

LOOKING FOR HAPPINESS IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES: THOMAS AQUINAS ON MAN’S LAST END AND THE ETHICS OF ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES

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Abstract

Thomas Aquinas’ treatise on man’s last end, presented in questions one to five of the *prima secunda* of his treasured deposit of wisdom, the *Summa Theologiae*, is mined for its insights into the proper conduct of enterprise. His text discloses that perfect happiness, the complete activation or fulfillment of our being, can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence and that it is sheer folly to look for happiness in any external goods (wealth, honor, fame, power), or any goods of the body (health, pleasure), or any goods of the soul. The significant ethical implications that arise for the institution of business from losing sight of the true ultimate end are taken up before laying out what a political economic order formed according to a true conception of happiness would look like.

Keywords

Happiness, Teleology, Business Ethics

Introduction

Teleological perspectives in ethics seek to identify the right or proper ends that ought to be pursued in virtue of our humanity. Institutional applications of this perspective in the arena of commerce ask what distinctive function business is asked to fulfill in society. Camenisch (1981) argued that this is the central question, or the “heart of the matter,” when it comes to business ethics. This position has since been picked up by others (Duska, 1997, 2000; Karns, 2011; Hollensbe et al, 2014). However, Camenisch qualifies his argument that business ought to contribute to human flourishing by provisioning goods and services that are really goods and services and not bads and disservices by stating, “business ethics, like any serious ethics, will need to develop a philosophical or theological anthropology, a view of humanity and what its proper pursuit, its appropriate fulfillment is (p.65).” In other words, ethics rests on inquiries undertaken in more fundamental disciplines. Explicit presentation and defense of the foundations is largely absent in the discussion of business ethics.

This study endeavors to fill this gap by undertaking an in-depth and detailed examination of Saint Thomas Aquinas’ treatise on man’s last end found in questions one to five of the *prima secunda* of his masterwork the *Summa Theologiae*. Saint Augustine thought the ultimate purpose of our lives was self-evident. “We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is articulated” (U.S. Catholic Church, 1992, no.1718). If it is this obvious, why is a treatise needed? First of all, happiness here means the complete fulfillment or activation of our being not the moment-to-moment enjoyment we might refer to as happiness today. Secondly, the great value of Aquinas’ treatise is that he presents and critiques a number of candidates for the *summum bonum*, including wealth, probing whether these true goods can carry the weight of ultimacy. Aquinas distills it down to a distinction between external goods, goods of the body, and goods of the soul. This clarification opens the door to gaining insight on the ethics of economic enterprises. What are the consequences of inverting these goods, of looking for happiness in all the wrong places? What shape would a provisioning system that properly values the various goods of human living take?

The Treatise on Man’s Last End in the Structure of the *Summa Theologiae*

“For the human intellect is measured by things, so that a human concept is not true by reason of itself, but by reason of its being consonant with things, since ‘an opinion is true or false according as it answers to the reality.’ But the Divine intellect is the measure of things: since each thing has so far truth in it, as it represents the Divine intellect.”

--ST, I-II, q.93, a.1, ad.3

St. Thomas Aquinas, a humble Dominican friar, was one of the greatest minds to ever grace the earth. His *Summa Theologiae*, which remained uncompleted at the time of his death, is a work of towering brilliance. This study seeks to mine a small vein, the treatise on man’s last end (ST, I-II, qq. 1-5), of Aquinas’ treasured deposit of wisdom for insights it might give into the proper conduct of enterprise. This extraction work must begin by understanding the overall structure of the *Summa Theologiae* and the placement of the treatise being examined within Aquinas’ summary of theology. This can be done by looking closely at the general prologue to the treatise.

“Since, as Damascene states (*De Fide Orthod.* ii, 12), man is said to be made to God’s image, in so far as the image implies *an intelligent being endowed with free-will and self-movement*: now that we have treated of the exemplar, i.e., God, and of those things which came forth from the power of God, in accordance with His will; it remains for us to treat of His image, i.e., man, inasmuch as he too is the principle of his actions, as having free-will and control of his actions.”

The structural outline of the *Summa Theologiae* mirrors the structural outline of reality. Aquinas begins with God because “in the beginning” (Gen. 1:1) was God. So in part I Aquinas, “treating of the exemplar,” successively lays out God’s one Essence—whether He exists (q.2), how He exists (qq.3-13), how he operates (qq. 14-26)—and His trinitarian nature (qq.27-43). He then goes on in part I to look at the act of creation, “at those things which came forth from the power of God in accordance with his will,” offering treatises on creation (qq.44-49), on angels (qq.50-74), and on man (qq.75-102), “made to God’s image.” Part I closes with a treatise on divine government (qq.103-119). Thus, the prologue to the treatise on man’s last end which opens part II of the *Summa Theologiae* serves as a recap of part I. In part II Aquinas moves to man’s return to God, “the rational creatures advance towards God” (ST, I, q.2), and in part III to the means of that return, “Christ, who as man, is our way to God” (ST, I, q.2).

The basic form of human life is a journey or story. Aquinas refers to us as “wayfarers” (ST, II-II, q.24, a.4). The great archetypal idea of a journey applies to the whole of creation not just *homo viator*, however. The *Summa Theologiae* is structured the way it is because all of reality is a journey out (an *exitus*) from God and a journey back (a *reditus*) to God. Peter Kreeft puts it in a stunningly beautiful way. “God is the ontological heart that pumps the blood of being throughout the arteries of creation into the body of the universe, which wears a human face, and receives it back through the veins of man’s life of love and will” (1990, p.15).

God does not create out of necessity. He is all complete in Himself. God creates out of love to diffuse His goodness. Thomas Aquinas is quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as saying, “creatures came into existence when the key of love opened his hand” (U.S. Catholic Church, 1992, no.293). Communicating His goodness to creatures is the exit portion of the journey. God’s call is for what he has brought into being to return to Him. Creatures, including man, do this by fulfilling their natures. This is the human nature summed up in the general prologue and fully explained in the relevant questions of part I. The important point is that the treatise on man’s last end builds from or assumes into place what has been demonstrated earlier in the *Summa Theologiae*. For instance, here is the review Aquinas provides to open Book Three of his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, wherein he discusses human happiness.

“We have shown in the preceding books that there is one First Being, possessing the full perfection of all being, whom we call God, and who of the abundance of His perfection, bestows being on all that exists, so that He is proved to be not only the first of beings, but also the beginning of all. Moreover He bestows being on others, not through natural necessity, but according to the decree of His will...Hence it follows that He is the Lord of all things made by Him: since we dominate over those things that are subject to our will. And this is a perfect dominion that He exercises over things made by Him, for as much as in their making He needs neither the help of an extrinsic agent, nor matter as the foundation of His work: since He is the universal efficient cause of all being...God, who in Himself is perfect in every way, and by His power endows all things with being, must need be the Ruler of all, Himself ruled by none: nor is anything to be excepted from his ruling, as neither is there anything that does not owe its being to Him. Therefore, as He is perfect in being and causing, so He is perfect in ruling” (Book 3, I).

The prologue sets up the treatise because what follows in the treatise on man's last end is to be understood from the perspective of the great *exitus—reditus* journey characteristic of reality. God has made man an image of Himself (Gen.1:27). Endowed with the faculties of intellect and will human beings have the power of self-mastery and moreover, in His infinite generosity God has given man stewardship responsibilities for the world (Gen.1:28). Human beings are not God and can never be God, yet God has made them a limited portrait of Himself. For instance, God formed the world through His thoughts. The thinking that human beings do can make for effective action in that same world. God's will created the world *ex nihilo*. Keeping in mind their limits as created beings and recognizing that their lives are always lived before God, human beings can choose creative possibilities with a deliberate will. It is just not true, as materialistic scientism proposes, that human beings are nothing but billiard balls being knocked about by the forces of the universe. Human beings can choose to love. In doing so they imitate the inner life of the trinitarian God that has given them their existence.

“Rational creatures...imitate God, not only in being and life, but also in intelligence...Likewise as the uncreated Trinity is distinguished by the procession of the Word from the Speaker, and from Love from both of these, as we have seen (Q.28, A.3); so we may say that in rational creatures wherein we find a procession of the word in the intellect, and a procession of love in the will, there exists an image of the uncreated Trinity” (ST, I, q.93, a.6).

It may seem that Aquinas has just assumed into place the answer to his probe about human purpose—that we exist to know and love God. In all his works Aquinas never engages in any such sleight of hand. Indeed, the criticism generally levelled at the treatise is that Aquinas moves too slowly. But this speed is deliberate. He offers a systemic and detailed argumentation over forty articles to ensure that no unsubstantiated claims are made, and nothing has been missed. In the eight articles of question one Aquinas establishes that man does have an ultimate purpose and this is happiness. It is key at this point to clarify what is meant by happiness and what is not meant by it.

In our contemporary age, with man curved in on himself, where a supreme court justice writes (Planned Parenthood vs. Casey, 1992), “at the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life,” happiness is whatever people think it is or want it to be. The act of stating itself, “that happiness consists in *x*,” determines the matter. In this framework there can be no honest dialogue about human purpose. Any contentions will be settled by force. But it is a fundamentally false and disingenuous view. Reality is not created by our imagination but exists independently of what we think about it which is why warning labels such as “may contain nuts” are put on products. Justice Kennedy would have us believe that we can define away any reality that is not appealing to us but it would not be wise to put the proposition to the test if, for example, one is handling venomous snakes. In sum, happiness today is a purely subjective feeling.

This is not how the term is used by Aquinas in his treatise. An end is that for the sake of which things are to be done. The ultimate end is that purpose which is not referred to any other. Man finds his happiness, the permanent possession of perfect good which completely satisfies all his desires, in the attainment of his ultimate end. Aquinas' treatise is ideally constructed to fill the gap in our understanding identified by Camenisch since the search is for that which completely fulfills human nature. Happiness refers to the flourishing of an embodied rational being, or rational animal using Aristotle's definition, that has dominion over his own actions. Happiness is not a feeling, although, as we will see, delight accompanies true fulfillment as a result of resting in the good attained. Happiness is the engaging of our highest power, the intellect, in its highest activity, contemplation of the highest truth. What does the mind close down on when it completes this activity? Aquinas devotes question three of the treatise to answering this question. As usual, he uses the first seven articles of the question to lay the foundation for the unshakeable argument he provides in article eight that “final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence” (ST, I-II, q.3, a.8).

Aquinas provides two arguments to support his claim. The first is that we will not be happy if something remains for us to desire and seek—i.e., unsatisfied desire frustrates us. The second reason Aquinas gives for why nothing less than the beatific vision will suffice for perfect happiness is “that the perfection of any power is determined by the nature of its object” (ST, I-II, q.3, a.8). The power in question is our human intellect and the object of that power is the essence of the thing we are considering. Unlike sub rational animals who know only particulars we are able to know immaterial forms and causes of things. The intellect is perfected, is at its best and most complete, when it performs its characteristic act of knowing what a thing is. At this point of the argument Aquinas introduces the remarkable human capacity of wonder. Our minds are designed to know and when we come across an effect that we don't know the cause of we wonder what that cause is. This fact, this wondering about the world we live in, about the causes of the effects we see, characterizes our humanity from infancy onto the last days of adult life. Wonder causes us to inquire, and this inquiry does not stop until we arrive at the knowledge of the essence of the cause. Of God, our inquiry can disclose that He exists, but it cannot penetrate to knowing God's essence.

“Our natural knowledge begins from sense. Hence our natural knowledge can go so far as it can be led by sensible things. But our mind cannot be led by sense so far as to see the essence of God; because the sensible effects of God do not equal the power of God as their cause. Hence from the knowledge of sensible things the whole power of God cannot be known; nor therefore can His essence be seen. But because they are His effects and depend on their cause, we can be led from them so far as to know of God *whether He exists*, and to know of Him what must necessarily belong to him, as the first cause of all things, exceeding all things caused by Him” (ST, I, q.12, a.12).

Such things as we know about God by rational inference can be supplemented by Divine revelation, but this still doesn’t lift our minds to see God as He is in Himself and the intellect will not be satisfied, will not be perfectly happy, until it reaches “the very Essence of the First Cause” (ST, I-II, q.3, a.8). The authors of *My Way of Life*, a condensed version of the *Summa Theologiae*, make this point by saying, “the small cup of man’s mind cannot contain the ocean of being, goodness, and truth which is the Essence of God” (Farrell and Healy, 1952, p.159). The perfection of the intellect is to know God, to have “union with God” (ST, I-II, q.3, a.8). In this alone does happiness consist.

For St. Thomas Aquinas happiness is twofold. Perfect happiness, seeing God’s Divine Essence, is attainable only after death and with supernatural assistance. It is perfect in that it is sufficient—nothing more is desired—and complete—there is nothing to add to it. There is also the imperfect happiness we can have in this present life. It resides in having the things we need to live a full human life and having the moral and intellectual virtues to direct the use and enjoyment of these human goods. Temporal happiness is subordinated to eternal happiness and the fragmentary and incomplete happiness available to us now needs the gift of God’s grace to be perfectly achieved. That is, the same grace that makes perfect happiness possible after our death infuses the virtue of charity into our souls while we are alive. Aquinas’ conclusion is that although certain limited happiness is possible in this life, complete happiness lies only in the contemplation of God in the life to come. The means of sanctification such as prayer, worship, reception of the sacraments are important practices in this life but they are not enough to give us perfect happiness. The flashes or glimpses of Himself that God sometimes affords are not yet the face-to-face experience of God. Aquinas references God’s promise in Holy Scripture that He will make it possible for us to see Him. “What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is” (1 Jn. 3:2).

The logic of the argument is this:

- i) Nothing in nature is in vain.
- ii) Our human nature is fashioned to long for the infinite.
- iii) Since there is nothing in nature that satisfies this longing, then there must be something beyond nature that will. Aquinas says this is God.

“All things by desiring their own perfection, desire God Himself, inasmuch as the perfection of all things are so many similitudes of the divine being...And so of those things which desire God, some know Him as He is in Himself, and this is proper to the rational creature.” (ST, I, q.6, a.1, ad.2).

We apprehend the essence of God and achieve happiness, our perfection, only through an elevation of the human mind by divine grace. But this happiness offered to us in the next life utterly transforms the significance of our present lives. We now live, we now use the goods of this life, not for our own sake but for God’s sake.

Would that the world was already won for God but sadly this is not the case. Human beings direct themselves to everything under the sun while ignoring the perfect, and even the incomplete, happiness that could be theirs. Any person who pursues a good, any imaginable good, that lies within the created order as an end in itself will inevitably be left asking, like the singer of a Peggy Lee torch song, “Is that all there is?” In question two Aquinas explains why anything short of God fails to fully satisfy. The next section goes over this part of the treatise.

Looking for Happiness in all the Wrong Places

“No one can serve two masters: for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

-Mt. 6:24

Man seeks happiness, seeks the perfect good that will satisfy all desire, but places his hope in things, however good in their proper place, that cannot carry the weight of ultimacy. In question two of the treatise

Aquinas asks where does complete happiness lie or in what it is and takes up a roster of failed candidates tightly organized around three general categories of created goods. These are external goods, goods of the body, and goods of the soul. In explaining why supreme happiness cannot consist in these goods, Aquinas prepares the reader to consider what it is in itself, its essence or quiddity.

“It is impossible for man’s happiness to consist in wealth” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.1). Why is the powerful lure of Mammon illusory? Aquinas, following Aristotle’s *Politics*, distinguishes between natural wealth and artificial wealth. Natural wealth, food, clothing, shelter, *et cetera*, serves to meet our natural needs. It is instrumental, i.e., we ought to seek to have access to a sufficient level of material resources, the level we need to live well, to live a good human life. Aquinas supports his point that the natural world was designed to sustain man in his existence by quoting Psalm 8, “You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet” (verse 6). Artificial wealth, money, has been invented by the art of man for the “convenience of exchange and as a measure of things saleable” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.1). Money is a cultural tool designed to aid in the procurement of natural wealth across the society. Having more material resources than we need does not lead to human flourishing but in fact detracts from it. Adding possessions to possessions without limit, beyond any identifiable need, leads to exhaustion not fulfillment and overconsumption of certain goods, e.g., foodstuffs, results in ill health not well-being. Pursuing artificial wealth as an end in itself is a basic perversion, one that needs to be zealously guarded against because the desire of such a disordered concupiscence is infinite. At least with natural wealth a person may be satiated at some point. When money is pursued absolutely, there can never be enough.

“It is impossible for happiness to consist in honor” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.2). By honor Aquinas means the particular distinctions, titles, medals, offices, awards, given to people who are admired for some excellence and not fame or celebrity in general. The basic problem with honor as a candidate is that happiness is something internal to a person, but honors are external to us and depend on those conferring them. Honor is something more extrinsic and superficial than the perfect good we are seeking to identify. The desire for honor does arise from the longing for happiness. “Good moves the appetite chiefly through possessing some property of happiness, which all men seek naturally” (ST, I-II, q.84, a.4). What we really long to possess, however, is the excellence that honor signifies and attests to. This is why Aquinas says it matters to us who confers the honors. We want them to come from the wise because we respect their judgment that we are deserving of the distinction, that we truly have the quality in question. So, we err in considering the proper place of the good of honor in our lives in two ways. First, we wrongly reverse the sign and the thing signified and work not for the excellence that elevates our personhood but for the external title. The second error is placing too high a value on honor, making the receipt of dignities such as awards the ultimate end of life. In doing so we fall into the sin of ambition.

“The desire of honor may be inordinate in three ways. First, when a man desires recognition of an excellence which he has not: this is to desire more than his share of honor. Secondly, when a man desires honor for himself without referring it to God. Thirdly, when a man’s appetite rests in honor itself without referring it to the profit of others. Since then ambition denotes inordinate desire of honor, it is evident that it is always a sin” (ST, II-II, q.131, a.1).

“Man’s happiness cannot consist in human fame or glory” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.3). Aquinas is right to separate fame from honor. The two are not the same thing and need not coincide. One can be granted honors without being famous and one can be famous without being granted honors. Such is the shallowness or absurdity of our times that some people are famous for being famous. Aquinas uses Ambrose’s definition of fame or glory, “to be clearly known and praised by others” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.3) to answer the question of the article. The definition itself, since it includes being known by others, necessarily moves Aquinas’ discussion of the question into the realms of metaphysics and epistemology. For Aquinas ultimate reality is not a social construction, as it is for so many contemporary thinkers, but something brought into being by a loving Creator. This is summed up in the following way: “God caused the universe by knowing it into existence, i.e., by uttering the mental word according to Genesis. Things exist, and are *what* they are, because God knows them as such (e.g., dogs are doggy because God thought them up)” (Kreeft, 1990, p.366, emphasis in original). Given this reality the nature of human knowledge is distinguishable from the form of divine understanding. “The thing known is related to human knowledge otherwise than to God’s knowledge: for human knowledge is caused by the thing known, whereas God’s knowledge is the cause of things known” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.3). This metaphysical understanding entails the conclusion that fame cannot cause happiness. Public knowledge of a man’s happiness is not what makes him happy. Man’s happiness does not lie in being thought to be happy. Rather, whatever portion of happiness someone possesses exists first, and then becomes known. Two different metaphysical starting points yield two dramatically different conclusions regarding wherein happiness lies. Aquinas begins with the assumptions of metaphysical realism that a world exists outside of the mind that we can know with our minds. Happiness then is that toward which we are directed by our objective human nature and therefore completely fulfills us. Those beginning with the metaphysical assumption that there is no world not of our own making are left with only subjective feelings to assess. Happiness is what makes a person feel good and the question about fame then is how you feel when people praise you.

Aquinas gives another reason for not holding human glory up as something we can depend on for our happiness. This is the observation he makes that “human knowledge often fails, especially in contingent singulars, such as human acts” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.3). Because of this, human glory is often deceptive. On the other hand, praise and glory from God can always be trusted. Because God’s thoughts are what make things how they really are, what God knows is always true knowledge. The glory of God’s praise is always true glory. Our “beatitude depends, as on its cause, on the glory man has with God” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.3). Understandably, Aquinas closes the *respondeo* with a citation from the Parable of the Talents, “well done good and faithful servant” (Mt. 25:21). What matters is how our lives are seen in God’s eyes.

Finally, Aquinas makes the point that fame, like money, is fleeting. It can be there one day and gone the next. But supreme happiness, the consummate fulfillment of our human personhood, must be something more stable and enduring. “Fame has no stability; in fact it is easily ruined by a false report. And if sometimes it endures, this is by accident. But happiness endures of itself, and forever” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.3, ad.3). Of course, we want to be well thought of by others, but the wise person, knowing that a single false word can blow away a reputation, does not measure his good by popular repute.

“It is impossible for happiness to consist in power” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.4). Aquinas give two reasons for this. The first of these is that power and happiness are different kinds of causes. Power has the nature of an efficient cause—something that brings something about or sets something in motion. Happiness has the nature of a final cause—the last end or goal towards which the process is directed. The second reason is that power is related to good and evil—i.e., power can be used to rule a humanitarian mission or a child trafficking organization. The good use of power is a result of virtue not power itself. In contrast, “happiness is man’s proper and perfect good” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.4). It is man’s proper good because it is the good that that pertains to his human nature. It is man’s perfect good because it fills that nature completely.

Aquinas goes on from here in the *respondeo* of the article to lay out four general reasons why none of the external goods discussed so far—wealth, honor, fame or glory, power—nor any external good, can be what happiness lies in. The first reason is that “since happiness is man’s supreme good, it is incompatible with any evil” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.4). But, as we have seen with power, it can be used by evil men to do evil and this is equally true of wealth, honor, and fame or glory. The second reason is that it is “the nature of happiness to *satisfy of itself*” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.4, emphasis in original). As the ultimate end we do not desire happiness for the sake of something else that would satisfy us and having gained happiness we cannot lack any needful good. This is not the case with external goods such as wealth, honor, fame or glory, and power. Even if these goods are acquired we may still lack many goods necessary to our flourishing. The third reason is that “since happiness is the perfect good, no evil can accrue to anyone therefrom” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.4). My happiness cannot be a source of evil to me. The same cannot be said of external goods. Aquinas uses a verse from the book of Ecclesiastes to illustrate his point. “Riches are sometimes kept to the hurt of the owner” (5:13). The fourth reason is that happiness is an inside job so to speak and not left to chance. “Man is ordained to happiness through principles that are in him; since he is ordained thereto naturally” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.4). Wealth, honor, fame or glory, and power are outside of us. They are due to external causes and are largely a matter of fortune. Aquinas concludes that for these reasons it is impossible for happiness to lie in any external good.

“It is impossible for man’s happiness to consist in goods of the body” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.5). Goods of the body might primarily refer to physical health, but they would include everything else associated with the body such as beauty and strength. Tracing out Aquinas’ argument for why these goods cannot be man’s last end helpfully discloses a great deal of his theological anthropology. The first argument given in the *respondeo* is that simply preserving ourselves in being is not enough. We must accomplish the purpose for which we were made. To make the point Aquinas draws an analogy to a ship’s captain. His ship is entrusted to him not to remain in port, preserved in its seaworthiness, but to sail to its destination and, Aquinas goes on, it is the captain’s duty to steer the course. In like manner Aquinas says, “God made man from the beginning and left him in the hand of his own counsel” (Sir.15:14). To be human we must deliberate and choose, we must assume the responsibilities that come with possessing the faculties of reason and will. Aquinas closes out the argument by saying that “man is not the supreme good” (ST, I-II, q.4, a.5), i.e., the supreme good is not simply what we are. Coming back to the analogy, it is not enough to preserve our being in the harbour. We are ordained to an end beyond ourselves.

Aquinas opens a second line of argument that even if man’s ultimate purpose were nothing more than his own preservation, a premise he has already defeated, happiness still could not lie in bodily goods because “man’s being consists in soul and body” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.5). Man is not just a belly in search of bread but a “being at once corporeal and spiritual” (U.S. Catholic Church, 1992, no.362). These two elements, spirit and matter, are unified to form a single nature. Preserving ourselves in being means preserving our whole being, our body/soul unity, in being. Aquinas goes on to state that the soul is the form of the body, “the pattern of an embodied life” (Budziszewski, 2020, p.198). The soul makes the body (matter) a living human body. The body is subordinate to the soul as matter is to form and because the body exists for the sake of the soul, then “all goods of the body are ordained to the goods of the soul, as to their end” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.5). Man’s last end, happiness, Aquinas concludes, cannot consist in the goods of the body.

The picture becomes clearer as Aquinas systematically and methodically discusses the candidates for the *summum bonum*. In the reply to the first objection to the question (ST, I-II, q.2, a.5, ad.1) Aquinas summarizes what has been considered so far and presents a sound common sense understanding of the proper hierarchy of human goods.

“Just as the body is ordained to the soul, as to its end, so are external goods ordained to the body itself. And therefore it is with reason that the good of the body is preferred to external goods, which are signified by ‘riches,’ just as the good of the soul is preferred to all bodily goods.”

I desire artificial wealth (money) in order to be able to purchase the natural wealth (nutritious food) I need for the good of my body (health). But I sustain my bodily well-being so that I can expand the reach of my mind, grow in virtue, love my family and friends (goods of the soul). Our bodies are not more important than our souls.

“Because bodily delights are more generally known, ‘the name of pleasure has been appropriated to them’ (*Nicomachean Ethics*, vii, 13), although other delights excel them: and yet happiness does not consist in them” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.6). In the articles of the *Summa Theologiae* the *sed contra* follows the objections to the question and precedes the *respondeo* and the replies to the objections. The purpose of the *sed contra* is to restate the traditional view to the question. It is left to the *respondeo* to argue the case. What the *sed contra* claims is generally not brought forward in favor of focussing on the more substantial argument developed immediately following it. For this article, “whether man’s happiness consists in pleasure?”, it is worthwhile to look at what the *sed contra* says. Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* is referenced to make two claims. The first is that sensual hedonism always ends in pain for both the hedonist and those affected by his excesses. Boethius says that any person reflecting on his experience will perceive this. The second is that if happiness really does lie in experiencing sensual pleasure, then there is nothing separating us from creatures whose whole horizon is eating, rutting, and sleeping. Human distinctiveness would be surrendered, and we would be reduced to a level of pure animality. Boethius’ insight was, until quite recently, the broadly held common sense understanding in society. In the 1952 movie, *Clash by Night*, a husband angrily upbraids his unfaithful wife and her lover for their inability to control their passions exclaiming, “what are you, animals!”

Before getting to Aquinas’ demonstration that pleasure cannot be man’s last end it will be good to pause and review what happiness means and on what basis each candidate is being interrogated. Happiness would likely be studied today by sending out a questionnaire and compiling the results. Happiness is whatever people report it to be. Implicit in this methodology is the axiomatic assumption that happiness is a feeling. Pleasure rises to the top of the list because it makes us feel good. Aquinas’ philosophical inquiry speaks of happiness, or *beatitudo* (Latin), or *eudaimonia* (Greek), differently than this. The probing is to uncover the perfect good that completely fulfills our objective nature. Happiness is an activity not a feeling. So, to ask if pleasure is our ultimate end is to ask if a stream of enjoyments absorb our human faculties so completely that there is nothing left to desire?

Aquinas speaks of bodily delights and other delights which “excel” them. The excelling delights he is referring to are intellectual or spiritual delights. While these are obviously of a different sort than sensual pleasures, Aquinas begins again with philosophical psychology and employs a particular philosophical terminology of essences (or substances) and accidents (or attributes). The essence of a being is its basic whatness or quiddity. The essence of man is that “he is a mortal rational animal” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.6). Then, in a remarkable piece of philosophizing Aquinas distinguishes between proper (or *per se*) accidents and ordinary accidents. Ordinary accidents are attributes of my being, dependent on my actually being in existence as a rational animal, but not explained by my essence. The accidents of my being six feet tall or having blonde hair are certainly part of my being but they are unrelated to my rational nature. Proper accidents are so related. Aquinas uses the example of risibility to illustrate his point. Only human beings write puns and laugh at them because unlike sub rational animals we possess intellectual powers. Having set it up this far Aquinas makes the crucial application: “every delight is a proper accident resulting from happiness or from some part of happiness” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.6). We are delighted because we have a fitting good or can anticipate having such a good. By fitting Aquinas means something good in view of our specifically human nature. It fits the type of creature we are. The key point is that delight is not the essence of happiness itself but is something resulting from happiness. Pleasure is one of the proper accidents of happiness.

Perfect happiness arises from the highest use of our highest power. Our highest and most characteristic power is our intellect and the highest object of contemplation is God. Our complete good is the intellectual vision of God, as enjoyed by the blessed in heaven, who see God face to face. It can be expected that the greatest happiness will yield the greatest delight. Joy accompanies the beatific vision as its proper effect.

The first argument Aquinas has presented in the *respondeo* is that intellectual delight is one of the *per se* results of happiness. He now goes on to argue that bodily pleasure, like intellectual pleasure, is not the essence of happiness but also that sensual delight is not one of the proper results of happiness. Why is this so and what explains the vehemence of the desire human beings have for sensible delight? The answer to both questions goes back to how human beings take in the world and gain knowledge and what powers they have. All human knowledge begins in the senses, but intellectual capabilities allow human beings to grasp the universal. Sensual

pleasures are as nothing compared to closing the mind down on the truth. “It is evident that good which is fitting to the body, and which causes bodily delight through being apprehended by sense, is not man’s perfect good, but is quite a trifle as compared with the good of the soul” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.6). The book of Proverbs exhorts us to gain wisdom though it cost us all we have. Aquinas completes his analysis by citing a passage that carries the same message: “all gold in comparison of her [wisdom], is as a little sand” (Wis.7:9). The pleasures of food and drink are a trifle, really nothing, compared to wisdom in this life and glory with God in the next. Perfect happiness and even incomplete happiness are sacrificed for sensible pleasures by a great many in our world because sensory perception is the first means of our knowing anything. Because of this fact everyone must pay attention to sensual experience and because of the attention that must be paid to it everyone is keenly aware of it. Because of the immediacy of these experiences many people do not go beyond them.

Pleasure is not the *summum bonum*. We experience pleasure from possessing some good. Delight is simply repose or rest in the good.

“The end is twofold: namely, the thing itself, which we desire to attain, and the use, namely, the attainment or possession of that thing. If, then, we speak of man’s last end, it is impossible for man’s last end to be the soul itself or something belonging to it” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.7). Aquinas continues to carefully work his way through his treatise on the ultimate purpose of life by now considering whether some good of the soul constitutes man’s happiness. He begins by making a distinction, crucial for gaining a clear understanding, between *what* we long for, the good itself, and our use or enjoyment of that good once we attain it. He first shows that if we take man’s last end as being the very thing in which consummate good lies, then it cannot lie in his soul. He then goes on to conclude, however, that if the last end is being spoken of in terms of the attainment or possession or any use (enjoyment) of the good itself, then man does attain happiness through his soul.

Aquinas makes the straightforward case that it is impossible for any good of the soul to constitute perfect happiness by using the philosophical concepts, far less familiar to us today, of potency and act. Unlike God who is Pure Act, human beings exist in a state of potentiality. At all moments of our mortal existence some of our soul’s possibilities remain unfulfilled—i.e., they have not been actualized. These unrealized potentialities exist for the sake of their realization. “Potentiality is for the sake of act as for its fulfillment” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.7). Potentiality is never its own end, its own reason for being. Just like an arrow cannot be its own target, the human soul cannot be its own ultimate purpose. The soul exists for something beyond it.

Aquinas begins a second argument by stating that the powers (faculties, appetites), habits (virtues, vices), and acts (knowing, willing) belonging to the soul cannot be man’s last end either. Unpacking the succinct reasoning which follows takes us into a deep exploration of the human constitution. Here is the full argument from this point.

“For that good which is the last end, is the perfect good fulfilling the desire. Now man’s appetite, otherwise the will, is for the universal good. And any good inherent to the soul is a participated good, and consequently a portioned good. Therefore none of them can be man’s last end” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.7).

The greatest good or ultimate end is something that leaves nothing to be desired. If we are honest, we will admit that all the finite goods we pursue—material items, accomplishments, knowledge, even friendships and family—leave us desiring more when we gain them. They do not ultimately satisfy and so they cannot be the last end. Aquinas seems to shift the argument away from this fact with his next statement but he is actually getting to an explanation of why we are left unfulfilled. The key is acknowledging, as Aquinas does here, the powers of reason and will that make us distinctly human. We share sensitive powers with sub rational creatures and using these powers we can have sensual experience of particulars. We can taste this desert or touch this fabric and so on. But we also possess an intellect that can strip out the universal form of particular things. And we possess a rational appetite that can choose the good as such, the common or universal form because of which every good thing is good. Here is a summation from Aquinas: “the will can tend to the universal good, which reason apprehends; whereas the sensitive appetite tends only to the particular good, apprehended by the sensitive power” (ST, I-II, q.19, a.3). So the intellect knows universal being and truth and the will is appetitive of universal good. Aquinas makes it clear that the universal good is God Himself.

“For it is clear that good has the nature of an end; wherefore, a particular end of anything consists in some particular good; while the universal end of all things is the Universal Good; which is good of Itself by virtue of Its Essence, which is the every essence of goodness; whereas a particular good is good by participation. Now it is manifest that in the whole created universe there is not a good which is not such by participation. Wherefore that good which is the end of the whole universe must be a good outside the universe” (ST, I, q.103, a.2).

Thus, we can begin to see why created goods don’t ultimately assuage desire. All created goods derive what goodness they have from the goodness of God. They merely share or “participate” in God’s goodness. They

are only a small “portion” of infinite goodness. We long for these little particles of goodness because of our longing for the universal good. Our ultimate purpose cannot lie in them but only in the primal good they reflect.

The conclusion to be drawn is that what *constitutes* happiness lies outside the soul and is beyond the soul. The attainment of this thing is *called* happiness and is within the soul. “The enjoyment of our ultimate good belongs to the soul; the ultimate good that we are enjoying is beyond it” (Budziszewski, 2020, p.244).

“It is impossible for any created good to constitute man’s happiness” (ST,I-II, q.2, a.8). With this last article of question two Aquinas hopes to close off all escape routes of those fleeing reality. He has already examined the possible candidacies of particular goods such as wealth, honor, fame or glory, power, pleasure and whole categories of goods, external, of the body, of the soul. It would seem that all possible created goods have already been covered but Aquinas adds a culminating query to cover off all other goods of creation that might be suggested—e.g., friendship, meaningful work, reaching angelic existence (obj.1), the good of the whole universe (obj.2), any or all created goods (obj.3).

Aquinas repeats his argument from the previous article that was asking whether some good of the soul constitutes man’s happiness. It is worth noting for a final time the emphasis Aquinas places in the *respondeo* on the *impossibility* of any created good to satisfy our desires completely. Happiness will not be ours if we pursue created goods more zealously or pursue different created goods since we will still be looking for happiness in the wrong place.

“Happiness is the perfect good, which lulls the appetite altogether” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.8). The good we seek has to do this, has to leave us desiring nothing more, or it would not be the last end. Human beings are equipped with an intellect and a will. The object of the intellect is the universal truth and the object of the will is the universal good. These are not found in any created good or in all of creation together but in God alone. Nothing other than the universal good, God Himself, can lull our desires. A key insight of Aquinas’ is that “every creature has goodness by participation” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.8). A basic receptivity to reality is required as a starting point because our being has been given to us by infinite Being. It is good to uncover particular truths about some aspect of reality but the endeavor will never placate our longing. Indeed it is only universal truth, truth as such, that makes particular findings true at all. Piling up knowledge, however significant in its place, is not enough. Only universal truth will do. This applies to the universal good, as well, the good as such, that makes all particular goods good. Particular goods, however sensational and meaningful, cannot ultimately satisfy us. Unlike sub rational creatures for whom these goods are enough because their horizon does not extend beyond them, it is our great burden and glory to be able to conceive the universal. Only the infinite and uncreated Good who imparts goodness to finite and created goods will do. “*Whatever good we attribute to creatures, pre-exists in God, and in a more excellent and higher way*” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.8, emphasis in original).

The conclusion of the argument is also the culmination of all the inquiry of question two. “Wherefore God alone can satisfy the will of man, according to the words of Ps. 102:5 ‘Who satisfieth thy desire with good things.’ Therefore, God alone constitutes man’s happiness” (ST, I-II, q.2, a.8).

Just because there is disagreement about which good affords consummate fulfillment does not mean we have to succumb to relativism about ultimate ends. Whether a good, a candidate for the *summum bonum*, really fits the bill can be rationally investigated. Aquinas’ study on the matter, which we have just reviewed, concluded that it is impossible for wealth, honor, fame or glory, power, any external good, pleasure, any good of the body, any good of the soul, and any created good whatsoever to be the perfect good which assuages all desire.

Yet, our societal commitment is to pursuing these goods absolutely. We foolishly look for complete happiness in having more of them. Despite the warning that “the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil” (1Tim.6:10), the moral ideal for business is unapologetically presented as making “as much money as possible” (Friedman, 1962, p.20). Despite Lord Acton’s caution that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, a new totalitarianism has arisen that seeks total control over not only the thoughts and actions of men but also “claims authority over the meaning of nature” (Hanby, 2023, p.27). Despite the body being the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:20), the sexual revolution (Eberstadt, 2023; Elliott, 2020; Kuiper, 2022) absolutizes orgasmic pleasure and brings about enormous personal and societal harm. The United Nations sets development goals that do not arise above the physical as if health *is* happiness not just a proximate human good.

We hurl ourselves obsessively into the pursuit of more—more profit, more power, more pleasure, more prestige, a more perfect physique—but happiness eludes us, as it must. The rational soul cannot be satisfied by these goods but only by union with God. When we reject the destiny for which we were created, we adopt a vision of becoming gods on earth ourselves. We are witnessing a new working out of the original temptation, “you will be like God” (Gen.3:5). There are, of course, significant ethical implications for economic enterprises from losing sight of the true ultimate end. The next section looks at these.

Economic Implications: The Regime of Capitalism

“The evil was not in bread and circuses, per se, but in the willingness of the people to sell their rights as free men for full bellies and the excitement of the games which would serve to distract them from the other human hungers which bread and circuses can never appease.”

-Marcus Tullius Cicero

A societal experiment, not unique to human history but still exceptional in its audacity, is being run to do away with any acknowledgment of the Creator. It is evidently clear to anyone who will dare to look that this project in civilization making is failing. Moreover, it cannot but fail. A humanism without God is an “inhuman humanism” (Benedict XVI, 2009, no.78). Human beings cannot step out of the love story they are in and hope to flourish. “Without God man neither knows which way to go, nor even understands who he is” (Benedict XVI, 2009, no.78).

Yet, our society has chosen to go it alone without God and craft fictions of our own choosing about our human nature and the nature of the world we live in. It doesn’t make much sense to talk about being “made in the image of God” when the belief is that such a Being does not exist. If human beings are truly on their own, then they will have to remake themselves in their own image. In the absence of a real world, given not made, there are only schemas invented whole cloth in the mind. Thought is the warden of being.

When reason loses its nerve and no longer dares to rise the truth of being, a metaphysical and moral vision must be smuggled in. The crushing despair of nihilism, which is what is left when reality is annihilated, is staved off by belief in the salvific potential of technology. The dream is that we can have technology so good we will not have to be good ourselves. It is the most futile of hopes because efficient causes can never substitute for final causes. Instrumental reason cannot prevail absolutely without abolishing the human person. This logical outcome is ignored and the molders of the modern world, the commercial and tech titans, press on with their agenda of inevitable technological progress. What is true is what works technologically or, said another way, reality is measured by what is technologically possible. The technological utopia envisioned, like all utopias, moves off into an ever-receding future time.

What does this time of being after God, this time of having more rather than being more, mean for business culture? What does business see as its mission and what practices are used to fulfill this purpose?

Milton Friedman’s prescription that profit should be the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity was previously referenced. Centuries of profit-making water passing under the political economic bridge has brought about, according to Heilbroner (1985), a regime like social formation, capitalism. What distinguishes capitalism as a ruling order is the place assigned to gain. Other regimes have been able to generate surpluses, material goods over and above that required for the maintenance and reproduction of society. In these regimes, the value of the surplus was seen in the use to which it could be put—for example, displaying the regime’s might, constructing religious edifices, consuming luxuries. In capitalism, the surplus is used to generate more surplus. Gain is sought as an end in itself. The means become the ultimate end. Aquinas’ dismissal of artificial wealth as a candidate for man’s last end is simply not entertained. Too much is thought to be at stake to let rational reflection intrude. Money dislodges God as being of primary importance in men’s hearts. The ultimate commitments made give rise to objectively unjust structures. All enterprises, indeed all social groupings, operate within these “structures of sin” (John Paul II, 1998, no.73). It is particularly important to note that the State is coerced by the power of commercial enterprises to do their bidding, to tailor their own practices and ideals to the aims and needs of business.

Every single aspect of human life in society is examined for its potential as a profit-generating activity. Everything becomes a marketable commodity—even goods that by their nature should never be bought and sold. All the stops are pulled out to turn things that have always been received as gifts into items that must now be paid for.

Labor, too, is something to be bought and sold. The worker is a commodity like any other. Because the purpose of being in business is to maximize financial margins, however, and because labor is a cost against those margins, it becomes rational to reduce the money spent employing people to a bare minimum. This can be done by paying them as little as possible, a practice antithetical to the generosity of Jesus, or by reducing the need for a human presence through automation. This creates the intractable problem of technological unemployment. In the regime of capitalism, tens of millions of people lack access to productive resources or gainful employment. The technological system does not need them; indeed, it desires their absence. Even though unemployment causes personal suffering modern industry has no answer for the scourge.

If people are merely factors of production, mere tools in the profit-making process, then it is not surprising that work is designed for them without any thought to the welfare of their souls or their higher interests. Capitalism is humanly inadequate because it holds things to be of more importance than people. The aberration from right order is summarized by Pope Pius XI (1931, no.135).

“Bodily labour...has everywhere been changed into an instrument of strange perversion: for dead matter leaves the factory ennobled and transformed, where men are corrupted and downgraded.”

The exploitation of the most vulnerable people in the world by corporate interests may be out of sight for many but it has not gone away. Indeed, it has reached new levels of cruelty since the time of Pope Pius XI. Shipping companies, those owning oil tankers, container ships, bulk carriers, general cargo ships, deep sea trawlers, send their exhausted fleets to decommissioning yards on the fouled beaches of Bangladesh where teenage boys break them apart in hellish conditions for a dollar a day. Hundreds of these workers are killed every year because of a lack of proper equipment and lax safety standards. Countless numbers make it through alive only to suffer long-term ill health effects.

Conflict is endemic in the regime of capitalism. In what should be a harmonious endeavor, labour and ownership clash like rival armies over wages and working conditions. The envy systematically cultivated by the commercial world to keep people unsatisfied with what they have upsets social unity. Everyone’s desire to have more runs into everyone else’s desire for the same.

The key criterion in deciding what to bring to market is *whatever* will sell, or more accurately, *whatever* can be *made* to sell. This need not be something useful to, or uplifting of, the purchaser. The mission is profitability not answering real needs. More money can often be made by preying on human frailty, by exploiting human weakness, so the lowest human passions are intentionally aroused as a business strategy. Advertising bombards people with propaganda to keep them consuming what is produced. Objectively improper consumer attitudes and lifestyles are created. People are ensnared in a web of false and superficial gratifications. In our provisioning system the one solicitude people have is to obtain their daily bread in any way they can.

Much of our commercial world is simply noxious and must fall away. Enterprises that push tobacco (Proctor, 2011), opioids (Keefe, 2021), gambling (Schull, 2012), and pornography (Kuby, 2015; Van Manen, 2016) act in opposition to human well-being.

All means of wealth acquisition—speculation, rent seeking, financial shadiness—are held to be good. Competitive advantage can be gained by not accepting responsibility for negative externalities generated by the firm. Genuine economic progress is distorted when this happens. Profits are privatized and costs are commonized. Playing the Double P—Double C game overstates legitimate financial success and is a direct affront to justice.

Another way the game is played is to dispose of costs onto future generations. When Royal Oak Mines abandoned its gold mine outside of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories in Canada, it left behind a \$250 Million arsenic trioxide mess for the territorial government to clean up and an industrial wasteland that will scar the landscape and harm the health of humans and other living creatures for decades (CBC News, 1999).

In addition to this, the concentration of economic resources in gigantic corporations allows these economic entities to exclude others from entering the market in hopes of extracting monopoly profits. Competitors are bought up. The profit margins of suppliers are squeezed to nullity. Vexatious lawsuits are filed against would-be entrants. Patents are taken out not to protect one’s discoveries but to restrict the inventiveness of others. Yearly advertising budgets in the billions of dollars act as a significant barrier to entry.

All of this results in a moral ratcheting down. Those who pay the least heed to the dictates of conscience are able to crush more cautious competitors. The anonymity offered by the limited liability corporation dulls a sense of responsibility. People have to struggle to retain their virtue.

A “devouring usury” (Leo XIII, 1891, no.6) is at the heart of the struggle for profits. There is a commitment to an infinite expansion of production because the last money borrowed must be paid off. Unlimited economic growth consumes the resources of the earth in an excessive and disordered way. The natural world is senselessly destroyed. In fact, a great theft of the natural and biological capital of the planet from future generations is taking place. A sixth great extinction of life forms is being observed in real time. There are now 3,500 tigers left in the wild in the world. This is down from 100,000 a century ago. Their habitat is down to seven percent of what is once was. This population collapse is not unique to tigers. Sixty percent of the world’s largest herbivores are threatened with extinction.

Political economic structures are not like mountains, rivers, and other landscapes that are brought about by natural processes. They are formed and sustained by the beliefs and actions of human beings. This means that the regime just recounted is both a human creation and a reality that could be otherwise. Setting aside the dominant secular premises that gave rise to our current ruling order and returning to Aquinas’ metaphysical and moral realism would result in political economic structures of a considerably different shape. The next section discloses what a political economic order formed according to God’s plan for his creation, formed according to a true conception of human happiness, would look like.

Economic Implications: Responsible Free Enterprise

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets.”

-Mt. 22:37-40

Human persons are made in the image of a triune God and are given a particular vocation to fulfill. The Christian life is a summons to perfect love. Christians are called to love God above all things and to love all others and all of creation for the sake of God. God’s grace elevates Christian disciples to a new level of being, providing them with the supernatural help they need to be co-creators with Him and because the gifts of creation are God’s gifts, human beings must administer them in a way that reflects God’s justice and love. Human fallenness has made this a most demanding task. Human agency is executed in a divine order. When this order is rebelled against, human institutions and human cultures deviate from God’s plan of love. The challenge is to bring our human built world into accord with the ultimate reality we receive but do not make. Integral human development, “the development of the whole man and of all men” (Benedict XVI, 2009, no.8), is predicated on receptivity.

“Truth and the love, which it reveals, cannot be produced; they can only be received as gifts. Their ultimate source is not and cannot be, mankind, but only God, who is himself Truth and Love. This principal is extremely important for society and for development, since neither can be a purely human product; the vocation to development on the part of individuals and peoples is not based simply on human choice but is an intrinsic part of a plan that is prior to us and constitutes for all of us a duty to be freely accepted. That which is prior to us and constitutes us—subsistent Love and Truth—shows us what goodness is, and in what true happiness consists. It *shows us the road to true development*” (Benedict XVI, 2009, no.52, emphasis in original).

Without referencing Saint Thomas Aquinas’ treatise on man’s last end, Pope Benedict XVI nevertheless reiterates its conclusions. True happiness can be found only in union with God. This is also the path to creating an institutional world that truly contributes to human flourishing. The incomplete happiness available to us now stretches toward the perfect happiness of the life to come if we “do everything for the glory of God” (1 Cor.10:31). This is, I think, what Dorothy Day was getting at when she said, “all the way to heaven is heaven.”

Giving glory to God in all our activities encompasses everything done in conducting commerce. Love must enliven the business sector no less than in any other area of human endeavor. If business practices are to be fully human, they must be borne of love and manifest love. If business relationships are to uphold human dignity, they must be permeated by love. We must rejoice in the good of others in our organizational life just as we do in our personal life. Just what love entails can be specified in more detail by looking more closely at business as an institution.

As corporeal beings, human persons must win their way in the world by provisioning for themselves as any organism does. The distinctive challenge human beings face in meeting this demand is that they must think themselves through it, they must employ their intelligence in exercising economic initiative. Human freedom is a burden because it means a person must exercise prudential judgment and live with the consequences of the decision. In the economic realm this freedom requires people to be enterprising in providing for themselves and their loved ones and neighbors. Human beings are also inherently social by nature. Given this, it is understandable that people come together to form institutions to tackle the provisioning problem. What is important about these social forms is that they are societies of persons even though natural, physical, and monetary capital will be utilized. The subject and end of every social institution, including the business firm, is the human person. Institutions exist to elevate people because in the Christian world view, the human person is a high and holy mystery, made in God’s own image. As such, the human person is worth infinitely more than any material goods that might be produced or the organizational entities created to generate that production. Institutions and societies come and go but the soul of every unique human being lives forever. “The primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity” (Benedict XVI, 2009, no.25).

Businesses are uniquely positioned to address the provisioning problem since they possess the ability to convert raw materials into products. The decision of primary importance then is *what* to produce or supply. This should be something that contributes to human flourishing. Material goods are meant to be a means to our sanctification. What we have should help us to realize our destiny, which ultimately is spiritual not material. Although we are in the world, we are not of it, having been created for eternal happiness with God. Economic production should not deflect people from this end. Spiritual and moral good should not be sacrificed to material interests. The want structure encouraged by enterprise should serve good moral formation. Just because something can be made and sold doesn’t mean that it should be. Society doesn’t need an institution that makes it hard for people to be virtuous, that works against human well-being in its totality, however profitable it might be. Every company must be able to answer the question, “is what we are doing worth doing at all?”, in the affirmative by pointing out how they are contributing to physical, mental, social, moral, and spiritual development.

Work has a profound meaning in the Christian world view. God gives human beings a share in the governance of the world he has created. Human work is a collaboration with God in creation. God has placed his precious gift of creation under human dominion. Human beings have a God-given mandate to fulfill (Gen.1:27-28). Thus, work is a duty. It is God's will that human beings are to be his hands in continuing to create. This obligation to work is met by observing two inheritances. First, human beings are always starting with goods gifted by God. "At the beginning of man's work is the mystery of Creation" (John Paul II, 1981, no.12). The order discovered in creation is to be heeded by human beings. Second, the instruments human beings use at work are the result of work. To think rightly of work is to see it in the stream of the history of human labour. Human beings never work alone because they are always accessing, always dependent upon the work of others whose legacy of work preceded theirs.

The objective sense of work, "the sum of activities, resources, instruments and technologies used by men and women to produce things", is always subordinated to the subjective sense of work, the human subject "capable of acting in a planned and rational way, capable of deciding about himself, and with the tendency to self-realization" (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, no.270) performing the work. Work has dignity because of the dignity of the human person doing the work—i.e., it is *human* work. The precedence of the subjective dimension of work over the objective means "it is always man who is the purpose of work". "Work is for man not man for work" (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, no.272).

The spiritual destination of man is eternal happiness with God. The sanctity Jesus calls us to in this life, "be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48), is achieved through work. Human work directed to God as its final goal becomes a prayer. It is a chance to imitate Jesus by carrying the cross in all of work's activities. It is the chance to do the unique work God calls each person to do. In the words of Saint John Henry Newman, "God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission" (Neville, 1893, p.301). Christians are to put themselves into their work "for the Lord" (Col. 3:23). With this orientation to God, work becomes the medium of self-making.

"Work is a good thing for man—a good thing for his humanity—because through work man *not only transforms nature*, if to adapting his own needs, but he also *achieves fulfillment* as a human being and indeed, in sense, becomes 'more of a human being'" (John Paul II, 1981, no.9, emphasis in original).

This deep understanding of human work has profound implications for how the workplace ought to be structured. Goods and services are produced by people using material means. Labour takes precedence over capital in the process because of every human being's capacity for self-transcendence. Capital is to be used to enable work that facilitates the development of the human personality. The means of production "cannot be possessed against labor, they cannot even be possessed for possession's sake" (John Paul II, 1981, no.14). To look at human beings as another commodity to be bought and sold at the service of capital expansion is an inversion of means and ends that lacks the divine wisdom to see the immortal splendour of the human personality.

What else can be concluded about the form or shape the work community should take given the theological anthropology articulated? People ought to be given meaningful work that utilizes and develops their higher faculties. The magnificence of one's work should match the magnificence of the human personality and be perfective of the same. The subjective character of work entails the right to participate. Upholding this right diffuses the responsibility for managing the firm. All organizational members should rightly be seen as associates or partners in the venture. "Joint ownership of the means of work" can be sought, but even if this is not achieved, each person should consider himself as "part-owner of the great workbench at which he is working with everyone else" (John Paul II, 1981, no.14).

Proper attention must be paid to the work practices in place. Respect for the inalienable human rights of workers should be shown. The hours of work required, the physical demands put on the workers, the safety conditions in place should be humane. Charity can never countenance work environments that are harmful to the physical health and the moral integrity of the people working in them. Love draws out the best in others and sets the workbench up as a place where virtue can be developed.

Employees would share not just in running the enterprise but also in the successes (and failures) of the venture. Distributive justice would characterize the compensation system. Since it is only in families that the human race perpetuates itself, a family living wage, a wage sufficient "for establishing and properly maintaining a family and for providing security for its future" (John Paul II, 1981, no.19) would be paid. Organizational leadership is morally onerous because it bears tremendous and expansive responsibilities. Paying a living wage is one of those obligations, and it is wholly inadequate to throw one's hands up and say that market forces do not allow this level of compensation. Prudential reasoning must be used to exhaust all measures internal to the firm, such as finding non-labour cost savings, that might be utilized to ensure that just wages are paid. If these are not enough, the help of indirect employers—governments, social service agencies, unions—must be sought. Also, if right workplace relations are to exist, employees must make the commitment, supported by employers, especially

through training opportunities and work design, to develop the skills and knowledge warranting a higher wage in the marketplace.

Parental requests ought to be accommodated to the greatest extent possible. Management should work flexibly with each individual and family, fostering personal and professional relationships that make a good life for employees and their families possible, thereby contributing to the building up of the basic social structures of our existence. Love is to be expressed not only *in* our families but *to* all families. Management has an obligation to put in place policies under which the family can more easily fulfill its mission.

After products are made, they still must find their way into people's hands. The proper objective of marketing is to identify people who would benefit from the goods and services supplied and provide them with the information they need to make prudent decisions in the marketplace. If the truth of these products cannot be communicated openly and honestly, then it is almost certain that the salesmen are treading on thin ice ethically.

Those engaged in selling have a product to sell. Because it is their product, they know its features and how it functions. By listening they can uncover the needs of potential customers. They can come to grasp how the product may be of value to certain people. The *art* of sales is a *linking up* of the people who might be helped by the product being carried with that product on terms that uplift everyone.

How a company handles buyer's remorse is a telling sign of how the job of sales is being configured within the company's overarching purposes. It makes sense for companies to adopt a virtual no questions asked return policy if the aim is to serve the authentic needs of others and this ought to be the objective. Jesus came "as one that serves" (Lk. 22:27). If a product is not serving the other person, then you want to make it easy for him to undo the purchase. Love of the other person, willing his good, is the aim not financial gain for oneself at the expense of another's well-being.

Promotional efforts in a business culture shaped by Christian beliefs need to do even more than this. They need to encourage people to simplify their lives both to reduce the environmental impact of consumption and to help people find a place for leisure and prayer. Business should aid in the shift to lifestyles where consumer choices and financial decisions are determined by "the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth" (Benedict XVI, 2009, no.51). Wisdom is to be pursued not the satisfaction of hedonistic impulses.

Because businesses cannot operate without impacting the natural world, they must reflect on what their relationship to that world should be. The starting point for these reflections will be God—i.e., the Christian world view is theocentric [not biocentric]. A triune God of infinite love is at the heart of Christianity. Nature is a gift offered by the Creator to all humanity. The response to this gift, to the gift of our very lives, must essentially be one of gratitude and appreciation. Precisely because it is a gift of God the natural world should be treated with the utmost respect and reverence. The gift should be cared for and treasured. How is this to be done?

Responsibility: God has entrusted the earth to human beings as a great entail. The natural world is given to us for our good but it is not ours to wheel and deal with as we please. Our dominion is not absolute. Creation is God's masterpiece. The Artist has let us use his work but he has not surrendered ownership of it to us. The great privilege of being stewards of God's creation is accompanied by the onerous responsibility of emulating God's providence, a providence where the fall of every sparrow has significance.

Prudence: Despite the fantastical dreams of colonizing the cosmos being presented today, the Earth is our home place and since it is, wisdom dictates that we should care for it. This begins by acknowledging that nature has an "inbuilt order", a "grammar" of its own (Benedict XVI, 2009, no.48). Only then will our tinkering with that God-given order be intelligent.

Love: Sharing in divine love moves the Christian disciple to love all that God loves. Followers of Christ will love themselves because God loves them. They will love their bodies because their bodies are "temples of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:20). Man journeys to God who is his happiness in his body. Christians will love their neighbors because their neighbors too have been created by God to share in God's own life. They will love the world because everything that exists has been created by God out of love. Dostoevsky's text (1958, p.375) put into the form of a poem, "Love of Creation," beautifully communicates this affection:

"Love all of God's creation
The whole and every grain of sand in it.
Love every leaf, every ray of God's light.
Love the animals, love the plants, love everything.
If you love everything,
You will perceive the divine mystery in things.
Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend
It better every day.
And you will come at last to love the whole world
With an all-embracing love."

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