

3.40

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL



Name: _____

Date: _____

Words to know:

defect (*imperfection or lack*), pinnacle (*highest point*)

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that, in a general sense, evil is an _____ or lack of what should be there. Technically speaking we call this a _____. So evil is not a being or nature; it's the _____ of something.

Privation: The _____ of what _____.

This is how Aquinas approaches the problem of evil: God has created a _____ world of material things and in order for such a world to exist, it is necessary that things grow, die, and decay. Aquinas calls these _____.

When Aquinas talks about the evil that human beings experience, he no longer speaks of natural evil. There are two types of evil that pertain to rational and free creatures:

EVILS THAT PERTAIN TO HUMAN BEINGS	
Poena:	Culpa:
Which is worse? Why?	
GOD'S WILL	
Culpa:	
God never wills the evil of _____ or fault. Sin: We choose some partial good contrary to the order of right _____. God _____ us to do this but is in no way its _____.	
Poena:	
But God does will the _____ that follows from this moral evil, both in order to restore the right ordering of _____ and also to correct the wrongdoer.	

Why does God permit the suffering of the innocent?

Human suffering, bodily death, etc. are very real and terrible _____ and they were not part of God's original _____ for us.

Those evils only entered the world because of the _____ of our first parents and we inherit the terrible consequences of this _____.

In those who suffer them, these are the evil of _____ (not the evil of guilt.) They can be the occasion for great moral _____ and goodness.

Why does sin exist?

How sin is possible: The creature focuses its attention and directs its _____ to some limited good, disregarding the defect or _____ that the choice will cause.

But we cannot explain _____ the creature does this. Evil is always _____ and self-defeating. Why then does God permit it?

Two quasi-explanations:

1. We can be sure that God only permits evil for the sake of some much better and higher _____.
2. God allows the defect of sin so that He can manifest His _____ in an even greater way as our Savior. This is a beautiful and high truth, and it reaches its pinnacle in the _____.

Comprehension questions:

1. Which type of evil do you think we experience more often, that of suffering (poena) or that of sin (culpa)?
2. Have you experienced God bringing good out of evil in your life? How?
3. Do you find St. Thomas' explanation of evil and suffering convincing? What remaining questions do you have?