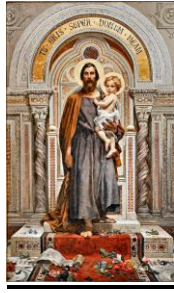


# St. Joseph Society



**Objective:** Catholic morality is the practical outworking of the great dogmas of the Catholic faith. St. Paul commands us to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13). Last month, we investigated the nature of the human person. This month, we are going to investigate the end or goal of the Christian life which is happiness with God in heaven.

## Unit 3 Podcast Schedule

- Episode #9 – What is happiness?
- Episode #10 – Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness #1
- Episode #11 – Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness #2
- Episode #12 – The Beatific Vision

## Monthly Meeting: What is happiness?

### I. Episode #9 – What is happiness? – Thomistic Moral Theology is Teleological

1. Vernon Bourke – “To say that ethics is necessarily a teleological science, means that we cannot get along in moral philosophy without giving some thought to the final cause, or end, of human actions” (*Ethics*, 28).
2. Brian Davies – People are creatures that are endowed with an intellect and a will and are drawn to goals that attract them. Human actions are always a voluntary aiming for an end perceived as good. Since goodness is perfective, or fulfilling, proper human action (ie. The moral life) is always a movement to what is fulfilling or perfecting of the agent whose movement it is. People by nature desire or are attracted to what perfects or fulfils them, and in this fact is the foundation of morality” (*The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 227-232).

### II. Episode #10 – Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness #1

1. Aristotle – “We always desire [happiness] for its own sake and never as a means to something else, whereas honor, pleasure, intelligence, and every virtue we desire partly for their own sakes, but partly also as means to happiness, because we suppose they prove instruments of happiness. Happiness, on the other hand, nobody desires for the sake of these things, nor indeed as a means to anything else at all . . .

happiness [is] the most desirable of all things . . . Happiness is something final and self-sufficient and the end of all action” (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b13-1096a10).

2. Non-Christian Pursuits of Happiness: Hedonism – Pleasure is the end of life and the highest good. According to philosophers like Epicurus, virtue is useful as restraining us from excessive passion, which is rough motion and unpleasant.
3. Non-Christian Pursuits of Happiness: Utilitarianism – The extension of hedonism beyond mere selfish pleasure to the pleasure of the group. The moral goodness of an act is to be judged by its utility in promoting the common welfare of all as well as the personal advantage of each. The aim of human life is expressed in the Greatest Happiness Principle: “The greatest happiness for the greatest number.”

### III. Episode #11 – Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness #2

1. Non-Christian Pursuits of Happiness: Stoicism – Stoicism is directly opposed to hedonism. Hedonism made pleasure the goal of the ethical life and used virtue as a means for acquiring pleasure. Stoics believed that virtue is not the means to happiness, but happiness itself. According to the stoics, virtue is its own reward.
2. Non-Christian Pursuits of Happiness: Evolutionism – The theory of evolution is but the expression in biological terms of the most influential concepts of the 19th Century, that of unlimited progress and of the perfectibility of man. Broadly understand, proponents of an evolutionary model of ethics which inevitably understand man and society as progressing toward a life that is more self-realized and satisfactory.

### IV. Episode #12 – The Beatific Vision

1. Man's Capacity for God (CCC 1-3, 27-30) – The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself.
2. Jesus – “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)
3. St. Augustine – Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God and “In regard to what is supremely good . . . philosophers have taken many different stands – all striving with the highest earnestness to determine what it is that makes men happy. By definition, our supreme end is that good which is sought for its own sake, and on account of which all other goods are sought” (*Confessions*, 3).
4. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange – “The blessed souls live above the reach of our hours and days and years. They live in one unique instant which does not pass. This instant, when we enter heaven, when we receive the light of glory and begin to see God forever, must be prepared for. In this preparation three other instants of life have pre-eminent importance:
  - i. that of receiving justification by baptism,
  - ii. that of reconciliation with God if we have offended Him gravely,
  - iii. that of a happy death, that is, final perseverance.