

Welcome to ...



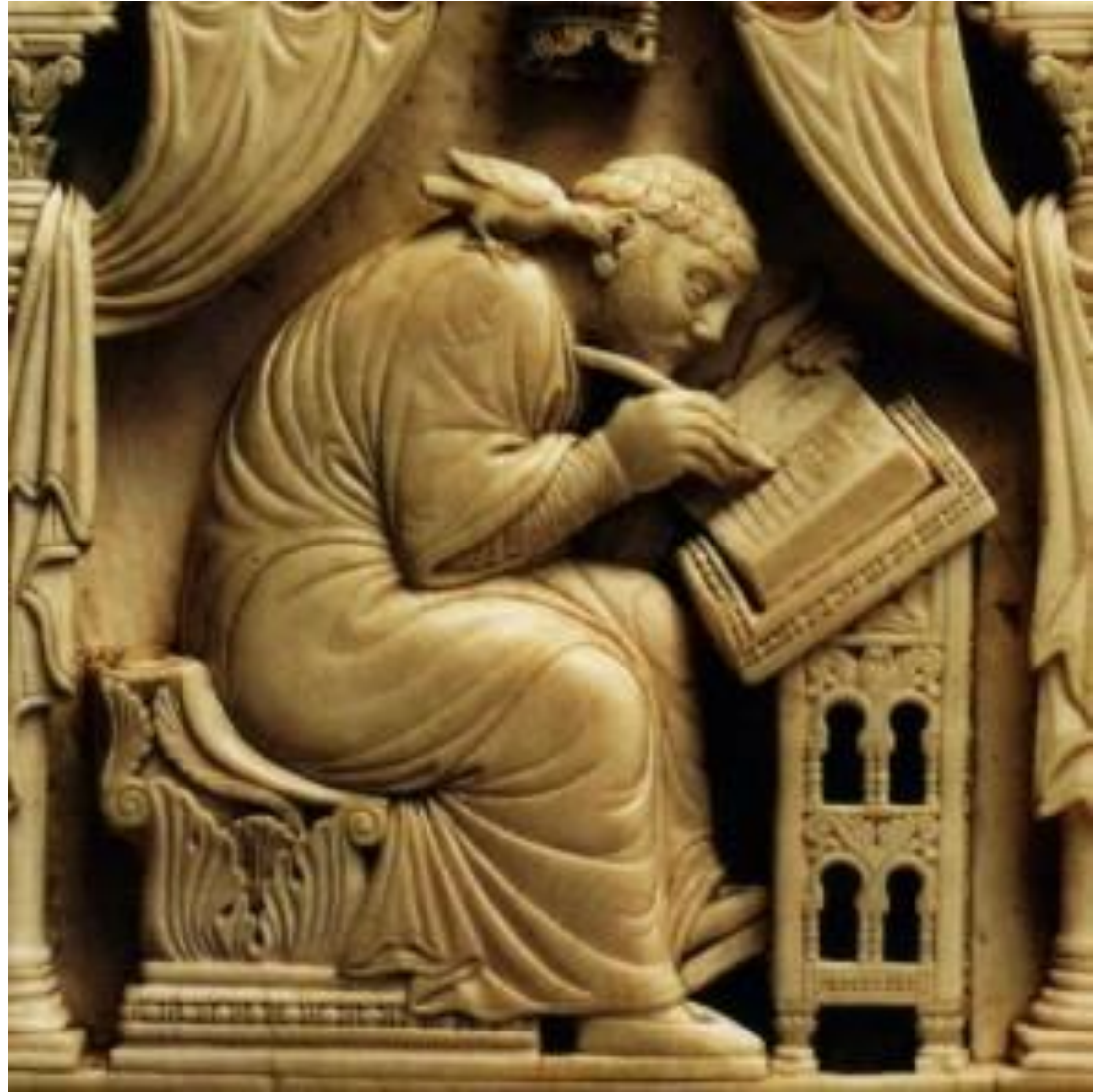
Introduction to Philosophy



Philosophy, Christian Faith & Theology

Faith & Reason

- What is Reason?
- What is Faith?
- *Catechism*, 26-184
(Faith 142-175)



Faith & Reason



Reason

- A relationship with the truth founded on the human ability to think.
- Limited by our finitude (we are mortal and finite beings).
- Proper thinking, questioning and arguing; looking for proper ways of communicating the truth.

Faith

- Having knowledge we believe to be true even if we cannot come to it by ourselves.
- We use faith at a human level (trust others).
- Faith can also be a relationship with the truth that surpasses the human ability to think or know.
- Faith surpasses reason in relation to Divine Revelation.

Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason.

Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth.

Definition of Supernatural Faith

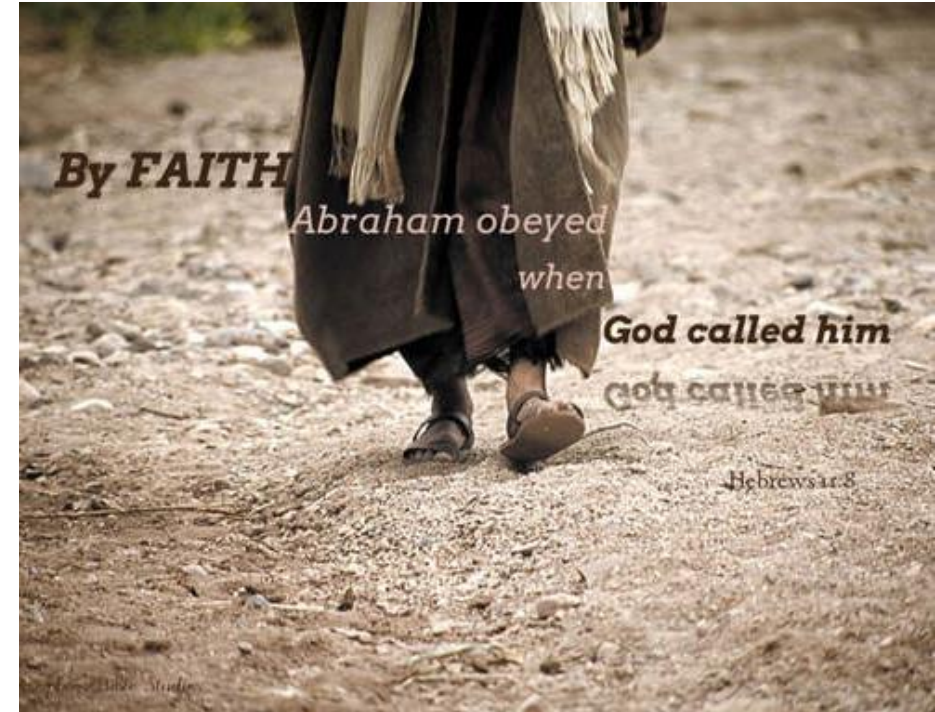
The act of faith is man's *response* to God who reveals himself (CCC, 142).

- Faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God.
- It is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed" (CCC, 150).

By faith, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God. With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer. (CCC, 143).

The virtue of faith is a supernatural virtue which enables man, by enlightening his intellect and moving his will, to assent firmly to all that God has revealed, not because of the intrinsic evidence but because of the authority of God who is revealing.

Faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, *because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself*. Not because we completely grasp it with our reason, but because its truth has been guaranteed by the one revealing (God).



Human Faith & Supernatural Faith

As personal adherence to God and assent to his truth, Christian faith differs from our faith in any human person. It is right and just to entrust oneself wholly to God and to believe absolutely what he says. It would be futile and false to place such faith in a creature.

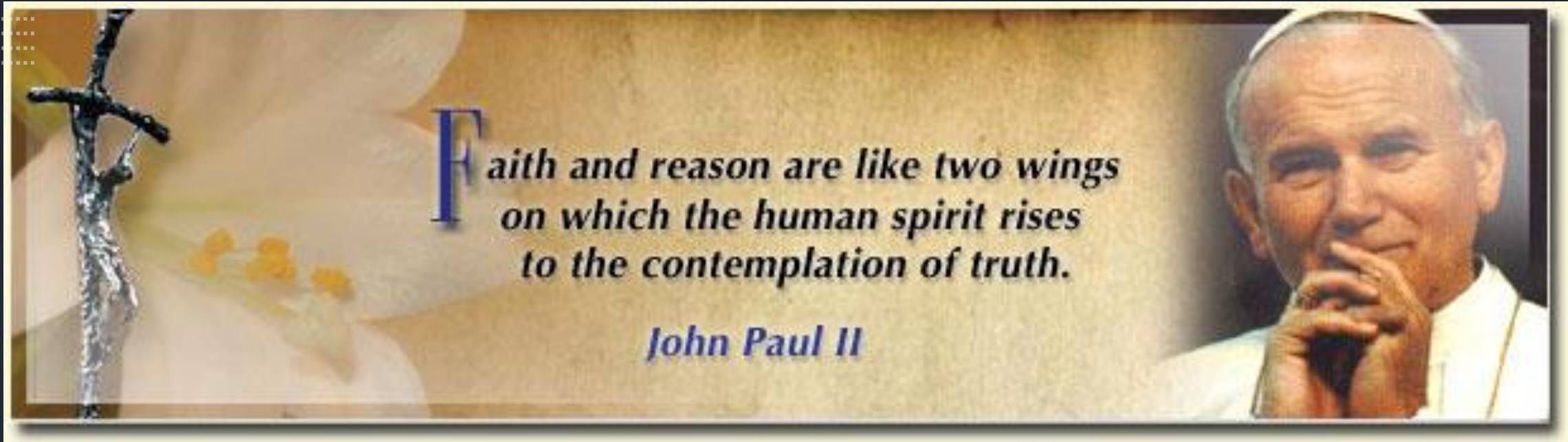
Fideism: Faith without Reason

Fides et Ratio:

Faith without reason can become superstition.

Reason without faith gets caught up in itself and stops asking the important questions.





Faith & Reason

Supernatural faith: to believe on the authority of God who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

At a human level we use faith all the time – we believe what others tells us when we judge it **reasonable** to believe them. No one works out everything for him/herself.

We trust the source.

Faith is one of two human ways of knowing – Faith & Reason.

True or False? Why or Why Not?

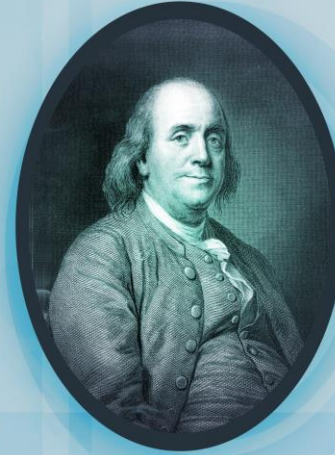
Though faith is above reason,
there can never be a contradiction
between faith and science because
both originate in God. It is
God himself who gives us the light
both of reason and of faith.

— from the Catechism of the Catholic Church,
CCC 159



V

THE WAY TO SEE BY FAITH,
IS TO SHUT THE
EYE OF REASON.



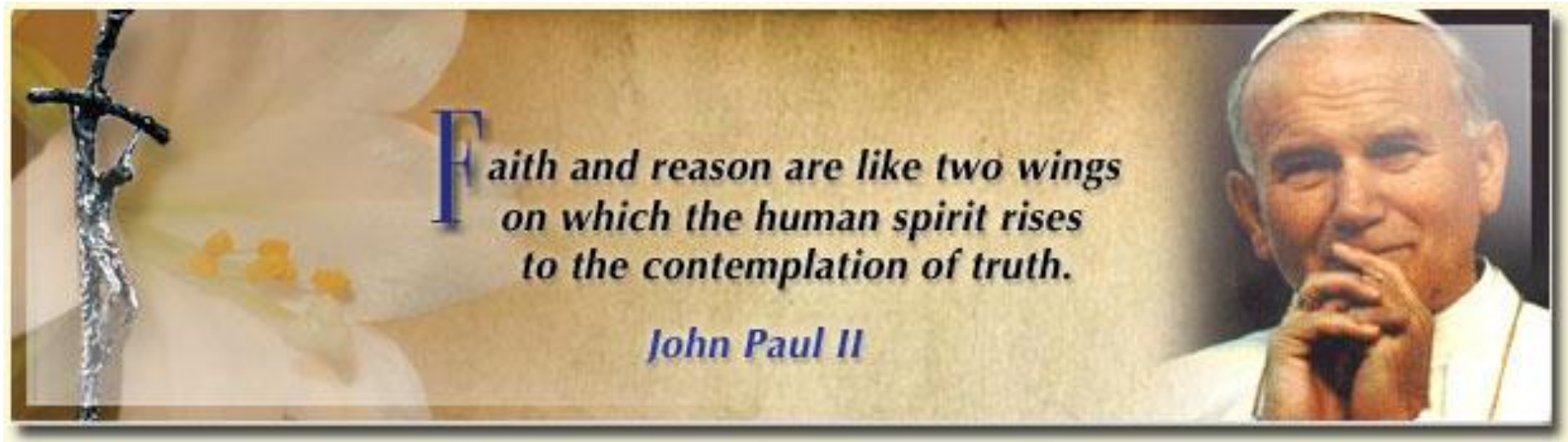
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

What Happens To Faith Without Reason?

What Happens To Reason Without Faith?

cf. *Fides Et Ratio*, n. 48

People have different understandings of the word faith. They are not necessarily understanding what we are saying – we need to clarify.



Harmony Between Faith, Reason and Science

Although faith is above reason, there can never be any real disagreement between faith and reason, since it is the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith and who has put the light of reason into the human soul.

Research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God (CCC, 159).

It would be senseless to try to prove the supernatural truths of the faith. It is possible to one prove that anything which claims to be contrary to these truths is false.

Faith & Science: Why are they seen as incompatible today?

Science Works

- Idea that because science works it should work for everything
- But: science doesn't ask the ultimate questions (how v why)

Materialism

- Idea that the only realities are physical ones

Relativism

- Idea that different religions in times and places means we can only conclude that there is not truth/good/right or wrong
- But: Extreme relativism doesn't work. To say 'nothing is true' is to make a truth claim. To say 'everything is relative' is contradictory
- But: The fact that there are different faiths doesn't mean that faith is not universal. It also doesn't mean that there is no true answer

Religious Fundamentalism/Fideism

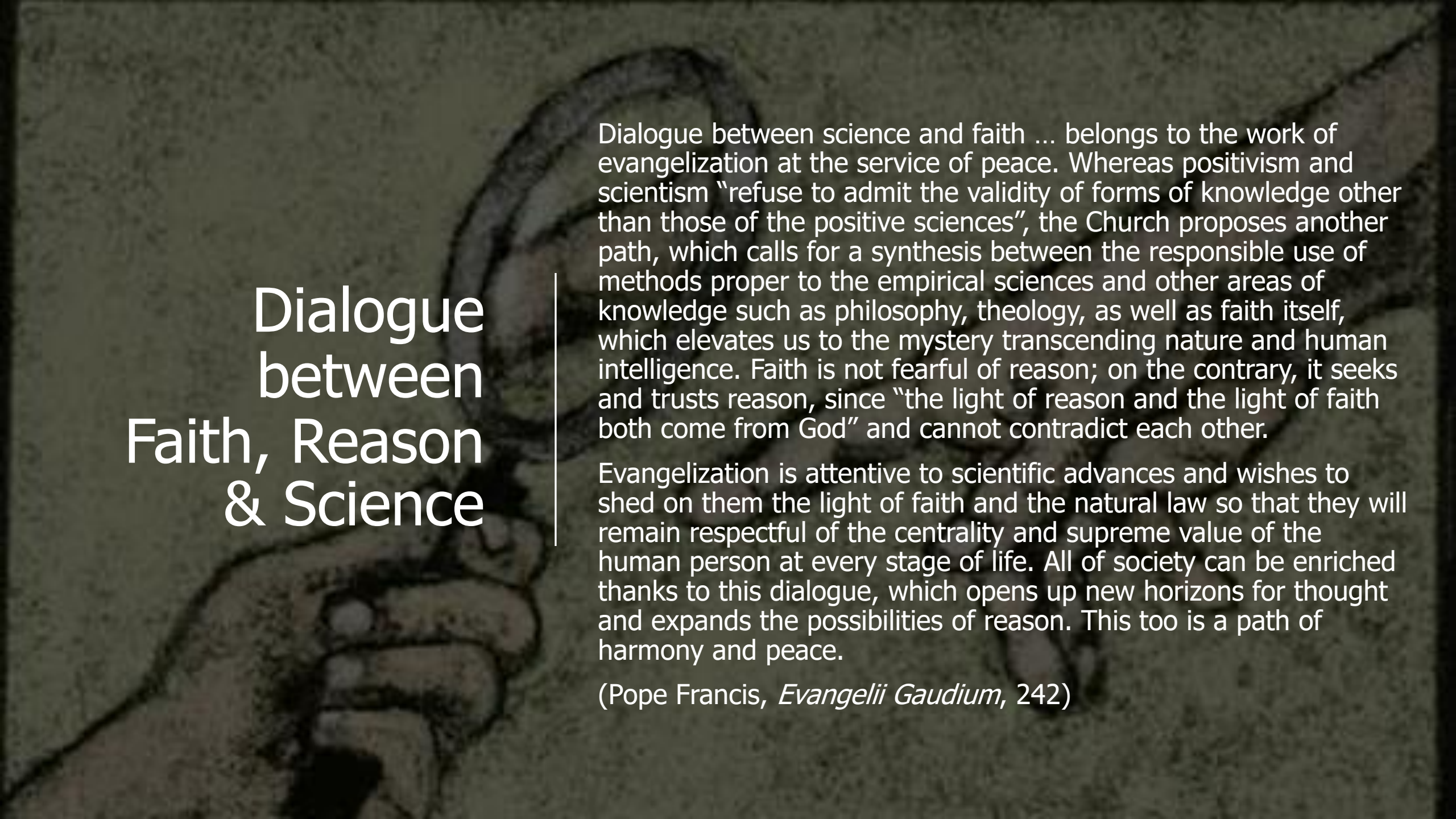
- Refusal to think or reason about faith



The *Catechism* on Faith & Science

- Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth.
- Research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God.
- The humble and persevering investigator of the secrets of nature is being led, as it were, by the hand of God in spite of himself, for it is God, the conserver of all things, who made them what they are. (*CCC*, 159)





Dialogue between Faith, Reason & Science

Dialogue between science and faith ... belongs to the work of evangelization at the service of peace. Whereas positivism and scientism "refuse to admit the validity of forms of knowledge other than those of the positive sciences", the Church proposes another path, which calls for a synthesis between the responsible use of methods proper to the empirical sciences and other areas of knowledge such as philosophy, theology, as well as faith itself, which elevates us to the mystery transcending nature and human intelligence. Faith is not fearful of reason; on the contrary, it seeks and trusts reason, since "the light of reason and the light of faith both come from God" and cannot contradict each other.

Evangelization is attentive to scientific advances and wishes to shed on them the light of faith and the natural law so that they will remain respectful of the centrality and supreme value of the human person at every stage of life. All of society can be enriched thanks to this dialogue, which opens up new horizons for thought and expands the possibilities of reason. This too is a path of harmony and peace.

(Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 242)



The Church has no wish to hold back the marvellous progress of science. On the contrary, she rejoices and even delights in acknowledging the enormous potential that God has given to the human mind. Whenever the sciences – rigorously focused on their specific field of inquiry – arrive at a conclusion which reason cannot refute, faith does not contradict it.

Neither can believers claim that a scientific opinion which is attractive but not sufficiently verified has the same weight as a dogma of faith. At times some scientists have exceeded the limits of their scientific competence by making certain statements or claims. But here the problem is not with reason itself, but with the promotion of a particular ideology which blocks the path to authentic, serene and productive dialogue. *EG, 243)*

The Role of Philosophy for Believers

‘Take care not to let anyone cheat you with his philosophizings, with empty phantasies, drawn from human tradition, from worldly principles; they were never Christ’s teaching.’ (Col 2:8)

Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Rom 1:20)

‘Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence’. (1 Pet 3:15)

St Paul in the Areopagus (Acts 17:16-34)



St Paul in the Areopagus, Raphael, 1515.

What is Theology?

- Theos-Logia
- Material Object: God and creatures as they refer to God
- Light: Reason enlightened by the light of divine Revelation
- Philosophy and Theology are two levels of knowledge



St Jerome, Gerard Seghers, 17th c.



St Augustine, Peter Paul Rubens, 1636.

Philosophy & Theology

- Faith does not destroy nature
- Faith allows reason to develop more fully & pursue its goal
- Reason can ask the big questions but can't attain all the answers
- There are truths that surpass the human ability to think
- Faith presupposes reason
- Reason is healed and elevated by faith

Faith Seeks Understanding

A believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith, and to understand better what He has revealed. A more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love.

The grace of faith opens "the eyes of your hearts" to a lively understanding of the contents of Revelation: that is, of the totality of God's plan and the mysteries of faith, of their connection with each other and with Christ, the centre of the revealed mystery. The Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and more profoundly understood. (CCC, 158)

"I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe." (St Augustine)



The Guiding Role of Faith for Philosophy

The certitude of faith

Supports us in tackling basic philosophical questions, offers guidance & warns against paths that stray from revealed truth

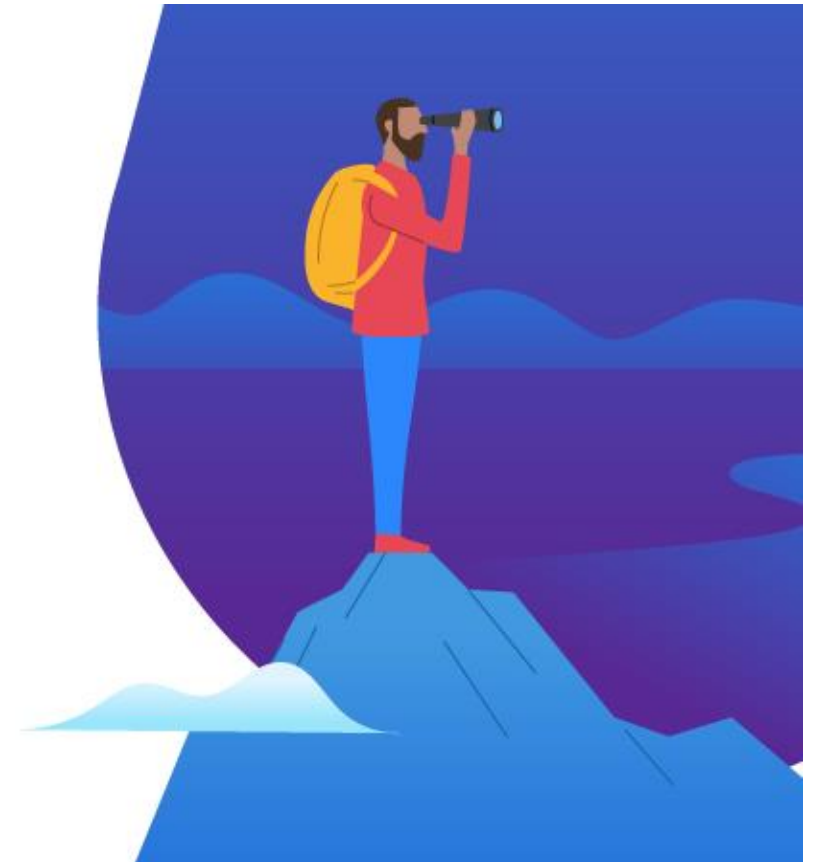
Does not suppress rational thought; rather stimulates reason to explore paths it might not have thought of

Revealed truths that shed light on philosophy:

Revelation clearly proposes certain truths which might never have been discovered by reason unaided, although they are not of themselves inaccessible to reason. Among these truths is

- The notion of a **free and personal God** who is the **Creator** of the world, a truth which has been so crucial for the development of philosophical thinking, especially the philosophy of being. ...
- The reality of sin, as it appears in the light of faith, which helps to shape an adequate philosophical formulation of **the problem of evil**.
- The notion of **the person** as a spiritual being is another of faith's specific contributions: the Christian proclamation of human dignity, equality and freedom has undoubtedly influenced modern philosophical thought.
- In more recent times, there has been the discovery that **history** as event—so central to Christian Revelation—is important for philosophy as well. It is no accident that this has become pivotal for a philosophy of history which stakes its claim as a new chapter in the human search for truth. (F&R, 76.)

Fruitfulness of the relationship: saintly theologians who were also great philosophers (F&R, 74.)



Relative Autonomy of Philosophy and its Orientation to Revealed Knowledge

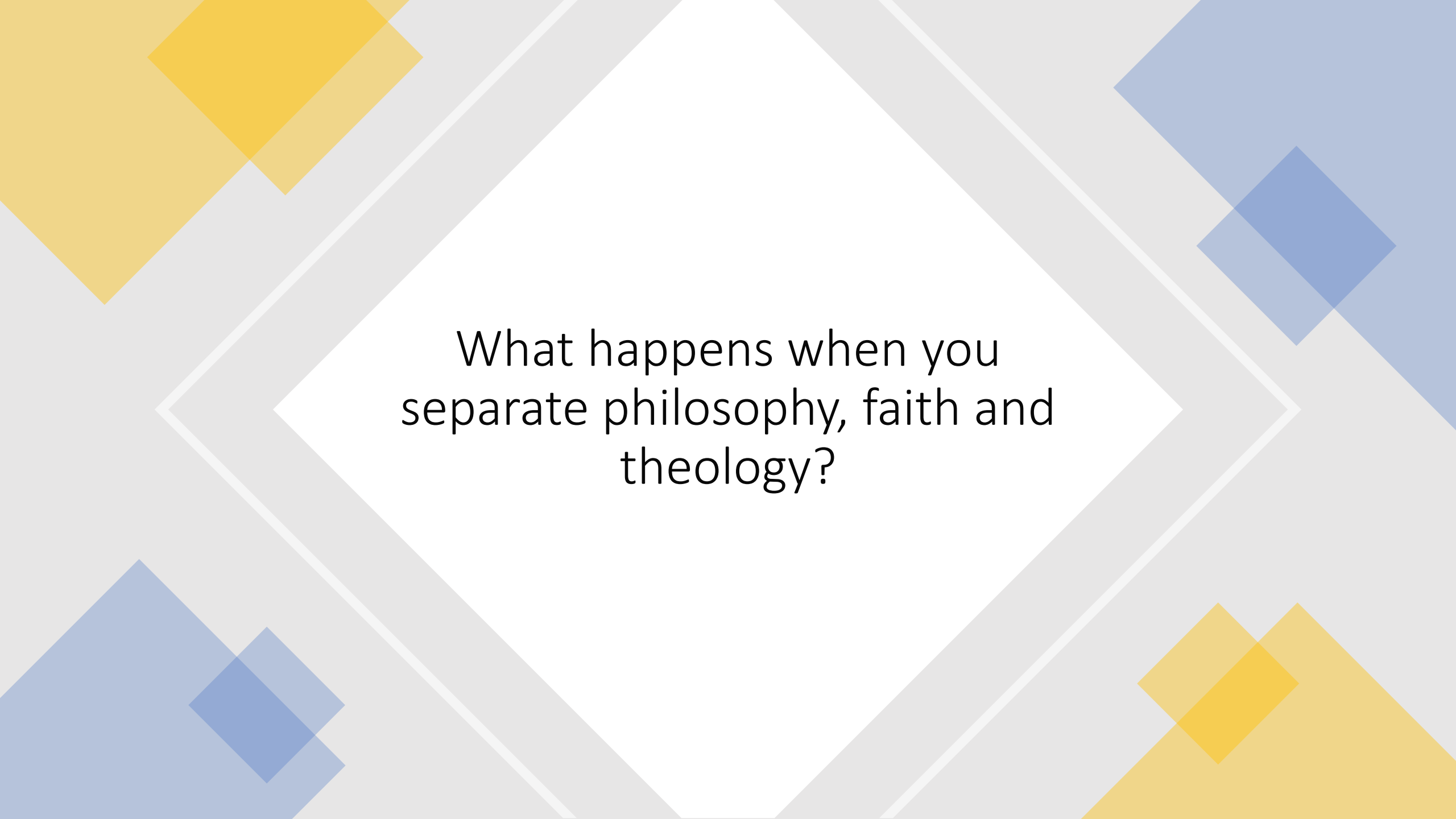
'I intend in this final section to point out certain requirements which theology—and more fundamentally still, the word of God itself—makes today of philosophical thinking and contemporary philosophies. ...

Philosophy must obey its own rules and be based upon its own principles; truth, however, can only be one. The content of Revelation can never debase the discoveries and legitimate autonomy of reason. Yet, conscious that it cannot set itself up as an absolute and exclusive value, reason on its part must never lose its capacity to question and to be questioned.

By virtue of the splendour emanating from subsistent Being itself, revealed truth offers the fullness of light and will therefore illumine the path of philosophical enquiry. In short, Christian Revelation becomes the true point of encounter and engagement between philosophical and theological thinking in their reciprocal relationship.

It is to be hoped therefore that theologians and philosophers will let themselves be guided by the authority of truth alone so that there will emerge a philosophy consonant with the word of God. Such a philosophy will be a place where Christian faith and human cultures may meet, a point of understanding between believer and non-believer. It will help lead believers to a stronger conviction that faith grows deeper and more authentic when it is wedded to thought and does not reject it. It is again the Fathers who teach us this: "To believe is nothing other than to think with assent... Believers are also thinkers: in believing, they think and in thinking, they believe... If faith does not think, it is nothing". And again: "If there is no assent, there is no faith, for without assent one does not really believe".' (F&R, 79)





What happens when you
separate philosophy, faith and
theology?

What is 'Christian Philosophy'? (JPII, *F&R*, 76)

The term in no way intends to suggest that there is an official philosophy of the Church, since the faith as such is not a philosophy.

The term seeks rather to indicate a Christian way of philosophizing, a philosophical speculation conceived in dynamic union with faith.

It does not therefore refer simply to a philosophy developed by Christian philosophers who have striven in their research not to contradict the faith.

The term Christian philosophy includes those important developments of philosophical thinking which would not have happened without the direct or indirect contribution of Christian faith.

Christian philosophy has a subjective aspect:

Subjective, in the sense that faith purifies reason.

As a theological virtue, faith liberates reason from presumption, the typical temptation of the philosopher. Saint Paul, the Fathers of the Church &, closer to our own time, philosophers such as Pascal & Kierkegaard reproached such presumption.

The philosopher who learns humility will also find courage to tackle questions which are difficult to resolve if the data of Revelation are ignored.

Eg, the problem of evil & suffering, the personal nature of God & the question of the meaning of life or, more directly, the radical metaphysical question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?".

Christian Philosophy has an objective aspect

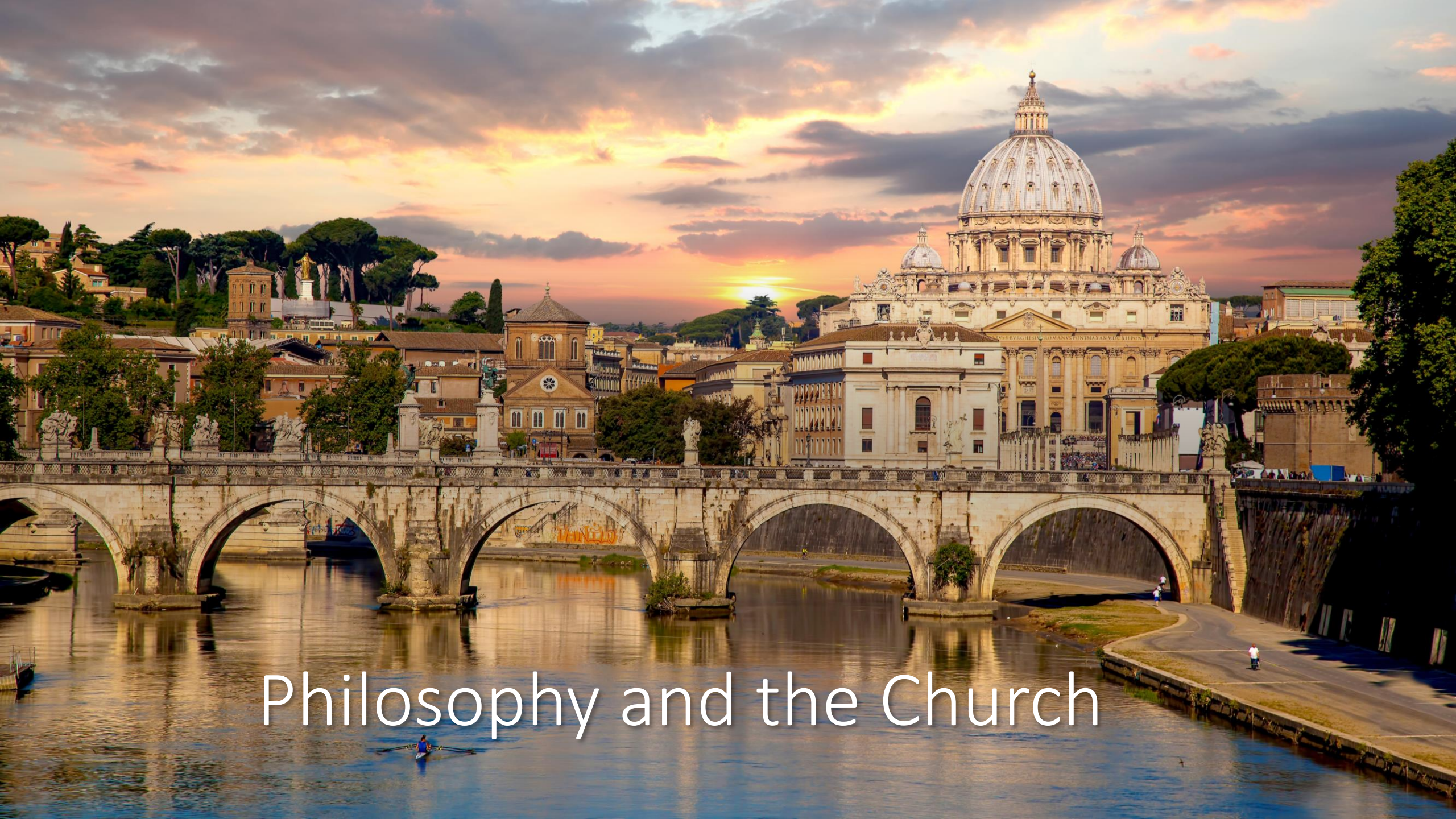
Objective, in the sense that it concerns content. Revelation clearly proposes certain truths which might never have been discovered by reason unaided, although they are not of themselves inaccessible to reason.

Eg, the notion of a free & personal God who is the Creator of the world, a truth which has been so crucial for the development of philosophical thinking, especially the philosophy of being; the reality of sin, as it appears in the light of faith, which helps to shape an adequate philosophical formulation of the problem of evil; the notion of the person as a spiritual being, another of faith's specific contributions: the Christian proclamation of human dignity, equality & freedom has undoubtedly influenced modern philosophical thought.

In more recent times, there has been the discovery that history as event—so central to Christian Revelation—is important for philosophy as well. It is no accident that this has become pivotal for a philosophy of history which stakes its claim as a new chapter in the human search for truth.

The need to explore the rationality of certain truths expressed in Sacred Scripture, eg the possibility of man's supernatural vocation & original sin. These are tasks which challenge reason to recognize that there is something true & rational lying far beyond the straits within which it would normally be confined. These questions broaden reason's scope for action.

In speculating on these questions, philosophers have not become theologians, since they have not sought to understand & expound the truths of faith on the basis of Revelation. They have continued working on their own terrain & with their own purely rational method, yet extending their research to new aspects of truth. It could be said that a good part of modern & contemporary philosophy would not exist without this stimulus of the word of God. This conclusion retains all its relevance, despite the disappointing fact that many thinkers in recent centuries have abandoned Christian orthodoxy.



Philosophy and the Church



The Church's Interest in Philosophy & Culture



Philosophy and the Church

- Evangelization
- Pastoral
- Theology
- Apostolate & culture



The meeting of Christian saint Francis of Assisi with the Sultan of Egypt Al-Malik Al-Kamil.

Obstacles to Christian Faith in Some Philosophical Approaches

Materialistic
Evolutionism

Relativism

Positivism

Agnosticism

Scientism

Freudianism

Marxism

The Church's Magisterium on Teaching & Studying Philosophy

- *Aeterni Patris*, On Christian Philosophy (1879)
- Vatican II and post-conciliar magisterium
- *Fides et Ratio*, 78.

'The Magisterium has repeatedly acclaimed the merits of Saint Thomas' thought and made him the guide and model for theological studies. This has not been in order to take a position on properly philosophical questions nor to demand adherence to particular theses. The Magisterium's intention has always been to show how Saint Thomas is an authentic model for all who seek the truth. In his thinking, the demands of reason and the power of faith found the most elevated synthesis ever attained by human thought, for he could defend the radical newness introduced by Revelation without ever demeaning the venture proper to reason.'



AETERNI PATRIS
ENCYCLICAL LETTER
POPE LEO XIII
ON THE RESTORATION OF
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY
1879



St Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)