

The Vision of Work Inspired by Philosophical and Biblical Interpretations

Alejandro Cañadas, PhD¹

Abstract

Martin Luther's Reformation (October 31, 1517) promoted a vision of work inspired by a partial reading of Sacred Scripture (*sola scriptura*), and also rejected the Catholic notion of works being meritorious for salvation or eternal life. By insisting that justification be entirely by faith alone (*sola fides*) apart from works, Luther's Reformation set in motion such a profound effects through history that influenced not only the Russian Revolution in 1917 but also shaped our current secularized Western world today.

This paper claims that one important cause for the Reformation to have such long-lasting consequences in history has been the philosophical breaking with the *via antiqua*, which has been the foundation for the Catholic Philosophical Tradition. This paper explains the main characteristics of the *via antiqua*: Realism and Reality from Natural Epistemology, Analogy and Participation, Divine and Human Agency and the Life of Virtue. Then, the paper describes how the Catholic understanding of works of salvation at the final judgment preserves the unity of the biblical witness regarding salvation and also uses the four characteristics of the *via antiqua*

¹ Alejandro Cañadas is an Associate Professor of Economics at Mount St. Mary's University.
canadas@msmary.edu

Introduction

The year 2017 coincides with two important anniversaries, which have profoundly influenced the development of the current mentality of human work reflected by the modern ideological secularism of knowledge in the public sphere and the naturalist metaphysical assumptions of academic life and research, which produced the relativization of religious truth claim in the personal sphere. The first important event is the fifth centenary of the Reformation (October 31, 1517), led by Martin Luther who promoted a vision of work inspired by a partial reading of Sacred Scripture (*sola scriptura*). He also rejected the Catholic notion of works being meritorious for salvation or eternal life, insisting that justification be entirely by faith alone (*sola fides*) apart from works. The second event is the first centenary of the Bolshevik Revolution (October 24-25, 1917), a Communist party led by Lenin which diffused a materialistic vision of the human person, work, and history.

These two events a priori seem disconnected because they are four hundred years apart from each other. Nevertheless, they are very connected because the Reformation set in motion the influential ideas of the Russian Revolution to happen. What is more, researchers like Brad Gregory in his book “The Unintended Reformation” claim that the Reformation had powerful influences that even affected Europe and North America in the twenty-first century. Gregory’s principal argument is that the whole Western world today is an extraordinary complex, a tangled

product of rejections, retentions, and transformations of the medieval Western Christianity”² that had been set in motion for the Reformation five hundred years ago.

So, which was the main characteristic of Martin Luther’s Reformation that set in motion such a profound “unintended” effect that influenced the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the secularized revolution in nowadays, which such explanatory power that influenced all domains of life?

The answer to this important question can be found in Luther’s writings which were the product of his education and his own experience. Martin Luder was born on November 10, 1483, in Eisleben, in the country of Mansfield in Saxon Germany. In 1502 he got his bachelor’s at the University of Erfurt, a master of arts (1505) and then on the Erfurt’s law school.³ The University of Erfurt was dominated since the second half of the fifteen century by the *via moderna*. Furthermore, Luther considered himself a philosophical disciple of Ockham. Luther wrote: “*My master Occam*” to be “*the greatest dialectician,*” and the Ockhamists “*my own school... which I have absorbed completely.*”⁴

This article claims that the main characteristic of Martin Luther’s Religious Reformation that set in motion such a profound “unintended” effects that influenced all domains of life

² Brad S. GREGORY, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2012, 2 pp.

³ It was at the University of Erfurt where he added an “h” to enhance his name to *Ludhet* and it was in 1518, a year later of presenting his ninety-five thesis at the Wittenberg Castle Church when he changed his name to **Luther**. See Scott W. HAHN- Benjamin WIKER, *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300-1700*, A Herder & Herder Book, he Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 2013, 147 pp

⁴ Quoted in Scott W. HAHN- Benjamin WIKER, *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300-1700*, A Herder & Herder Book, he Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 2013, 148 pp.

nowadays is our secularized Western world is a philosophical cause. That is the philosophical breaking with the *via antiqua*, also known as the perennial philosophy or the Catholic Philosophical Tradition, which has its roots in Greek Aristotelian philosophy and the tradition of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church in particular St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. The philosophical path was called the *via moderna* or *terminism*.

This paper highlights one the main contributions to the *via moderna* philosophical revolution, namely William Ockham's Nominalism. It also describes Nominalism's main implications for the role of human work on salvation at the Final Judgement.

Luther showed to have a nominalist's zeal in condemning philosophical realism, which was associated with Aristotle. In early February 1517, Luther wrote: "*Should Aristotle not have been a man of flesh and blood, I would not hesitate to assert that he was the Devil himself.*"⁵

The influence of the *via moderna* can be seen today in the way current science, even Social Sciences like Economics, are shaped. For example, for many, the Catholic perspective on economics is primarily and maybe exclusively the ethical analysis of economic arrangements using Catholic moral principles. However, reducing the Catholic perspective to simply moral analysis can mask its most essential element: the metaphysical and epistemological assumptions about the human person in the first place and how science knows reality.

⁵ Martin LUTHER, *Luther's Disputation against Scholastic Theology*: AA. VV. (Helmut Lehmann, ed.), *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, *Career of the Reformer I*, Ed. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia 1957, pp. 40-44.

This essay is divided into five parts. First, it describes the main characteristics of the *via antiqua* or perennial philosophy (also known as the Catholic Philosophical Tradition). Second, it explains the influence of William Ockham. Third, it explains the role of Martin Luther in setting in motion the unintended consequences of the Reformation that affected the Western world five hundred years later; fourth, it explains the Catholic view of works for salvation at the Final Judgment; finally, it provides some conclusions regarding the significance of this processes.

1. The main characteristics of the *via antiqua* or perennial philosophy (also known as the Catholic Philosophical Tradition).

The perennial philosophy or the Catholic Philosophical Tradition can be described by its main characteristics: the importance of Realism and Reality from Natural Epistemology, Analogy and Participation, Divine and Human Agency and the Life of Virtue. The first two characteristics are the most difficult to understand, and they are also the most important because they set the foundation to apply the last two characteristics. Let us explain each one of these:

First, (Objective) **Realism and Reality from Natural Epistemology**: this is the natural process through which human beings know reality. This process is based on our common experience and the use of our senses. Classical Philosophy has observed this process by the reflection of Aristotle and then the “Catholic Philosophical Tradition” built on Aristotle’s wisdom and later complemented by the wisdom of St. Augustine and St. Thomas’ refinements, adding the Catholic Wisdom received by Divine Revelation.⁶ The first act of the mind is called

⁶ Therefore, following Natural Epistemology, there are three acts of the mind: First, simple apprehension; second, Judging, and third, Reasoning. Simple apprehension means basically “conceiving, understanding or comprehending” one object of thought or one concept, such as “mortal” or “man.” Judging is more complex than simple apprehension. Instead of just thinking one concept, like “man”, it relates two concepts, like “man and mortal”

“simple or initial apprehension of the essence.” It is said that the proper object of sense knowledge is the direct apprehension of the forms. The senses grasp only accidental forms that external to the object. Therefore, the object of the senses is the species of qualities, known as sensible qualities.⁷

Aristotle groups the object of sensation into three main classes:

- 1) The ***proper sensible***: they are the objects of each of the five external senses like color, sound, odor, taste, and the aggregate of qualities perceived by touches such as warmth, cold, weight, resistance, and the like. They are called proper because they pertain to each to one sense only.
- 2) ***Common sensible***: can be perceived by more than one sense. There are five such sensibles: size, shape, number, movement, and rest. The common sensible is not independent and separate from the objects of sense. They always presuppose the knowledge of the proper sensible upon which they impose a further modification.
- 3) The ***sensible per accident*** which means that we know things or we apprehend them by our senses. We believe that the senses give us a grasp of the external world, which is the

by predicating one term of the other in judging that for example: “man is mortal”. In the second act of the mind, we can error in judging or creating the product of judging, which is by producing a judgment that is false. Finally reasoning is a process more complex than judging because as judging moves from one act of simple apprehension to another, reasoning moves from two or more judgments (premises or assumptions) to another (the conclusion) in arguing that if the premises are true, then the conclusion must be true. For example: “All men are mortal, and I am a man, therefore I am mortal.”

⁷ H.D. GARDEIL, O.P., *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Volume Three: Psychology*, Translated by John A. Otto, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2009, 127-1377 pp.

reality. So our sensible knowledge allows us to capture or apprehend the concepts of the essence of things.⁸

A very important consequence of this process of human knowledge which Aristotle and St. Thomas agreed on is the “*objectivity of the sense knowledge*”⁹ which means that truly our senses give us a grasp of the external world as it is. This process highlights the objectivity of our knowledge and our natural capacity to grasp universal concepts and objective TRUTH. That is why the process of knowing reality described by the *via antiqua* is called Realism and Reality. This very important truth is a key characteristic of the *via antiqua* that has been challenged by Martin Luther following William of Ockham and many philosophers after him and, it became a key ingredient of our modern secularism. On the contrary, the *via moderna* influenced by those thinkers that opposed the “*objectivity of the sense knowledge*” claims the “*subjectivity of the sense knowledge*” because they believe that our senses cannot give us a real grasp of the reality as it is but, a mere symbolical awareness. So reality cannot be grasped objectively but subjectively, and we cannot have a real apprehension of external things. In this case, it is debatable even whether we can grasp universal concepts. Thus, we could only grasp subjective truths.

Second, the Catholic Philosophical Tradition highlights the importance of **Analogy and Participation** in the process of knowing abstract concepts, which is a direct consequence of Natural Epistemology. The process of knowing by Analogy and Participation shows that by the acts of the mind we are not only able to understand the nature and existence of real things

⁸ Ibid., 57 pp.

⁹ Ibid., 58 pp.

objectively, but also capable of the first and most universal level of knowledge. In particular, through the second operation of the mind in which the act of understanding is completed by the practical analysis of judgments, we can affirm the existence of being. For example, when we say that “*the weather is pleasant*,” or by the use of the verbal form: “the sun *shines*.” In the first example, it is clear that it is a judgment of something that **is** or it is an affirmation of **being**. In the second example, the **being** is implicitly affirmed through the use of the verb *shines*. Therefore, in the process of knowledge by the process of judgment, every judgment that we create is about **what is**. Hence, it is about **being**. This is true of every judgment, affirmative or negative; there is an association of two terms telling of **being**, saying **what is or what is not**. Thus, every act of the thought is determined by **being** and fixes on **being**. Moreover, since reality is **being**, to think is to form a conception of reality. In summary, we can say that **being** is the first and most comprehensive object of thought. Since metaphysics is the science of what is first and most universal or comprehensive, its object, it follows, is **being**.¹⁰ However, the true object of metaphysics is not the being considered as the first notion of the thought or being whose conception is the first notion of the intellect. The first object of metaphysics is the being as being or being as such.¹¹ This is an important distinction between the being of the physical kind, which is particular and matter-bound (that we know from our senses and the sensible

¹⁰ H.D. GARDEIL, O.P., *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Volume Four: Metaphysics*, Translated by John A. Otto, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2012, 38 pp.

¹¹ The true object of metaphysics is the being as being, with the two inseparable aspects of being: essence and existence. Hence, the true object of metaphysics is the being as being: anything capable of entering the world of concrete existence. Thus, whatever has been, or is , or will be, or could really be, under whatever mode or manner, is comprised under the object of metaphysics...even that which is affined to be concrete order of things by way of privation or negation.” See H.D. GARDEIL, O.P., *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Volume Four: Metaphysics*, Translated by John A. Otto, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2012, 42 pp.

world, and being as the object of metaphysics, which is the first and most universal object of thought, which is universal and matter-free.¹²

Aristotle and St. Thomas showed that the movement from the particular concept of being to the universal notion of being is realized by the use of analogy. To solve tension that we have between the universality of the concept of being, which is the most comprehensive notion that can be conceived, and the fact that everything in reality, whether actual or possible,¹³ falls under being, we use the analogy. The doctrine of analogy will solve the question: how can the totality of things so diverse be united under one concept which includes them all, in their diversities as well as in their identities?¹⁴

In a popular or scientific world, things are said to be analogous when they bear some likeness to each other. Philosophically following Aristotle, the analogy is viewed under the theory or mode of logical predication, which is only applied to the case of being. This is a mode that is neither univocal nor equivocal but in between analogical concepts.¹⁵ The analogy is the opportunity to make comparisons between two things or situations that seem similar. For example, when we speak we can make an equivocal statement, which is one that is not clear, it can have more than one possible meaning or is ambiguous. For example, when we use the word “love” when can use it in an equivocal way if we say: “*I love this book, I love this day and I love*

¹² Ibid., 39 pp.

¹³ For St. Thomas “being is neither essence alone nor existence alone but a composite of the two: an essence actuated by its ultimate perfection, existence.” See Ibid., 44 pp.

¹⁴ Ibid., 45 pp.

¹⁵ H.D. GARDEIL, O.P., *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Volume Four: Metaphysics*, Translated by John A. Otto, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2012, 50 pp.

my wife.” In this statement, the word love has not one clear meaning but three different meanings. Likewise, we can speak by making a univocal statement, which only has one and only one meaning that is clear. For example, “*Because I love my wife, I married her.*” In this case, the word “love” has only one clear meaning.

One example of a statement that uses analogy could be: “*I want to love my wife, as Jesus loves the Church.*” Here the statement is using analogy because there are some similarities in the meaning of the word “love.” Here the word “love” has a reference to the way Jesus loves the Church, meaning, “*like Jesus I want to offer my life every day in service to my wife.*” The analogy also has the tension between the perfect love that Jesus has for the Church (which I would not be able to reproduce in the same way of perfection by my faculties) and the limited love that I have as a human person. Because of this characteristic of the possibility of making a comparison between two things or situations to highlight the similarities and dissimilarities at the same time, the analogy is very useful to talk about God.

This process of knowledge using analogy is especially relevant to interpret Sacred Scriptures. The Catechism of the Catholic Church gives three criteria to interpret correctly Sacred Scripture:¹⁶

- 1) Be especially attentive “*to the content and unity of the whole Scripture*” (the Old and the New Testaments).¹⁷

¹⁶ In particular the Catechism of Catholic Church highlights the importance of the analogy of faith in reading Sacred Scripture. See *Catechism of Catholic Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican, Second Edition, 1997, No 114-117.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, No 112.

- 2) Read the Scriptures “*within the living Tradition of the whole Church.*”¹⁸
- 3) Be especially “*attentive to the analogy of faith*”¹⁹ which means the “*coherence*” of the truths of faith among us and the whole God’s plan of Salvation.

The “*coherence*” of the truths of faith means that to grasp these truths we have to use our reason and use the instrument of analogy to speak of the relationship between God and us. In fact, the analogy is, and it has been the mode of speaking about God’s plan of Salvation in Scripture. We can see that the Church in her Tradition, since the time of the apostles, has taught that the OT illuminates the NT. It also shows the unity of God’s divine plan of Salvation by using a type of analogy, called “*typology,*” which discerns in God’s works of the OT prefiguration of what God accomplished through Jesus Christ in the NT.²⁰

Another important use of analogy is what Steven Long calls the “*intrinsic analogicity of being.*”²¹ According to Long, when one makes various true judgments about the existence of things, one becomes aware that not only do those things exist, but “*the cat is not the angel, nor is the cat being to the angelic being.*”²² Aristotle argues that being is divided by act and potency, and it is this real distinction between act and potency that allows for the proper understanding of how being is diversified, for it can account for the empirical evidence of change and

¹⁸ Ibid., No 113.

¹⁹ Ibid., No 114.

²⁰ Ibid., No 128.

²¹ Steven A. LONG, *Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011).

²² Ibid., 107 pp.

multiplicity.²³ In other words, the being of a being like an animal is limited by its various “potencies;” for instance, the way the animal can know things through its senses. Therefore, it is the nature of the animal that limits its being.

Natural Epistemology shows us that by the first two acts of the mind we are not only able to understand the nature and existence of real things, but also we are (implicitly) aware that the differing natures of things do not all share the same measure of perfection. In other words, through the first two acts of the mind, we know the reality of being, and being is intrinsically analogous. The Catechism of the Catholic Church shows the importance of using an analogy to talk about God. For example, we can claim that “being, good, and love” can be predicated of God as pure potency, unity or source in God because we have particular knowledge of things that are good and lovable. So, the concept “*intrinsic analogicity of being*”²⁴ is the process through which we know reality by this analogy of proper proportionality.²⁵ It is important to keep in mind that while God’s being is not limited by potency, created beings are diversified according to the diverse relationships of act and potency. Therefore, it is the diverse relationship of the act to potency among various beings that serve to reveal their various degrees of participation in being.

St. Thomas Aquinas notes that there are three ways that one can take part in something else:

²³ H.D. GARDEIL, O.P., *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Volume Four: Metaphysics*, Translated by John A. Otto, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2012, 65 pp.

²⁴ Steven A. LONG, *Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011).

²⁵ The love that I know is limited by the actuality of my being but I also know the love of a saint which is proportionally much higher than mine and also I can imagine the concept of infinite love in God.

- 1) The manner one receives in a particular manner something that is more common or universal. This is how a species participates in a genus, namely, the way man participates in the genus animal.
- 2) The second method of participation is the way in which matter participates in a form or a subject in an accident.
- 3) The third method of participation is the way in which an effect participates in a cause; and in particular when the effect is not proportioned to the cause, as light received by the air.

Regarding the first two, St. Thomas notes that being cannot participate in anything else. Additionally, being cannot participate in something like the particular in the universal, for nothing can be more universal than being. It is in the third and final way that St. Thomas holds that being can participate in something else, namely, the way an effect participates in its cause. In this case, the primary cause of everything that *is* is God. So, the first cause also affects the being; yet, not in such a way as to make being proportioned to the power of its divine cause. Therefore, this raises the question: how does created beings participate in its divine cause?²⁶

In summary, the Catholic Philosophical Tradition teaches that being participates in the divine being as an effect in a cause. What is more, the account of analogy as determined by the division of being by act and potency provides the foundation for a proper understanding of participation. Thus, being is diversified by act and potency and, it is potency that limits a given

²⁶ H.D. GARDEIL, O.P., *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Volume Four: Metaphysics*, Translated by John A. Otto, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2012, 55-72 pp.

creature's participation in common being (*esse commune*), which itself participates in the divine being as an effect participates in its cause. However, St. Thomas also directly follows Augustine in affirming that God is intimately present in his creation, for His transcendence is not competitive with his immanence. In question eight of the *Prima Pars*, St. Thomas teaches that God is in all things, yet in a certain manner, as "an agent is present to that which upon it works." Consequently, St. Thomas states that God is present to all things "according to its mode of being," and while being is innermost in all things properly speaking, so, in a certain respect God is present "innermost" in the things using the analogy of participation. As we know, in some respect, an agent is present in the work he or she does ("the artist is present in the painting"), so God is also present in His work of creation as "an agent is present to his works."²⁷ At this point, we are in the position to conclude our overview of St. Thomas's account of participation by highlighting the fact that everything the creature has is a gift from God, including the ability to remain in being using God's intimate sustaining presence. In particular, God is present innermost in moving creatures according to their nature, which brings us to our third and final category, divine and human agency and the life of virtue.

Third, the characteristic of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition is **Divine and Human Agency**, which reflects the capacity that we possess as human beings and the Catholic meaning of freedom. At the core of Divine and Human Agency is what human being can do in relation with God but using our will and freedom. Divine and Human Agency is based on St. Thomas's understanding of the "*primacy of divine agency regarding human action.*" This is expressed in

²⁷ Ibid., 55-72 pp.

Scripture in the statement of Jesus: “*apart from me you can do nothing*”²⁸ (John 15:5).”²⁹ As human beings, we act move by God’s grace and also in the order of nature God is the primary cause of our actions,³⁰ and still, we can keep our freedom and initiative.³¹

Fourth, the final characteristic of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition is the capacity that we have to live a **Life of Virtue** because the divine agency does not destroy but actualizes human agency, namely, we are empowered by God’s grace to be perfect as the “Father is perfect.” St. Thomas teaches that human freedom is not defined by its relationship to God but regarding the choice of proximate causes. Thomas’s account of divine and human agency, teaches, “God moves the creature according to its nature toward the good.”³² This is what Servais Pinckers has rightly called the “**freedom for excellence.**”³³ Therefore, to truly live our human agency we

²⁸ Ibid.. 8 pp.

²⁹ Thomas notes that there are two ways that this can be understood, namely, either by nature or by grace. It appears that for Thomas the order of grace is primary, meaning, apart from the grace of God no one is able to perform a truly “meritorious work.”

³⁰ Hence it is clear that in all things that operate God is the cause of their operating. For all who operate are in some way a cause of being, whether according to essential or accidental being. However nothing is a cause of being except in so far as it acts by God’s power. Therefore everyone who operates acts by God’s power. See *SCG* III. 67.

³¹ In light of Thomas’ account of the analogy of being, where God is not in a determined relationship to the creature but whose existence is completely transcendent, *divine agency does not cancel out human freedom, but in fact makes human agency possible*. In regard to the relationship between divine and human causality, Thomas teaches that while *humans are a genuine cause of their own movement through free will, nevertheless human freedom does not require that humans be either the exclusive or primary cause of their actions*. In this account, *God’s causality not only makes possible genuine human agency, but God moves each creature according to its nature as the primary, transcendent cause*. See *ST* I, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3.

³² As the perfect cause, God moves us toward the good, yet no finite good can compel the will. It is at this point that the reality of delectability comes in, for man can choose a lesser proximate good and so defect from the final good, God himself. It is here that there is a genuine competitive relationship between divine and human agency, where sin is the only thing we have exclusively from ourselves.

³³ Servais PINCKAERS, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, translated from the third edition by Sr. Mary Thomas Noble (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 354-378 pp.

have to live our freedom in a virtuous life. Virtues (both the acquired and infused) are a good quality that perfects the human person according to their nature. Consequently, “God moves humans according to their nature as free, rational animals to both have and practice a given virtue.”³⁴ Hence, “both by nature and by grace God moves creatures toward natural and supernatural ends using the acquired and theological virtues.”³⁵

2. The Influence of William Ockham

William Ockham is famous for being one of the main contributors to the *via moderna* through his philosophical ideas, in particular for denying the reality of universals.³⁶ Ockham departs from perennial philosophy by denying the reality of universals. Ockham argued that when we refer to “Socrates is man” the word “man” does not refer to any reality inside or outside that particular reality (Socrates). Contrary to Aristotle and St. Thomas, according to Ockham, the universal noun

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ It is important to acknowledge that even though this essay focuses on the William Ockham’s contribution to the *via moderna*, there were many other contributors like Marsilius of Padua (c. 1275-1342) who used the philosophy of the Muslim philosopher Averroes (c. 1126-1198), which elevated reason over revelation or the rational state over religion. John Wycliffe (c. 1330-1384) argued for theologians to serve the crown, considering the monarch as an absolute ruler by divine right. His thoughts would prepare England to embrace the work of Marsilius in the English Reformation. Other many important contributors have been Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli (1469-1527), Martin Luther’s Reformation (1483-1546), Henry VII I in England (1491-1547), René Descartes (1596-1650), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), Baruch de Spinoza (1632-1677), and John Locke (1632-1704) among others. All these contributors have been influencing each other and their thoughts. They all benefited from the *via moderna* path which has been spreading and influencing throughout history all the way to our days.

has no foundation in nature.³⁷ So, in nature there are only particulars. This departure from the existence of universals means for Ockham that with our intelligence we create general concepts that are reflected in “universals” names like “man.” The key difference is that if these “universal” terms are not rooted directly, in reality, they are only names. That is why Ockham’s philosophical position was called “Nominalism” (from the *Latin, nomen*: name).³⁸

It is very important that the proper object of the intellect is the essence of things because we should be able to grasp the essence of a thing, which is the being. If intellect is not able to grasp the essence of things, the inner word alone can be associated with an image or representation like a picture of the thing that is created by the mind of something outside the mind. If that is the case, we do not know the universal but only a representation of the particular.³⁹

This philosophical position become known by the fifteen century as the *via moderna*, in opposition to the *via antiqua* associated with the *realist* philosophy of St. Thomas and Aristotle. Hahn and Wiker explain following Oberman, that the *via antiqua* as a philosophical movement “does not represent the united front of all ancient thinkers nor it is truly defined in terms of antiquity, since the most eminent proponents of the *via antiqua* were St. Albert Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome.”⁴⁰ Therefore, these two important philosophical movements should be

³⁷ Scott W. HAHN- Benjamin WIKER, *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300-1700*, A Herder & Herder Book, he Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 2013, 47 pp.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ H.D. Gardeil, O.P., *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Volume Four: Metaphysics*, 78-79 pp.

⁴⁰ Scott W. HAHN- Benjamin WIKER, *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300-1700*, A Herder & Herder Book, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 2013, 51 pp.

“best understood in regard to their respective intellectual assumptions and methods, rather than relative age.”⁴¹

There are theological reasons that motivated Ockham’s philosophical school of thoughts. Ockham rejected the reality of universals because he reacted against two other schools of thoughts that restricted God’s omnipotence to His creation (Islam and Averroism). Ockham reacted against these philosophical schools to defend the omnipotence of God’s will against any attempt to mitigate His absolute will. For Ockham, “any binding of God’s will was an unconscionable violation of God’s sovereignty and a direct contradiction to His Omnipotence”⁴² (*potential Dei absoluta*). That is why Ockham deny the “Greco-Arabian necessitarianism” of Averroism⁴³ by declaring that universals were merely names.

The key philosophical problem for Ockham if universals were actually in things, then not only would creation be determined by them, but also it would seem that God’s actions as the creator would be restricted by their existence and necessary relationships.⁴⁴ Against this implication of universals, Ockham argued that nature as we know it “is merely one among the infinite number of possible expressions of God’s creative will and power, and God’s power be so absolute that nothing binds it at all except the principle of no contradiction.”⁴⁵ Therefore, nature, as it happens to be, is completely depending, ordained by God as one among countless possibilities, although “once God

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

has so determined the order (express as *His potential ordinata*) he binds Himself to that decision in a kind of covenant (*pactum*).”⁴⁶

The practical implications of Ockham’s theological-philosophical position are five:

First, there are no metaphysical principles: “since nothing can be read from nature, then there could be no philosophical climbing from the depending creation to an understanding of any necessary metaphysical principles or God Himself.”⁴⁷

Second, there is a separation between supernatural and natural and both are not connected. Since (for Ockham) we cannot understand or reach to God using any metaphysical principles, the only possible connection could be made from God to us through his revelation. However, even revelation is not accessible to us because still “*God’s power is absolute and His ways ultimately inscrutable,*” that is why the supernatural does not presuppose and build upon the natural and the two are radically separate.⁴⁸

Third, Theology and Faith are fictitious and irrational;⁴⁹ then the authority of the Church is diminished. Since for Ockham, now philosophy is entirely independent of objective truths and revelation, Theology is not useful anymore. Besides, the authority of the Church is fabricated by Faith. Therefore they need to be replaced by a new method and a new authority.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 52 pp.

Fourth, in practice, we have to replace Faith by reason and the authority of the Church by the secular's authority of philosophy. Now that Ockham created a vacuum by destroying metaphysical truths, faith, and theological authority, Philosophy is the right tool to support the new secular order as an independent authority in natural affairs and defines reason entirely above faith.⁵⁰

Fifth, there is now a reductionism in physics that favored the development of materialism. As Hahn and Wiker describe in their book: "*Ockham's nominalism left a vacuum that would be filled by another universal.*"⁵¹ Ockham's denial of universals led to a kind of reductionism in physics that favored a materialistic view of the world. Because nominalism focused on particulars as a source of intelligibility, it lends to the notion that particular parts are more important than wholes. This reductionism to the particular is essential to the development of science.⁵²

Sixth, Ockham's analysis seriously deflates the importance of metaphysics and physics, then of the three greatest theoretical sciences enumerated by Aristotle, leaving the opportunity to the rise of the third one, mathematics,⁵³ which Descartes will develop even further.

Ockham's theological-philosophical position has important implication to the interpretation of the role of works at the Final Judgement from Scriptures. This will open the door for Martin Luther's development in the Reformation based on these:

⁵⁰ Ibid., 58 pp.

⁵¹ Ibid., 53 pp.

⁵² Ibid., 54 pp.

⁵³ Ibid., 52 pp.

First, Ockham's law-based understanding of the cosmos yielded a natural philosophy, which would read Sacred Scripture believing that miraculous events are impossible.⁵⁴ This idea created the predisposition of suspicion as a necessary way by the true meaning of the biblical text.

Second, if there are no metaphysical principles and separation between supernatural and natural and both are not connected, Ockham's contributed to the idea that there is no analogy of being connecting creator and creature. This will contribute to the displacement of typological, allegorical scriptural interpretation to a more literal and historical oriented.⁵⁵

Third, if Theology and Faith are fictitious, irrational and the Church has no theological authority, then religion is regarded as supernatural.⁵⁶ Now, the door is open to shift the real authority of Biblical interpretation to the secular philosopher who will use reason and a more scientific method.

Fourth, within a century from Ockham's time, the necessity of mathematics was identified with the laws of nature, and nature came to be governed by its laws, the result was that the "necessitarianism" of mathematics drove out the possibility of divine action.⁵⁷ For biblical interpretation, this meant getting rid of God as well.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 54-55 pp.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 57 pp.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 53 pp.

Fifth, the goal of scriptural exegesis will be “either to rationalize Scripture for everyone’s sake or as Marsilius desired, to politicize it by reinterpreting Scripture to serve a merely moral function, keeping the uneducated masses orderly and happy with their lot in civil society.”⁵⁸

3. Martin Luther

One of the main effects of Martin Luther rejection of the *via antiqua* and in particular to the influence of nominalism was an inner antagonism to philosophy insofar as it stressed the distance between God and creation, even to the point of denying any analogy between creator and creature.⁵⁹ The problem here is very severe in practice because if there is no real analogy, then revealed theology must likewise be completely distance from natural philosophy.

Two other problems could be seen in the influence of nominalism on Luther’s thinking: first, Luther accepted the distinction stressed by nominalism between God *potentia absoluta and ordinata* as between the unknowable God and God as revealed in Christ.⁶⁰ Of the former, we know nothing; of the latter, all could be found Scriptures, which are a divine given and even against reason. Therefore, for Luther, regarding revelation “we can say nothing through demonstration, but we hold

⁵⁸ Ibid., 58 pp.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 149 pp.

⁶⁰ Heiko OBERMAN, *Via Antiqua and Via Moderna: Late Medieval Prolegomena to Early Reformation Thought*, in Heiko OBERMAN, *Impact of the Reformation*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1994, 13 pp.

it as simple belief apart from reason.”⁶¹ As a consequence, Luther allowed reason to function on the natural level, but in a way isolated from revelation.

Second, in highlighting the difference between God’s *potentia absoluta* and *ordinata*, nominalism stressed a “*belief in the absolute power of God so strong that it did not allow for effective activity of any intermediate sacred being, whether person or thing, so that it had a marked tendency to destroy any belief in sacramental and the Sacraments themselves.*”⁶² As a practical consequence, Luther argued that the Sacraments were part of God’s *potentia ordinata*, and were, therefore, not dispensable.⁶³ This process of desacramentalizing had two important effects: it strengthened secularizing tendencies because it tried to destroy Church authority on this matters, and it contributed definitively to cutting the scriptural continuity between the priestly and sacrificial elements in the Old Testament and the New.⁶⁴ Both contribute to Luther’s dialectical way of seeing reality into opposed and confronting realms OT vs. NT, the dualism of soul and body, spiritual vs. temporal, secular government and spiritual, two distinct kingdoms: spiritual and secular (the

⁶¹ Scott W. HAHN- Benjamin WIKER, *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300-1700*, A Herder & Herder Book, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 2013, 150 pp.

⁶² R. W. SCRIBNER- and C. Scott DIXON, *The German Reformation*, Palgrave Macmillan , New York, 2003, 14 pp.

⁶³ Heiko OBERMAN, *Via Antiqua and Via Moderna: Late Medieval Prolegomena to Early Reformation Thought*, in Heiko OBERMAN, *Impact of the Reformation*, T. & T. Clarck, Edinburgh, 1994, 15-16 pp.

⁶⁴ Scott W. HAHN- Benjamin WIKER, *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300-1700*, A Herder & Herder Book, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 2013, 150 pp.

“kingdom of God” and the “kingdom of the world”).⁶⁵ This is clearly a consequence of negating the doctrine of Analogy and Participation.

The main purpose of this essay is to highlight that Martin Luther’s rejection of the *via antiqua* (influenced by nominalism) has been one of the main foundations of Luther’s Reformation. However, it is important to mention that for Luther’s Reformation to set in motion such a profound “unintended” effect that influenced not only the Russian Revolution in 1917 but also the secularized revolution in nowadays other synergies wherein play at that particular moment. Even though the analysis of other important synergies that contributed to the propagation of the effects of the Reformation for five hundred years is outside the scope of this essay; it is important to acknowledge some of them.

First, the political context of the Reformation was characterized by the tension between the Roman emperor, the Habsburg Maximilian I, the pope and the electors that run back to the breakup of the Carolingian empire in the ninth century. Since the fourteenth century, the power of the emperor had been declining while the power of the German electors had risen. There were seven electors, three of which were archbishops (of Mainz, Cologne, and Trier) and used their power to offset the power of the remaining four electors who were secular princes. One of these secular electors was the Frederick III, Prince of Saxon, who became Luther’s protector and used Luther’s reformation to control the temporal and the religious power of the Church in his territory.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Scott W. HAHN- Benjamin WIKER, *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300-1700*, A Herder & Herder Book, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 2013, 202-03 pp.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 155 pp.

Second, the political context of the Reformation was connected to the economic power, and the interventions from the pope to tax foreign territories and to sell indulgences⁶⁷ were revenues were moved from Frederick's royal coffers.⁶⁸ When Emperor Maximilian died in 1519, Pope Leo X at one point avidly supported Frederick for the future emperor, but the Habsburgs alone spent over a million gulden in the successful candidacy of Charles V, so to get the votes from Frederick they negotiated a price of it. These political and economic conflicts between the pope the emperor and the German princes (electors) were experienced in nationalist terms, opposing Italian versus German interests.⁶⁹

Third, all these political, nationalistic and economic problems are the result of the corruption of the clergy's practices, the perversion, and laxity of the religious orders, which were the main motivation of Luther's ninety-five theses calling for a moral reform of the Church.⁷⁰

Forth, the new power of the technology of Luther's time was the printing press through which Luther's thesis became immediately famous.⁷¹

Fifth, the influence of the *via moderna* and in particular the effect of nominalism in Luther's particular thinking was complemented by Luther's personal struggles to become holy, his intense scrupulosity and doubts about his redemption, and his overwhelming fear of God as a harsh

⁶⁷ The Turks had capture Constantinople in 1453, and Pope Calixtus III (1455-1458) called for a crusade with indulgences for support. Frederick II allowed indulgences in his territory as long as he could receive half the proceeds. See Ibid, 156 pp.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 156 pp.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 156-57 pp.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 158 pp.

⁷¹ Ibid, 159 pp.

judge. All these contributed to his animosity to any perceived Pelagian elements, and to his fierce affirmation of justification by faith alone.⁷²

4. The Catholic View on Works

Marin Luther rejected the Catholic notion of works being meritorious for salvation or eternal life, even if they were preceded by grace, insisting that justification be entirely by faith alone (*sola fides*) apart from works. It is important that Luther did not discard the role of works at all but emphasizing that even though works do not justify, they are important for faith to demonstrate that faith is real.⁷³ Thus, “if good works do not follow, it is certain that this faith in Christ does not exist in our heart.”⁷⁴ Luther struggles with the tension between faith and works, but he is careful to give priority to faith. Works are necessary, but they do not make a person Christian.⁷⁵ For example, to be without works at the final judgment would be cause for fear (1 John 4:16-18).⁷⁶ However, works by themselves will

⁷² Ibid, 154 pp.

⁷³ *Luther's Works*, Vol. 34, *Career of the Reformer I*, Ed. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia 1957, 124 pp. Cited by AA.VV. (Various Authors), *Four Views on The Role of Works at the final Judgement*: AA. VV. (Alan P. Stanley and Stanley N. Gundry, ed.), Zondevar, Grand Rapids, 2013, 16 pp.

⁷⁴ *Luther's Works*, Vol. 34, *Career of the Reformer I*, Ed. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia 1957, 134 pp. Cited by *ibid.*, 17 pp.

⁷⁵ *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, *Career of the Reformer I*, Ed. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia 1957, 361 pp. Cited by *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 453 pp. AA.VV. Cited by (Various Authors), *Four Views on The Role of Works at the final Judgement*: AA. VV. (Alan P. Stanley and Stanley N. Gundry, ed.), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2013, 17 pp.

not alleviate fear since salvation is a free gift grounded in “*God’s forgiving grace.*”⁷⁷ So yes, works are important, but if one were to appear at the final judgment without them, “*we cannot tell anyone in such a situation to do anything else than to believe. If you have no works, then do not be without faith.*”⁷⁸

The Catholic view of good works at the final judgment seeks to explain the entirety of the biblical witness without minimizing either passage that discusses the priority of God’s grace or texts highlighting the role of good works.⁷⁹ So, a summary of the Catholic view of good works can be written:

“The charity of Christ is the source in us of all our merits before God. Grace, by uniting us to Christ in active love, ensures the supernatural quality of our acts and consequently their merit before God and before men. The saints have always had a lively awareness that their merits were pure grace.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No 2011).

The Catholic view of good works has these characteristics:

First, in the New Testament (NT) Salvation in Christ is described as a past (Titus 3:5, Rom. 8:24), present (1 Cor. 1:18; Acts 2:27)), and future reality (John 10:9; Acts 15:11; Rom. 10:13; 1 Cor. 3:15;

⁷⁷ Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 453 pp. Cited by AA.VV. (Various Authors), *Four Views on The Role of Works at the final Judgement*: AA. VV. (Alan P. Stanley and Stanley N. Gundry, ed.), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2013, 17 pp.

⁷⁸ Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 454-55 pp. Cited by AA.VV. (Various Authors), *Four Views on The Role of Works at the final Judgement*: AA. VV. (Alan P. Stanley and Stanley N. Gundry, ed.), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2013, 17 pp.

⁷⁹ Michael P. BARBER, *A Catholic Perspective: Our Works are Meritorious at the Final Judgement because of our union with Christ by Grace*, Chapter Four in AA. VV. (Alan P. Stanley and Stanley N. Gundry, ed.), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2013, 161 pp.

1 Tim. 2:15). What is more, in the NT salvation is understood regarding “justification,” “redemption,” “entering the kingdom,” “forgiveness” as well as “eternal life.” Therefore, salvation as justification can be identified as something that has occurred in the life of the believer (1 Cor. 6:11) as well as taking place into the future (Matt. 12:36; Rom. 2:12-13).⁸⁰

Second, in the NT soteriology is Christological meaning that salvation comes in Christ. So, we are made righteous because Christ is “our righteousness” (1 Cor. 1:30). Ultimately, because we are united to Christ we are righteous. Therefore, to be saved is to be “conformed to the imaged of God’s Son.” (Rom. 8:29).⁸¹

Third, in Catholic theology, union with the triune God in Christ is the result of God’s grace. The NT shows that salvation is given to us as a free gift (Eph. 2: 8-9; Rom. 11:6; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5).⁸²

Fourth, even though Catholics affirm that salvation is the result of God’s free gift, Catholic teaching also recognized that there are many passages in Scripture that describe good works as a criterion for salvation. In the NT there are passages in which God will judge each person according to his or her works (Matt 16:27; Matt 25: 34-46; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Pet. 1: 17;

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 163 pp.

⁸¹ Dr. Michael Barber explain that the “Christological center of soteriology can easily be overlooked. Salvation is often understood in minimalistic terms. Many portray salvation in Christ in terms of what Christ has saved us *from*, neglecting what he has saved us *for*.” In practice that means that salvation is little more than a “fire insurance” because it delivers us from the fires of hell. However, salvation involves much more than that, ultimately involves communion with God in Christ. See Michael P. BARBER, *A Catholic Perspective: Our Works are Meritorious at the Final Judgement because of our union with Christ by Grace*, Chapter Four in AA. VV. (Alan P. Stanley and Stanley N. Gundry, ed.), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2013, 165 pp.

⁸² See Council of Trent, Session 6, Chapter 5 and chapter 8. Cited from H. J. SCHROEDER, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Herder, St. Louis, 1941, 31-35 pp. Also in the Catechism we read: “Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life.” Catechism of the Catholic Church No 1996.

Rev. 2:23; Rev. 22:12). The idea can even be traced into the Old Testament (OT), for example, Psalm 62 declares: “*and that to thee, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For thou dost requite a man according to his work*” (RSV Psalm 62:12). In Proverb we read: “*If you say, "Behold, we did not know this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watching over your soul know it, and will he not requite man according to his work?* (RSV Proverbs 24:12).

Fifth, in the NT we read that quality of the good deeds is important as well. What is more, believers must do the impossible to be saved: we must be perfect as the Father is perfect (Matt. 5:48).⁸³ This is divine perfection, which is an unattainable goal for human beings. However, God makes it possible for us to attain what Jesus is calling us to achieve because, with Christ, we can make do even what is impossible in human terms (Matt. 19:26).⁸⁴

Sixth, in the NT Jesus describes salvation in the final judgment regarding the “*settling of account*” (Matt. 18: 23). This comes from the Jewish tradition that sin constitutes a “debt” that we have to pay to God. This tradition is also seen in the NT, for example in the Lord’s Prayer: “And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors” (RSV Matt. 6:12). Paul describes that every sin has its price: “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 3:23). Jesus explains that his death provides the ransom needed for salvation, which is the cost of redemption (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). Paul also reminds us that Christ has saved us by canceling the debt of our indebtedness by his death on the cross (Col. 2:14).⁸⁵

⁸³ See Matt 19:16 and Mark 10:17; Matt. 19: 21; Matt.28: 19-20; Matt 19: 23- 24; Matt 19:25; Matt 19: 26; Matt 5:48.

⁸⁴ Michael P. BARBER, *A Catholic Perspective: Our Works are Meritorious at the Final Judgement because of our union with Christ by Grace*, Chapter Four in AA. VV. (Alan P. Stanley and Stanley N. Gundry, ed.), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2013, 170-71 pp.

⁸⁵ Gary ANDERSON, *Sin: A History*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2009.

Seventh, in the OT we read that God will repay for our good deeds, which are viewed as a “reimbursement” for our sins or debts with God (Prov. 19:17; Tob. 4:6-11; Sir. 29 9-13; Sir. 3:3-4, 14-15; Wisdom 2:22). Jesus teaches a similar idea in the NT, where there are many passages where final judgement is seen in terms of the “settling of account” (Matt. 18:23), and salvation is described as a wage or reward received accordingly for our good deeds (Matt. 19:21; Luke 12:33; Matt. 20:1-16; Matt. 19:16-30; Matt.25:14-30; Luke 19:25; Matt. 6: 1-4; Matt 6:5-6; Matt. 10:41-42).⁸⁶

Eighth, maybe the most clearly text regarding the role of works at the Final Judgement is in the letter of St. James, where we find the only place in Scripture where “justification” and the phrase “faith alone” appear together: “*You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone*” (RSV James 2:24). In this letter, St. James uses the comparison to the works of Abraham and Rahab, in fact, justified them. Therefore, works do justify the believer.⁸⁷

Ninth, salvation is a process of maturing in the image of Jesus Christ. It is a dynamic process because salvation involves past, present and future dimensions. The initial moment of saving

⁸⁶ Michael P. BARBER, *A Catholic Perspective: Our Works are Meritorious at the Final Judgement because of our union with Christ by Grace*, Chapter Four in AA. VV. (Alan P. Stanley and Stanley N. Gundry, ed.), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2013, 173-77 pp.

⁸⁷ It is very interesting that Martin Luther in 1522 after he presented his translation of the New Testament into German and introduced his doctrine of justification by faith alone, he also rearranged the canon of the NT by ranking those books that supported his doctrine. He ranked first the gospel of John and St. Paul’s epistle, especially those to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians and St. Peter’s first epistle. Even though, Luther considered the St. James’s epistle part of the inspired book of the NT before 1519, he refused to accept the apostolic authorship in 1520. See Scott W. HAHN- Benjamin WIKER, *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300-1700*, A Herder & Herder Book, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 2013, 199 pp.

grace start with Baptism (1 Pet 3:21; Titus 3:5; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 12:13).⁸⁸ Baptism is truly a saving event in which we are “reborn” and made a “son” in the Son of God. God's grace saves one and not by works at this point. However, salvation is a process in time. It involves being conformed to the image of Christ. This implies a process of maturity or grows up to perform good works (Eph. 2:8-10) in union with Christ.⁸⁹

5. Conclusions

This article claims that the main characteristic of Martin Luther's Religious Reformation that not only affected the Russian Revolution in 1917 but also influenced all domains of life nowadays, in our secularized Western world, is the philosophical breaking with the *via antiqua*, which was called the *via moderna*.

This paper highlights that the main contribution to the *via moderna* philosophical revolution has been William Ockham's Nominalism philosophy. The paper also describes Nominalism's main implications for the role of human work on salvation at the Final Judgement.

The influence of the *via moderna* can be seen today in the way current science, even Social Sciences such as Economics, are shaped. For example, for many economists, the Catholic

⁸⁸ For Catholic Theology Baptism is not understood as a work accomplished by human beings, but rather the work of God. What is more, the fact that one received Baptism and does not administer Baptism to oneself shows that no one can save themselves by their own actions performed independently of God or the believing community of the Church. See Joseph Cardinal RATZINGER, *Church, Ecumenism and Politics: New Endeavors in Ecclesiology*, Ignatius, San Francisco, CA, 2008, 19 pp. See also the Catechism of the Catholic Church No 1282.

⁸⁹ Michael P. BARBER, *A Catholic Perspective: Our Works are Meritorious at the Final Judgement because of our union with Christ by Grace*, Chapter Four in AA. VV. (Alan P. Stanley and Stanley N. Gundry, ed.), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2013, 183 pp.

perspective on economics is primarily and maybe exclusively the positive and sometimes ethical analysis of economic arrangements using Catholic moral principles. However, only reducing the Catholic perspective to simply moral analysis can mask its most essential element: the metaphysical and epistemological assumptions about the human person in the first place. Then, it is important to know how these foundations inform how science knows reality, and how the science is more capable solving real problems. This shows the important role that Catholic Universities have integrating into their curricula the characteristics of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition among all the scientific disciplines. This integration of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition to the different scientific disciplines can be done most effectively on those Catholic Universities which offer a core curriculum grounded within the Catholic Philosophical Tradition.

The main characteristics that describe the Catholic Philosophical Tradition are the importance of Realism and Reality from Natural Epistemology, Analogy and Participation, Divine and Human Agency and the Life of Virtue. The first two characteristics are the most difficult to understand, and they are also the most important because they set the foundation to apply the last two characteristics. The importance of knowing the main characteristics of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition is key. For example, a very important consequence of the foundation of Realism and Reality from Natural Epistemology is our capacity to use our senses, which can give us a grasp of the external world as it is. This process highlights the objectivity of our knowledge and our natural capacity to grasp universal concepts and objective TRUTH. That is why the process of knowing reality described by the *via antiqua* is called Realism and Reality. This very important truth is a key characteristic of the *via antiqua* that has been challenged by Martin Luther following William of Ockham and many philosophers after him and, it became a key ingredient of our modern secularism. On the contrary, the *via moderna* influenced by those

thinkers that opposed the “**objectivity of the sense knowledge**” claims the “**subjectivity of the sense knowledge**” because they believe that our senses cannot give us a real grasp of the reality as it is but, a mere symbolical awareness.

The process of knowing by Analogy implies that by our human capacities we are not only able to understand the existence of real things objectively but also, we are capable of knowing the first and most universal level of knowledge (abstract things, numbers and mathematics, transcendental things, ideas, ideals and the existence of God).

The process of knowing by Participation allows us to identify not only that God exists and He is the first mover or cause of all that exists, but also that God still is present in the creation. Therefore, we can participate in God action of creation as well as we are receiving God’s created act.

By Divine and Human Agency, which reflects the capacity that we possess as human beings, not only because God is the primary cause of our actions but also because we act moved by God’s grace and still, we can keep our freedom and initiative.⁹⁰ Finally, the final characteristic of the Life of Virtue highlights our dynamic process of human and spiritual growth through which we flourish as human beings replicating the image of Jesus Christ in ourselves. It is the utilization of human freedom to respond to the God’s invitation to participate in His divine sonship. This is a dynamic process of spiritual and human growth because the divine agency

⁹⁰ In light of Thomas’ account of the analogy of being, where God is not in a determined relationship to the creature but whose existence is completely transcendent, *divine agency does not cancel out human freedom, but in fact makes human agency possible*. In regard to the relationship between divine and human causality, Thomas teaches that *while humans are a genuine cause of their own movement through free will, nevertheless human freedom does not require that humans be either the exclusive or primary cause of their actions*. In this account, *God’s causality not only makes possible genuine human agency, but God moves each creature according to its nature as the primary, transcendent cause*. See *ST I*, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3.

does not destroy but actualizes human agency. This is what Servais Pinckers has rightly called the “**freedom for excellence.**”⁹¹ Therefore, to truly live our human agency we have to live our freedom in a virtuous life. Virtues (both the acquired and infused) are a good quality that perfects the human person according to their nature. Consequently, “God moves humans according to their nature as free, rational animals to both have and practice a given virtue.”⁹² Hence, “both by nature and by grace God moves creatures toward natural and supernatural ends using the acquired and theological virtues.”⁹³

As a summary, the Catholic understanding of works of salvation at the final judgment preserves the unity of the biblical witness regarding salvation and also uses the four characteristics of the *via antiqua* to clearly express the truth of its meaning.

Consequently, we can ultimately understand the role of works at the final judgment by showing the complementarity between human works and God’s grace for our salvation.

Finally, salvation is a process of maturing in sonship that starts in Baptism. Initially, we are saved by God’s grace and not by anything we do. However, God’s grace in the believer allows him or her to do the impossible, meaning to perform works meritorious of salvation. Moreover, it is by his works that the believer is truly saved because he or she is fully conformed to the image of the Son of God.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Servais PINCKAERS, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, translated from the third edition by Sr. Mary Thomas Noble (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 354-378 pp.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.