ Grace restores our capability, which is our natural capabilities of seeking the truth, doing good and loving God and neighbor which had been hurt by sin, grace transforms us and we become able to love God above ourselves directly for Himself.¹³⁴

According to Aquinas, in faith, we assent to what is not self-evident, beyond human invention and grasp, so we need the grace of God. It elevates the believer to a perception beyond mere human reason. S.J Pope said “Without Christian revelation and its grace-supported acceptance, one would not know of his or her supernatural dignity nor pursue the supernatural end”.¹³⁵ So, there is no different sources of faith in the Catholic Church, both those who teach and those who are taught get their understanding from the same source. There are no ways that the theologians and other teachers of faith can look down upon those whom they instruct in faith matters because all is because of the grace of God. Stephen Brown says concerning the theologians, “Yet, their faith is not different from the faith of the simple believers. It is the church’s faith- all of them believe what God has revealed through the prophets and apostles as taught by the church”.¹³⁶

¹³² S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 224.

¹³³ J. RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 62.

¹³⁴ Cf. R. NIEUWENHOVE- J. WAWRYKOW, *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, 187.

¹³⁵ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 224.

¹³⁶ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 228.

The ability to rise to faith is not a mere personal achievement, but only a humble answer to God's goodness and should be well stated that this answer is not possible without God's initial call; so grace enables man to respond. That faith is a gift from God is well expressed in Jn 6:65, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day". Now the man, who has been drawn by Father God to Christ, has to believe and believing here entails taking a personal and radical decision for Christ. Schnackenburg wrote that, "In spite of his knowledge of the action of God's grace, the Johannine Jesus insists on man's responsible decision to believe: God's call must be met in man by a hearing, an answering, and learning".¹³⁷ So, the help by grace of God is not a mere push into faith. Man's response is very important too, but on its own it can be taken as the root of foundation of faith.

Refusing to believe is refusing to cooperate with God. The scriptures give us the faculty or power to sight of heavenly things. Scriptures are indispensable for human search for ultimate happiness. Schnackenburg commenting on the people who refused to believe in the signs performed by Christ the gospel of St John, he said, "The way men acted then become a warning to the reader not to close out the redemptive revelation of Christ, and an exhortation to embrace the light which still streams from the Logos, to become a child of God by faith".¹³⁸

Through grace God enlightens the mind and heart of man so that he may see with the eyes of faith. The influence of grace does not entail in any way the limitation of human freedom in his actions. Man is to cooperate with the grace; the actions that make

¹³⁷ R. SCHNACKENBURG., *The Gospel According to St John, Vol 2.* 52.

¹³⁸ R. SCHNACKENBURG., *The Gospel According to St John, vol 1.* 247.

it possible for human being to acquire perfect happiness must be voluntary and should be done with knowledge not in void of knowledge. For Aquinas, “[...] since voluntary actions receive their species from the end, they must needs receive their genus from the last end, which is common to them all [...]”.¹³⁹ Here grace is the principle of the movement that tends towards happiness.¹⁴⁰

Man cannot have happiness naturally but he has to move towards happiness and he cannot do that only depending on his natural powers. “[...] man obtains it by many movements of works which are called merits”.¹⁴¹ However, this is to be understood in the sense that we do not merit the perfect happiness through our human effort in performing action or work. Aquinas teaches that, “Works are necessary to man in order to gain Happiness; not on account of the insufficiency of the Divine power which bestows Happiness, but that the order of things be observed”.¹⁴² Human effort is necessary but all is grace because the goal of faith is beyond humanity, never in the highest human thoughts would one have discovered it.

Human being’s goal is actually beyond his or her nature; it is supernatural.¹⁴³ So, assent to revealed truths of God can be explained by an appeal to grace from God. Without downplaying the necessity of grace, it is important to know that, S. J Pope wrote that, “All other essences can only attain their completion through activity, that is, by accomplishing the transition from potency to act. Hence, human happiness must

¹³⁹ ST. 1-11, q.1. a. 5.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 5. a. 7, ad 3.

¹⁴¹ ST. 1-11, q .5. a. 7.

¹⁴² ST. 1-11, q. 5. a. 7, ad 1.

¹⁴³ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 224.

consist in activity”¹⁴⁴ It consists from the activity that stems from the grace of God. Human beings are different and special in creation, but the problem is that many of us do not respect and appreciate our place or position in the whole creation.

2.7 Formation of Conscience an essential task in order to pursue true happiness

Aquinas calls for the correctness of the human will which is necessary for happiness; this is the right order of the will to the last end.¹⁴⁵ For him to desire happiness is nothing else than to desire that one’s will be satisfied, so man is to will God. By being enthusiastic for God, we will be able to consider happiness as our final and perfect good. However, there is always hindrance to the knowledge of truth, that is why the right formation of conscience is important in order to acquire perfect happiness. Without good formation of conscience we will not be able to move direction that Aquinas is suggesting to us that we begin to experience proper happiness here on earth. He said that:

Man must, of necessity, desire all, whatsoever he desires, for the last end [...] whatever man desires, he desires it under the aspect good. And if he desire it, not as his perfect good, which is the last end, he must of necessity, desire it as tending to the perfect good, because the beginning of anything is always ordained to its completion [...] every beginning of perfection is ordained to complete perfection which is achieved through the last end.¹⁴⁶

The above statement calls human beings to have a well formed or informed conscience. A man with well disposed affections; in all he does desires his last end. Conscience is the source for our life review. We review our lives with a purpose to

¹⁴⁴ S.J. POPE, ed., *the Ethics of Aquinas*, 62.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 5. a. 7.

¹⁴⁶ ST. 1-11, q. 1. a. 6.

reconcile with the past failures, gaining energy to push forward, to do things or act with a purpose and to get the right meaning of one's life. As Christians, we need to constantly put our lives or our existence in question because we many times fail to completely live responsible lives. Our conscience always accuses us of the crimes we commit against our fellow human beings and against the whole creation. According to Fulton Sheen, no man can be happy on the outside who is already unhappy on the inside unless he no longer follow the dictates of his conscience.¹⁴⁷

Doing without hearing or from an uninformed will is just acting thoughtlessly. "In the Jewish tradition, right action is always accompanied by '*kavanah*'. *Kavanah* is attentiveness, acting purposefully, being aware of what we are doing, reflecting upon and learning from our doing".¹⁴⁸ In the Scriptures, we find the same invitation, in Lk 20:25, we can perform many deeds but Christ is asking us along with our deeds, that we open our hearts too (cf. Mt15:8-9). "The Lord said; Since this people draws near with words only and honors me with lips alone, though their hearts are far from me [...]". (Isa 29:13). "The problem of our day is the problem of finding interior peace [...]".¹⁴⁹ Without inner peace there is no proper formation of conscience.

Nothing external can give rest to the spirit, so we need to work more first on our inner life. For Sheen, "The man who consciously directs his actions so that he will save his soul has Eternity and God as a goal".¹⁵⁰ This is true because our human behavior cannot be exhausted by external actions only. We need to will and have the desire from

¹⁴⁷ Cf. F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 24.

¹⁴⁸ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 94.

¹⁴⁹ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 26.

¹⁵⁰ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 106.

within our hearts to perform good actions. Though we are talking about faith in action, we remain in the same strong belief with Thomas Keating who said that: “Although we certainly want to make reasonable use of our talents, serve others, and do our duties well, these are not the most essential thing. The gift that God wishes us to offer is much more difficult than all other kind of service because it is the total gift of our being-our inmost self [...]”¹⁵¹

2.8 Conclusion

Aquinas is calling us to truly live a full and a worthwhile life. We can only do so by being fully and personally involved in our life’s project. To avoid the tendency of just touching the surface of our life, we take the pain to attentively be present and fully engaged in and with this gift of life from God. Knowing the truth means little, unless the truth we know is put into practice and infused with love too. Grace and Image of God in us, help us to connect the world we live in with the heaven. Together, our knowledge, being, and actions should always share a common destiny and that is God Himself, though we sometimes if not many times we falter against him.

It will be difficult to explain well what this ultimate happiness we are talking about is, but we can also use St Paul words when he said that what we are waiting for is the glory of God, that which the “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard what God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor 2:9). As long as we can experience happiness here on earth, it remains as a taste of what is to come in the future life. S.J Pope wrote

¹⁵¹ T. KEATING. O.C.S.O, *Crisis in Faith: Invitation to Christian Maturity*, 91.

that, “There are, however, some aspects of the divinity that human reason is utterly incapable of knowing fully: we await their clear knowledge in the life to come, where our happiness will be complete”.¹⁵² All the different levels of happiness that we look for in this world are to be measured by God’s authenticity, reality and absolute end.

¹⁵² S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 224.

CHAPTER THREE

Living the Gospel in pursuit of Ultimate Happiness and Necessity of the Church

3. Introduction

As human beings, each and everyone must work for his or her salvation. Faith in God has personal and communal dimension. The two dimension, in practical way are one and they fulfill each other. Working to fulfill one of these dimensions and ignoring the other, brings imperfection to our energy and understanding of salvation. Moreover, it may in a bigger possibility make us fail to attain ultimate happiness.

So, in this chapter we will look at the necessity of the Church as the community of faith and also how it helps us to understand the Gospels and provide for us the opportunity to live the Gospel. It is in this chapter too that we will try to bring about the church's the understanding of the Beatitudes as a call to act upon the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the hope that comes with believing the Gospels. We will only present the spirit behind the Beatitudes since all demands from us faith in action.

3.1 Commitment to Faith as the only way to Salvation

Those committed to true faith in God are to breathe out loving kindness. It is a call to turn our homes, work places and the whole world indeed to a heaven on earth. Looking at the way Jesus offered Himself for us, we can see that faith in Jesus as the Son of God is not a set of beliefs, creeds and dogmas but a true relationship with God. Whenever we say we accept Jesus in faith, we are to know that this means that we are ready to make Jesus' heart and spirit our own. A true Christian should have a heart filled with compassion and a spirit that believes in infinite possibilities. Commenting on Ezk 11:20 "I will remove the heart of stone from their bodies and give them the heart of flesh, instead, so that they will keep my laws and put them to practice [...]" , Cornelius Van der Poel says this verse tells us that God is doing something more in blessing human beings, he is giving power of understanding that goes beyond mere cold intellectual knowledge. The heart is made the source of human understanding and human action too.¹⁵³

According to the faith in John's Gospel, the more we abide in God, the more we experience our identity. Faith is that relationship with God where there is no room for fear but hope and happiness. In faith we are called to open ourselves to experience life in all its freshness. Faith purifies the mind and opens the heart to great mystical experiences and insights. Faith is to be lived because it is recognized only through its fruits. This means that faith is a reality which is to be experienced.

¹⁵³ Cf. C. J. Van der POEL, *The Search for Human Values*, 107.

3.2 The Church a Community of belief and action

The Church is a community of care. Together we should build a community of life. It is through the church that we are able to form and grow in the communal character of faith. Schillebeeckx says, “Christian faith is the faith of a community which has a history in time and space and which interprets this in the light of the need to act consistently in a Christian manner and in the light of changing (philosophical and social) assumptions”.¹⁵⁴ This is necessary to avoid individual ideas in understanding the future life, but we need to move together as one according to the ecclesial understanding of the goal of Christian life and to indicate the necessary means to attain it.¹⁵⁵

According to Pope Benedict XVI, for the church to be meaningful in the world, it should live and promote the live of the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are also a road map for the church.¹⁵⁶ So, the road map for the church becomes also the road map for the believers as individuals, families and communities. For O’Connor, “The believers by faith commit themselves to a form of existence that is essentially social. They thereby assume responsibility for the very being of others in the community and also for the transformation of the world”.¹⁵⁷ Through living the life of the Beatitudes, we are inserted into a deep spiritual union with Christ and we gain true blessedness.

Though there are divine things that can be known naturally by the human intellect, Aquinas also gives a hint on the weakness of human intellect in knowing divine things, so we need to gather as a community of believers so that we can hear and

¹⁵⁴ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 70.

¹⁵⁵ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 228.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. J RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 74.

¹⁵⁷ J.M. O’CONNOR, O.P., *Becoming Human Together*, 213.

learn from each other. This shows the importance of the church's ministry of preaching in order to bring good news to the people. There is no contradiction between the need of having the church and the sufficiency of grace. God uses human instruments to beget, nourish, defend, and strengthen faith, but such instruments are not sufficient on their own to produce faith, so grace of God is channeled to us through the church.¹⁵⁸ The Church should help her members in their faith development, moral development and role development. She is to teach a concrete morality as to help the faithful to grasp and come to terms with practical moral development.

The Church is to read the signs of time and interpret them correctly to the people and in doing so she provokes the faithful to watchfulness. (cf LG 4). The community's vision of the world is to be shaped by the church. By the Church we are shaped and helped to be good interpreters of the life of Christ in the world through our way of living. Through the Church's teachings, we come to realize that something divinely is demanded from us, especially through our way of life. Though faith is not solely the product of preaching, still the necessity of preaching and teaching concerning divine things remain an indispensable need. The Church is to teach her followers to enter into the existential interpretation of the bible with same understanding.

The world of faith is the communal world with shared interest, speech, discourse and understanding, so the Church becomes an essential element in the whole of the criterion of verification.¹⁵⁹ The Church does her work knowing that she is different from

¹⁵⁸ Cf. S. F BROWN., *The Theological Virtue of Faith: An Invitation to an Ecclesial Life of Truth*, 226.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 70.

other worldly institutes in the world. The Church is really the community of God, the earthly Church and the Church enriched with heavenly things are not to be considered as two realities. (cf LG.8). The Church is to continue to sustain hope of salvation in people and she does so through the word of God (scriptures) and sacraments. She should enable changes in people's lives, meaning change in their thoughts, feelings and behavior.

Through the Church we have to have or experience the collective experience of the Catholic faith. Through the Church we experience our intimate relationship with God and the Christians have the responsibility to make the Church community live up to the gospel truth. So, the Church as in hierarchy has a responsibility of teaching her Christians, and the Christians themselves have the responsibility of letting the Church's teachings come to reality by making them experiential to the society as whole. The Church is to help people to feel, to experience, to understand and to will God who is their perfect good. Participation in Church's events gives us more understanding of the real meaning of our life. It is the work of the Church to prove to the world that the life of sainthood can still be real and a living presence for us today in the world which is growing indifferent to God's concerns. In this situation, the Church is to build, strengthen, and to hold up the faith of people. Like the OT prophets the Church is to help people to keep their memories fresh about God's intervention in human origin, history and ultimate end. People need to be offered God's assurances in their lives.

Authentic Christianity can never be divorced from practical life. The Church is to always strive to seek a theology that speaks of the actions, struggles of people and

empower their faith. The Church theology should go beyond personal desires to encompass the whole community. Through her experiences, the Church's theology is to come from her experiences; it should be a practical theology, thereby ready to help her people to have a spirituality that arises from their faith experiences. Such type of spirituality would be very strong and far from hypocritical spiritual gymnastics. However, it is two different things to have the ways of knowing and promoting practical spirituality and to live a practical spirituality, so the Church is to have a practical spirituality and she should live her spirituality, this is because in the world we live today there is a big gape on having or knowing something and doing something that one knows. There is a great need for cooperation in the Church. For Schillebeeckx, "Christianity is not simply a hermeneutic undertaking, not simply an illumination of existence, but also a renewal of existence, in which 'existence' concerns man as an individual person and in his social being".¹⁶⁰

The Church is to be a liberating and developing Church in order to help her people to journey towards eternal happiness. For the Church to be able to fulfill her duty she needs to study the word of God intensely. However, the Church should not and does not study like those studying civil education, she joins her study with prayer and action; and too she does all this for the sake of the glory and honor for and of God. The Church is to make Christ attractive to people, failing to do this the Church fails in her mission to announce the resurrection of Christ. Concerning studies, the Church should promote the love of learning the scriptures and this will bring people to desire God, and it is this

¹⁶⁰ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 66.

very desire of God that leads us to the yearning of the coming of God's kingdom here on earth.

3.3 Doing the Gospels in pursuit of the Ultimate Happiness

Theology should be training of life and this is only possible through life of prayer, reflection, and the study of God's word. Prayer too is putting the Gospel into action. As we practice these, we begin to know the truth and this very truth will impels us to love it and as we grow in its love, we experience ourselves being transformed by it. We can live a theological life practically and this demands that we live in dependence or submission to God's word.¹⁶¹ In the Church's teaching on justification, we can say that to believe that justification is through faith not through human works is not really just a over-romantic vision, no, it constitutes a moral imperative, so we should act and live in hope that through our good works we become God's representatives in the world and that through this we are moving towards eternal happiness. The origin of our good works cannot be our personal achievement but God's love.

When we talk of doing the Gospel, we talk of the actions or works of a man already acting under the divine influence, there is cooperation between God's grace and man's freedom here. The Council of Trent teaches that, when God touches man's heart, man himself is not inactive since he has freedom to reject the inspiration from God and again without God's grace man does not have power in his own free will to move himself towards justice in God's sight (Council of Trent 1547, DS1525). Ratzinger

¹⁶¹ Cf. P. RICOEUR, *Critique and Conviction*, 144.

wrote that, “Scripture is full of potential for the future, a potential that can only be opened up when someone ‘lives through’ and ‘suffers through’ the sacred text”.¹⁶²

Ultimate happiness is salvation, therefore a gift of and from God, so for man this happiness entails the acquisition and the enjoyment of it. This shows that man has to be in action in order to enquire and enjoy this very happiness beginning from here on earth, though the foundation to rise to that very level is granted by God himself. “Man will be blessed in his doing” (Jm 1:25). “Teacher what must I do to inherit eternal life? [...] you have given the right answer; do this and you will live (Lk 10:25-28). “Go and do likewise”. (Lk10: 37). It is through the good works we doing the name of Christ that we become like shining stars.

To do this St Paul insists that we live a life of obedience that is total submission, meekness and servanthood: “[...] continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose”. (Phil 2: 12-13). In the lives of the saints, we know that the message of the Beatitudes is existential. Many of the Beatitudes have been lived and fulfilled in different ways in the lives of the saints. For Ratzinger, “The saints are the true interpreters of the Holy Scripture. The meaning of a given passage of the Bible becomes most intelligible in those human beings who have been totally transfixed by it and have lived it out”.¹⁶³

We are called to do what we have learned or what we know about God in the Gospels. Christians are not distinguished only because of the convictions they have

¹⁶² J RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 78.

¹⁶³ J RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 78.

about the good, but more by the good they do. With this in mind the Catholic Church believes and teaches that a God-pleasing faith must take into account the political, economy and social realities of the society and they recognize the evils in these sectors and try to bring about a change. Veling says, “The question of meaning and existence carries no sense on its own, unless it is first underwritten by the question of the ethical and the Good”.¹⁶⁴ The basic Christian conviction about what is good and where it can be found is that God is good. Anything else is good in so far as it relates to God. “[...] the sovereign good is possessed, the more it is loved, and other things despised: because the more we possess it, the more we know it”.¹⁶⁵

However, whatever good is found in the temporal things here on earth, we shall possess it all in the true source of goodness who is God Himself. The question we are to ask ourselves should be how to bring our lives into conformity with the scriptures? Living the gospel way of life is to above all acquire the gospels, living and practicing them in concrete life situations. It is the work of the Church as we have seen, to direct people into the practical orientation to the gospels. The Church encourages her ministers to do theology not for the sake of knowing theological discourses and theories only, but so that they form the people and transform souls by teaching and leading people by example. There is no opposition between theory and practice in Christian life as there is no opposition between heaven and earth. This is what Veling calls “on earth as it is in

¹⁶⁴ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 13.

¹⁶⁵ ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 1, ad 3.

heaven [...]”.¹⁶⁶ People who do not live according to God’s will and claim themselves to be Christians; misrepresent God and Christ to the world, which is a sin.

Living and doing what the scriptures say is the essential key to spiritual growth in Christian life. Veiling says that the primary meaning of the message from the Torah was about the way one should live. “God’s word, the Torah, is something to live, to do, and such was the purpose of study and prayer, to bring our lives into alignment with the teachings and commandments of Torah”.¹⁶⁷ No need to remain on the level of thinking about our lives only but need to enter into the practical concerns of our life in conformity with the Gospel demands. In doing this we get into the very meaning of the “Hebrew word, *dabar*, which is ‘deed or an event’ which is announced by a word, expressing the close correlation between life and action”.¹⁶⁸ In Judaism, more than the contemplated act, it was the performed deed that counts.¹⁶⁹ This is the teaching of the church that the purpose of human beings is to know, to love and to serve God in preparation for eternity, to serve entails entering into action.

¹⁶⁶ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 145.

¹⁶⁷ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 91.

¹⁶⁸ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 92.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 92.

3.4. The Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-10) call to Existential, True and Everlasting Happiness

The true, existential, and everlasting happiness springs only from a true, existential and everlasting love. This love is none other than the love of God and neighbor. Human journey and vocation to ultimate end is to be lived in the spirit of beatitudes. The beatitudes are the vocation of all human beings into a profound relationship with God and thereby being vehicles to enter into his glory. They are invitation to believers to live by new standards the new life offered by Christ. Through the Beatitudes, Ratzinger said, “[...] the standards of the world are turned upside down as soon as things are seen in the right perspective, which is to say, in terms of God’s values, so different from those of the world”.¹⁷⁰ It is an invitation to an experiential faith; the Gospels themselves are existential, active and alive. They are a call to glory, not human glory but our sharing in God’s own glory. For Rangione, “The eight beatitudes, then, are the general principles of perfection; they are the moral laws of the Kingdom of Christ. They fit firmly the goal of our existence, which is beatitude or eternal happiness, and they point out clearly the means to attain that end”.¹⁷¹ Though the blessings and rewards that come from living the beatitudes are pronounced for the future, their actualization is from this moment forward.¹⁷²

The Beatitudes clearly show us how the individual efforts in working for our salvation is attached and directed to the working for communal salvation, the practice of brotherly love is a very necessary condition in order to reach that goal. They too call us

¹⁷⁰ J. RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 71.

¹⁷¹ L.A RANGIONE O.S.A., *Conferences on the Beatitudes*, 18-19.

¹⁷² Cf. Dictionary of Biblical Theology, trans, P. J. CAHILL S.J., 46.

to a faith that transcends the earthly barriers like tribalism, racism, nationalism and many others. Pope Benedict XVI said that: “The Sermon on the Mount is not a social program per se, to be sure. But it is only when the great inspiration it gives us vitally influences our thought and our action, only when faith generates the strength of renunciation and responsibility for our neighbor and for the whole society-only then can social justice grow too”.¹⁷³

The poor are all who are not able to rely on themselves in different situations of life; they are to appeal to the generosity of our hearts. Now here, God works through us who believe to help these people out of their unwanted situations, God fulfills his promise of providence through us. For Flynn, “[...] God in His providence has chosen to save man through humanity. This is achieved first, through the Sacred Humanity of Christ Who offered Himself a sacrifice for all men. [...] beside Christ’s Humanity, the world is saved through our humanity. [...]. Christ’s life must be brought to men through your humanity”.¹⁷⁴ Poverty also has an interior dimension, so there is need for human being to always have an inner harmony with the divine.¹⁷⁵ This inner harmony with the divine is the beginning of experiencing the ultimate happiness here on earth. Micallef tells us that, “The kingdom of God works from within; if a person accepts it and allows it to transform him, then; he himself will become leaven which will transform those around him”.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³J. RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 77.

¹⁷⁴A. FLYNN- *al.*, *Living our Faith*, 323-324.

¹⁷⁵Cf. J RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 76.

¹⁷⁶ A. MICALLEF, S.J, *On Becoming a Christian*, 56.

We are living in a world where people are looking for self glory but for Aquinas our happiness now and the awaited future happiness depends on our relationship with God. “That glory which is essential to Happiness is that which man has, not with man but with God”.¹⁷⁷ The beatitudes too clearly teach that our last judgment will be based on our concrete, historical actions towards our neighbors. This leads us to the point that we do not simply exist but we exist for a purpose. Through the beatitudes, we are invited to practice the existential interpretation of the bible. The beatitudes call us to think back, especially to the Acts of Apostles when Christians witnessed to the world in word and deed. We are still invited to this form of evangelization.

So, doing good works is not a way of envelop our sins but should come from the hearts of those who have and who are experiencing an inner transformation. Inner transformation will simply reflect itself outside especially for those who live the life of the Beatitudes. We are not invited to desire to perform miracles to reveal God’s goodness to others. For Ratzinger, “God’s power is now revealed in mildness, his greatness in his simplicity and closeness[...] what formerly found expression in storm, fire, and earthquake now takes on the form of the cross, of the suffering God, who calls us to step into this mysterious fire, the fire of crucified love”¹⁷⁸. The Beatitudes demand a humble way of serving God, they help us not to be satisfied in ourselves by not merely not committing evil deeds, but they invite us to do good and offer a true worship to God.

¹⁷⁷ ST. 1-11, q. 4. a. 8, ad 1.

¹⁷⁸J RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 67.

Faith in action does not only mean that we should be seen doing good works for others, but it includes in a special way the good we do to ourselves. For example, by giving oneself time to read the scriptures, meditating upon it, active participation in the liturgy of the church and many personal sacrifices and mortifications we better our personal relationship with God. All these are part and parcel and the foundations for faith in action. Faith in action as shown in the Beatitudes has its beginning with our personal inner life. They are actions of the one who has been transformed from within.

Through the Beatitudes we discover that human vocation is providing an illustration of God's love and mercy in the world. It calls us to be the representatives of God's mercy and justice. All this is possible only if we are ready to learn from Christ. Ryan tells us that, "Christ's life exemplifies a whole way of living-an *exemplum vitae*".¹⁷⁹ We need to learn to diffuse true happiness in the life of others and we can only do this if we ourselves are experiencing this true happiness. Joy and happiness should be our companions to holiness.¹⁸⁰ The Beatitudes calls for self-discipline, we have to be poor in heart so that we become rich in happiness. There is no way one can claim to live the life of beatitudes without faith and trust in Jesus Christ. All and each Beatitude, for example poverty, of justice, humility, meekness, purity, mercy desire for peace and persecution; they get their value and meaning from Christ. So it is those who have put Christ at their hearts that can live the Beatitudes in any situation of life and such people are able to give their up lives as a testimony to Jesus.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ RYAN, *Thomas Aquinas as Reader of the Psalms*, 94.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 23.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Dictionary of Biblical Theology, trans, P. J. CAHILL S.J., 46.

It is all about willingly making oneself poor by detaching self in order to possess everything, that is letting God to possess us as individuals and thereby he becomes our all in all. The Beatitudes seem to call us for a revolutionary praxis whereby all is done through Christ the centre of our Christian values and Christ himself practiced this and he too came for this. Through the beatitudes, we learn that Christ is calling us to avoid the faith and life which is narrowed to excessive preoccupation with individual salvation. Our individual striving for eternal life should and is directed towards the community, which is the practice of brotherly and sisterly love is the necessary condition set before us by the beatitudes. Brotherly love is a necessary condition for one to reach the human's final goal of life.

The poverty insisted in the Scriptures is the spirit of heart and also it applies to those poor in worldly material; that this should not be our main concern that will make us to lose focus on God. For Sheen, "Our Lord never tried to induce the poor to accept poverty as a good, or misery as a thing to be sought for itself. He glorified neither the poor man nor the rich man".¹⁸² Again Sheen says "The poverty of Nazareth was not a condemnation of wealth, nor a glorification of poverty: it was an illustration of the beautiful doctrine of detachment".¹⁸³ The working faith proposed to us in the Beatitudes is not only the work of God, but it demands human response; and if one response positively, he need not to boast because the ability to answer is already the human attitude willed by God from the beginning of creation in response to his love, so in the whole movement, there is no mere human personal achievement.

¹⁸² F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 110.

¹⁸³ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 110.

3.5 The Love for God and Neighbor as the Greatest Commandment

“If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). In this we have something to learn about the importance of our human acts by which we return to God. In this too, we return to God love for love. The Scriptures present to us the boundless love of God for human beings in the history of salvation. In our life we experience God’s love first by believing that He is our Creator and He is a loving Father. This will lead us to let God hold a central place in our lives. He is the beginning and end of all that exists. It is only by considering what God has done for us, that He has willed to share with us mere human beings His own divine life that we shall come more and more to realize how incomparable and how infinite is the love of God for us. With this view, it will not be difficult for us to keep His commandments because we will do this in faith, hope, and trust and above all in love. Luice-Smith said that: “[...] the fact that the Trinity is a communion love, and that we are made in God’s image, tells us something important: what we are for. The Trinity is our eternal destiny [...] for the Christian, love is our origin, love our calling and love our final destination”.¹⁸⁴

Aquinas’ discussion on happiness demands that our human actions be directed to the other. The other matters a lot as I act; one is to see that the other benefits from his or her actions. In the letter of St James, the love of the neighbor and help of the poor is depicted as the royal commandment (Jm 2:8). In his discussion about perfect happiness, Aquinas brings the importance of the neighbor or other people around us. For him, what we do to our brothers and sisters, is part of our own destiny. However, Aquinas used the

¹⁸⁴ A. LUCIE-SMITH., *Foundations of Moral Theology*, 22.

word friends, and he ask the question that if there are necessary for our journey towards God. Claude Farley said that the Beatitudes invite us to be Christians seven days a week, they challenge us to examine ourselves, they call us to have a faith that is operational and they call to always see what is going on around us. Commenting on the story of Lazarus and the Rich man, in Lk 16:19-25; he said that the reason why the rich man went to hell was because “he didn’t see Lazarus”.¹⁸⁵

Man needs friends but not to delight in them since he only has his perfect delight in God. Aquinas wrote that, “[...] but for the purpose of a good operation, that he may do good to them; that he delight in seeing them do good; and again that he may be helped by them in his good work. For in order, that man may do well, whether in the works of the active life, or in those of contemplative, he needs the fellowship of friends”.¹⁸⁶ It is difficult to speak of our relationship with God without speaking of our relationship to one another especially in Christian life. For Veling, “Love cannot sleep, can never be peaceful or permanent. Love is the incessant watching over the other; it can never be satisfied or contented with bourgeois ideal of love as domestic comfort”.¹⁸⁷ We are members of one another (Eph 4:25). If one member is suffering, we all suffer together (1 Cor 12:26). Fulton Sheen sees love as the measurement of all we do, commenting on the second Beatitude which speaks of being merciful, he says that the Lord corrected the exaggerated justice which knew no mercy, even justice should be done in love.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ C.J. FARLEY, *Be-Attitudes: An Involvement Approach to Teaching Christian Values*, 5.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 4. a. 8.

¹⁸⁷ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 122.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. F. J. SHEEN, *The Cross and the Beatitudes*, 22.

In the letter to the Hebrews, it is said, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness; without which no man shall see God” (Heb 12:14). This is an invitation to rejoice in God as we see each other and enter into fellowship. “Going towards God is meaningless unless seen in terms of my going towards the other person”.¹⁸⁹ It is our connection with other people that gives our love of God meaning. Without this our love would remain empty and our concept of love void too. Our neighbors have a lot to do with our existence, so the question of existence cannot be answered within the realms of my own self; rather, it is given to me by the other who provokes the question of my existence.¹⁹⁰ We are responsible for each other. Cuttaz says “Man has duties not only toward God, but also toward his neighbor and himself. Many of his good acts relate directly not to the Creator but to creatures”.¹⁹¹ Happiness in seeing our neighbors growing in faith towards God and doing good is said to be a saintly attitude because in many situations we feel jealousy on them instead of appreciating and encourage them.

Levinas says that in our lives we need to desire that “The other must be closer to God than I”.¹⁹² Saints are people who have grown in holiness mainly because their desire and compassion for the other peoples was very strong, for them the other is of primary concern and they themselves of secondary concerns. In his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*: “On Social Concern”, Pope John Paul II said that “at stake is the dignity of the human person, whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to us by the Creator, and to whom the men and women at every moment in history are

¹⁸⁹ E. LEVINAS and KEARNEY, “*Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas*”, 23.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 14.

¹⁹¹ C.F. CUTTAZ. *Our Life of Grace*, 174.

¹⁹² E. LEVINAS, “*Philosophy and the Idea of Infinite*”, in Peperzak, *To the Other*, 111-112.

strictly and responsibly in debt” (No. 47). The conversion (*metanoia*) we are called and demanded that we commit ourselves to our fellow human beings not only by feeling with them but to the point of translating our feelings into action. For example, mercy is not only to feel about others. Chappel says “Mercy requires something of us: that we relent, that we change our mind and heart, that we give up a previous understanding of another, that we release them from the bondage of our preconception, and finally that we stoop down and bear with them in their suffering”.¹⁹³

The greatest commandment goes together with the Golden Rule, ‘do to others as you would like them to do to you’. This does not ask us to demand love from those we love. We should not only love others because we want them to love us back, because there are life situations when we love others and they do not respond to us in love. This should not let us loose our loving capacity because as Christians we are even called to love our enemies. In Christian teachings, love is not measurable. It is immeasurable and the journey towards final happiness makes us to understand that our very existence itself is not the ultimate meaning life, so the other matters a lot for us to reach our final goal of life. Edward Schillebeeckx in favor of an existential faith, says “Only a real and authentic concern for our fellow-men and therefore for the meaning of human existence can really give meaning to the objectives of truths of the Christian creed”.¹⁹⁴ The ultimate happiness that Aquinas is teaching demands that one know the truth, love the truth, possesses, contemplate the truth, and live the truth.

¹⁹³ CHAPPEL, “*Conversion By Mercy*”, 6.

¹⁹⁴ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 48.

Terry Veiling says, “The only justification for surviving, for living, for ‘*being*’ is when the anxiety over my own life and death are transfigured into concern for the life and death of my neighbor”.¹⁹⁵ In the other, there is a real presence of God. God is against our false love by which we claim to love him always while we always forget our neighbors, but always claiming that we have direct and satisfying spiritual life towards God. Gutierrez said that this feeling fills us and we feel comfortable with it because we have domesticated God instead of us feeling called to do and desire more in serving God.¹⁹⁶

Self-denial is important and in Christian sense it goes together with self-sacrifice. This is so because in our modern world we have experienced that self-denial without self-sacrifice leads to hopelessness, even to the point of committing suicide. It might happen that self-sacrifice without self-denial too may lead to a life of hypocrisy, pride, and holding onto false securities of life. For Sheen, “The more we think of ourselves, the less we think of God, all egoists are anti-religious. The spiritual prerequisite for seeing God is not to be blinded by our own ego with its pride, conceit and deification of the self”.¹⁹⁷ The peace of Christ is to be shared among Christians and not only between Christians but with non-Christians too. Christianity should be a force for full human development. In the State, people are looking for glory and fame, people want to be well known and praised. Aquinas said that, “Fame has no stability; in fact, it is easily ruined by false report [...] But happiness endures of itself, and forever”.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 117.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. G. GUTIERREZ, *Essential Writings*, 105.

¹⁹⁷ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 34.

¹⁹⁸ ST. 1-11, q. 2. a. 3, ad 3.

3.6 The Virtue of Hope in search for Ultimate Happiness

As Christians, we grow closer to the truth through life experience; however, we cannot say boldly that we know the whole truth along the way. We discover that in our daily life, change, development and revisions are needed. These are not to be looked at as signs of failure but as ways of coming to the truth.¹⁹⁹ In Lk 24 we learn that the center of the gospel is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is this very resurrection of Jesus that alone gives meaning to our liturgy and all church activities. Cuttaz tells us that, “The acts by which the believer desires the happiness of heaven and confidently expects to possess them some day and to receive from God, who is faithful to His promises, the necessary helps to attain this end. The virtue that supernaturalizes these acts is *hope*”.²⁰⁰

All Christian hope is based on the Resurrection of Christ, upon which our own resurrection is anchored. The mystery of resurrection of Christ is so fundamental to our faith. Rom 8: 24, says that we are saved by hope. This hope comes from our imperfect participation in the likeness of God. We continue to desire God and live with hope for our redemption. This is so because the object of true happiness who is God is not seen in His Essence; and this imperfection destroys the nature of true happiness. For Aquinas, this imperfection is on the part of the participator not on the part of God who is happiness itself, so there is no any imperfection in God.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Cf. R. GULA, *Reason informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality*, 31.

²⁰⁰ Cf. C.F. CUTTAZ, *Our Life of Grace*, 173.

²⁰¹ Cf. ST, 1-11, q. 5. a. 3, ad 2.

3.7 Christian Life as lifelong worship

Christian life as a perpetual worship is a response to an experience of God. The Christian life has a different quality when an awareness of God is kept with zeal. People around the person who fears and loves God will be able to sense this; thereby one becomes light of the world. The Christian moral actions should not come as the other many works of moral rightness, rather than grateful responses to the goodness of God. As individuals and as the community of believers in Christ, we are given the Spirit of God and this spirit charges us with the new worship, the true worship offered in spirit and truth. It is a worship by life well lived for God. Fr Schnackenburg, “The new worship is neither mere lip-service, nor a purely interior cult. Bloody sacrifices cease at once, but the externals of worship are not totally rejected”.²⁰²

Knowing God as the centre of our values, we will be worried of becoming great people in the world by trying to do what is not in our capacity but we will be worried of becoming good people in the world. Our life will be a prayerful life even outside the sanctuaries, this will always enables us to discern of what God requires us to do in all circumstances of life. Creativity and expression on the word of God is demanded from us. Faith leads us to thinking, doing and true love. However, in believing or assenting in faith, we receive what could not have been thought out by merely human effort, so Edward Schillebeeckx says “Faith, on the other hand, is essentially what is not thought of itself, but rather promised to us, and this, which has not been thought out, claims our

²⁰² R. SCHNACKENBURG., *The Gospel According to St John*, vol 2. 439.

thought”.²⁰³ It is promised to everyone from everywhere. Human beings help each other by helping and allowing others to experience the environment that helps them to recognize and receive the gift of faith offered by God.

Right inclination of the will is required and is necessary for to live a Christian life fully, happiness cannot be without the right will.²⁰⁴ As Christians, our relationship with the world is to be strong even more than of those who do not believe in God since we are to live with the passion of becoming perfect and in doing so we reveal and witness to the goodness of God to humanity. Veling says that when we pray “‘Thy Kingdom come’, we are subjecting the conditions of human existence, ‘on earth’, to be the unconditional claims of God’s word, ‘as it is in the heaven’”.²⁰⁵ So, our lives should be open books for people to read and value the goodness of God that is living in a way that is of God and from God. To live a Christian life well one need to be standing on something real; and that is on God Himself. The closer our lives as Christians are to the earth, the more real and truthful they become Christian.²⁰⁶

Here one lives a life centered and closely related to the experiences of God and beliefs about God. In Christian life, faith ought to affect morality and its primary source is the Bible. This does not mean that Christians are separated or cannot enter into dialogue with other people in common matters of life. The difference would be that the Christians live in self-understanding informed by faith. This is because for Aquinas, Christian way of life cannot be completely discovered by reason. For him, faith has

²⁰³ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 47

²⁰⁴ Cf. ST. 1-11, q. 4. a. 4, ad 1.

²⁰⁵ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 18.

²⁰⁶ Cf. T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 138.

such a bearing on moral discernment that some moral solutions can only be understood within the framework of faith. Veling quoted Gustavo Gutierrez who said that “Any attempt to separate the love of God from the love of neighbor gives rise to attitudes which impoverish both”.²⁰⁷ There is completely no calculations in Christian love.

The uniqueness of Christian morality cannot only be limited to the context, moral self-understanding, intentionality and motivation but it goes beyond to what God wants from us. For Veling, we need a renewed attention to our life in the world; we have to seek to align ourselves with God’s will, with God’s heart, with God’s good intentions for the world.²⁰⁸ This brings about the distinctiveness of Christian morality; it is lived with the purpose of fulfilling the scriptures and attaining ultimate happiness. Faith commits the believer to a certain way. Hans puts it well when he said that, “We care for this life because we are waiting for the life to come. What is ‘good’ will be decided at this point”.²⁰⁹ Life on earth is a journey towards God; we can use the words of Sheen who said:

The first decision any traveler makes is to choose his destination. After he knows where he is going, he can then decide what means he will use on the journey- automobile or foot, plane or train. The wise man will proceed by the same ordered method in planning how to live, for life too is a journey. It too must have a goal, reasonably chosen, before we can decide how best to spend our energies and pass our days.²¹⁰

Choosing to be a Christian, Veling says “It means choosing to pattern or model my life on example of divine life. It means seeking to live in ways that bear witness to life of God. It means that I am trying to live on earth as it is in heaven-as an example of

²⁰⁷ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 22.

²⁰⁸ Cf. T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 10.

²⁰⁹ H. HANS., *Christian Ethics in the African Context*, 35.

²¹⁰ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 106.

God”.²¹¹ This, demands that one be a true believer and to be a true believer, one does not stop at the words; but moves on to believe in the realities expressed in the words and live a life in accordance with those realities. Through such a faith one enters a different world than the one revealed by human discovery. Through faith we receive from God an invitation to a new way of seeing things and situations, and a new way of living too.²¹²

Faith does not only provide us a way of knowing the situation at hand but also a commitment to behave and decide in a certain way. Levinas says, the justice rendered to the other, to my neighbor, gives me an unsurpassable intimacy to God. We follow God, above all by drawing near to our neighbors, and showing concern for the widow, the orphan, the stranger and the beggar; an advance that must not be made with empty hands.²¹³ That is what we call dynamic faith of which Aquinas is calling us in order to experience and reach ultimate happiness.

Moral quality goes hand in hand with moral actions. Therefore, as Christians, we are called to form our moral character well in order to be able to give witness of what we believe in. In doing so we begin to experience the perfect happiness in an imperfect way to be fulfilled when we have beatific vision. Aquinas says that, “A certain participation of Happiness can be had in this life: but perfect and true Happiness cannot be had in this life”.²¹⁴ Our faith experiences shapes the way we interpret the experiences of life and respond to them. The belief of faith can not only be verified by purely theoretical aspects of the illumination of faith. Faith is a reality that should be put into

²¹¹ T. A. VELING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 146.

²¹² S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 228.

²¹³ Cf. E. LEVINAS, *Difficult Freedom*, 18.

²¹⁴ ST. 1-11, q. 5. a. 3.

practice through human actions. The Christian creed is not a purely doctrinal or theoretical formulation of orthodoxy, but rather an integral part of the church's liturgy and an action of the church too.²¹⁵ The profession of faith is to be witnessed and to function in human behavior. Then the world will be able to witness and learn from our living faith.

The religious beliefs influence the attitudes one ought to have towards the world; they provide a reason of acting in certain ways and determine the responses one ought to make to the world. However, experience and history have shown that the decisiveness of religious beliefs on one's moral life depends on the depth of one's commitment to faith. Our faith, if it is genuine, has to qualify our morality. As long as one is on the earth, there is no day when one would claim that no more is required of him or her because he or she has done all the good. For Keating, "The tremendous challenge of Christian life is that God is willing to go the whole way in giving Himself to us if we will go the whole way in giving ourselves to Him".²¹⁶

It is in this world, not in heaven, that we come to understand and practice our faith and love. E. Schillebeeckx quoted Hans Fortmann who said that "When we speak, for example, about the redemption, we shall have little chance of being heard by contemporary man and of receiving his consent as long as the reality of that redemption is not visible, at least as a possibility, within his own life, in other words, visible within the historical dimension of our human and social life".²¹⁷ Without experiencing the love

²¹⁵ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 68.

²¹⁶ T. KEATING, O.C.S.O, *Crisis in Faith: Invitation to Christian Maturity*, 85.

²¹⁷ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, trans, N.D. SMITH., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, 48.

and power of God, it will be difficult for us to express the deeply felt religious sensibility to the neighbors and we too fail to testify to God's presence in us and in the world. S.J Pope said it well when he said, "Humans are connected with God through activity as well, but under the conditions of the present life, this connection is repeatedly interrupted and must always be newly begun".²¹⁸

3.6.1 Sacraments call for action

Sacraments give us new life in Christ, thereby we begin to experience the heavenly banquet here on earth. They do not just picture symbolically our life in and with Christ, but they are actions joined invisibly by Christ's will to the action of his life and death. In and through our lives, sacraments are actions that can be seen and touched. Just as in his life on earth Jesus was God seeable and touchable, so he is now in the sacraments.²¹⁹ Christ's victories won for us a new life that is the life of grace. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the source of our hope; it is this resurrection that gives meaning to our liturgy. The life of grace therefore gives us a new life in Christ. Baptism is the beginning of this new life. The other sacraments nourish and increase it. "Sacraments meet the needs of God and humans by doing something: they have effects, which brings things forward to eternal fulfillment".²²⁰ Through the sacraments, we are able to live in a human way the divine life: "You are holy nation, purchased people that you may proclaim the perfections of him who has called you out of darkness into his

²¹⁸ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 62.

²¹⁹ Cf. T. McDERMOTT., *How To Read Aquinas*, 93-94.

²²⁰ R. NIEUWENHOVE. - J. WAWRYKAW, *The Theology of Aquinas*, 343.

marvelous light” (1 Pt 2:9). And again St. Peter reminds us clearly that by grace we are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pt 1:4).

Looking at Aquinas who sees human beings as pilgrims moving towards God, we can say as Christians, we begin our life in the Kingdom of God by baptism. In baptism we die to sin and rise to life and walk in newness of life (Rom 6:3-4). In the scriptures, we find that Christ’s mission and His works were directed to this goal that we walk in newness of life. Aquinas’ ultimate happiness can be summarized in this goal, that Christ came so that we may share with him the divine life of grace. John the evangelist puts it well that: “I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly” (Jn 10:10). Our participation through the sacraments in Christ as members of Body the Church must lead us to a new Christian way of life and we do this in the spirit of Christ.

The Eucharistic celebrations assures us of the presence of the Risen Christ among us; and at the end of Mass we are encouraged and invited to go and continue to celebrate Christ among us in action and thanksgiving in our society. Through the sacraments, the whole person is made holy; so we do not only talk of the salvation of the soul and destruction of the body. Nourished by the word of God and strengthened by the Eucharist we go back to our homes with energy and desire to do good and above all to love God more.

3.7 Human Freedom in his journey to ultimate happiness

After saying all this on the journey towards ultimate happiness, we can ask ourselves, is there human freedom to choose his own end? True Christian freedom means that we are responsible for one another. We are living in the word whereby many people have different understandings and definitions on human freedom. However, the Catholic Church teaches that our freedom should and is in our being chosen or our being tied to God our origin.

Our freedom is in letting the will of God be done not our will. (Cf. Lk 22:43). Law and grace does not reduce human freedom in any way, Hildebrand says, “Rather they invite him to assent, not in a state of lazy passivity, but with the fervor of a glorious collaboration which, far from being unfree, is in fact the very peak of freedom; it includes both a response to freedom over himself and a free response to something above him, testimony to man’s transcendence”.²²¹

For Veling, the other means a lot again in my freedom. He says “Prior to any choice or intentionality on our part, we are already exposed to the other. It is almost as if the other holds me against my will, against my ravenous desire to be the center of the universe”.²²² According to the scriptures we see that being there for one another is the way life is basically ordered. True freedom does not mean staying in my own comforts. True freedom calls us to be exposed to other fellow human beings. Levinas says “It is though I were destined to the other before being destined to me”.²²³ Again in one of his writings Levinas says “As we live here on earth, the face of the other (neighbor) is the

²²¹ D. HILDEBRAND- A. HILDEBRAND, *The Art of Living*, 78.

²²² T. A. VEILING, *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*, 128.

²²³ E. LEVINAS, *Outside the Subject*, 87.

epiphany of what can thus present itself directly, and therefore also exteriorly, to an I".²²⁴ In our existence, we exist in freedom because we are most loved by God.

To those whom we love, we give freedom; we do not treat them as slaves. God loved us to the full and he gave us all the freedom. He gave us Christ as the example of one who truly lived in true freedom in obedience to God love. So for us: "The primary tool is God's own human life, displaying the power of his love to remake creation, displaying it not by laying down a law or necessity on men, but by gambling on provoking a loving response".²²⁵ From the beginning of creation, God gave human beings full freedom and invited them to make of it their best of life in view of human divine destiny. A true human freedom is that freedom that has been embraced by divine freedom. False human freedom goes for selfish motives and sees divine freedom as enslaving human freedom.

True freedom in the scriptures is a freedom to do the will of God. This type of freedom entails and demands one to be more concerned about others than oneself. In the third Beatitude in the Gospel of Mathew, we see that the meek are promised the land. This clearly means that they will have something of their own, and having something of your own entails total freedom. By having their own land, they will have their own rules, they will have freedom to worship their true God without fear and this is the freedom that the people of Israel desired, freedom to do alone and worship the true God.

When we work for God well, in meekness and humility, God himself through Jesus Christ, creates a space for us, and on that space we find our true freedom. So, even

²²⁴ E. LEVINAS, "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinite", in Peperzak, *To the Other*, 110.

²²⁵ T, MCDERMOTT, *How To Read Aquinas*, 93.

in the midst of unsettled world, Jesus can create a place for us where, no matter in which situation we are, we experience joy and freedom from above. For Ratzinger, “The world exists, in other words, because God wanted to create a zone of response to his love, a zone of obedience and freedom”.²²⁶ Through the blessings that we receive from living the life of the Beatitudes, this zone is created too in depths our hearts.

3.8 Conclusion

In Aquinas’ teaching on ultimate happiness, he is inviting us to an existential, active and productive faith. The Year of Faith that has just pass was a reminder to the entire faithful, to move forward and to acquire a faith that has progress and achievements in life. A faith that is not workable and that is not effective is dead. We are called to a faith suggested by practical theology; that is a faith that has concrete facts and concrete theories that can be tested practically. The church is advocating for the faith that profits us as individuals, as a community and the faith that benefit the whole humanity and whole creation.

We have found out that the faith which the Gospels and the Church at large are calling us to is not an hypocritical faith, meaning that faith which is full of showcases through performing many works that are not necessarily inspired from above. It is a faith that springs from the heart that has been filled by the Holy Spirit, a faith that has love for God as its beginning and end. This type of faith is both fulfilled by contemplation of God and inspired actions. So, contemplation is very necessary and

²²⁶ J. RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 83.

even becomes part of the work for every believer. The Beatitudes call us to be always in touch with God and to be always attentive to the needs of our neighbors.

CHAPTER FOUR

Suffering and Ultimate Happiness

4. Introduction

Because of the life of faith, one has to take even painful choices and pass through painful experiences in life. These choices and experiences are mostly against one's will but we enter into them for the sake of God's will. In this chapter we will try to see the possibilities of being happy while in difficult situations, the need for commitment or joy in suffering. We will also look at how suffering has and is still in some culture looked at as a punishment of some sort. We will also discuss how the contemporary man views happiness and joy.

4.1 Suffering and Happiness

“Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny himself; take up his cross each day and follow me” (Lk 9:23). Choosing to be friends with Christ, involves obligations and expectations. If we are followers of Christ we will experience life as Christ did.

Through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, God himself, in Christ, entered into the depth of people's suffering. Fr Antonio Magnante said, "Suffering is deeply rooted in human nature and human experience. It cannot be satisfactorily explained in terms of punishment, trial or discipline".²²⁷ We are called to bear our sufferings willingly and this demands that we must be willing to surrender our personal selves. Only a total surrender can make one fit to be a disciple of Christ. In our life of faith we have to understand that Jesus did not guarantee a life devoid of problems and pains. From the call of Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles we learn that it is not an easy task to be of God. Joy, hope and happiness should be our companions to holiness.²²⁸

The temptation we need to fight from within during times of suffering in life is to judge or have different perspectives of God that changes through our different situations of life because we may have different attitudes towards God. Leonardo Boff says that if we see God differently through our different situations and again let our faith controlled by life situations, this will lead to the point that the God we invoke and worship becomes more of an idol than a living and challenging God.²²⁹ Faith is carrying one's cross and follows Jesus Christ. Jesus himself is the true healer and his healing follows us beyond the grave. For believers, both natural life and spiritual life are not two different types of life that are opposites. No, they are one and each fulfills the other and both are gifts from God journeying to one goal.

True faith entails remaining in Christ in whatever situation one is in. This type of faith and hope helps us to gain from it a deeper understanding of our own existence.

²²⁷ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 9.

²²⁸ Cf. F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 23.

²²⁹ Cf. L. BOFF, *God's Witnesses in the Heart of the World*, 47.

“I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world” (Jn 16: 33). Antonio Magnante said that, “What Jesus did was to assume suffering into his hands and offer it to the Father. This is the way of overcoming the uselessness of suffering, and making it creative for salvation and the world wholeness”.²³⁰

Our sufferings and troubles have no power of destruction over us, because with, in and through Christ, we are conquerors. Death has no longer have power over us. In the Beatitudes, we can see that Jesus Christ, even in this life, brings joy in the midst of troubles and pains. It is not said blessed they who will, but ‘blessed are they’, even now as they are in such situation, they already begin to feel the hand of God upon them. The Beatitudes present to us the reality of life and how it is suppose to be lived.

4.1.1 Commitment and Joy in Suffering

In 1Cor 4:9-13, Paul is expressing the suffering he underwent as he worked for God, and also he depicts to us the great joy that he still posses. A sick person can still live in peace. Sacks defined peace (*shalom*) by saying that “Shalom is the peace that emerges when human beings are in right relationship with themselves, their neighbors, the earth and its creatures, and God”.²³¹ Only those in right relationship with God are contended. For Sheen, “Contentment enhances our enjoyment and diminishes our misery”²³². In the lives of the saints we see that contentment and joy is not something inborn, one can attain it through great resolution and attentiveness in successful fighting

²³⁰ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 10.

²³¹ J. SACKS, *The Dignity of Difference*, 20-21.

²³² F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 15.

against disruptive human desires. However in doing this, the help of God is necessary because trusting on our mere human powers we fail. Sheen says, “Human situation is not easy to cope with. Different human situations can be accepted and made bearable only by a surrender of the self to God”.²³³

In our age is difficult to have true contentment because we are so much attached to the outside aspects of life. “One of the greatest mistakes is to think that contentment comes from something outside us rather than from a quality of the soul”.²³⁴ With this, we can very well see how difficult it is for a person without faith to be contended and able to carry his or her suffering with love and patience. Ratzinger put it very well when he said, “What the Beatitudes mean cannot be expressed in purely theoretical terms; it is proclaimed in the life and suffering, and in the mysterious joy, of the disciple who gives himself over completely to following the Lord”.²³⁵ Christian life demands from the faithful indispensable sacrifices, total humility and renunciations. Humankind, created in God’s image are to imitate God in all their daily activities and commitments.²³⁶

It is by knowing the purpose of human life that we have the true foundation to our true happiness. Knowing the human purpose; goes hand in hand with recognizing and knowing our limits in life as whole. In psychology people are sometimes taught to cure their restlessness by recognizing and having the ability to live with those limits that are impossible to eradicate in human life. Thinking that one can control all happenings of his life, that false courage comes because of lack of faith by not

²³³ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 6.

²³⁴ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 14.

²³⁵ J. RATZINGER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 74.

²³⁶ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 30.

recognizing the owner of our lives, that is God himself. According to Quoist, “You must realize that you can never be fully happy without God, who alone can satisfy your infinite longing. The reason for this is that the hunger for happiness which each one of us experiences is in actuality a hunger for God”.²³⁷

When a man who does not believe or a man of little faith is in big problem and feels that he has done all but nothing working, he immediately breaks down because of both weakness of body and of the spirit. Faith and contentment bring a strong and happy heart. In all human situations, what matters more is the inner-self of the individual. Though those people of strong faith may be in other times physically weak, they remain inwardly strong and happy, so sickness and death will never become sources of despair for them. In Jesus Christ According to Antonio Magnante “Sickness and, consequently, suffering, which could render life to be useless and without meaning, become a redemptive power if they are deposited into the heart of Jesus, who, in his turn, will offer them to God. Thus, suffering becomes silent acceptance, silent oblation to Christ, and through him to God”.²³⁸

Through the examples of the martyrs of the Church we learn that to be the witnesses of Christ we need to too offer our own bodies. To be a witness of Christ entails all that God’s Son went through. Because of our intense desire for Christ who is our Lord, we can make a fearless commitment in the world. Through God’s grace, we are enabled to move on with life despite the mixture of beauty and pain we find in our world today. Larry Rosenberg says it is very difficult for a person who does not come to

²³⁷ M. QUOIST., *The Meaning of Success*, 82-83.

²³⁸ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 141-142.

terms with some unavoidable situations of life such as: I am subject to aging and this is unavoidable; I am subject to illness; I am subject to death and this is unavoidable and I am the owner of my actions, whatever I do, for good or evil.²³⁹ All sufferings and pain become lighter if we endure them patiently, discontentment poison our thinking and will power. For Fulton Sheen, the above point is different from hopelessness of life. Contentment is not opposite of self-betterment or call to hardworking.²⁴⁰ However, we who live with the people in pain are also asked to play our part by having sympathy on the suffering.

The issues discussed above of contentment and humility in sufferings brings joy in suffering. This is now very personal in the sense that the one suffering is to grow into this though support is of very important role. Fulton Sheen says “All the natural joys are intensified by spiritual joys and put upon a more enduring basis. No earthly happiness would be permanent or thorough if it were not associated with a good conscience”.²⁴¹ He defined spiritual joy as, “a serenity of temper in the midst of the changes of life [...]”. To a man who has never rooted the soul in the Divine every trouble exaggerates itself”.²⁴² Joy in suffering makes situations lighter to handle and brings about courage where there is nothing seems to hope for.

The Scripture teaches that a cheerful heart always finds a yoke easy and a burden light to carry. Joy in hard times for us Christians is through the assurance that Christ died on the cross and that on the third day he resurrected. All in all, life after

²³⁹ L. ROSENBERG, *Living in the Light of Death: On the Art of Being Truly Alive*, 13.

²⁴⁰ Cf. F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 15.

²⁴¹ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 23.

²⁴² F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 23.

death becomes our hope and encouragement. In Christian life, we are called to the love of Christ, a love that goes beyond death. Through God's grace, we too are capable of that love, the love that goes beyond the grave that is a love that remains through all eternity. We should be able in our life to mediate the love, concerns and, and wisdom of God with the joys and sufferings of humanity.

4.1.2 The virtue of Humility in Suffering

According to Sheen, "The humble man is never discouraged, but the proud man falls into despair. The humble man still has God to call upon; the proud man has only his own ego that has collapsed"²⁴³. In everything, the humble person is able to refer everything to God. Humility makes us to be loved by God and anyone who is loved by God has no need to look for other unnecessary loves because he or she is loved by love itself.²⁴⁴ To experience true happiness in difficult situations is possible but it demands that one should be humble enough and be ready to give up one's own self-will to follow God's-will. "[...] the man who loses himself finds himself and finds his happiness".²⁴⁵ The church teaches that "The way of perfection passes by way of the cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails the access and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes" (CCC. 2015). Quoist tells us that, "In Christ and through him the mystery of joy is made

²⁴³ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 18.

²⁴⁴ Cf. F.J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 21.

²⁴⁵ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 22.

equivalent to the mystery of the resurrection [...]. The measure of your intimacy with God is exactly the measure of your joy”.²⁴⁶

In the scriptures we read of God who has always intervened in order to save his people. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and forever, meaning that he can save us from our sufferings and trials. To say God will save us does not mean that we will not die. In Christian sense, it means though we die, we will resurrect to eternal happiness. For Antonio Magnante, “Through Jesus’ resurrection, light has been shed on the darkness of suffering and death. Such light can be perceived through an act of faith. That light of resurrection should be brought into the daily suffering, wherever it is found in the world”.²⁴⁷ He again said that, definitive suffering is not caused by physical sickness and shortage of material objects but by spiritual emptiness. The definitive suffering is the potential loss of eternal life or ultimate happiness.²⁴⁸

4.2 Suffering in Africa

Poverty, as given in the Beatitudes, does not mean misery or denying oneself the material goods that are necessary for human life. Poverty as it is in the gospels does not promote religious fundamentalism. In Africa, suffering is a reality and again instead of reducing, suffering has been increasing in many nations because of political instability and corruption. There is no equal sharing of goods and political power. Many of our political leaders are interested in gathering wealth for themselves, so they make sure that they gather as much as they can before they leave the power. In other nations, we

²⁴⁶ M. QUOIST, *The Meaning of Success*, 83.

²⁴⁷ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 142.

²⁴⁸ Cf. A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 9.

have presidents who have claimed themselves to be the presidents of those countries till death.

However, in Africa we also have the problem of certain cultures that have taken long to accept the gospel. They still believe in things and situations that do not bring them the true happiness they are yearning for. For example, we have many cultures up to now that have a very negative understanding of death. In my culture, that is Shona culture in Zimbabwe, many people in some of the remote areas still believe that death is caused by someone. So, if a person died because of headache they go to the traditional healers to consult what caused the headache, but mostly they look for “who” caused it. In Aquinas, we find that that beyond death lays our union with God. Ultimate happiness as a relationship between God and humanity is a relationship that would be horned beyond death.²⁴⁹ We can use our gifts, riches and even our sufferings and trials to invest in and for our present and future life with God.

It is the tendency of many Christians to surrender their faith when faced with tough situations of life, they feel there is no wrong to break some laws and put the gospels aside in order to look for some remedy somewhere. Alexander Lucie-Smith said that: “Human beings, by keeping the law, they ensure their own happiness. This accords with St Thomas’ overall moral vision, which is usually described as the ethics of happiness or eudaemonism, and which is the belief that human beings naturally seek happiness and the law of God is the best way to achieve that goal”.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Cf. A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 39.

²⁵⁰ A. LUCIE-SMITH, *Foundations of Moral Theology*, 71.

Longtime ago, this way of thinking left families broken and brought a lot of confusion and unhappiness in the communities. Poverty too in some cultures, is thought to be caused by jealous relatives or neighbors. The belief in witchcraft has made many people to live in fear and unhappiness. Our problem is not to discuss whether witchcraft exist or not but to invite people of Africa to place their trust in God who is the true source of happiness and to begin to enter into action in order to alleviate poverty and to spread the goodness to each other. The only thing that will bring prosperity, spiritual joy and true justice in Africa is the living and active word of God. The word of God is the true source of true and eternal happiness.

According to Sheen, “If our wills are on the side of God, we cannot be discouraged, for the side which we have chosen is always victorious, is never flouted”.²⁵¹ If we remain attached to God, we will know and experience the gospel truth that there is no cross too heavy than the power given us by God. To those who believe in God victory is always on their side. “The proper fear of God relieves us from all temporal fears: we trust Him to protect us and to befriend us through all dangers”.²⁵² Eternal happiness is the reward form God for those who are able to endure in the midst of trials and suffering. It is the reward of genuine faith in God. No matter in which situation of life we may be in; this should not block us to follow the original vocation of man. According to Antonio Magnante, “The human person is a being who since the

²⁵¹ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 112.

²⁵² F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 122.

beginning, according to the original plan of creation, was destined to immortality and incorruption, destined to eternal association and intimacy with God”.²⁵³

4.3 Modern man’s secular understanding of Joy and Happiness

The secular contemporary understanding of joy and happiness is lacking because of its understanding of the purpose of life too. Joy and happiness have come to be so much associated with material prosperity. Joy is so much mistaken with bodily pleasures and many people are not able to experience true happiness in all the adversities of life. There are few people who are ready to forget about themselves even for a short time and give their little time to their neighbors. Some after failing to achieve the status of life they wished from the beginning, they felt that there was nothing really for them to live for. Some could not even manage to live because of the disappointment they got from their own friends, loved ones or family members.

The taste of ultimate happiness that we experience in this world is a spiritual joy and our companion to holiness; it cannot fail in the changes and troubles of life, that is, if it is well rooted in the persons of the Trinity. It is a spiritual joy that one can experience both in times of prosperity and time of adversity. It is so because, “The journey one is meant to undertake is, most of the time, painful because it involves both heart and mind. The heart has to eliminate envy and jealousy, and the mind has to destroy its own logic and shift to God’s logic; from experience to reflection and finally to contemplation and possession”.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 40.

²⁵⁴ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 86.

Since many have believed and concentrated much on searching for happiness from outside without going for true inner happiness; some have committed suicide and some are sick both physically and spiritually. Sheen says that “Life is unbearable only to those who are ignorant of why they are alive; men in such a condition of soul equate happiness with pleasure and identify joy with a tingling of the nerve-endings”.²⁵⁵ Since we have seen that man without God to direct him, he is very limited to his own destination, so there is no way we can seek for true happiness in our own limited selves. Those who try this are always living a life subjected to disappointments. Those who truly search for fulfillment in God will never be disappointed though there will be trials. People are interested in power and leadership, the big problem comes in the instance that those who are power hungry to lead people are failing to govern themselves.

Many people are concerned more on how to avoid death and few think about how to avoid sin and live a holy life. Unbalanced desire for temporal goods and successes is ruining the faith of the people. Modern man’s happiness lies now on manipulating of goods to get higher profits, by doing so their happiness lies in the profit they are making. It also seems that many people have lost the sense of responsibility, meaning that they reduce responsibility to oneself and do away with its dynamic sense of being responsible to the other and the whole creation. Leonardo Boff said: “The encounter with the poor provides the occasion for the encounter with what God demands of us”.²⁵⁶ So, we are invited to care for the poor and in doing this we rightly present God to people, the nearness of God is to be felt in and through the believers.

²⁵⁵ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 25.

²⁵⁶ L. BOFF, *God’s Wittiness in the Heart of the World*, 111.

4.3.1 *The rich in worldly material goods and ultimate happiness*

Fulton Sheen quoted one of the beautiful saying from one of the medieval economists, Antonio Florence who said that: “The object of making money is that we may provide for ourselves and our dependents. The object of providing for self and others is that one may live virtuously. The object of living virtuously is to save our souls and attain eternal happiness”.²⁵⁷ Worldly riches are not in themselves bad and automatic blocks of people’s life towards God. What matters here is the individuals’ disposition towards the worldly goods they own.

Politics on its own is good and divinely intended but man has dirtied it, especially here in Africa to the point that whenever African man or woman hears the word being mentioned, what come to their mind is all the negative issues that has been used by our leaders to gain political power. Power in both politics and in the Church is to be exercised by those who fear God and respect human life. Worldly riches should be owned by those who know how to share and to detach themselves from it while they have it. All the leadership on earth should become subject to the power of God. The Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI wrote that “when man limits himself to think only of material and experimental objects, he closes himself to the questions of life, about himself and about God, impoverishing himself”.²⁵⁸

The parable of the rich fool in Lk 12: 13-21, is a good example of Jesus teaching on material goods. The rich fool is not accused of having a lot. I guess that he must have

²⁵⁷ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 54.

²⁵⁸ POPE BENEDICT XVI, Faith-Reason Split Is Schizophrenia, www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-faith-reason-split-is-schizophrenia. Date: 02-04-14.

earned these things through good planning, that is his effort. The parable was given after the young man asked Jesus to solve the problem of inheritance between him and his brother. True, the young man had a right to the inheritance but Christ was calling to see that there was something more profitable than worldly inheritance. This something more profitable to inherit is the Kingdom of God; that is our true eternal inheritance.

The rich fool was satisfied by having a lot and he thought all was well with him, but actually he did not know that for a human being to have all right with him only depends with one's relationship with God. For Quoist:

Man in his blindness seeks happiness precisely where he is unable to find it; and so, finding himself checkmated at every turn, at long last he gives up and decides to abandon himself to the fleeting pleasures of the moment-or else, giving way to despair, he concludes that happiness is little more than an illusion. But true happiness does exist and you can experience it.²⁵⁹

The rich fool was to first give thanks to God for blessing him and he had too to look around him and share his plenty with the poor. In Luke 12:31, we are called to seek first the kingdom of God and the other things will be given to us as well. God always blesses us for the sake the glory of his name and for the sake of the other.

Jesus did not canonize poverty or reject that people should not become rich; he only denounces the way the rich use in calculating riches and their disposition towards their riches. "For our Lord does not canonize the 'giving up' of wealth in favor of a vacuum; he approves, rather, of giving wealth in exchange for the far greater riches of Heaven".²⁶⁰ In pursuit of ultimate happiness, we are called to live a life which is worthy of our vocation; we need to have heavenly bank account. In and through his life, Jesus

²⁵⁹ QUOIST M., *The Meaning of Success*, 80.

²⁶⁰ F. J. SHEEN, *Way to Happiness*, 111.

showed us a true way of investing in God's true riches. Even the worldly riches can and must be used to advance our relationship with God. "Exterior goods are ordered to the well-being of the body; that bodily goods are oriented toward the well-being of the soul; and that the goods proper to the active life are ordered to the goods of the contemplative life".²⁶¹ Riches in the hands of a Christian can be a powerful weapon for helping oneself and the society to advance into the Kingdom of God.

4.4 Some suggestions that should be carried out by the Church and all believers in promoting true happiness in our societies

The question here will be how can this be done? First of all Christians are to struggle to live in the example given by Christ. According to Burke, "You have to learn how to live a Christian life in a pagan atmosphere [...] It is true because, to all practical intents and purposes, the social and moral atmosphere surrounding us all today is pagan".²⁶² It is time for the church in Africa and everywhere to be near her people in her pastoral activity. The pastors are to be near the suffering people, they need to do the gospel more than talking much about the gospel. There is need of leading by example, especially in times of suffering; the pastors should remain holding on Christ.

We have example of the church pastors who, in one or another difficult situation of life have resorted to go back to some of the African beliefs and they ended up going to consult the African diviners instead of remaining trusting in God. Fr Antonio Magnante wrote that: "[...] human life becomes a fascinating adventure swinging between happiness and unhappiness, but always with a spark of hope which God never

²⁶¹ R.NIEUWENHOVE- J. WAWRYKOW, *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, 177.

²⁶² C. BURKE, *Covenanted Happiness: Love and Commitment in Marriage*, 161.

allows to be extinguished. By clinging to that spark of hope, we can keep on fighting in the midst of historical events".²⁶³ In real sense, we can say that, it is God himself who fight for us; he is our victory in and through Jesus Christ.

We have some of the church leaders who fear death to the point that when death enters in their families or when they themselves are faced by death, they become a scandal to the faithful. We too need to acknowledge that there is a lot of improvement in the sense that many people have seen and believe in the primacy of the gospel in life and people of Africa are becoming missionaries to each other. It is our cultures to be transformed by the gospel, not the gospel by our cultures. It is by living the life of the Beatitudes or Sermon on the Mount that we will be able to become shining lights to each other.

Loss of happiness here on earth makes people to see even good things meaningless and many end up committing suicide or living life without direction at all. We are to teach and show the love of Christ to each other by living the gospel way of life. People should know that happiness do not come from externals, it should come from deep within the human heart and that one's right to happiness is not in isolation with other people's right to happiness. Tensions and other problems of life are to be solved in time in order to allow those affected to be happy and let their happiness grow to ultimate happiness.

We need to avoid solving problems of life by avoidance, because avoidance does not brings us internal harmony. True happiness calls us to continue fighting till we win the powers of darkness; it is so because there is no easy way to true happiness. To

²⁶³ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 51.

reach true happiness, life of reflection is needed. Without time to reflect on life, we get lost in the short lived pleasures of this world. True faith, faithfulness, unity and forgiveness are necessary for those looking forward to ultimate happiness. We have seen from Aquinas that nothing is available in this world that can be the substitute for true happiness.

Our Church is to continue helping people to cope with their different life situation. In some cases the religious and some catholic pastors, make the Catholic faith cold and lifeless. In performing our duties we do not show the life that enwraps our Catholic faith. The choices we make in life must be the choices that bring happiness and there is a great need for the Christians to learn to sacrifice our desires for the sake of others. Our experiences tell us that where good pastoral work is done, love, hope, courage and faith have been reborn in the life of the suffering and dying people. This we cannot do on our mere human effort, so, there is constant need to look for strength from God through prayer.

Since we have said that the ultimate happiness does not begin after death, we need to look at all aspects of human life and see if something can be done in order to help people to experience God the source of their life in all aspects of life. Having said so, we find that the duty of helping others to live a happy life begins from the parents, to the individuals, to the church, and the society at large. Cormac Burke quoted St. Josemaria Escriva who always encourages parents to educate their children in a way that from the beginning, their hearts are always filled with the love and desire of

seeking and knowing Christ and remaining in him.²⁶⁴ Love for each other demands effort. “Love, true love, is other-centered”.²⁶⁵

So, the life we live should be a life that promotes true happiness to oneself and those around us. Some of our behavior discourages those around us. Commenting on the effects of divorce, Burke said that “[...] it is not just your children’s present happiness that is at stake; it is their future happiness too: the sort of life that you prepared them for, the sort of happiness-easy or difficult, true or false-that you, by your own life and example, taught them to seek”.²⁶⁶ With this we can agree that in promoting true happiness, the church should also in a serious way take a further step in family ministry, so as to have strong Christians at church community level. Many of our families, communities and societies are wounded, some to the point that happiness has become a metaphysical or mythological concept. Yes, we will not enter into the ultimate happiness here on earth, but through the grace and word of God, we can in a special way everyday grow to perfect happiness, though sufferings will remain part of our life here on earth.

4.5 Conclusion

According to Antonio Magnante “Only God, the Creator, has power over everything and knows the intimate secrets of nature”.²⁶⁷ Suffering does not only entail sickness, oppression, hunger and so on. These are the most part of it, but here we include also the spiritual and psychological sufferings that are brought about both our

²⁶⁴ Cf. C. BURKE, *Covenanted Happiness: Love and Commitment in Marriage*, 159.

²⁶⁵ C. BURKE, *Covenanted Happiness: Love and Commitment in Marriage*, 65.

²⁶⁶ C. BURKE, *Covenanted Happiness: Love and Commitment in Marriage*, 79.

²⁶⁷ A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 127.

physical sufferings and by the choices and decisions we make in life. To follow Christ entails carrying one's cross, while temptation is always following us. In trying to follow Christ we may have thought some people to be good examples to follow but in one way or another they may have discouraged us. It remains that in suffering and struggling either physical, psychological and spiritually, Christ is our true and incomparable example to follow.

Physical suffering is for a moment but complete fulfillment in Christ is forever. To be able to remain in state of spiritual joy even when suffering and struggling we need first to understand the purpose and meaning of human life here on earth; without this we will not be able to continue committing ourselves to God's will for humanity. In Africa, the Church should help people to give priority to the Scriptures above the beliefs of our cultures, tribes and areas. There are other aspects our cultures and tribes that need to be transformed by the Gospels. Without this, we continue and end up carrying other sufferings that are not real in life, but only in our minds.

Ultimate happiness is an open gift from God for everyone. What is required is our disposition in our relationship to and with God through Jesus Christ. Our project we begun with trying to understand Aquinas teaching on ultimate happiness have taken us to the biblical understanding of eternal happiness especially through the beatitudes. As if it was not enough, the end of this chapter four suggest to us that eternal happiness cannot be attained by only a mere desiring it, so the Church and the individual Christians are to venture into a strong and well planned pastoral work as a way of helping people to attain complete fulfillment, life in and with God. This is the right and true purpose of the different theologies that the Church teaches. "Christ's resurrection is

not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is irresistible force” (EG 276). This is what brings us true faith, hope and happiness.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In the first chapter we tried to show that there should be no any gap between what we learn, know to be the truth and believe with our action. The Scriptures are alive and theology is existential. In the second chapter we saw that happiness is not an additional aspect of life, but man and woman were created for happiness. This can be traced from the beginning of creation. The Trinity is the true source of true human happiness. Coming to the third chapter, we looked on who we can live the Gospel way of life by looking at the Beatitudes as a call to existential faith. We too saw how through living the Gospel way of life Christian can begin to experience eternal happiness here on earth though not fully as it will be on resurrection day. Lastly, in the fourth chapter we discussed on how we should reconcile human suffering and the call to ultimate happiness by the Gospel. Here we clearly saw that it is only by learning from Jesus' life that one can be suffering and at the same time able to continue in the happiness that comes from God's word.

For Aquinas, "Works are necessary to man in order to gain Happiness; not on account of the insufficiency of the Divine power which bestows Happiness, but that the

order of things be observed”²⁶⁸. All that we have said in this project can be summarized like the message of the Gospels; that is living with and in purposeful spirit of charity that includes both love of God and love of neighbor. All the different levels of happiness that we look for in this world are to be measured by God’s authenticity, reality and absolute end. With Aquinas, we can conclude that ultimate happiness is a divine promise that invites man to respond to it, so it is not a purely human achievement. Man’s action is a response to God’s love and faithfulness. Under the conditions of this present life happiness for humanity is participation of a man in the true happiness of God (*participation beatitudinis*).²⁶⁹

All are called to happiness. In order to reach this perfection the faithful are to use the strength given out to them by Christ as a gift, by this all are able to do the will of the Father in our everyday activities. Christ wants that we whole heartedly devote ourselves to the glory of God and to the service of our neighbors (cf. L.G 40:2). “While he was speaking, a woman from the crowd called out and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that carried you and the breasts at which you nursed”, He replied. “Rather, blessed are those who hear the Word of God and observe it” (Lk 11:27). This is the true blessedness, the true happiness that springs from God’s word. Without listening, hearing, knowing, believing, contemplating and living God’s word, will not experience true happiness in life. This word of God is to be in a special way preached and lived to all ends of the earth.

²⁶⁸ ST. 1-11, q. 5. a. 7, ad 1

²⁶⁹ S.J. POPE, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 62.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologica*, Vol. 1, New York: Benzinger Brothers 1946.
- BROWNING, D.S., *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care. Theology and Pastoral Care*, Fortress Press. 1983
- BOFF, L., *God's Witnesses in the Heart of the World*. Ed and trans, Robert Faith, Claret Centre for Resources in Spirituality, Vol. 3, Chicago, Los Angeles, Manila, 1981.
- BUBER, M., *Between Man and Man*. New York: Collier Books, 1965.
- BURKE, C., *Covenanted Happiness: Love and Commitment in Marriage*. New York: Scepter Publishers 1999.
- CHAPPEL, H., "Conversion By Mercy and For a Praxis of Mercy". Paper presented at the Catholic Theological Society of America, June 8, 2001.
- CUTTAZ, C.F., *Our Life of Grace*, trans BOUGHARD, A., Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1958.
- FARLEY, C.J., *Be-Attitudes: An Involvement Approach to Teaching Christian Values*. New York: The Society of St Paul 1972.
- FLYNN, A. - al., *Living our Faith*. Book Three. New York: William H. Sadlier. Inc 1958.
- SHEEN, F. J., *Way to Happiness*. Garden City Books: Doubleday Company, New York, 1954.
- ., *The Cross and the Beatitudes*. P. J. Kennedy and Sons, New York, 1937.
- GULAS, R.M., *Reason informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality*, Paulist Press, New York,
- GUTIERREZ, G., *Essential Writings*. ed. James B. Nickoloff. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- HADOT, P., *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
- HANS. H., *Christian Ethics in the African Context*. Nairobi, Kenya: Uzima Press, Imani House 1976.

- HESCHEL, A., *Between God and Man: An Interpretation of Judaism from the Writings of Abraham J. Heschel*. ed. Fritz A. Rothschild. New York: Free Press, 1959.
- HILDEBRAND VON D. - HILDEBRAND A., *The Art of Living*. Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1965.
- KEATING, T., *Crisis in Faith: Invitation to Christian Maturity*. New York: Living Flame Press 1970.
- LEVINAS, E., "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinite." In *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*. Adriaan Peperzak. West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1993.
- ., - KEARNERY, R., "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas." In *Face to Face with Levinas*. ed. RICHARD A. COHEN. Albany: State University of New York Press 1986.
- ., *Outside the Subject*. trans. Michael B. Smith Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press 1993.
- ., *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*. Trans. Sean Hand. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press 1990.
- LUICE-SMITH, A., *Foundations of Moral Theology*, Africa: Paulines Publications 2006.
- MAGNANTE. A, I.M.C., *Why Suffering? The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*. Africa Nairobi: Paulines Publications 1997.
- METZ, J. B., *Faith in History and Society: Towards a Fundamental Practical Theology*. trans. David Smith. New York: Seabury Press 1980.
- MICALLEF, A S.J., *On Becoming a Christian*. Malta: University Students' Catholic Movement Jesuit Center of Spirituality 1984.
- MCDERMOTT, T., *How To Read Aquinas*. London: Granta Publications 2007.
- NIEUWENHOVE, R.V- WAWRYKOW, J. ed., *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*. University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2005.
- O' CONNOR MURPHY, J. O.P., *Becoming Human Together*. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc, 1977.
- POLLAN, M., *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's –Eye View of the World*. New York: Random House 2001.
- POPE, J.S., *The Ethics of Aquinas*. Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C 2002.
- QUOIST, M., *The Meaning of Success*, trans by Donald P. Gray. Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides Publishers, Inc 1963.

- RATZINGER, J, POPE BENEDICT XVI; *Jesus of Nazareth, From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, trans ADRIAN J. WALKER, New York Doubleday London Toronto Sydney, 2007.
- RANGIONE, L.A., *Conferences of the Beatitudes*. Philadelphia, Pa: The Peter Reilly Co. 1957.
- RICOEUR, P., *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- ROSENBERG, L., *Living in the Light of Death: On the Art of Being Truly Alive*, Boston: Shambhala, 2000.
- RYAN, T., *Thomas Aquinas as Reader of the Psalms*. Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000.
- SACKS, J., *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. London: Continuum 2002.
- SCHILLEBEECKX. E., *Christ the Christian Experience in the Modern World*, London: SCM Press 1980.
- ., *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, trans N.D SMITH, New York: The Seabury Press 1974.
- SCHNACKENBURG, R., *The Gospel According to St John, vol. 1. Introduction and Commentary on Chs 1-4*, London: Burns and Oates 1980.
- ., *The Gospel According to St John, vol 2. Commentary on Chs 5-12*, London: Burns and Oates 1980.
- TRACY, D., “*On Theological Education: A Reflection*”. In *Theological Literacy for the Twenty-First Century*. ed. Rodney L. with Nancy M. Rourke. Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans 2002.
- UGENTI, A., *God and Happiness, 101 Questions and Answers*. Africa, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2007.
- VELING, T. A., *Practical Theology “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”*. New York: Mary Knoll 2005.

Bible

The New African Bible. Nairobi Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa 2011.

Church Documents and Papal Letters

- VATICAN II, *Gaudium et Spes*. (The Church in the Modern World) 1965
- VATICAN II, *Lumen Gentium*. (Light to the World). 1965.
- DIVES MISERECODIA* (Rich in Mercy), JOHN PAUL II, 1980.

EVANGELI GAUDIUM: (The Joy of the Gospel) Pope Francis, 2013.

SOLLICITUDO REI: (On Social Concern) JOHN PAUL II, 1987.

Dictionary

DEFOUR, X. L., *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 2nd ed, trans P.JOSEPH CAHILL S.J. London: Geoffrey Chapman 1973.

Internet Source

POPE BENEDICT XVI, *Faith-Reason Split Is Schizophrenia*, www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-faith-reason-split-is-schizophrenia Date: 02-04-14.