

Some elements of **Thomistic (Aristotelian) realism**:

1. All human knowing begins in the **senses** and is associated with some **image** ("phantasm").
2. We can **abstract** from concrete cases and develop **universal concepts** (laws of science).
3. We can think about thinking, reason about reasoning, and judge our judgment (Lonergan).
4. **Truth is one. Truth cannot contradict truth.**
5. Truth obliges us to **say of what is that it is** and to **say of what is not that it is not**.

Reality is *what it is* whether I know it or not (Wallace, Polanyi).

In knowledge, the mind of the knower is **con-formed** to what is known.

6. We cannot *at the same time* and *in the same sense* of the words affirm a *proposition* and its contrary. It is **self-referentially inconsistent** to deny these two basic propositions of logic:

**Principle of Identity:**  $a = a$

**Principle of Non-Contradiction:**  $-(a = -a)$  or  $a \neq -a$

**Ontological interpretation** of these two principles:

A thing is what it is.

A thing is not what it is not.

The **Principle of Excluded Middle** says that in formal logic, there is nothing in between "true" and "false." Linguistic constructs that are neither true nor false are not "*propositions*"; they may be interrogatory, meaningless, accidental, imaginary, hypothetical, poetic, comic, surrealist, paradoxical, random, or fictitious--we can talk nonsense if we want to. But we can't talk nonsense and then demand that others treat us seriously.

If anyone denies these principles, we may **retort** (answer back) that the skeptic has *used the very principles being denied in order to form the denial*. **Retortion** shows that the skeptics are hypocrites. They *say* one thing but *do* another.

7. Every **thing** in the material universe is a **form of matter** caused by some other **form of matter**. No thing in the universe could exist unless there is a different *kind of being* which is uncaused.
8. We are obliged to **do good and avoid evil** (**synderesis**: *first principle of ethics*).

If something is true, I have a *moral obligation* to accept it.

If something is false, I have a *moral obligation* to reject it.

*Theological note:* Sin is always anti-human.

Sin is always contrary to nature.

Sin never makes sense--it is stupid through and through.

We must not call good evil or evil good.

9. **We can know some things for certain**. To deny the first principles of thought is self-referentially inconsistent: what you **say** is contradicted by what you **do**. That is intellectual hypocrisy, whether it is conscious (due to malice) or unconscious (due to a lack of self-awareness, fear, inattention, or other mental incapacities).

10. We can know some things **only partially and incompletely**. Our knowledge can grow by the proper use of **successive approximations** and careful use of **analogies** (*comparisons*).

Not everything is "clear and distinct" (*Descartes' mistaken standard of truth*). We do not make contact with the whole of reality just by reading our own minds (although the mind is *part* of reality). Quantum phenomena (QP) shatter our ordinary categories of thought. QP can behave **like** waves or **like** particles, depending on how we observe them. We cannot observe QP without changing them (**Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty**). The best way to imagine them prior to observation is in *superposition*--occupying all possible quantum states. If there is any law of QP, we don't yet know what it is. As far as we can see right now, quantum events happen at random, but with assignable and measurable probabilities.

11. **Not everything is black-and-white**. Some things are matters of law (logical, natural, positive, revealed); other things are free choices--"*De gustibus non disputandum*" = "*Don't argue about matters of taste.*"

The Four Causes of any thing <i>in the universe</i>	
<b>form</b>	formal cause ( <i>morphe</i> in Greek, hence " <i>morphing</i> "--shape-changing)
<b>matter</b>	material cause ( <i>hyllos</i> in Greek; <i>hylomorphism</i> refers to Aristotle's theory of form and matter)
<b>agent</b>	efficient cause ("the causing cause"--something that makes things happen or that forms matter)
<b>end</b>	final cause (purpose, <i>telos</i> , goal of an action; related to <i>teleology</i> , the study of purposeful behavior)

### The Five Ways of Aristotle (384-322 BC) and Aquinas (1225-74 AD; ST I Q2 A3):

#### 1. Motion (a special kind of change)

- A. No physical thing (thing == "a form of matter") is the self-sufficient cause of its own motion.
- B. If every object in motion had a mover, then the first object *in* the universe that was set in motion needed a mover.
- C. There cannot be an infinite regress of things-moved-by-things. . . . . *Either you see this or you don't!*  
*Clue: the whole chain of events could never be set in motion if we had to go back INFINITELY far in the past. The universe is not infinitely old.*

- D. The First Mover has to be **a different kind of being** from kind the things we find in the universe. In order to be the source of all motion that we see in the universe, this being must be an Unmoved Mover and cannot be a form of matter in the space-time/matter-energy continuum.

*Because of the **Second Law of Thermodynamics** (entropy increases: some energy becomes unavailable whenever work is done), it is not possible to have a perpetual-motion machine. People who deny the argument from motion believe in a perpetual-motion universe.*

#### 2. Efficient Cause (a form of matter that causes change or forms matter--one thing causes another thing)

*The efficient cause (agent) is what forms matter into a particular thing or causes events to happen.*

- A. Every form of matter *in the physical universe* is caused by some other form of matter.
- B. No thing in the universe can cause itself to be what it is; every thing is formed by a pre-existing agent, which itself was formed by a pre-existing agent, etc.
- C. There cannot be an infinite regress of things-caused-by-things. . . . . *Either you see this or you don't!*
- D. There must be a *different kind of being* from the kind of things we find in the universe. In order to be the cause of all things in the universe that cause other things in the universe, this being must be *uncaused*--that is, not brought into being by any other being and not just a form of pre-existing matter.

*When we get down to the level of quantum behavior, it is virtually impossible to identify the chain of caused causes. Things seem to happen purely at random, with no identifiable cause. But if every part of the universe exhibited the same indeterminacy as quanta (quantum phenomena), we would not be able to tell that the quantum behavior was different from ordinary behavior. For us to know how quanta act, to know their indeterminate nature, the quanta must be able to act as causes in our observational apparatus; and if the quanta act as causes with a particular nature, then they cannot be used to discredit the notion of efficient causality.*

**Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty** is certain. It is a law of nature: we cannot determine both the location and the vector of motion of a quantum phenomenon at the same time. In order to observe quanta, we must interact with them; when we interact with them, we change their quantum state. If we can **know this fact** about quantum phenomena, it proves that **the indeterminacy of quantum behavior does not overturn the principle of causality**. The evidence for Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty comes from the effect that quanta have on our instruments. If the quanta did not have a **predictable effect** on our instruments, we would not know what we do know about them--we could not group and classify them as the kind of things whose location and vector of motion cannot be determined at the same time.

#### 3. Contingency

- A. Every thing *in the physical universe* is a "contingent being." That means that it came into being, exists for a while, then ceases to exist. It is possible for such things "to be or not to be" (*Hamlet*).
- B. Such things come into being through other contingent things. **Things do not come into being out of nothing.**
- C. There cannot be an infinite regress of beings caused by other beings. The matter and energy *in* the universe from which all other beings come cannot have come into existence out of nothing.
- D. There must be a *different kind of being* from the kind of things we find *in* the universe. There must be a being whose existence is *necessary*, not contingent. This is a being whose being is to be (reminiscent of the Hebrew name of God, *yhwh* in Hebrew, *ego eimi* in Greek: "I am" or "I am who am" or "I am He who causes to be").

**The whole universe is dying** (Second Law of Thermodynamics--entropy increases). *That we are alive and not dead shows that the universe had a beginning in time (or with time). Space-time and matter-energy all interact with each other and depend on each other. Prior to the inflation of the God-particle, there was no space or time or matter or energy--there was no universe. We have no record of conditions prior to the smallest unit of time,  $\sim 10^{-43}$  second (a Planck second) after the beginning of all time. **Some non-contingent (necessary) Being must have caused all contingent being.***

#### 4. Qualities

- A. We perceive that some things *in the universe* are better than others (good, noble, true).
- B. We could not have a scale of values unless we implicitly recognize that there is something that is "best" (most good, most noble, most true).
- C. Perfection depends upon being. A real hamburger is infinitely more valuable than the idea of a hamburger if you're hungry and it's lunch time. Real money is more valuable than the idea of money if your goal is to tear down Churchill Tower and replace it with more beautiful buildings.
- D. There must be a *real being* in whom all the perfections are one (true, beautiful, and good) and by whom all perfection is communicated to lesser beings.

*Every judgment about the true, the beautiful, or the good implicitly appeals to the scale of value established by the highest truth, the most beautiful, or the greatest good.*

#### 5. Order

- A. Every thing *in the universe* is an example of order.
- B. Order does not happen by accident. The natural tendency of the physical universe is to become more disorderly (*Second Law of Thermodynamics*: entropy (disorder) increases). Order comes from intelligent causes.
- C. There must be an intelligent being who gave the universe the order we see in it.

*No scientific discovery can overturn this argument. Every scientific discovery shows that being is intelligible. This is NOT a "God of the gaps" argument. It is an argument from the reality of human knowing. "If being is intelligible, then God exists" (Lonergan). Every time we make a knowledge claim, we affirm the order and intelligibility of the universe, even if the claim is that we know that we know very little of what can be known. **We know enough to know how little we know.***

*Only a non-physical (spiritual) Intelligence could have caused that order in the universe.*

- \* **Common conclusion of all Five Ways:** "And this is what we mean by 'God.'" In a later article, Thomas shows that there can be only one infinite, eternal being, and therefore that the cause of motion, agency, contingent existence, truth, beauty, perfection, and order is the same being. This pure Spirit is infinite, eternal, all powerful (omnipotent), all knowing (omniscient), all present (omnipresent), all good, all beautiful, all true, all just, etc.

This kind of philosophy about God's existence and essence is known as **natural theology** in the Roman Catholic tradition.

#### Perceiving God *through* the Universe

Seeing the universe as filled with God's glory (Pss 8, 19) is a **Gestalt switch** (*a change in perception of the data*).

**God is the Gestalt (*interpretation*) that makes sense of all sense-making.**

Once you realize that there is a God, then everything else in the universe *looks different* from the way it did before. As with the Magic Eye puzzles, "those who have eyes to see will see, those who have ears to hear will hear" (Ez 12:2, Mk 8:18).

#### Models of God

**theism** generic belief that there must be a God

##### Forms of monotheism

**monotheism** belief that there is only one God

**Western religions:** Judaism, Christianity, Islam. God is the uncreated creator of all that is.

**pantheism** "God is *[part of]* everything and everything is *[part of]* God."

**Eastern religions:** Nirguna Hinduism; Taoism; sundry mystics.

**Western philosophy:** *monism*--Leibniz, Spinoza, Hegel (?), Wordsworth (?)

**deism** **Enlightenment model:** God is like a clockmaker: he gave the universe its laws (mechanisms) and started it up. Everything runs now like clockwork and is totally predictable from the laws of nature.

##### Alternatives to monotheism

**polytheism** belief that there are many gods and goddesses  
Animism; Saguna Hinduism; European paganism; primitive religions.

**atheism** belief that there is no divinity of any kind

**agnosticism** **Strong form:** belief that no one can know for sure whether there is a God  
**Weak form:** personal uncertainty about whether there is a God

I think it is a mistake to try to "*prove existence*" by the use of pure logic. All that pure logic proves is the existence of *concepts*. As a realist, I aim to get my ideas from "contact with reality" (Polanyi). I think the project of deriving reality from "clear and distinct ideas" (Descartes) is an abject failure.

Recognition of the existence (or non-existence) of things requires the use of our whole existence: bodily senses, abstraction of concepts, sound judgment.

To decide that something does or does not exist, there must be **sufficient reason** for the judgment. **The evidence collected in making the case varies with the *kind of object being sought*:**

There are no dragons.

There are no unicorns.

There are no mermaids.

There is no gold mountain.

The moon is not made of green cheese.

There is no Rolls Royce in my bedroom.

There are no integer solutions for  $n$  other than 2 in equations of the form  $a^n + b^n = c^n$  (*Fermat's Last Theorem*).

There is no system of formal logic that can be proven to be consistent and complete (*Gödel's Theorem*).

The infinity of real numbers outnumbers the infinity of integers (*Cantor*).

There are no perpetual motion machines.

I exist.

You exist.

Other people exist.

Platypuses exist.

Our 1985 Chrysler Fifth Avenue existed when I first typed this sentence. The car may still exist, but it ceased to be ours in 1998. I doubt that I can prove that the car ever existed to a determined skeptic--any document I could produce might be a counterfeit. The documents are no better (and no worse) than my own say-so.

I doubt the existence of the Abominable Snowman and other cryptids (cf. *cryptozoology in Wikipedia*). *Proof that none of these creatures exist depends on a thorough search of the regions they are alleged to inhabit, and such searches are absurdly expensive to mount. It's easy to search my closet and decide that my shoes are not there; it is not easy to search the Himalayas for Yetis.*

## Romans 1:18-22

"The wrath of God is indeed being revealed from heaven against every impiety and wickedness of those who suppress the truth by their wickedness. For **what can be known about God is evident to them**. Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse; for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks. Instead, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless minds were darkened. While claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image of mortal man or of birds or of four-legged animals or of snakes."

## Vatican Council I (1870)

"The Catholic Church believes that there is one true and living God, the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, Almighty, Eternal, Immense, Incomprehensible, Infinite in intellect and will and in all perfection; who, being One, Individual, altogether simple and unchangeable Substance, must be asserted to be ***really and essentially distinct from the world***, most happy in Himself, and ineffably exalted above everything that exists or can be conceived. Holy Mother Church does hold and teach that God, the Beginning and End of all things, ***can certainly be known from created things by the natural light of reason***, 'for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made' (Rom. 1:20)" (emphasis added).

## Avoiding the God of the Gaps

***We know that order does not happen by accident.***

If the universe is orderly (which is what science proves on a daily basis), then a supreme, eternal, all-powerful intelligence exists--"and that is what everyone means when they say 'God.'"

**Any future finding of science that can be *proven* to be true confirms that the universe is orderly** and that, therefore, there must be a supreme being that caused the order of the universe.

The *Summa* was intended as a four-year seminary course for those beginning their studies in Theology. It is a blend of philosophy (*what we can know from the senses, experience, and reason*) and theology (*what we know from revelation*). Thomas sought to teach people how to *think about faith*. Reason is created by God, and therefore **truths known from reason can never conflict in reality with truths known from faith.**

These are the first set of questions in the *Summa*; the Five Ways that I have briefly outlined are only a small part of Thomas' considerations of the nature of God. The first 26 questions are essentially philosophical and represent **natural theology** (what reason can figure out about God's existence and nature from looking at the universe); the rest bring philosophy to bear on the revealed doctrine of the Trinity (*positive theology*).

1. The Nature and Extent of Sacred Doctrine
2. **The Existence of God (The Five Ways)**
3. On the Simplicity of God
4. The Perfection of God
5. Of Goodness in General
6. The Goodness of God
7. The Infinity of God
8. The Existence of God in Things
9. The Immutability of God
10. The Eternity of God
11. The Unity of God
12. How God is Known by Us
13. The Names of God
14. Of God's Knowledge
15. Of Ideas
16. Of Truth
17. Concerning Falsity
18. The Life of God
19. The Will of God
20. God's Love
21. The Justice and Mercy of God
22. The Providence of God
23. Of Predestination
24. The Book of Life
25. The Power of God
26. Of the Divine Beatitude

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*These articles deal with **revelation**, which is knowledge of God that is told to us and that we cannot reach by any philosophical study of the natural world.*

27. The Procession of the Divine Persons
28. The Divine Relations
29. The Divine Persons
30. The Plurality of Persons in God
31. Of What Belongs to the Unity of or Plurality in God
32. The Knowledge of the Divine Persons
33. Of the Person of the Father
34. Of the Person of the Son
35. Of the Image
36. Of the Person of the Holy Spirit
37. Of the Name of the Holy Spirit--Love
38. Of the Name of the Holy Spirit as Gift
39. Of the Persons in Relation to the Essence
40. Of the Persons as Compared to the Relations or Properties
41. Of the Persons in Reference to the Notional Acts
42. Of the Equality and Likeness among the Divine Persons
43. The Mission of the Divine Persons

**God is pure spirit** (a concept explored at length by St. Augustine in his *Confessions*). This means that God is not composed of form-and-matter, as we are, and is nowhere to be found *in* the space-time/matter-energy continuum, which is the proper subject of the physical sciences. God is not *part* of the universe and the universe is not *part* of God (contrary to **pantheism**, which holds that "everything is God and God is everything").

**God seems absent** when we examine the physical universe through our senses. No matter where we look, we see, hear, taste, touch, or smell no God, no Heaven, no Hell, no angels, no demons, no saints, no souls in torment--all we *sense*, directly or through scientific instruments (which extend our senses), is material realities. Saganists, operating on the *assumption* (unproven belief!) that material reality is the only kind of reality there is, say, "We don't see God in the universe; therefore, there is no God."

**God also seems absent when we're suffering.** The worst suffering takes place when we feel that the entire universe is cold and indifferent to us and that God has abandoned us.

**All human speech is oriented toward time-and-space.** Our way of knowing begins with the senses and is always associated with some kind of spatio-temporal image. No matter (*matter!*) how hard we try, we cannot "get away from" (*note the spatial imagery*) the words that took shape (*form!*) in (*spatial preposition*) our sense experience. We cannot think or speak without, in some way, bringing in spatio-temporal **images** that have some measure of untruth when applied to the reality of Infinite Spirit. We have to hang loose from the images embedded in language and cling to the truth of our *insights and judgments*. Scientists who deal with Quantum Electro-Dynamics (QED) do the same thing because we have no adequate picture of a single reality that can exhibit the properties of either a wave or a particle under different circumstances--*our imaginations fail us when we deal with the smallest and the greatest of realities*.

**"The Tao that can be put into words is not the real Tao"** (Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*)

**The God that we can put into words is not the real God.**

**The God that we can imagine (picture) is not the real God.**

**The me that I can put into words is not the real me.**

**Creation is NOW, not then.** For scientists, creation took place billions and billions of years ago. Somehow or another, something happened (*scientists disagree among themselves about this question*), and ever since the first Plank second ( $10^{-43}$  second), there has been the kind of universe that we are accustomed to experience through our senses. From the **metaphysical standpoint** of Aristotle and Thomas, it makes no sense to speak of "now and then" when talking about God. What we experience as an irreversible flow of events is all NOW to God. Creation isn't something that happened a long time ago in a far away place. God is bringing all things into existence *here and now*.

**Creation is IN GOD, and therefore God is "in" creation.** Our minds want to create a picture (or image) of how God relates to the universe. The kinds of *things* that can be "present everywhere" while remaining themselves are few in number and are necessarily impersonal. Using these things as models for God, we end up imagining God as a fog bank, a vague radiant light, a quantum smear of equipotentialities, or a "force" like gravity. When we switch to an image of a person, we immediately pin God down to a particular spot in an imaginary space-time continuum and generate the feeling that He, like us, is swept downstream in the river of time and that He, like us, is here and NOT there. From the metaphysical standpoint, we must assert that **God is where He acts** and that **all that is is caused by God's action**.

Human or other created agents do not have the power to remain within what they cause. The sculptor is not *in* the sculpture, the painter is not *in* the painting, the novelist is not *in* the novel, the parent is not *in* the child in the same manner as God is *present in* creation.

From the metaphysical standpoint, **God is omni-present by His essence, action, and power.** This is hard for us to grasp. We have to let go of our ordinary images derived from space-time. God is not in some far-away "place" or way back in some distant "time."

**God is here and now.  
God is the most universal,  
most powerful, most real,  
BUT the most hidden of all causes.**

*"The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of His hands"* (Ps 19:1).

As Edie Difato used to say at Mother of God prayer meetings, "Two plus two equals four even when I'm a child and don't know it or when I'm asleep or when I'm injured and can't think about it. God is love and God knows and loves me even when I'm not conscious of Him or can't feel His love directly."

I take **Carl Sagan** as the prototype of materialist, atheistic scientism. I will call his religion "saganism" and denote members of his religion as "saganists." Dembski calls them "naturalists."

Saganists believe that there is no God. *Therefore*, whatever happens must happen strictly by chance, with no guiding intelligence giving things order:

The universe came into being just by chance, perhaps as a fluctuation in a quantum void, perhaps as one universe out of an infinite number of multiverses that exhaust all possible quantum possibilities all at once.

Earth came into existence just by chance.

Life on earth came into existence just by chance.

Life became intelligent just by chance.

Intelligence is just a function of complexity.

When we create a sufficiently complex computer, it will be at least as intelligent as we are, if not more so.

We're just lucky that our minds happen to understand the universe; neither our minds nor order in being are caused by an Intelligent Designer.

Intelligence became scientific just by chance.

Scientists choose atheism just by chance.

Nobody can say that anything is good or evil. It just is.

For saganists, there is no demonstration of the improbability of everything happening just by chance that can overturn their basic assumptions. No matter how large the calculation of improbability, the saganists just shrug and say, "**Oh, well--strange things do happen.**" In fact, the existence of humans capable of making scientific discoveries in a mindless, random universe *proves* to them that *very improbable things do happen*.

This is the whole point of the fiction of Douglas N. Adams, who loved the fact that his initials were DNA. In *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, he takes delight in toying with the idea that infinitely improbable things could happen just by accident; he denies that there is any meaning whatsoever in the fact that we find ourselves understanding an intelligible universe. For him, any questions about the meaning of "Life, the Universe, and Everything" is a stupid question and deserves a stupid answer: 42.

So, for the saganists, you are a fluke of the universe. The universe could care less whether you exist or not. You are the result of random mutations preserved by natural selection. When you die, you're gone. Enjoy life while it lasts, because this is all there is.

You only go through life once, so you'd better make the best of it, unless you're suffering, in which case you might just as well kill yourself now, because that's what's gonna happen later anyways. Your existence is totally meaningless to anyone or anything other than yourself, and even then, you're just kidding yourself about how important you are--all pre-scientific (unenlightened) human beings project their desire for love and respect onto the blank screen of the random universe.

Before you go, you might want to take a shot at spreading your DNA around, because that's the only post-death reality there is. But then again, you might not want to have any kids, because they're expensive and keep you from having the quality of life that is most pleasurable. There's really no point to playing the random mutation game because we know that the whole universe is getting colder and more spread out and no one gets out of here alive.

A few billion years from now, it's lights out. The party will be over. The sun will burn away the earth's atmosphere and oceans, then will go nova and swallow the earth whole. Meanwhile, "eat, drink, and be merry." Be happy; don't worry. You can still have lots and lots of orgasms, even if life is meaningless. If you play nice, you won't catch or pass on too many STDs.

*(Note how close this is to Ecclesiastes: "Eat, drink, be merry, and enjoy your sexual relationship with your spouse, for tomorrow we die." If you are convinced that there is no life after life, this is good advice.)*

## Theism

- a. **Monotheism**: God is NOT *part* of Creation. God is an entirely different **kind of being** from all other kinds of being. Monotheism may or may not include the existence of other supernatural beings (angels, principalities, powers, thrones, dominions, cherubim and seraphim, saints, devils, demons, etc.) or states of being (Heaven, Hell).
- i. **Unitarian**:
- (1) **Personalistic Theism**: Judaism, Islam, Mormonism, Arianism.
  - (2) **Platonism (Idealism)**: creation emanates from God automatically, without God's choice or concern. *Bonum diffusivum sui*: "Goodness is diffusive of itself."
  - (3) **Deism**: Enlightenment model of God. He just kicked things off, then lets everything run according to its own laws. Transcendence without immanence. God could care less about what he has caused (very much like **Aristotle's** unmoved and immovable Mover).
- ii. **Trinitarian**: orthodox Christianity. The doctrine of the **Incarnation** breaks the normal monotheistic distinction between Creator and Creation, since a **Divine Person** (God, the Son) takes on the nature of a creature.
- b. **Polytheism**: the gods and goddesses are *part* of the universe:
- i. **Dualism**: Zoroastrianism, Taoism (?). A god of good is opposed by a god of evil.
  - ii. **Animism**: Native American religions, Asian religions (China & Japan), Arabian and African tribal religions; Confucianism (?), magical Taoism. Every thing in the universe is inhabited by spiritual beings: sun, moon, stars, trees, animals, mountains, rivers, oceans, wind, etc.
  - iii. **Classical Paganism**: Egypt, Greece, Rome. Humans can become gods through **apotheosis**.
  - iv. **Saguna Brahman**: *atman is Brahman*: my true self is a god. The God who I am is not the God that you are. We retain our individual personality when we are divinized.
- c. **Pantheism**: all is god and god is all. Immanence without transcendence. Pantheism could be placed under atheism, since if everything is God, then there is no God to be worshiped, honored, or adored.
- (1) **Nirguna Brahman**: Buddhism, esoteric Taoism (?), "The Force" (?). My true self is the same God that your true self is. All distinctions are illusory (maya). *Tat tvam asi*.
  - (2) **Monism**: There is only one spiritual substance of which we are all parts.
  - (3) **Process theology**:
    - (a) God changes with the universe and is *in* it, not distinct from it. Whitehead, Rabbi Kushner (author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*).
    - (b) God is the by-product of the universe just as the mind is the by-product of the body. Various science fiction stories, John Puddefoot (?). *This might also be categorized as a form of atheist materialism*.

**Atheism**: there is no God.

**Materialism**: The Force (?), scientism (Saganism), naturalism. There is nothing but the universe as disclosed by science. The physical universe is the only reality that exists.

**Agnosticism**: A decision not to settle the question.

- a. **Accidental**. Some people just haven't thought the questions through (slackers?). Agnostic's Prayer: "O God, if there is a God, save me, if there is a me."
- b. **Personal**. "I personally don't know whether or not there is a God."
- c. **Intentional. Banachianism [Indifferentism]**: nobody can know anything for certain because for every religion there is an opposite and roughly equal re-religion. "Truth" only means "true for me." There is no truth by which all judgments can be judged. "No one can know for sure whether there is a God."
- d. **Methodological**: do not try to answer questions in physics, chemistry, biology, economics, history, psychology, sociology, art or literature by appealing to hidden divine action.

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These categories are not water-tight. Individual views may blur the boundaries and bounce back-and-forth between categories.

Each view of God also defines a **view of self (theological anthropology)**: Whatever we say about God reveals what we think about ourselves. **Who do we think we are?**

From the Catholic standpoint, we cannot do theology without using **philosophy**.

Greek roots: *philos*, love, *sophos*, wisdom.

Translation: love of wisdom; insight into insight, understanding understanding, thinking about thinking, reasoning about reasoning, judgment of judgment (paraphrasing Lonergan's *Insight*).

**Theology** means "thinking about the faith."

Just as scientists *use mathematics* (an independent discipline) as a tool for thinking about physics, chemistry, biology, human behavior, etc., so theologians *use philosophy* as a tool for thinking about the faith.

**Natural theology** is a branch of philosophy. It strives to find out how much we can know about the existence and nature of God using human reasoning about the universe we observe around us.

**Whenever we think, we use our natural gifts of reasoning.** Whatever we think about thinking will affect all of our thinking about anything we think about: the physical universe (*science*), the human universe (humanities), and non-material realities (*metaphysics and religion*).

It is possible to think about God (to theologize) without explicitly thinking about thinking (to philosophize). In such a case, our philosophy is unconscious or subconscious. We may need to do some explicit philosophizing if our thinking goes astray.

God calls us to love Him. That is our primary *vocation* (calling). We may recognize His love for us and respond to it with love as simply as children respond to the love of their parents and friends.

God has also given us the gift of intelligence and is not unhappy when we use this gift to ask questions about what we believe. **Fideism ("blind faith") is a vice, not a virtue!** Fideists say, "I believe because I believe. I have no other reason for faith than faith." For the Church, faith based only on faith is inadequate; it is not a responsible use of the gift of intelligence. The Church teaches that the act of faith is *rational, free, supernatural and certain*. We think we have **good reasons for what we believe**. This is consistent with the admonition in Scripture to "always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." The Greek word for explanation (noun, *apologos*; verb, *apologeisthai*) is the root of our word "apology" and gave us the branch of theology called **apologetics**, which seeks to explain *why it is reasonable to believe*.

