

Charity's Order

September 5, 2015

What does the Catholic Church think of “racism”? Or of “anti-semitism”? Or of “sexism”? Or of “homophobia”? And so on and so on. In a liberal world where everybody is supposed to be nice to everybody, is it not surprising how “political correctness” seems to come up regularly with a new class of people for all of us to hate? The Catholic Church, following its divine Master, says we are to love our neighbour and to hate nobody, but it does not say we should love all our fellow-men indiscriminately. Let us see how a great Catholic theologian puts order into our love of God and man. Here are the bare bones of the 13 Articles of St Thomas Aquinas’ Summa Theologiae, 2a 2ae, Question 26:—

1 Charity does have an order, because it is a friendship in supernatural bliss, and that bliss has its starting-point in God, and wherever you have things following from a starting-point, you have an order. *(Notice how the Catholic immediately refers a major question to God. What might liberals immediately refer to as the starting-point of their “niceness”? Hatred of Nazis? Seriously . . .)*

2 Charity must love God above neighbour, because charity is a friendship in bliss, and all bliss for myself or my neighbour has its source in God. *(Where do liberals place the source of their happiness? In self-fulfilment? In their fellow-men? These are relatively poor forms of happiness.)*

3 God must be loved above self, because all (unspoiled) creatures, each in their way, naturally love the common good above their particular good, and God is the natural and supernatural common good of all.

4 Spiritual self must be loved above spiritual neighbour, because I am closer to me than I am to my neighbour so that if

I do not love me (spiritually), I am unlikely to love my neighbour. But –

5 Spiritual neighbour must be loved above corporal self, i.e., my own body, because spirit comes before body, because spirit partakes directly in bliss, while body partakes only indirectly (through spirit).

6 Some neighbours must be loved more than others, because they all vary in their closeness to one of the two poles of charity, objective to God, or subjective to me. Saints are closer to God, neighbours to me.

7 Objectively, Saints will be loved more than relatives, but subjectively neighbours will be loved more intensely than Saints, because in a variety of ways they are closer – “Charity begins at home.”

8 Essentially, blood-relatives will be loved above non-relatives, because blood-ties are natural, fixed and substantial. Accidentally however, other ties of friendship can be more powerful.

9 Objectively, parents are to be loved more than children, because as sources of life and of many benefits, parents are closer to God, but subjectively children can be closer to us for several reasons.

10 Father should be loved more than mother, as such, because by the part each plays in giving us life, the father is formal and active whereas the mother is material (*maternal*) and passive (*St Thomas was writing about human beings who are normal and not de-natured as they are today*).

11 Objectively, parents are to be loved more than wife, because as sources of life and of many benefits they are closer to God, but subjectively she who is “one flesh” with her husband is to be loved the more.

12 Objectively, somebody doing good to us is to be loved more than somebody we do good to, because they are a source of good to us, but by subjective closeness we love the more somebody that we do good to, for various reasons, e.g. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

13 There will still be an order of charity in Heaven, especially the loving of God above all. Also the objective grading of neighbour for his closeness to God will count more there than it does here on earth.

"Racism"? – which races are closer to God, or to me? They are not all the same. "Anti-semitism"? – are "Semites" friends or enemies of God? "Sexism"? – do today's women help or hinder me on my way to God? "Homophobia"? – how do "homos" stand with God?

Kyrie eleison.