

Report May 2019 Meeting of the Philosophy Group

Our topic this month was what do philosophers say about the existence of god.

We first considered **Pascal's Wager**: *Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) French philosopher, mathematician and physicist.*

It posits that humans bet with their lives that God either exists or does not.

Pascal argues that a rational person should live as though God exists and seek to believe in God. If God does not actually exist, such a person will have only a finite loss (some pleasures, luxury, etc.), whereas he stands to receive infinite gains (as represented by eternity in Heaven) and avoid infinite losses (eternity in Hell).

We went on to discuss **St. Thomas Aquinas: 1225–1274**

Dominican priest, theologian, and philosopher considered one of the greatest Christian philosophers. Two of his most famous works, the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1259-64), and the *Summa Theologiae* (1266-73), are examples of his work on Christian philosophy.

Aquinas liked systems, he had:

5 statements about the divine nature of God – simple, perfect, infinite, immutable & one.

4 cardinal virtues – prudence, temperance, justice & fortitude.

3 theological virtues – faith, hope and charity.

He said God's existence could be demonstrated through reason, while specific doctrines (such as the Trinity & the incarnation of Christ) were revealed through faith.

The Existence of God can be proved in five ways:

1. God is first mover which enables things to move.
2. God is the first cause which causes things to exist.
3. God is the first cause of contingent beings which give necessity to things to exist.
4. There is a gradation of quality to be found in things, God is the cause of the aim for perfection.
5. God is the intelligent being who directs natural things to their end.

Our discussion challenged Aquinas' reasons, but also considered the balance with faith, which cannot be reasoned.

Our next Philosophy meeting will be on 23rd July, 10am at Penny's café. All welcome.