

Notes to Accompany a Course on Ethics  
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*Reasons for Our Hope*

. . .being ready always to satisfy  
everyone that asketh you a reason  
of that hope which is in you.

(I Peter 3:15)



# Philosophia Perennis

## Foundations of Catholic Wisdom from Revelation and from Reason

After having gone through four of our eight courses of philosophy, or rather, four courses in the pursuit of wisdom; and before we get into the polemical courses where we encounter other systems of thought with which we are not in agreement, we present in the following notes what might be called our philosophic platform, consisting of truths we proclaim and defend. Such are conclusions we arrive at through reasoning in the light of Faith, as well as judgments of wisdom revealed to us by God in Holy Scripture.

- A. Wisdom and its attributes
- B. The Cosmology of Faith and Revelation
- C. Basic conclusions arrived at in the different courses of philosophy.  
Fifteen conclusions under each of the following topics:
  - I. Thought -- corresponding to the course on logic
  - II. Nature (physics or cosmology)
  - III. Life (psychology)
  - IV. Happiness.\*
  - V. Ethical rules for the life of the individual.\*
  - VI. Ethical rules for family life.\*
  - VII. Ethical rules for political life. \*

\*These topics refer to ethics in general.

# A. Wisdom and Salvation

## I. Wisdom is the Art and Science of Salvation

1. That we may know thy way upon earth: Thy salvation in all nations. (Psalm 66:3)
2. Moses refers to the law of salvation revealed in Holy Scripture and says to the people: This is your wisdom, and understanding in the sight of nations. (Deuteronomy 4:6)
3. In all ways remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin. (Ecclesiasticus 7:40)
4. The sons of wisdom are the church of the just: and their generation, obedience and love. (Ecclesiasticus 3:1)
5. . . . Jesus Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:3)
6. The wise shall possess glory. (Proverbs 3:35)
7. . . .but the wise took oil in their vessels . . . (Matthew 26:4)
8. For the wisdom of doctrine is according to her name, and she is not manifest unto many, but with them to whom she is known, she continueth even to the sight of God. (Ecclesiasticus 6:23)
9. He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, that he may turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the incredulous to the wisdom of the just. (Luke 1:17)
10. Os justi meditabitur sapientiam. The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom. (Psalms 36:30)

## II. Appreciation of Wisdom

1. The perverse are hard to be corrected, and the number of fools is infinite. (Ecclesiastes 1:15)
2. Better is wisdom than weapons of war. (Ecclesiastes 9:18)
3. She is more precious than all riches, and all the things that are desired, are not to be compared with her. (Proverbs 3:15)
4. Blessed is the man that findeth wisdom. (Proverbs 3:13)
5. With me (wisdom) are riches and glory. (Proverbs 8:18)
6. Every man of understanding knoweth wisdom and will give praise to him that findeth her. (Ecclesiastes 18:28)
7. Wisdom is better than strength. (Wisdom 6:1)

8. Now all good things came to me together with her (wisdom). (Wisdom 7:11)
9. I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither did I compare unto her any precious stone. (Wisdom 7:8-9)
10. For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom. (Wisdom 7:28)
11. For wisdom is more active than all active things. (Wisdom 7:24)
12. The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it. (Matthew 13:45-46)
13. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Luke 12:34)

### III. True Wisdom is from God

1. All wisdom is from the Lord God, and hath been always with Him, and is before all time. (Ecclesiasticus 1:1)
2. Because the Lord giveth wisdom. (Proverbs 2:6)
3. And I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me. (Wisdom 7:7)
4. But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God. (James 1:5)
5. But who shall know thy thoughts, except thou give wisdom. (Wisdom 9:17)
6. I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. (Matthew 11:25)
7. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay. (Luke 21:15)
8. And God was with him (Joseph) . . . and gave him wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh. (Acts 7:10)
9. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (I Corinthians 1:20)
10. To thee, O God of our fathers, I give thanks, and I praise thee: because thou hast given me wisdom and strength. (Daniel 2:23)
11. When I was yet young, before I wandered about, I sought for wisdom openly in my prayer. (Ecclesiasticus 51:18)
12. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. (Isaias 11:2,3)

## IV. The Way of Wisdom

1. For wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sin. For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful. (Wisdom 1:4, 5)
2. The children of Agar also, that search after the wisdom that is of the earth, . . . but the way of wisdom they have not known. (Baruch 3:23)
3. If the iron be blunt . . . with much labour it shall be sharpened: and after industry shall follow wisdom. (Ecclesiastes 10:10)
4. To give subtlety to little ones. (Proverbs 1:4)
5. I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones. (Matthew 11:25)
6. The sons of wisdom are the church of the just: and their generation obedience and love. (Ecclesiasticus 3:1)
7. Tradition – How great things have we heard and known, and our fathers have told us. (Psalm 77:3)
8. Inquire of the former generation, and search diligently into the memory of the fathers. (Job 8:8)
9. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Psalm 110:10; Proverbs 9:10)
10. I wisdom dwell in counsel. (Proverbs 8:12)
11. The testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones. (Psalm 18:8)
12. But where is wisdom to be found?; . . . Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of them that live in delights. (Job 28:12, 13)
13. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness. (I Corinthians 1:23)

## V. Wisdom – Imbedded in the Universe

1. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 13:35; Psalm 77:2)
2. . . . and to enlighten all men, that they may see what is the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God, who created all things. (Ephesians 3:9)
3. The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed. (Matthew 13:31)
4. . . . and let them be for signs and for seasons. (Genesis 1:14)

5. He that maketh the earth by his power, that prepareth the world by his wisdom. (Jeremias 10:12;51:15)
6. Thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight. (Wisdom 11:21)
7. For behold thou hast loved truth: the uncertain and hidden things of thy wisdom thou hast made manifest to me. (Psalm 50:8)
8. . . . but where is wisdom to be found? (Job 12:12)
9. I will yet pour out doctrine as prophecy, and will leave it to them that seek wisdom. (Ecclesiasticus 24:46)
10. She (wisdom) reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly. (Wisdom 8:1)
11. But that the works of thy wisdom might not be idle: therefore men also trust their lives even to a little wood, and passing over the sea by ship are saved. (Wisdom 14:5)
12. The Wisdom of Solomon – For he hath given me the true knowledge of the things that are. . . for wisdom which is the worker of all things, taught me. (Wisdom 7:17– 21)

## VI. Folly – The Inclination of Our Fallen Nature

1. The perverse are hard to be corrected, and the number of fools is infinite. (Ecclesiastes 1:15)
2. The wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God. (Romans 8:7)
3. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. (I Corinthians 3:19)
4. False Wisdoms -- For this is not wisdom, descending from above: but earthly, sensual, devilish, (James 3:15)
5. For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. (Luke 16:9)
6. Fools hate them that flee from evil things. . . a friend of fools shall become like to them. (Proverbs 13:9, 20)
7. It is better to meet a bear robbed of her whelps, than a fool trusting in his own folly. (Proverbs 17:12)
8. Am I then become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? (Galatians 4:16)
9. Thou shalt not follow the multitude to do evil. (Exodus 23:2)
10. Are you so foolish, that, whereas you began in the Spirit, you would not be made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:3)

11. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof: but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever. (I John 2:16-17)
12. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take rest; eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee: and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? (Luke 12:19-20)

## VII. Attributes of True Wisdom

1. Deep – O, Lord, how great are thy works! Thy thoughts are exceeding deep. (Psalm 91:6)  
The spirit searcheth... the deep things of God. (I Corinthians 2:10)
2. Noble – She glorifieth her nobility by being conversant with God. (Wisdom 8:3)  
The love of God is honorable wisdom. (Ecclesiasticus 1:14)
3. Beautiful – I became a lover of her beauty. (Wisdom 8:2)  
She is more beautiful than the sun. (Wisdom 7:29)  
The wisdom of a man shineth in his countenance. (Ecclesiastes 8:1)
4. Holy – For wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins. (Wisdom 1:4)  
Os justi. The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom. (Psalm 36:30)
5. Salutary – He that gaineth souls is wise. (Proverbs 11:30)
6. Sweet – My spirit is sweet above honey, and my inheritance above honey and the honeycomb. (Ecclesiasticus 24:27)
7. Dwells in Counsel – I wisdom dwell in counsel. (Proverbs 8:12)
8. Incompatible with Deceit – For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful. (Wisdom 1:5)
9. Concerned with the Last Things – In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin. (Ecclesiasticus 7:40)
10. Traditional – How great things have we heard and known, and our fathers have told us. (Psalm 77:3)
11. Stable – A double minded man is inconstant in all his ways. (James 1:8)
12. Chaste – But the wisdom, that is from above, first indeed is chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation. (James 3:17; Wisdom 7:22-24)



## VII. Wisdom Must Radiate

1. Better is the man that hideth his folly, than the man that hideth his wisdom. (Ecclesiasticus 41:18)
2. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)
3. The wisdom of a man shineth in his face. (Ecclesiastes 8:1)
4. For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of his goodness. (Wisdom 7:26)
5. For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it. For after this cometh night, but no evil can overcome wisdom. (Wisdom 7:29-30)
6. He that walketh with the wise shall be wise. (Proverbs 13:20)
7. You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. (Matthew 14-15)
8. As the vine I have brought forth a pleasant odour: and my flowers are the fruits of honour and riches . . . I, wisdom, have poured out rivers. (Ecclesiasticus 24:23, 40)
9. And to enlighten all men, that they may see what is the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God, who created all things. (Ephesians 3:9)
10. That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. (John 1:9)
11. And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:5)

## IX. Wisdom is a Person

1. I love them that love me: and they that in the morning early watch for me, shall find me. (Proverbs 8:17)
2. I am the way, and the truth, and the life. (John 14:6)
3. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. (John 1:1, 14)
4. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life: for the life was manifested; and we have seen and do bear witness, and declare into you the life eternal, which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us. (I John 1:1, 2)

5. And he said to me: It is done. I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth, I will give of the fountain of the water of life, freely. (Apocalypse 21:6)
6. Doth not wisdom cry aloud, and prudence put forth her voice? Standing in the top of the highest places by the way, in the midst of the paths, beside the gates of the city, in the very doors she speaketh saying: O ye men to you I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. (Proverbs 8:1-4)
7. Wisdom hath built herself a house. (Proverbs 9:1)
8. Give me wisdom, that sitteth by thy throne, and cast me not off from among thy children. (Wisdom 9:4)
9. . . . Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2,3)
10. The Queen of the south shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold one greater than Solomon is here. (Matthew 12:42)

# B. The Cosmology of Faith and Revelation

## I. Creation

No pagan philosopher ever conceived that the universe was created from nothing. It is a truth revealed by God, and the foundation of a cosmology of Faith. This article of Faith implies many great truths:

- A. The omnipotence of God.
- B. The contingency of everything in the visible universe.
- C. The necessity of a Divine purpose worthy of a divine creator, etc.
  - 1. Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. (Nicene Creed)  
Anglice: I believe in one God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
  - 2. In the beginning God created heaven and earth. (Genesis 1:1)
  - 3. He that liveth for ever created all things together. (Ecclesiasticus 18:1)
  - 4. Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth? (Job 38:4)
  - 5. For he spoke and they were made. (Psalm 32:9)
  - 6. If anyone does not admit that the world and everything in it, both spiritual and material, have been produced in their entire substance by God out of nothing, let him be anathema. (Vatican I)

## II. The Counsels of Eternal Wisdom

- 1. The world was created freely: Whatsoever the Lord pleased he hath done. (Psalm 134:6)
- 2. But it was through the counsels of an eternal wisdom, and therefore, for an end worthy of a divine maker: The Lord made all things for himself. (Proverbs 16:4)
- 3. And God saw all things which had made and they were very good. (Genesis 1:31)
- 4. As he chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4)
- 5. She (wisdom) reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly. (Wisdom 8:1)
- 6. And to enlighten all men, that they may see what is the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God, who created all things . . . According to the eternal purpose which he made in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:9)

### III. Wisdom is Hidden in the Universe

1. And He poured her (wisdom) out upon all his works, and upon all flesh. (Ecclesiasticus 1:10)
2. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world. (Psalm 77:2)  
Our Lord applied this text to His parables. (Matthew 13:35)
3. Solomon, having prayed for wisdom, and having obtained it from God, said of himself through the Holy Ghost: For he hath given me true knowledge of things that are: to know the disposition of the whole world, and the virtues of the elements. (Wisdom 7:17)
4. Solomon also said: I will speak of great things. (Proverbs 8:6)
5. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. (Matthew 6:28, 29)
6. All things were known to the Lord God, before they were created. (Ecclesiasticus 23:29)

### IV. The Universe is Conserved in Existence by God

1. Upholding all things by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:3)
2. For Him, and by Him, and in Him are all things. (Romans 11:36)
3. For in Him we live and move and are. (Acts 17:28)

### V. The World was Created Originally in a Paradisal State

1. And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning; wherein He placed man whom he had formed. (Genesis 2:8)
2. For God created man incorruptible but by the envy of the devil, death came into the world. (Wisdom 2:23, 24)
3. The works of God are perfect. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

## VI. The Fall

It is impossible to understand our universe, unless we know that it is in a fallen state.

### The Fall of Angels

1. Our Lord, speaking as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, said: I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven. (Luke 10:18)
2. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning... And thou saidst in thy heart... I will be like the most High. (Isaias 14:12, 14)

### The Fall of Man

3. Cursed is the earth in thy works; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. (Genesis 3:17)
4. Holy Scripture calls the world in its fallen state "The vale of tears." (Psalm 83:7) Also, "The valley of the shadow of death." (Isaias 9:2, Psalm 22:4)

## VII. Man is the Principal Object of all Creation

1. The whole story of creation is in Genesis: Chapters 1, 2, 3; especially, "Fill the earth and subdue it." (Genesis 1:28)
2. And He gave man power over all things that are upon the earth. (Ecclesiasticus 17:3)
3. Thou hast set him over the works of thy hands. (Psalm 8:7)
4. My delights were to be with the children of men. (Proverbs 8:31)
5. Why dost thou set thy heart upon him. (Job 7:17)
6. The seasons ordered to man's purposes: (Genesis 8:22, Ecclesiasticus 33:9)
7. Even the heavenly bodies were created for man. (Genesis 1:14); . . .the sun, the moon, and the stars of heaven . . . which the Lord thy God created for the service of all nations, that are under heaven. (Deuteronomy 4:19)
8. The whole world groaneth with man (i.e., reflects an echo of man's anxiety and man's restlessness.) (Romans 8:22)
9. Even the angels – "for are they not ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14)
10. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. (Nicene Creed)
11. And the world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof: but he that doth the will of God, abideth forever. (I John 2:17)

## VIII. The Incarnation is the Central Event of History

1. But when the fullness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman. (Galatians 4:4)
2. In these days He hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things. (Hebrews 1:2)
3. For in Him were all things created in Heaven and earth, visible and invisible. (Colossians 1:16)
4. The beginning of the creation of God. (Principium creaturae Dei. Apocalypse 3:14)
5. The Alpha and the Omega. (Apocalypse 22:13)
6. And he hath subjected all things under His feet. (Ephesians 1:22)
7. The mystery which was kept secret from eternity. (Romans 16:25)

## IX. God's Providence and His Government of the Universe

1. But the very hairs of your head are numbered. (Matthew 10:30)
2. Chance is a reality to man (Ecce. 9:11); but there is no chance before God, for "Lots are cast into the lap, but they are disposed of by the Lord." (Proverbs 16:33)
3. Say not before the angel: there is no providence; lest God be angry at thy words. (Ecclesiastes 5:5)
4. Lord, Lord, Almighty King, for all things are in thy power, and there is none that can resist thy will, if thou determine to save Israel. (Esther 13:9)
5. Who had numbered the sand of the sea? (Ecclesiasticus 1:2)
6. God condemns the philosophy of deism. ( see Job 22:14)

## X. Order and Purpose

1. And to enlighten all men, that they may see what is the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God, who created all things . . . according to the eternal purpose, which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:9-11)
2. Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight. (Wisdom 11:12)

3. And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto the good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints. (Romans 8:28)
4. That He might make known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Him, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, to re-establish all things in Christ, that are in heaven and on earth in Him. (Ephesians 1:9-10)

## XI. The Universe: One and Finite

1. For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. (Romans 8:18, 19)
2. And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to his purpose are called to be saints. (Romans 8:28)
3. She (wisdom) reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly. (Wisdom 8:1)

## XII. Miracles and the Economy of Salvation

1. Who is he that he commandeth both the winds and the sea, and they obey him? (Luke 8:25)
2. Who alone doth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 135:4)
3. Renew thy signs and work new miracles. (Ecclesiasticus 36:6)  
That they may know thee as we also have known thee, that there is no God beside thee O Lord. (Ecclesiasticus 36:5)
4. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee; and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him. (John 2:11)

## XIII. Time and Eternity

1. We have not here an abiding city. (Hebrews 13:14)
2. For a thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday which is past. (Psalms 89:4)
3. For things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. (II Corinthians 4:18)
4. There are many things hidden from us that are greater than these: for we have seen but a few of his works. (Ecclesiasticus 43:36)

5. Alas! Alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come. (Apocalypse 18:10)
6. Time is short. (I Corinthians 7:29)
7. The fashion of this world passeth away. (I Corinthians 7:31)
8. Till the day break and the shadows retire. (Canticle of Canticles 2:17)

## XIV. Immortality, Resurrection, Glory

1. Now that the dead rise again, Moses also showed at the bush, when he called the Lord: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for he is not the God of the dead but of the living: for all live to him. (Luke 20:37, 38)
2. And the dust return to its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God, who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:7)
3. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. (Apocalypse 21:1)
4. For I know that my redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. (Job 19:25)
5. I have learned that all the works which God hath made continue forever. (Ecclesiastes 3:14)
6. Behold I make all things new. (Apocalypse 21:5)
7. In the beginning, O Lord thou foundest the earth: and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish but thou remainest: and all of them shall grow old like a garment: and as a vesture, thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art always the selfsame, and thy years shall not fail. The children of thy servants shall continue: and their seed shall be directed for ever. (Psalm 101:26-29)
8. The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds. (Wisdom 3:7)
9. And then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Matthew 13:43)
10. . . . concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. (Acts 23:6). Faith in the omnipotence of God spells the difference between the hope of the resurrection and the despair of nihilism.



## XV. Our Lady the Crown of Creation

1. All generations shall call me blessed (Luke 1:48). All the generations of the faithful greet her as the Second Eve -- the Mother of all those born to life of grace as Eve is of all those born to the life of nature. (Genesis 3:20)
2. I shall put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel. (Genesis 3:15). She is the prophesied issue of all history.
3. Hail, full of grace (Luke 1:28). The angel brought her the greeting from heaven.
4. It is not hard to guess the enigmatic hint in Heb. 1:5; for who of the angels could ever say to God: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Psalm 2:7)
5. The Church applies to her:
  - a. The Queen stood on thy right hand. (Psalm 44:10, and the rest of Psalm 44),
  - b. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways. (Proverbs 8:1, and the rest of Proverbs 8),
  - c. Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no a spot in thee. (Canticle of Canticles 4:7, and many other references in the Canticle of Canticles),
  - d. I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. (Ecclesiasticus 24:24)
6. They found the child with Mary his mother. (Matthew 2:11)
7. See ye that I have not laboured for myself only, but for all that seek out the truth. (Ecclesiasticus 24:47)

# C. Conclusions Arrived at in the Different Courses of Philosophy

## I. Thought

1. All men by nature desire to know. (Aristotle)
2. Truth is conformity of our mind to reality, or of our mind to the mind of God.
3. All human activity begins with thought.
4. Only truth is constructive thought; all error is subversive or at least sterile.
5. Truth in the natural order prepares the mind for the supernatural truth.
6. All that makes man good, noble, happy, depends on his thought. We possess by nature truth seeking powers, but there is also in us a tendency to go after falsehood.
7. "O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart?" (Psalm 4:3)
8. All change, for better or for worse, must begin with a change in the way people think. Those who say: "I do not care how a man thinks, it is what he does that makes the difference" are guilty of a great fundamental error. Nothing makes more ultimate difference in what a man does than how he thinks.
9. In the final analysis, a man's life is a success or a failure depending on the acts of his mind. Two men could be equally handsome, equally pleasant, and, at least on the outside, equally virtuous; and yet one of the two could be wise while the other is a fool. The difference: what each of them affirms or denies in his mind as the truth about life and reality.
10. Wisdom is the perfection of knowledge about the most important truths accompanied with an inclination of the entire human nature to live and act accordingly. Considered absolutely, wisdom is the highest ideal for human life, and as such, is impossible of full achievement on this earth. But while remaining an ideal, it does establish a direction and a scale of values: we can usually tell when knowledge is more or less perfect, well or ill ordered, concerned with what is truly important or failing to put first things first.
11. Wisdom implies a mind in conformity with reality, as it truly is, not merely as it appears. Therefore a basic attribute of wisdom is profundity, and most people miss it by way of being superficial.
12. There is a superficial outlook on reality which reduces it to what appears to the senses, to a mere process in space and time, which therefore denies or ignores the invisible realities (substance, God, the soul, etc.), denies immortality, denies the moral order, denies a purposive and personal providence ruling the universe. Many people are caught in this superficiality; but even more people, while not holding explicitly its principles, still conduct their lives as if they do.

13. "A supernatural soul does not deal with secondary causes." (Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity)
14. "Felicity is the activity of man's most perfect power." (Aristotle)
15. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

## II. Nature

1. Nature is the essence of a thing considered as the principle of its actions and passions; i.e. of what it can do or suffer.
2. All our knowledge begins with the sensible universe; i.e. the reality manifest to our senses. In this world given to us through the senses, our mind (or intellect) perceives the objective and valid concepts of substance and cause.
3. This sensible universe is characterized by change; and thus our first problem consists in an examination of the nature of a changing object (*ens mobile*). The study of a changing object is the philosophic science of cosmology.
4. Ens mobile (a being subject to change) is the philosophic name we give the visible universe and everything in it. And so the earth is a changing object, so is a star, a tree, a dog, or a grain of sand, as well as the entire universe taken as one thing.
5. Many experimental sciences deal with the world of change; notably, physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, geology, etc. These sciences begin, on the whole, with concrete facts universally admitted and open to verification by all, and also on the whole, these sciences reach conclusions that are verifiable and sometimes useful. Yet the visible universe is meant to teach us truths of an order prior to the peculiar methods and interest of the experimental sciences. No experimental science, not even all the experimental sciences put together, can adequately replace the philosophic science of cosmology. In cosmology the visible universe reveals to the mind its attributes (i.e., the attributes of a changing object), its purpose, and its order. It also leads to the knowledge that a world of change could not be the only primary reality.
6. A changing object manifests a duality of act and potency somehow united in one being. The aspect of act is that by which the changing object is something actually now, the aspect of potency is that by which the same being could become something else. An acorn is an acorn in act but a tree in potency, and a grain of dust is in potency part of a living thing like a tree. Every changing object is a composite of act and potency. In the case of a changing object that is also visible, act can be called form, and potency can be called matter. The objects of the visible universe are composites of form and matter. The visible universe is a material thing. A material thing cannot be the only reality, nor the primary reality.

7. Every material object has a nature which determines that object to act (or suffer the action of other things) in a determinate and purposive way. It is because of that nature that the object is knowable and recognizable. All the so-called Laws of Nature as are studied in physics, chemistry, and biology, are reducible to the innate purposive tendencies of such concrete individual natures. What justifies the concept of Nature (in the universal singular sense) is the fact that the millions of individual little natures function within the scheme of one, universal, purposive harmony.
8. Every material object is either one natural substance or is made up of many natural substances. Every material substance is a composite of prime matter and substantial form, and is subject to substantial change.
9. The sensible universe teaches all men clearly that there must be an immaterial world of realities on which the material world depends.
10. The material universe manifests order and purpose, and therefore argues for an Intelligence creative of these values.
11. The two concepts of "creation" and "omnipotence" come from revelation, but a philosophically trained mind can draw all the conclusions they imply.
12. The material universe is not one substance but a plurality of substances, yet it manifests a certain unity of purpose and concerted action.
13. The material universe manifests the reality of life and the difference between living and non-living things.
14. *Natura non deficit in necessariis.* (Nature does not fail in what is necessary.)
15. *Natura est ratio artis divinae, inditae rebus; qua moventur ad suos fines.* (Nature is the effect of divine art, implanted in things by which they are moved to their end. – Saint Thomas Aquinas)

### III. Life

1. Life is the power of immanent action. The very definition of life implies purpose and order. A being capable of immanent action is a being that works for itself. A being capable merely of transient action is as such servile, working for the good of another.
2. From the faintest echo of life in a blade of grass to the fullness of life in the Godhead, there is a graduated scale of perfection and a hierarchy of beings and of values.
3. One living thing, one blade of grass, in a world of inanimate natures, is a queen served by everything else.
4. The different grades of life – vegetative, animal, human, angelic, divine – represent different intensities of immanent activity.
5. The greatest nature in the visible universe is human nature. All other natures, and the universe as a whole, are for man.

6. The whole universe and all history revolve around one central event: the Incarnation.
7. In all the visible universe nothing is personal and immortal except man.
8. In man, the material and the spiritual meet in one nature.
9. The only substantial form that can exist completely independently out of matter is the human soul.
10. He that liveth forever created all things together. (Ecclus. 18:1) God created the whole universe all at once as one project; but He continues to create human souls at their conception, cooperating with the natural process of generation.
11. Only by believing in the omnipotence of God can we believe truly in creation, in the singular providence of God, in the moral order, and in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.
12. Every object in the universe, by an implanted tendency, works towards an end of its own, and thus it plays its part in the large concert of the universe.
13. Man alone in the visible universe plays his part freely and with knowledge of the end. So while all material substances must obey the will of God by necessity, man alone can disobey.
14. The end for man who obeys and who cooperates with grace is the attainment of the highest perfection of life, the attainment of life eternal.

I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.  
(John 10:10)

15. If liberty consisted in the power of giving oneself to good or evil, man would be freer than God. (Father Grou)

Life is God's gift, and it must seek truth, beauty and goodness.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life. (Ego sum via et veritas et vita.  
(John 14:6)

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.  
(John 8:32)

## IV. Happiness

1. All men, in all they do, seek after happiness. All men, in all they do, should seek after their true happiness, i.e., the end for which they were created.
2. Perfect happiness cannot be attained in this life. But virtue, which is the way to happiness, can be thus attained.
3. There is an inchoate happiness in the attainment of a virtuous life.
4. Only those who possess the truth and who cooperate with God's purpose for them can be as happy as it is possible in this life.

5. Ultimate happiness consists in the secure possession of all truth and the love of all goodness. It is becoming, to the greatest degree possible, one with the Divine Nature.
6. All the means to the ultimate end have an aspect of finality by which they reflect the truth, beauty, and goodness of the final end. There are no pure means in existence.
7. Ethics is a department of practical philosophy which treats of human acts in relation to their ends and ultimately to the one final end.
8. A human act is an act which proceeds from the deliberate free will of man, guided by knowledge. Examples: My writing these notes, saying the Rosary etc.
9. The final end is that which gives perfect happiness, and leaves no place for further desires.
10. Felicity is the activity of man's most perfect power. (Aristotle)  
But the activity of man's highest power (the intellect) presupposes the wholesome and proper functioning of all his powers.
11. The contemplative experience consists in the enthusiastic, loving, and ecstatic appreciation of the goodness of God in Himself, and as reflected in nature, or as represented in art.
12. The contemplative experience is our best clue to happiness in time (imperfect happiness), and in eternity (perfect happiness, beatitude, life eternal).
13. Contemplation is promised to us as the goal of all activity.  
(Saint Augustine)  
  
All human occupations are brought into the service of those who contemplate the truth. (Saint Thomas Aquinas)
14. Eternity is the simultaneously whole and perfect possession of interminable life. Life eternal is Our Lord's name for salvation (the Supreme Good, the Ultimate End).
15. Order is the proper disposition of means to the end. Peace is the tranquillity of order.

## V. Personal Ethics

1. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; the knowledge and love of God is the end. (Ps. 110:10; Prov. 1:7; Prov. 9:10; Eccu. 1:16)
2. Time is short, eternity long; we shall live forever.
3. We have one life to live, one purpose for our existence. Every act we perform casts a long shadow, even to eternity.
4. Every moment of life is an opportunity which can pass and be lost forever.

5. Every human act is a step towards, or a step away from, salvation. The first step towards salvation is an act of Faith -- the first act of supernatural life, and therefore, is contained also in every other meritorious act.
6. My highest duty is identical with my deepest desire and with my most precious right – the duty to save my soul.
7. We can actually enter the very life of God if we cooperate with grace! Even this cooperation is itself a grace, and we must pray for it and for perseverance in it.
8. Happy are we if we find in our hearts holy desires, if we have appreciation for the things of God. We should thank God if we do, and pray for more of the same.
9. Hic est voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra. (For this is the will of God, your sanctification. (I Thess. 4:3)
10. Only those who are trying to be saints conform to the will of God. It is the universal vocation, and therefore must apply to every state of life.
11. It is part of wisdom and of virtue (especially humility) to know that we inherited a rebellious nature that must be restrained and disciplined. Hence the need for great vigilance.
12. Virtue must be hedged and guarded.  
Qui dissipat sepem mordebit eum coluber. (He that breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him. Ecce. 10:8)  
Among the hedges of virtue are modesty, prayer, and holy companionship.
13. The singular providence of God. God has a general providence for the universe as a whole. To realize that is the sumit of philosophy. But apart from His providence for all men, for nations, and for families, He has a singular providence for me alone, regardless of all others. To realize that is the beginning of devotion.
14. Devotion is the chief act of the virtue of religion (and therefore also of justice) by which we give ourselves readily to the things that pertain to the service of God.
15. And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to his purpose, are called to be saints. (Romans 8:28)

## VI. Familial Ethics

1. Society is a stable moral union of a plurality of persons for the purpose of achieving common ends by the use of common means.
2. The human family is the most natural and the most necessary of all societies.

3. Every human achievement has an aspect of knowledge (scientia), an aspect of art (ars), and an aspect of morality (moralitas). The family, being a human achievement, involves a science, an art, and a set of moral principles.
4. The moral principles, or ethical rules, governing the family, are contained in the eternal law, and are also embodied in the very nature of man.
5. All authority is from God. So is the authority of the parents with respect to the children, of the old with respect to the young, and of the father with respect to the whole family.
6. The purpose of the family is the communication of life, the protection of life, and the cultivation of perfection. It requires the loving cooperation of all involved.
7. The basis of the family, the bond of its unity, is love, natural and supernatural, between man and woman, between parents and children, and between brothers and sisters.
8. The common good for the familial society is most intimately connected with the individual good of each member of the family. The happiness of one is the happiness of all. As family, the members share all things in common.
9. The family is the little church, the little school, the little government. All these and other institutions, human and divine, are to serve and supplement the function of the family, but not to replace it or to usurp its rights and duties.
10. What can be done in and by the family should rest with it. The principle of subsidiarity applies here. What the proximate authority can do should not be relinquished to the remote one.
11. Economy is the art of making the best use of all available means for a community of happiness.
12. In the Catholic Church we know two kinds of family: One majors in the propagation of natural life (the secular family); and the other majors in the propagation of supernatural life (the religious family). Both involve that peculiar quality of appreciation and adventure we call romance. God gave us one exemplar for both – The Holy Family.
13. Like everything of great value, the home should be protected with hedges. Satan, the hater of life, constantly assaults homes with the poisons of infidelity, impurity, and insubordination.
14. The family, the home, provides a constant opportunity for practicing the works of mercy, corporal as well as spiritual. It is the nursery of all the virtues, especially Faith, Hope, and Charity.
15. The proper virtues of familial society are: fidelity, charity, obedience, mutual help and mutual respect.



## VII. Political Ethics

1. Just as man by nature must belong to a family, so he must also belong to a political society, namely, the state. We have no choice about it; we actually find ourselves belonging simultaneously to a political as well as a familial society.
2. While the family is essentially a community of love whose members have all things in common, the state is an order of justice whose members do not and should not have all things in common. With fellow citizens we share some common interests and should have some common loyalties; but above all, we need to have respect for each others' rights.
3. God intended the world to consist of different nations governed by rulers (kings, emperors, chiefs, presidents, etc.). Traditions, customs or constitutions determine the process by which these rulers are designated to care for the common good. But once so designated, God bestows upon them the authority to govern. Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above. (John19:11)
4. As a society, the state has the privilege to back its laws with coercion. This monopoly of the use of force is essential to the political order, and is also its danger. It is the door to tyranny.
5. All the laws of the state must seek the common good in the temporal order, the state being a natural and a temporal entity. The state itself has no immortal soul and no eternal destiny.
6. The common good aimed at by the state involves providing conditions and opportunities for prosperity (peace and order, security, national defense, protection against crime, construction of roads and bridges, administration of justice, etc.)
7. The principle of Subsidiarity: Functions that can be performed by the local and closer community (the town, the parish, the family) should not be taken over by the state.
8. All laws that are contrary to the eternal counsels of God have no authority.
9. Every power must do homage to the moral order. (Bishop Prohazska)
10. The state being in its essence an order of justice, when it becomes unjust "the very glue of the ship of state becomes unstuck."  
  
"The very glue of the our ship of state seems to become unstuck." (Justice Harry Blackmun – the one who wrote the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion!)

11. It is the obligation and inherent right of the Church, independent of any human authority, to preach the Gospel to all peoples. (Canon 747 #1)
12. The Church has the right always and everywhere to proclaim moral principles. (Canon 747 #2)
13. The highest cause for prosperity, even in the temporal order, is God's blessing.
14. States are blessed in proportion to their cooperation with God's one project in this world, the project of the salvation of souls. (Psalm 126:1)
15. *Lex suprema, salus animarum*. God's supreme law in the whole universe is the salvation of souls. (The last Canon #1752)