



# Theology Corner

Vol. 10 – September 17th, 2017

---

*Theological Reflections by Paul Chutikorn - Director of Faith Formation*

---

## Does God Exist? Aquinas' "Fifth Way."

We have now come to the Fifth and final way of St. Thomas Aquinas. I have to admit, this is my personal favorite. This argument is known as the argument from intelligent design or the argument from final causality. Aquinas' argument can be paraphrased like this: There are clearly things in the world that are not intelligent, yet they still act towards an end or purpose as opposed to some random operation or by chance. So, in order for a thing which does not possess any form of intelligence to act intelligently, there must be an intelligent being which directs it to act in such a way. This being we call God.

What we are really seeing is an argument from governance. In other words, the argument that according to the operations in the world, there must be a being which governs them toward their natural end. What is rather interesting and very effective about this argument in particular is the fact that Aquinas chooses not to focus as much on human beings as intellectual creatures, but things such as inanimate objects or very basic forms of life act intelligently without any sort of intelligence of their own. For example, nearly everything in nature acts in patterned regularities. These regularities are what allow scientists to do their job. Think about it, without a pattern in nature, how could a scientist possibly study anything? We know that a particular mixture of hydrogen and oxygen produces water because of a pattern, and we know that a seed from the fruit of an avocado acts toward achieving the end of being an avocado tree. Without an intelligence behind its function, everything would be arbitrary. We could plant an avocado seed and have a giraffe come out from the ground, or we could experiment with hydrogen and oxygen and it could create milk. This is obviously absurd to even consider, and the reason for this is because it is evident that things act intelligently almost as if they know what they are doing. Due to this patterned behavior in nature, it is only logical to conclude that intelligence is external to them being that they do not themselves possess it.

This argument is an argument of necessity, being that there is no inductive reasoning involved here. That being said, it does open up more inductive logic for intelligent design. For instance, everything that God creates is good, so they all serve some purpose in some way. Personally, I like to look to the human person to consider all of the things that are ordered in such a way that could not reasonably have happened by chance. Think about the machine-like operations of the human body – it is clear that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, but breaking it down further, look at how complex the human eye is. Scientifically, to consider all of the components of the eye coming together to form such a complex organism, and labeling it as a random occurrence is very illogical. There is intelligent design written all over nature. To claim that all of nature was a result of a random explosion, is as reasonable as finding a book of all the Shakespearean works in the middle of the road and claiming it must have popped into existence, at random, with no author.

If you would like to engage this on a deeper level, please join our **weekly Summa study every Friday @ 6pm in the Religious Ed Center.**