

## 1: Argument from desire - Wikipedia

*The desire to see God is the highest natural desire, yet it is a natural desire that nothing natural can satisfy. Aquinas draws from St. Paul (1 Cor ) to show that the vision of God's face is above all natural desire and above our innate inclinations.*

In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul. Such says the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The purpose of this article is to help you determine or at minimum, help you consider your position on humankind and the natural desire to see God. To achieve that end, I will recount the high points of a debate I witnessed between two venerable scholars: David Bentley Hart and Lawrence Feingold. An extended version of my notes is available here , and a video of the debate here. First, a bit of confessional and topical background. The manualist tradition upheld a strict separation between natural and supernatural orders of being. Grace comes in, as it were, only from the outside. De Lubac attempted to correct this error. For Hart, de Lubac was absolutely right to assert that rational consciousnessâ€™ at its baseâ€™ must be an orientation toward the vision of God. Both Hart and Feingold believe that the destiny of humankind is to see God; our end and fulfillment is found in God alone. So the real question of their debate is not whether the desire for God exists in humanity,<sup>2</sup> but how this desire interacts with the constitution, abilities, and ends of the human person. I have done my best to concisely present the views of these authors in a form that remains true to my transcribed notes from the lecture. I encourage you to examine the publications of both participants for further clarification. Question 1 of 3 Moderator: How do you understand the legacy of De Lubac? He ignited a debate that had been going on for seven centuries. It began with St. Thomas Aquinas, who held that perfect happiness is the fulfillment of all our natural desires. The desire to see God is the highest natural desire, yet it is a natural desire that nothing natural can satisfy. Aquinas draws from St. Paul 1 Cor 2: Though convenient, they distort the revelation of God in Christ and in Creation. Although there is no way to get a satisfactory answer from Aquinas on this question,<sup>3</sup> I believe that de Lubac reinvigorated Aquinas by reading him as an inheritor of Patristic tradition. Question 2 of 3 Moderator: Consciousness is, of its nature, intention. It is a necessarily-ecstatic movement toward an end in nature, but an end in nature to which it can be related only because, primordially, it is related to Truth as such. Rational consciousness is what allows us to see the world within the embrace of a primordial intuition that it can never come to rest with the finite. We find nothing in the world desirable simply in itself. Actually I agree with that. We have a natural inclination, as rational beings, for the Transcendental. So, the issue is really the way this question is posed in debates, which tend to be more polemical than probative. I believe that the embrace of supernatural desire is what makes natural, rational experience a possibility. How deep is this supernatural desire embedded in the human person? To answer that question, I need to make a fourfold distinction about desire: We gain knowledge of the universe by interacting with created things. Hence, the natural human desire to know is proportionate to our created condition. Drawn forth by knowledge and experience, this desire involves the search for Beauty and Truth. Additionally, God gives us Revelation and Sanctifying Grace. When God reveals himself, we receive a beautiful encounter with what we naturally desireâ€™ to see the face of Beauty. Revelation changes that natural desire and gives it a foundation, allowing us to hope for it in the firmest way. We now know that this natural desire can be fully realized. Another element is added to natural desire through sacraments. I now realize that this end the beatific vision is somehow related to me proportionally. Even though we both agree that this desire was present in the beginning, I am stating that it is realized in me, in a new way, by grace. Grace is what shows me that I have something proportionate rather than infinitely disproportionate to God. Could there be a reality in which your actual intellect experiences no elicited desire, and does not concretely desire God as God? Even the ability to recognize the very concept of causality already occurs within an intentionality of consciousness and desire that is irreducibly oriented toward the vision of God. In an ex nihilo universe, beings are created specifically for union with God. Within this framework, rational consciousness is a way to recognize that any created cause is not yet final. Rational consciousness leads us to the One Final Cause. It is, of its nature, a participation in the knowledge of God, and can be nothing other than the movement of created being toward the full disclosure of

Being. If all this is so, are we really bound to the notion of proportionality in the created world? We live in a reality where rational beings are called out of nothingness into union with God as the very ground of their existence. My side grants that the fulfillment by grace of our desire for God is supernatural and therefore exceeds the natural capacity. But the desire itself was already supernatural. Question 3 of 3 Moderator: Revelation becomes reduced to the facts of Scripture and salvation history, and there is a vast incontinuity between social order and the greatness of God. He wanted our reality to be absolutely saturated in a notion of the Incarnate Logos, he wanted every moment to be open to the infinite. Then, Christ becomes the revelation of a purely gracious super-addition to nature. He makes it intelligible perhaps in a new way, but is not required to make it intelligible all the way down. This is a good example of how it is important to frame a debate rightly. In addition to this nature, I perceive sanctifying grace. Aristotle and Plato asked this question, and answered in the affirmative. Aquinas says that the ancients got this one right. The innate end of human nature is contemplating God through the mirror of creation. So the natural end is God, but the way of contemplating God naturally is through things made. Is that a perfect end for man? No, it leaves a natural desire that of seeing Beauty fully unsatisfied. Hence, this contemplation is in some sense immeasurably imperfect, but not for that reason nothing. We usually hear that the paradox is an irreducibly natural desire for an irreducibly supernatural end. But if you say that an innate desire is unfulfilled, are you really talking about an end that satisfies at all? If the prior orientation of consciousness toward God is what makes the desirability of natural ends possible, then any degree of satisfaction with natural ends is so imperfect that it could never be understood as any kind of fulfillment of human nature. Back to the question of pure nature: I would say this: I think of pure nature as I think of pure nothingness. The very first moment of creation is an act of unmerited grace. When God becomes human, what is revealed? That End is the only possible End for all created nature, for all rational nature. So, Aquinas teaches a twofold gratuitousness of grace: Do we need a concrete nature in order to make grace truly gratuitous? But we do believe this! Implications: Part 1 of 2 Question: What are the implications of this difference between us? The twofold gratuitousness of grace is a key teaching for Catholics in the school of Aquinas. This matches the Christological paradigm, where we have a distinction of two natures without separation. But the distinction remains something crucial. So in the Christian, a distinction between two sorts of gratuitousness must be preserved. Christ is the only perfect human precisely because he is also God. It is dangerous to see the revelation of God in Christ as incidental to the structure of created being. In becoming human, God did not undergo a metempsychosis. There is no conflict between divine and human natures from the beginning. Human nature is already an instance of participation in the divine nature. Everyone [or, at least Catholics and Orthodox] is willing to grant that there are innate ends. Aquinas might add that even if one were to only have had natural ends accessible, there would still be a desire to go Beyond those ends. This desire would not preclude eternal resting, although it would preclude the perfect eternal resting. Part 2 of 2 Question: How could we have fallen from a state of sinlessness?

### 2: What Does the Bible Say About Desire?

*Comment: Not an ex-library copy. Hardcover; The Natural Desire for God (Aquinas Lecture ) by William R. O'Connor; c; Marquette University Press. This book has some water damage, especially visible at the front bottom cover and at the end-sheets.*

Here is how Aquinas states the argument: So, it must be fulfilled after this life. Scotus pointed out that many animals seem to have an instinct for self-preservation. Lewis â€™ Joy is a form of desire, Lewis claims, but of a unique sort. Though Joy is a form of desire, it differs from all other desires in two respects. To have it is, by definition, a want: With Joy, it is not clear exactly what is desired, and false leads are common. Many suppose, wrongly, that Joy is a desire for some particular worldly satisfaction sex, aesthetic experience, etc. As John Beversluis argues, [8] Lewis seems to offer both deductive and inductive versions of the argument from desire. Nature makes nothing or at least no natural human desire in vain. Humans have a natural desire Joy that would be vain unless some object that is never fully given in my present mode of existence is obtainable by me in some future mode of existence. Therefore, the object of this otherwise vain natural desire must exist and be obtainable in some future mode of existence. He writes, for example: A baby feels hunger: A duckling wants to swim: Men feel sexual desire: If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. But is there any reason to suppose that reality offers any satisfaction of it? In the same way, though I do not believe. Humans have by nature a desire for the transcendent. Most natural desires are such that there exists some object capable of satisfying them. Therefore, there is probably something transcendent. Among the questions critics raise are: Is Joy, as Lewis describes it as a "pang," "stab" "fluttering in the diaphragm," etc. If Joy is a desire, is it a natural desire in the relevant sense? Is it innate and universal, for example, like the biological desires Lewis cites? Is Joy in the sense of a spiritual longing for the transcendent relevantly similar to the kinds of innate, biological desires Lewis mentions desires for food and sex, for example? Or does the argument depend on a weak analogy? Do we know, or have good reason to believe, that all natural desires have possible satisfactions? Is this Aristotelian claim still plausible in the light of modern evolutionary theory? Is the natural desire for perfect and eternal happiness more like these fantasy-type desires, or more like the innate, biological desires that Lewis mentions?

### 3: Catechism of the Catholic Church - Man's Capacity for God

*The reality is that all human beings have a natural desire for God. The desire in our hearts for God does not come from any mere or passing conversation we might have with our friends, nor does this desire for God well up in our hearts principally from an inspiring book we've just read, or from a movie.*

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. A Psalm of David. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. May grace and peace be multiplied to you. Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. And again, as was his custom, he taught them. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! A Psalm of Asaph. I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted. When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I consider the days of old, the years long ago. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed. O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come. When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions. Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple! By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas; I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. Suggest a Verse Enter a Verse Reference e. Unless otherwise indicated, all content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

### 4: DonaMajicShow â€¢ Augustine vs. Aquinas: Man's Natural Desire to

*Again, we find that God has implanted in each of us a conscious desire for a perfect love that only God can fulfill. (3) Desire for Perfect Justice/Goodness In addition, we have a conscious desire for perfect justice and goodness.*

This ordering is normally but not always<sup>1</sup> understood as involving the elevation of human nature to a supernatural state beyond its own unaided natural powers. In what does the potential human ordering to the supernatural consist? It is the purpose of this article to explore the metaphysical and anthropological intelligibility of this ordering alongside the controversy that has attended it among Catholic theologians and philosophers. Inasmuch as creatures can be said to be in potency to that which only the divine power can bring forth in them, it nonetheless remains true that God can bring about certain effects only in certain natures. If God can raise up sons of Abraham from the very rocks, this can only be by rendering them no longer to be rocks. By contrast, the life of grace through the active agency of God perfects human persons, uplifting human nature without destroying or mutating it. Thomas has written, water or earth have diverse passive potencies in respect of the diverse active agencies of fire, the heavenly bodies, and God. It is this conception of obediential potency that expounds acts of infused virtue as truly acts of the human agent, without thereby implying that human nature can perform supernaturalized acts apart from divine aid. Toward this end this essay first considers the anthropological datum of the threefold object of the human intellect. That which is connatural to rational human nature and proportioned thereto will be contrasted with that of which this nature is objectively capable with divine help obediential potency but which is disproportionate to human nature considered in itself. This is the dual sense of nature required by the notion of obediential potency. Proceeding from this anthropological analysis, St. As interpretations of the natural desire for God have moved many learned critics to reject obediential potency as a defining concept in St. Rational natures in general are capax Dei in a manner that nonrational natures are not. It is evident to all that subrational beings are incapable of divine knowledge and love, for the very reason that they are incapable of any spiritual act. But exactly what kind of rationality characterizes 2 human beings, who are not simply pure spirits intuiting the essences of all beings for if this were so human beings would enjoy intuitive natural knowledge of the angels, which is contrary to fact? Therefore the angelic intellect, that is totally separate from a body, has for its proper object intelligible substance separate from a body; and in this way it knows intelligible material things. But the proper object of the human intellect which is united to a body is quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter; and in this way it ascends from the knowledge of visible things to a certain knowledge of invisible things. But the reason for this is that it belongs to such a nature to exist in an individual, which cannot be apart from corporeal matter: Wherefore the nature of the stone, or of any material thing cannot be known completely and truly save according as it is known as existing in the particular. But we apprehend the particular through sense and imagination. And thus it is necessary in order that the intellect actually know its proper object that it turn itself to the phantasms, as the universal nature is known in the particular existent. Knowledge of essence abstracted from sensible being does not yet represent knowledge of the essence "completely and truly," because it is not thus known according to its mode of being which mode comprises the particular limits of corporeal matter. The nature of a material thing is truly known when known in its actual mode of being in the singular sensible thing. This requires sense and imagination. Both at the inception of our knowledge, and in its completion in judgment regarding the nature of this particular sensible thing, human knowledge entails sensation. The connatural target of this knowledge is what St. Thomas designates as the proper object of the human intellect: Yet this "embodiedness" of human knowing should not eclipse recognition of its immateriality, an immateriality signified by its very attainment of the truth of sensible beings. This immateriality is apparent in St. Thomas calls the formal object of the intellect, which is universal truth or the true in general. Thomas, which is being. Both truth-in-general, and being, extend beyond the realm of material quiddity else questions regarding the existence and truth of God and the angels would be nonsensical. And the truth of material quiddity is indeed known in relation to its being. Thomas "being is the primary intelligible, as sound is the primary audible,"<sup>9</sup> and "being is that which is first conceived by the mind. Thomas does indeed argue that

being is the primary intelligible. Thomas being is the adequate object of the human intellect--that into which the truth of every human knowing is resolved--it is not reducible to material quiddity,<sup>11</sup> nor does the human mind connaturally know all being a knowing possessed only by God. Hence being is not the proper object of the human intellect. For universal truth extends beyond the range of knowing that is connatural to the human mind, a mind that is not by nature a separated spirit but the distinctive power of the rational animal. In the usage of Aquinas "proper object" signifies the natural locus for our human knowledge of being. The sense of "natural locus" may be determined by asking the question: Where does the question of being arise for a rational animal? Aquinas denies that human beings possess any quidditative knowledge of angels. Thomas quiddity as found in corporeal matter. It is 4 material quiddity that we know directly, and it is in terms of material quiddity that the question of being is humanly formulated. Such a knowledge of material quiddity, requiring advertance to sense and imagination, is manifestly incapable of yielding direct knowledge either of angels or of God. While material quiddity is the connatural object of the intellect, no material quiddity is the subsistent universal truth and good, but only a finite participation thereof--meaning that no material thing can finally fulfill the highest natural human potencies. The knowledge of material quiddity cannot in itself uplift the mind to such knowledge and love. The powers of intellect and will thus constitute a natural translucence to God within the creature, without yet constituting the least trace of actual motion toward beatific vision as such on the part of the creature. For the least such motion will require a supernatural principle to operate within the human person, so as to begin to uplift the human faculties from their natural objects and assume them within the divine itinerary of salvation, ordering them to the inner being of God. Hence, the conclusion that the primary intelligibility of being is for the creature naturally known through the locus of creaturely quiddity carries one profound implication within St. Thomas to articulate a doctrine whereby complete finality for the human person is shown to require divine aid, while simultaneously maintaining the integrity of the quidditative order and of subordinate natural ends that are finite participations of the ultimate end. The key to this explanation is precisely found in the teaching that the proper object of the human intellect is the quiddity of a material thing. According to Aquinas the human intellect is ordered to 5 know the truth formal object of being adequate object, but to know it in relation to material quiddity proper object. The formal translucence of the intellect to being does not of itself bring the hidden life of God within the natural exercise of the intellect. For God is naturally knowable by the human mind in precision from supernatural grace only through the evidence of finite sensible effects that as finite are utterly disproportioned to God. Yet this thirst is in actual history a thirst haunted by the memory of the aboriginal promise of grace, a grace whereby this thirst was not merely for we-know-not-what, but for the God with whom Adam spoke. As the human spiritual faculties cannot in natural exercise and apart from intrinsically supernatural assistance be beatifically perfected,<sup>26</sup> so apart from grace the desire for consummately perfect knowledge and love can neither espy nor embrace the perfection sought. To summarize, for Aquinas the formal object of the intellect is universal truth, but the proper object of the intellect is quiddity as found in corporeal matter. The intellect discerns the transcendental perfections of being, truth, and good in relation to material quiddity--but subsistent universal being, truth, and good transcend its natural exercise. Although unattainable to the connatural range of human knowing and willing, only the communication of subsistent universal truth and good can consummately actuate these immaterial human faculties, for they are defined by their order to the universal truth and good. While such divine self-communication far transcends the proper object of human knowledge, it is in itself most knowable, for God Who is first in being is also the first intelligible,<sup>27</sup> and it is only in relation to being that even finite things are knowable. It is only in relation to the weakness of the created intellect that this self-communication appears as unknowable, i. The proper object of the intellect, i. The relation of the immateriality of the higher faculties of intellect and will to their substantial mode of being as naturally commensurated to matter, is the root of a dual sense of nature. For by virtue of their immateriality these faculties stand in passive potency to that knowledge and love that only the active agency of God can bring about in them. In relation to the divine aid, it is indeed "natural" that they can achieve such supernatural knowing and loving. But this passive spiritual translucence to the active agency of God working through sanctifying grace, the *lumen gloriae*, and finally beatific knowledge, stands in stark contrast to the type of object proportioned to human knowing apart

from such divine help: Obediential potency is simply the potency of a creature toward acts achievable only with the assistance of divine causality. As a stained glass window can irradiate colored light only with the assistance of light, so the human soul can directly contemplate God only with the assistance of God. Subrational beings lack any obediential potency for beatific knowledge of God, because they lack intellectual nature. All this makes abundantly clear that one is not dealing merely with the extrinsic susceptibility of creatures to divine miracle, i. In this way, acts of a creature can proceed from a supernatural principle without ceasing to be true acts of the creature. Although the composite being of human nature conditions our knowledge, and the human intellect is connaturally ordered to know material quiddity, it remains the case that the human intellect is objectively ordered to universal truth. While standing at the lowest degree of immateriality, requiring sensible phantasms at the genesis and the completion of its connatural communion with being, the human intellect is still intellect, still an intrinsically spiritual power ordered to universal truth. As the fullness of universal truth subsists only in God, if it is possible for God to uplift the creature to direct knowledge of Himself then this knowledge will perfectly fulfill the human intellectual power. This distinction between that which is proximate to nature, and that of which nature is capable with divine aid, thus constitutes a dual sense of the "natural. Obviously direct knowledge of God infinitely surpasses the powers of any finite nature--and a fortiori of human nature--so that in one sense of "nature" such knowledge is supernatural. Yet in another sense, it is natural for a rational being to be capable of receiving divine aid in knowing either in knowing other creatures, or more properly in knowing God --even natural for a rational being whose rationality is commensurated to matter via its need for sensation, sensible phantasms, and imagination. It is natural that a human creature can enjoy friendship with God--if God initiates such a friendship. But the notion of a rock enjoying a friendship with God is contrary to nature, even if God were somehow conceived as originating such a friendship. For the rock has no power which can be augmented so as to know and love God. The notion of obediential potency thus construed is more powerful, nuanced, and synthetically comprehensive than many critics have supposed. Although the distinction between the "natural" as the unaided exercise of human creaturely powers, and the "natural" as that of which the creature is capable with divine aid, is present both implicitly<sup>28</sup> and explicitly<sup>29</sup> in St. Thomas. He was concerned rather to preserve the patristic sense of the human person as *capax dei* and as made in the image and likeness of God. As he put it: Once nature itself is identified as already oriented apart from grace directly to supernatural beatific finality, "the natural" is no longer definitively distinct from "the supernatural. If specifically and determinately supernatural beatitude is naturally sought--as distinct from a natural seeking for the indeterminate fulfilling good--then nature is at least in one respect supernaturally adequated, finite ends derogated, and supernatural grace merely a means for completion of a tendency antecedently arising from nature. By contrast anticipating my argument *infra*, section III, "The Natural Desire for God" one might hold that natural desire for the indeterminate good, and for God as known from nature, is not yet directly proportioned to supernatural bliss as is supernatural grace. On this view for the trajectory of nature to be elevated within supernatural grace it must be initially distinct from grace in its ordering to God, on pain of rendering human nature a definitional nullity. Framed in this way, the question becomes that of which account--that of obediential potency, or that of a natural desire for supernatural beatitude--is most consistent both with the natural evidence and with the datum of grace as extrinsic to human nature. By "extrinsic" is meant only that grace is neither a note of, nor identical with, human nature as such. Surely if by nature man is grace, or is law, he is in need of nothing but his nature for salvation or justice. This view--derogating the human need for divine aid--surely seems incongruous not only with natural evidence, but with the deposit of faith. Apart from this relative independence of the quidditative order, it becomes difficult to understand what it is that Christ assumes in the Incarnation. What is in question here is not psychological interiority or exteriority, nor the interior and exterior human act, but rather what is intrinsic to human quiddity or nature and what is not. Is supernatural grace either identical with or a note of human quiddity? If not, then supernatural grace must be affirmed as extrinsic to human nature an affirmation insisted upon by de Lubac himself. Thus the question then arises once more:

*of the natural desire to see God is an anthropocentric question since it concerns the potency and finality of human nature, and Aquinas fittingly deals with the issue mostly in the Secunda Pars of his Summa Theologiã!*

Brian Mullady FrBMullady aol. This paper will begin with an analysis of the positions which exclude the possibility of a natural desire to see God. In so doing, we will point out the unacceptable consequences of these positions. The argument against a natural desire to see God is this: This is because the ordering toward an end and the end itself are mutually determined. A natural end is naturally attainable through natural powers. Moreover, there is a sense of justice in which the attainment of a natural end is owed to the nature itself. Even though the positing of a supernatural desire to see God—as opposed to a natural desire—seems to protect the order of grace, it nevertheless implies consequences which are detrimental in other ways. It must be ordered in some other way. Positing a purely possible human existent is necessary if the desire for God is supernatural and not essential to human nature. If the desire for God is natural, then nature is directly ordered toward grace; but if it is supernatural, then there remains something like abstract nature as a third element. Grace does not perfect nature, it becomes nature. Cardinal Cajetan, who assumes that a natural desire to see God is a threat to the order of grace, posits a natural desire to see God which is conditioned. One end is attainable and natural, whereas, the other end is supernatural and unattainable except through grace. The Christian vocation would then become one possibility among many, and in no sense necessary. Even though de Lubac and Rahner exert a great deal of energy trying to avoid a double finality, they find themselves trapped by an equally paradoxical conclusion. In positing a purely possible human existent, de Lubac and Rahner try to avoid a double finality by imagining an abstract nature without any finality. But just as philosophically impossible as a nature with two ends is a nature with no end at all. Certainly, a nature without an end is a figment of the imagination. The solution to these difficulties is to posit a single human nature—which is demanded by philosophical realism: Aquinas begins by showing that the vision of God is the ultimate end of the human person: In fact, Aquinas is familiar with the principle *naturale desiderium non potest esse inane* which seems to suggest that a natural end is owed to nature. The divine substance is not beyond the capacity of the created intellect in such a way that it is altogether foreign to it, as sound is from the object of vision, or as immaterial substance is from sense power; in fact, the divine substance is the first intelligible object and the principle of all intellectual cognition. But it is beyond the capacity of the created intellect, in the sense that it exceeds its power; just as sensible objects of extreme character are beyond the capacity of sense power. According to the former the desire to see God is natural; according to the latter it is supernatural. In order to attain the ultimate end man must be given new capacities for action. The human person is essentially ordered toward grace, grace is not merely an extrinsic structure superimposed upon nature. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the attainment of the direct vision of God is necessary or owed to the human person. Attainment of the end is possible only with grace. On the Truth of the Catholic Faith. Nature and Grace in Modern Catholic Thought. Grace is no more. This position is taken up by Mullady. The absolute desire cannot be counted among the constitutive conditions of the human spirit, which could meaningfully exist without it. And this is also true of every natural end in any species, that the members of this species do attain it, in most cases. Hence, the light whereby the created intellect is perfected for the vision of the divine substance must be supernatural. In fact, this change can only come about by means of the created intellect acquiring some new disposition.

### 6: Desire to See God, Natural | [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)

*"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. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: 'The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God'" (CCC #27).*

We are perpetually unsatisfied when we get what we want, and we are capable of wanting anything at all. Suppose Troilus is right. That would mean desire eventually must consume even itself. It does not sit well, however, with the way that we Catholic thinkers typically talk about desire—categorizing some desires as natural and others as unnatural. It does not sit well with that most typical of Catholic ideas: If desire is doubly infinite, as Shakespeare suggests, and therefore self-consuming, what can it mean to speak of any desire as natural? Of course, if human desire is infinite, then it is, in a sense, entirely natural for us to desire anything we can imagine or conceive. This, in turn, means our desires are naturally open rather than closed, protean rather than formed, awaiting direction rather than already under orders. The range of things on which human desire is focused is, as a matter of fact, infinite, and the plasticity of desire is distinctively human. Consider the desires of your dog, or of the crape myrtle tree in your yard. The desires of these creatures are not infinitely malleable, and the range they are capable of reaching is small. The nature of human desire, then, is that no particular desire is natural. A full appreciation of human nature—a sort of meta-naturalism—properly denies the natural. And this denial applies even to the drives we have genetically: This is why we have Casanovas and celibates, gourmands and hunger artists, torturers and pacifists. If all this is true, then we ought not to talk as though it were not. You will hear it said, for instance, that the desire for political freedom is a natural human desire, or that heterosexual desire is natural, or that the desire for God is natural theologians often say this. For that matter, you will hear it sometimes said that it is unnatural to eat horses and snails the English like to say this, having in mind French culinary tastes, or that parental love for children is natural. But we should understand that, even while we speak this way, we are not in fact more open to any particular configuration of desire than to another. Or, at least, we have no particularly natural desires now—although, I want to argue, we did before the Fall and will again, after the resurrection to eternal life. But we must begin with the fact that human desire has been deranged. Our desires have moved from order to chaos; they have been opened to the damnable as well as the beautiful. And from this derangement comes, very rapidly, the evils of slavery, rape, genocide, and abortion, together with their many bloody cousins. We lack natural desire because our desires have been removed from their proper arrangement, their properly harmonious response to the fact that we are created beings. After the Fall, we suffer from derangement. The word derangement can be taken to have two apparently opposed meanings. It has its standard sense of removing arrangement, order, and beauty. But we might also use the word to mean an enclosing, a restricting—a limiting of what is properly a larger range. And this double meaning is reflected in the double derangement of our desires. Derangements in the direction of openness—as when our desires are set free to wander in an open range without limits—necessarily cause a second derangement, this time in the direction of discipline and enclosure. Our derangedly open desires can be directed to anything at all. But desire never seeks anything, exactly; it always seeks something in particular, though that something might be almost anything. Our sexual, gastronomic, and intellectual appetites are unbounded in what they might desire, but they will eventually focus on some particular desire. For these appetites to be configured, they will have to be narrowed, disciplined, and restricted—that is, deranged in the second sense of the word—from the infinitely open range in which they wander. This configuration happens inevitably. The question, then, is not whether it will happen, but how, and whether the configuration will be beautiful or ugly. Our appetites for one another to take just one example, derangedly open as they are now, may be configured toward necrophilia, in which we seek others only as dead. Or they may be configured toward love, in which we seek others as the particular images of God that each of them is. Or they may be configured anywhere in between. The second derangement, the narrowing one, may aim at a reversal of the first derangement or at its intensification. This would appear an innate drive: The sucking reflex of the newborn is something close to a human universal. Still, that drive is almost weightless and formless. It floats

nearly free of response to and desire for any particular food. Our hungers are instructed and formed over time by careful nurture. The breast is offered to newborns, and their positive responses to it and its gift of milk are encouraged. As they grow, children experience their tastes being formed by local habit, custom, and discipline until they become, for instance, adults who appreciate and desire a dozen raw oysters washed down with a crisply citrus-tinged Pinot Gris and who are revolted by a dinnertime offering of roast cat. Or they may become eaters who are disgusted by cheese while eager to eat plantain fried in peanut oil. Every adult eater has gastronomic appetites of fantastic complexity, and every particular feature of that complexity has, among the necessary conditions for its existence, a local catechesis. Consider, too, our desire to speak—the appetite for language, for responding to the words of others with words of our own. The catechetical story is the same, whether the children are speakers of Italian, with a taste for writing and reading sestinas, or speakers of English, with a taste for the rhythms of rap. Particular desires for words get configured in a vast edifice of culture, education, and native tongues. As with particular gastronomic choices, configured verbal desires that give delight to some will bore or disgust or puzzle others. A useful example for understanding this distinctively human feature of desire is the fact of excess. To say of human desires that they are excessive is, first, to repeat that they are open to almost infinitely varying configurations. But it is also to focus attention on the insatiability of desire: The human effort to configure and reconfigure and extend and elaborate desires is constantly transgressive exactly because it is excessive. Gastronomic desire does not find rest in adequate nutrition. If it did, there would be no chefs, no restaurants, no shelves groaning with diet and recipe books. Sexual desire does not find rest in procreation and loving intimacy. If it did, there would be no adulterers, no pornography, and very little romantic poetry. The question, then, is how we should discriminate among the configurations of our excess. Which should we encourage, and which discourage? Almost all of us have been catechized—the Christian word is appropriate—in such a way that we have a meta-appetite, an appetite for disciplining both our own appetites and those of others into particular configurations. Most parents, for instance, prefer to catechize out of their toddlers a desire to display and share their own excrement, a desire that many toddlers show at one time or another. Most teachers work hard to encourage the habits of mental discipline that they think will nurture the development of particular desired skills—literacy, say, or logic. At the same time, teachers work hard to discourage habits that will hinder the development of these skills. And doctors strive to change patterns of appetite, most generally those for a style of life directly productive of disease and death. Similarly, we often find our own adult appetites in need of reconfiguration, and so we catechize ourselves—whether over something as trivial as an appetite for nicotine or as important as an appetite for self-aggrandizement. Judgments of these kinds, and the catechetical activities that go with them, are normative: They imply an understanding of what human flourishing and human corruption are like. Christians are like everyone else in this. We believe that Jesus Christ came so that we might have life and have it more abundantly. This can be paraphrased without significant loss, except in pithiness, by saying that Jesus Christ came so that our appetites might be configured in some particular way, our desires lent a certain weight—a weight that will turn us from death and fit us for life. Each particular configuration of appetite has a temporal impetus: It is an element in a habitus, a mode of being in the world, that disposes people to move along its track. There is no inevitability about such movement. It is possible for a well-established habitus to be suddenly and radically reconfigured: Drunks may suddenly cease to drink, the generous may become miserly, and the violent may become peaceable. But this is not the usual story. Usually we continue moving in the direction we are heading. The ten-year-old child living in Japan is likely to become a more proficient and polished user of Japanese. The man practiced at inflicting pain on others will, in the right context, become even more practiced. The weight of our catechized appetites drags us in a certain direction: The eyes of the glutton follow the food, while those of the devout seek the traces of God. Christians, of course, believe that even good appetites cannot be developed fully on earth; they find their full and final development only when we see God face to face and know as we are known. The desire to know and see God is a configuration we can nurture or oppose. It can flourish or wither because of what we do or refuse to do, and its cultivation is undertaken with an eye to its heavenly result. To desire God is good for us because it prepares us for intimacy with him, which is what we are created for. To configure our desires in such a way that the desire for God

becomes progressively less possible for us is to make ourselves less than we should be. In its extreme case, it is damnation. Christians often say that human beings are disposed to configure appetite in a God-directed way, but we are, in fact, no more disposed to configure our desires that way than any other. This is, in part, why it is improper to speak of our desire for God as natural to us. The cultivation of the desire for God, then, is not a human work independent of God; it is an instance of responsive gratitude to the gift of the very possibility of action. An interesting question is whether this openness—this inchoateness of desire, this readiness for formation and malformation—is a good thing or a bad thing about us. Is this feature of human existence after the Fall something to be lamented and corrected, or are there features of it that warrant rejoicing—features that make it possible for us to be more fully conformed to God? In Eden, before the Fall, human desires were not inchoately open in the way they are now. There would have been neither need nor occasion for the range of gastronomic, verbal, or sexual appetites that are unavoidably open to us now. The same is true in heaven.

### 7: The Nature of Desire by Paul J. Griffiths | Articles | First Things

*natural desire to know God in himself pertains to a natural appetite for human knowledge, elicited by the knowledge that there exists a first cause of all things, and by the natural desire to see or know immediately this first cause.*

Thus we shall consider first that search Chapter One , then the divine Revelation by which God comes to meet man Chapter Two , and finally the response of faith Chapter Three. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator. These forms of religious expression, despite the ambiguities they often bring with them, are so universal that one may well call man a religious being: From one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him - though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "in him we live and move and have our being. But this search for God demands of man every effort of intellect, a sound will, "an upright heart", as well as the witness of others who teach him to seek God. You are great, O Lord, and greatly to be praised: And man, so small a part of your creation, wants to praise you: Despite everything, man, though but a small a part of your creation, wants to praise you. You yourself encourage him to delight in your praise, for you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you. These are also called proofs for the existence of God, not in the sense of proofs in the natural sciences, but rather in the sense of "converging and convincing arguments", which allow us to attain certainty about the truth. These "ways" of approaching God from creation have a twofold point of departure: Paul says of the Gentiles: For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. Augustine issues this challenge: Question the beauty of the earth, question the beauty of the sea, question the beauty of the air distending and diffusing itself, question the beauty of the sky. These beauties are subject to change. Who made them if not the Beautiful One [Pulcher] who is not subject to change? In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul. The soul, the "seed of eternity we bear in ourselves, irreducible to the merely material",<sup>9</sup> can have its origin only in God. Thus, in different ways, man can come to know that there exists a reality which is the first cause and final end of all things, a reality "that everyone calls God". But for man to be able to enter into real intimacy with him, God willed both to reveal himself to man and to give him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation in faith. Man has this capacity because he is created "in the image of God". Though human reason is, strictly speaking, truly capable by its own natural power and light of attaining to a true and certain knowledge of the one personal God, who watches over and controls the world by his providence, and of the natural law written in our hearts by the Creator; yet there are many obstacles which prevent reason from the effective and fruitful use of this inborn faculty. For the truths that concern the relations between God and man wholly transcend the visible order of things, and, if they are translated into human action and influence it, they call for self-surrender and abnegation. The human mind, in its turn, is hampered in the attaining of such truths, not only by the impact of the senses and the imagination, but also by disordered appetites which are the consequences of original sin. So it happens that men in such matters easily persuade themselves that what they would not like to be true is false or at least doubtful. We can name God only by taking creatures as our starting point, and in accordance with our limited human ways of knowing and thinking. The manifold perfections of creatures - their truth, their goodness, their beauty all reflect the infinite perfection of God. Consequently we can name God by taking his creatures' perfections as our starting point, "for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator". We must therefore continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, image-bound or imperfect, if we are not to confuse our image of God--"the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable"--with our human

representations. Likewise, we must recall that "between Creator and creature no similitude can be expressed without implying an even greater dissimilitude";<sup>17</sup> and that "concerning God, we cannot grasp what he is, but only what he is not, and how other beings stand in relation to him. Coming from God, going toward God, man lives a fully human life only if he freely lives by his bond with God. When I am completely united to you, there will be no more sorrow or trials; entirely full of you, my life will be complete St. Vatican Council I, can. DS , 48 We really can name God, starting from the manifold perfections of his creatures, which are likenesses of the infinitely perfect God, even if our limited language cannot exhaust the mystery. This is the reason why believers know that the love of Christ urges them to bring the light of the living God to those who do not know him or who reject him. GS ; Mt Augustine, Sermo , 2: Thomas Aquinas, STh I,2,3. DS ; DV 6; St. Thomas Aquinas, STh I,1,1.

*The opening chapters () treat Aquinas's analysis of natural desire (appetite, inclination, objects of the will, conditional desires), and many of his texts concerning the natural desire to see God.*

In any created good? Now this is wealth: Further, according to Boethius De Consol. Therefore happiness consists in wealth. Further, since the desire for the sovereign good never fails, it seems to be infinite. But this is the case with riches more than anything else; since "a covetous man shall not be satisfied with riches " Ecclesiastes 5: But as Boethius says De Consol. For wealth is twofold, as the Philosopher says Polit. Natural wealth is that which serves man as a remedy for his natural wants: For wealth of this kind is sought for the sake of something else, viz. Wherefore in the order of nature , all such things are below man , and made for him, according to Psalm 8: Consequently much less can it be considered in the light of the last end. Therefore it is impossible for happiness , which is the last end of man , to consist in wealth. Reply to Objection 1. All material things obey money, so far as the multitude of fools is concerned, who know no other than material goods, which can be obtained for money. But we should take our estimation of human goods not from the foolish but from the wise: Reply to Objection 2. All things salable can be had for money: Hence it is written Proverbs The desire for natural riches is not infinite: But the desire for artificial wealth is infinite , for it is the servant of disordered concupiscence , which is not curbed, as the Philosopher makes clear Polit. Yet this desire for wealth is infinite otherwise than the desire for the sovereign good. For the more perfectly the sovereign good is possessed, the more it is loved, and other things despised: Hence it is written Sirach For happiness or bliss is "the reward of virtue ," as the Philosopher says Ethic. But honor more than anything else seems to be that by which virtue is rewarded, as the Philosopher says Ethic. Therefore happiness consists especially in honor. Further, that which belongs to God and to persons of great excellence seems especially to be happiness , which is the perfect good. But that is honor , as the Philosopher says Ethic. Moreover, the Apostle says 1 Timothy 1: Further, that which man desires above all is happiness. But nothing seems more desirable to man than honor: Therefore happiness consists in honor. On the contrary, Happiness is in the happy. But honor is not in the honored , but rather in him who honors, and who offers deference to the person honored , as the Philosopher says Ethic. Therefore happiness does not consist in honor. I answer that, It is impossible for happiness to consist in honor. For honor is given to a man on account of some excellence in him; and consequently it is a sign and attestation of the excellence that is in the person honored. And therefore honor can result from happiness , but happiness cannot principally consist therein. As the Philosopher says Ethic. Honor is due to God and to persons of great excellence as a sign of attestation of excellence already existing: Reply to Objection 3. That man desires honor above all else, arises from his natural desire for happiness , from which honor results, as stated above. Wherefore man seeks to be honored especially by the wise, on whose judgment he believes himself to be excellent or happy. For happiness seems to consist in that which is paid to the saints for the trials they have undergone in the world. But this is glory: Further, good is diffusive of itself, as stated by Dionysius Div. Further, happiness is the most enduring good. Now this seems to be fame or glory ; because by this men attain to eternity after a fashion. Hence Boethius says De Consol. But it happens that fame or glory is false: Can anything be more shameful? For those who receive false fame, must needs blush at their own praise. For glory consists "in being well known and praised," as Ambrose [ Augustine , Contra Maxim. Wherefore the perfection of human good , which is called happiness , cannot be caused by human knowledge: For this reason human glory is frequently deceptive. But since God cannot be deceived, His glory is always true ; hence it is written 2 Corinthians The Apostle speaks, then, not of the glory which is with men, but of the glory which is from God , with His Angels. Hence it is written Mark 8: Thomas joins Mark 8: But if the knowledge be false , it does not harmonize with the thing: Hence it follows that fame can nowise make man happy. Fame has no stability; in fact, it is easily ruined by false report. And if sometimes it endures, this is by accident. But happiness endures of itself, and for ever. It would seem that happiness consists in power. For all things desire to become like to God , as to their last end and first beginning. But men who are in power, seem, on account of the similarity of power, to be most like to God: Further, happiness is the perfect good. But

the highest perfection for man is to be able to rule others; which belongs to those who are in power. Therefore happiness consists in power. Further, since happiness is supremely desirable, it is contrary to that which is before all to be shunned. But, more than aught else, men shun servitude, which is contrary to power. On the contrary, Happiness is the perfect good. But power is most imperfect. For as Boethius says De Consol. First because power has the nature of principle, as is stated in Metaph. Secondly, because power has relation to good and evil: Wherefore some happiness might consist in the good use of power, which is by virtue, rather than in power itself. Now four general reasons may be given to prove that happiness consists in none of the foregoing external goods. Now all the foregoing can be found both in good and in evil men. Secondly, because, since it is the nature of happiness to "satisfy of itself," as stated in Ethic. But after acquiring any one of the foregoing, man may still lack many goods that are necessary to him; for instance, wisdom, bodily health, and such like. Thirdly, because, since happiness is the perfect good, no evil can accrue to anyone therefrom. This cannot be said of the foregoing: Fourthly, because man is ordained to happiness through principles that are in him; since he is ordained thereto naturally. Now the four goods mentioned above are due rather to external causes, and in most cases to fortune; for which reason they are called goods of fortune. Therefore it is evident that happiness nowise consists in the foregoing. But it is not so with men. Just as it is a very good thing for a man to make good use of power in ruling many, so is it a very bad thing if he makes a bad use of it. And so it is that power is towards good and evil. Servitude is a hindrance to the good use of power: For it is written Sirach Therefore it consists in the health of the body. Further, Dionysius says Div. Further, the more universal a thing is, the higher the principle from which it depends; because the higher a cause is, the greater the scope of its power. Now just as the causality of the efficient cause consists in its flowing into something, so the causality of the end consists in its drawing the appetite. Therefore, just as the First Cause is that which flows into all things, so the last end is that which attracts the desire of all. But being itself is that which is most desired by all.

### 9: SUMMA THEOLOGIAE: Things in which man's happiness consists (Prima Secundae Partis, Q. 2)

*27 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. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion.*

In modern times it is discussed on its own merits as a means of showing that the supernatural is not something alien to human nature. The bridge, it is sometimes said, between nature and supernature is the desire for God, and more specifically the desire to see God, to know by intuition His very essence. Since the early years of the 20th century the treatment of the natural desire of the vision of God has centered mainly around St. Thomas and his 16th-century commentators. To begin with, it is admitted on all sides that to see God face to face is for St. Thomas something strictly supernatural, that it is above the natural capacities of man and in no way due to his nature as such. Final and perfect happiness can consist only in the vision of the essence of God. The evidence for this lies in two considerations. First of all, man is not perfectly happy so long as there remains something for him to desire and look for. Secondly, the perfection of every power is to be judged from its object. But the object of the intellect is what a thing is, that is, its essence, as Aristotle says in the third book *On the Soul*. Hence the perfection to which the intellect attains is to be gauged by its knowledge of the essence of a thing. If, therefore, an intellect cognizes the essence of an effect in such a way that it does not know the essence of the cause, that is, in such a way as to know what the cause is in itself, it is not said to reach the cause in every possible way, even though it knows through the effect that the cause exists. And hence when a man cognizes an effect and knows it has a cause there naturally remains in him the desire to know the quiddity of the cause, that is what it is. And the desire is one of wonder, and it causes a search, as is said in the beginning of the *Metaphysics*. For example, if a person has knowledge of an eclipse of the sun, he considers that it comes from a cause, and since he does not know what this is he wonders about it and in his wonder he sets up an inquiry. This inquiry does not end until he comes to know the very essence of the cause. So it is that if the human intellect cognizing the essence of some created effect knows only this of God that He is, its knowledge of the first cause is not yet simply perfect. Rather there still remains the natural desire of inquiring about the cause, and hence the man is not yet perfectly happy. For perfect happiness, therefore, it is necessary that the intellect should reach to the very essence of the first cause. It follows quite simply that final and perfect happiness can be found only in the contemplation of God face to face. Is one to conclude, then, that if God creates an intellectual creature He must make it possible for that creature to come to the vision, which is entirely above nature and not due to it? Strange to say, St. Thomas never went beyond trying to show that the fact of the vision of God, known from revelation, is perfectly in accord with reason. If in some places of his writings he seems to be proving the fact from reason alone, the context will always show that such is not his intention. All that he wishes to establish through rational discourse is that the intuitive vision of God is possible to man. To select one example from many, we read: But since it is impossible for natural desire to be in vain, which it would be if it were not possible to attain to that intuition of the divine substance which all minds naturally desire, it is necessary to say that it is possible for all intellects to see the substance of God, both those of separated intellectual substances and our souls. Thomas is speaking of a desire that can become an actual fact, as he expressly holds, only by the gratuitous elevation of intellect to an order of existence above its own natural powers and exigencies. Many and diverse have been the interpretations of St. Thomas. Cardinal Cajetan, OP, thought that he was speaking of a desire of rational nature in the supposition that this nature possesses knowledge of the existence of the vision of God through revelation. Even in that supposition God is desired only under the aspect of first cause, God the creator, governor of the universe. Soto believed that for the Angelic Doctor the natural desire is innate, a bent or inclination in the will, a *pondus naturae*, prior to all cognition. If one looks merely at the tendency, which is in every human being, the end that is, the vision of God is natural; if one looks to the attainment of that end, it is supernatural. Another great Thomist, Sylvester of Ferrara, OP [see *ferrariensis francesco silvestri*], rejects the supposition of revelation as a prerequisite to the natural desire. He holds this to be an elicited act of the will which supposes and follows that cognition of

God by which we know that God is. It is the desire of the vision of God as first cause, not as the object of supernatural beatitude. This renowned theologian also refuses to accept the mere innate tendency of Soto and Scotus. For him the desire is elicited because, he says, according to St. This elicited desire is natural; but it remains with regard to its object, the vision of God as He is in Himself, conditional if the vision is possible and inefficacious in itself of no avail for the attainment of the supernatural end. Dominating the theological discussion of the problem until the end of the 19th century were the classic opinions outlined above. Since that time a more literal exegesis of St. The years preceding the publication of *humani generis* in witnessed the proposal of the opinion that the intellectual creature by virtue of its creation is necessarily destined to the vision of God as its end, even though this end remains supernatural. The encyclical identified such a position as untenable; Pope Pius XII warned all Catholics against the novel speculations of those who "corrupt the true gratuitous character of the supernatural order when they assert that God cannot create beings endowed with intellect without ordaining them for the beatific vision and calling them to it" Denz Another hypothesis endeavoring to explain the natural desire, but not attributable to St. Thomas, is that of the "supernatural existential. This reality, which is said to be the desire for God, is not grace as we know it but a prerequisite for grace. *Doctrina et historia*, ed.

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