

# St. Joseph Society



**Objective:** Spiritual Theology has been referred to as the science of the saints. It can also be referred to as the science of Christian perfection. Spiritual theology attempts to guide the soul from the very beginning of the Christian life through the purgative, illuminative, and unitive way. Over the next six months, we will explore the “science of the spiritual life” as we discover authentic Catholic male spirituality.

## **Unit 1 Podcast Schedule**

- Episode #1: Man – The Image of God
- Episode #2: Powers of the Soul
- Episode #3: What’s the point? – Man’s Last End
- Episode #4: The Beatific Vision

## **Monthly Meeting: The Nature and End of Man**

### **I. Episode #1 – Image of God**

1. Ludwig Ott – “Man consists of two essential parts: a material body and a spiritual soul” and “Every individual soul was immediately created out of nothing by God” (*Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 106 and 108).
2. The Natural Image of God – In the natural order (i.e. without grace), a person can only attain a degree of knowledge of God by reason and love of God as the source and end of good. This image would be examined in natural theology and ethics.
3. The Image of Grace – This is the supernatural image of God (i.e. with grace) and since moral theology is concerned to show how the human person created in the *imago Dei* attains the image of conformity which perdures unto everlasting life this image is the starting point of moral theology.
4. The Image of Glory – In glory, the *Imago Dei* reaches its final and fullest state when the soul beholds God face to face.

## II. Episode #2 – Powers of the Soul

1. What is man? – Man is a soul/body composite. Man is an animal and he therefore has passions (appetites/desires) and emotions. Man is also rational, and he therefore possesses an intellect and a will.
2. Four Aspects of the Human Person (and the virtues which perfect them)
  - a. Intellect – The human faculty of understanding, judging, and reasoning (Prudence)
  - b. Will – The rational appetite for what one rationally apprehends as good. (Justice)
  - c. Irascible Appetite – A sense appetite for arduous goods. (Fortitude)
  - d. Concupiscible Appetite – A sense appetite for pleasurable goods. (Temperance)

## I. Episode #3 – What’s the point? – Man’s Last End

1. 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).
2. St. Thomas Aquinas – “The will naturally tends toward its ultimate end; for every man naturally desires happiness. And all other volitions are caused from this natural volition, since whatever a man desires is wished on account of an end. Therefore, the love of the good, which man naturally desires as an end, is a natural love; but the love derived from this, of a good loved for the sake of the end [in other words, the love of a means to the end], is an elective [i.e. free] love” (ST I, q. 60, a. 2, c.)

## IV. Episode #4 – 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 (*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.