Thomistic Prayer (NT Types)

Introduction:

Thomistic Prayer (which is named after Thomas Aquinas) is based on the Scholastic Method, which was popularized by Aquinas’ followers. The main emphasis is the natural progression of thought from cause to effect. Because it is very focused on rational thought, those who are not used to or predisposed to rational thinking will find this kind of prayer very “unprayerlike.” But, if done correctly, this kind of prayer can be a real prayer and not merely an academic exercise.

NT types:

12% of the population is NT types. NT’s approach the world in a very orderly and logical way – moving carefully from one thing to the next and from cause to effect. They find themselves drawn to things that are very complicated or challenging and are on a constant quest for the truth. They want to master any skill they come upon and are often leaders in their field. The worst characteristic of others is “stupidity and incompetence.” They are also highly critical of themselves and those around them. Because of that they tend toward being workaholics, perfectionists and poor losers.

Because feelings tend to be in the background for NT’s, they are more impersonal in their relationships, and often overlook the feelings of others. While they can be terse with others, they are also clear about where they stand and how they feel about various things.

Thomistic Spirituality:

The way NT’s approach spirituality is similar to the way a scientist approaches a scientific mystery. Often setting out specific and deliberate steps to take, they work toward their desired virtue. They prefer clearly ordered kinds of prayer, as opposed to the free-form way of praying of the SP (Franciscan). NT spends their time in pursuit of transcendental virtues: truth, goodness, beauty, unity, love, life, spirit. St. Teresa of Avila was considered an NT. Once she chose sanctity in her life, there was nothing that could stop her from achieving it.

John has always been the favorite Gospel of NT’s, particularly in its mysticism and

Thomistic Prayer:

In Thomistic Prayer, one takes a virtue and “walks around it”, studying it from every possible angle. In this prayer, we use the seven auxiliary questions (WHAT, WHY, HOW, WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WITH WHAT HELPS) and apply them to the scripture or topic selected. At the end of this study, one makes resolutions or goals as to how one might achieve the goal set out. Without these resolutions or goals, this is simply study, and not Thomistic prayer.

Example: Faith – questions asked:

1. what do we mean by faith?
2. What is entailed in the practice of faith?
3. Why should I have faith?
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4. When and where should it be practiced?
5. Who are examples of people who practice faith?
6. What aids can I use to help me practice faith?
   Concluding with making resolutions as to how one might practice the virtue of faith.

Homework: Options

**Contemplation on Mary:**
Consider and contemplate on the faith of Mary, who is a great saint primarily because of her faith. Faith means the total commitment and blind trust of our lives into the hands of God. We can understand the meaning of faith by seeing it exemplified in the life of another person. Write down the qualities of Mary’s faith as you see them exemplified in the Annunciation. What changes do you need to make in your life in order to bring your faith more into conformity with Mary’s faith?

**Contemplation on Reconciliation:**
Read Matthew 5:23-24
Are you willing to take this command from JESUS LITERALLY? Do you believe that it is more important to be reconciled with your brothers and sisters than it is to go to church on SUNAY? Is there anyone right now that is not reconciled with you? Have you tried to become reconciled with him/her? Have you tried as much as you should? As much as God would want you to do? Do you really love that person who is not reconciled to you? What more can you do to become reconciled with those who have something against you? Even if the thing against you is not real (i.e. imaginary), is there anything you should do to bring about an understanding between the two of you?

**Contemplation on Charity:**
Read James 2:14-26
What efforts am I making to serve the poor, the suffering, the needy people of my community? What am I doing for the poor and needy and suffering people of the world? Do I really believe that they are my brothers and sisters? What in the area of charity can I do to fulfill Christ’s command to love others as he has loved us? “Faith without works is as dead as a body without breath.”

**Contemplation on any Virtue:**
Using the questions above and forms above, you can contemplate any of the virtues: Faith, Justice, Prudence (wisdom to make right choices), Hope, Temperance (exercising restraint or self-control), Fortitude (strength), Charity.