

The Relationship of Reason and Faith in the Pursuit of Truth and Goodness

Faith and reason are one of the most important relationships in our lives, through this understanding, I agree that we must also live by faith rather than only reason to find what is true and truly good in our lives. I will further analyze this reasoning by reading the numerous texts in this course all coming from different periods and various authors. Faith and reason are acknowledged as key principles that help us live a balanced life through having strong moral values. Faith allows us to find Christ when making hard decisions as we enrich our perspectives through his teachings. Three of the texts come from multiple papacies which are “*Humani Genris*”, “*Dei Verbum*”, and “*Faith, Reason and the University.*” While reason provides a foundation for understanding, faith complements it by offering insights into the truth and goodness that surpass the limitations of earthly pursuits.

Many of the texts used to describe this statement include “*Humani Generis*,” which was written by Pope Pius XII during his papacy. The Pope emphasized the compatibility of reason and faith in understanding human existence to find divine truths. Pope Benedict XVI explains in “*Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections*” how truth and knowledge are obtained through faith and reason as they round out our education. In “*Dei Verbum*,” Pope Paul VI explains that faith and reason have a role in making each better by finding truths in faith as well as divine revelation in reason. The text goes on to further show that reason and faith are a source of knowledge in finding God and divine truths. The final text that compares to this statement is “*Man’s Search for Meaning*” by Viktor Frankl as he believes reason is used as a self-reflection while faith is a way to find hope and meaning in life’s challenges. Frankl emphasized the importance of finding purpose and values aligning with the idea that a balanced approach, combining faith and reason, contributes to a more thorough understanding of human existence.

Reason has a crucial role in understanding the natural world and human existence, which helps obtain moral truths we will live by. This is used as a tool in everyone's lives that allows people to make difficult decisions by using thought and morals instead of an immediate decision leading to negative effects. Though reason is a necessary tool in our lives, it has many limitations that emphasize the importance of including faith with reason if it is solely relied on. Limitations can be many things, but one that comes up a lot in my life is emotional bias. Emotional bias is extremely common, especially in family or relationship situations, but using reason and recognizing your emotional biases will save you from making poor decisions. The text "Humani Generis," examines these limitations as some truths go beyond the comprehension of reason, mainly focusing on divine revelations and truths relating to the Church. Pope Pius XII states in the text, "It is for this reason that divine revelation must be considered morally necessary so that those religious and moral truths which are not of their nature beyond the reach of reason in the present condition of the human race," (Pope Pius XII 3). Reason can be used in many different aspects such as logic, problem-solving, and causal relationships. Causal relationships are a very important aspect to have as understanding the cause and effect in a situation is crucial. In any decision-making process, we must think about what effects our actions may cause in many different settings like work or family.

Faith plays a complementary role to reason as it is commonly expressed that God initiates and communicates divine truths to humanity, and faith is the human response to this communication. God can be looked at as the author of our lives as he provides the things we need, and it is our job to use faith to make the best use of the things he blesses us with. Faith is not just your religious affiliation; it allows us to gather ideas to formulate the beliefs we choose to live by such as our discipline and values. Pope Paul VI elaborates further about this in "Dei

Verbum” when he exclaims, “Therefore ‘all Scripture is divinely inspired and has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind’” (Pope Paul VI 11). Many individuals find faith to go beyond the limitations of the finite world as it allows believers to transcend the confines of material existence or connect with transcendent truths. A key principle that is obtained by faith is hope as many believers look toward hope when there is an uncertain future ahead which includes an afterlife or divine plan that is beyond the present temporal state. A notable example of using faith to create good is Civil Rights Activist Martin Luther King Jr.’s push for nonviolent protests when African Americans wanted equality in the 1950s and 1960s. A deeply devoted Christian, King used the beliefs and values he obtained through his Christianity to help gain justice and equality for blacks without the outstretch of violence in the South.

Using faith and reason as partners is essential in understanding the current state of the world as well as making decisions through our thoughts and values, though some strengths and weaknesses exist in this complimentary relationship. A few benefits of this relationship are it allows moral and ethical guidance, emotional support, and the integration of key values into human lives. Moral and ethical guidance is important in being a good person, through faith and reason we can make decisions based on high morals as well as develop key principles through logic and realistic evidence. Faith offers a sense of purpose especially in challenging situations when in need of emotional support, through reason we can also find a rational foundation for handling our emotions. Benedict XVI states about using reason and faith to gain moral values by stating in “Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections,” “What it is able to say critically about Jesus is, so to speak, an expression of practical reason and consequently it can

take its rightful place within the university” (Benedict XVI 11). Key moral values are necessary for all individuals as they can include honesty, compassion, respect, and many others that help us understand how to approach situations and treat other individuals.

Though faith and reason have a strong relationship, there are a few pitfalls as well that are mostly caused by human nature like subjectivity, irrationality, and close-mindedness. These traits are caused by us as individuals as we may have biases in certain situations, so subjectivity unintentionally gets in the way of using reason and faith because of reasons like culture and personal beliefs. Individuals are extremely susceptible to irrationality when they come to a situation where there lies a strong belief or superstition. Close-mindedness happens self-consciously to individuals as they may not be motivated to do certain things or not be open to hearing more information about them.

Creating a balance between reason and faith is the goal for all humans whether they realize it or not. This complimentary relationship provides the knowledge and framework to allow understand the natural world as well as everyday problem-solving. This helps us gain a further understanding of the holistic approach we should have that allows us to see the measurable aspects of our lives both tangible and intangible in human experience. Viktor Frankl explains in “Man’s Search for Meaning,” “Third, the feelings of the majority of the guards had been dulled by the number of years in which, in ever increasing doses, they had witnessed the brutal methods of the camp. These morally and mentally hardened men at least refused to take active part in sadistic measures” (Frankl 92). Frankl uses this real-life example to show how guards during the Holocaust developed morality when seeing Jews get hurt and started to refuse to carry out their jobs because of their ethical and moral beliefs.

As the statement explains faith is the only thing that allows us to find what is truly good, so adopting these morals through religion is important to complimenting the knowledge we gain from reason. “Dei Verbum” explains how God allows us to find truths to further human understanding as the Second Vatican Council believes using reason can create a deeper and more detailed understanding of faith. Faith plays a role in finding what is truly good as it molds our ethics to make us good people for society by creating a moral foundation through sacred texts and scriptures which shape an individual's perspective on right or wrong. This provides a sense of purpose that helps us make ethical decisions by performing actions with better context to serve a better purpose and greater good.

The texts explained help us further understand the role of faith in finding what is truly good and showing how reason cannot work alone so we can create a complimentary role between them. Faith serves as a guiding light to show us the path to find moral excellence, ethical decision-making, and a sense of purpose. It provides a moral framework for all decisions we make in our lives and is seen as a living organism that keeps growing as we gain more knowledge. Reason helps our understanding of the world by making informed decisions that become complementary to faith which guides these decisions through a moral compass. The complementary relationship between faith and reason is essential in every individual's life, but faith is crucial when finding what is truly good in the world.

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