Candidacy 2 St. Thomas Aquinas Treatise on Happiness
Mrs. Marilyn Pipkin, OP
Oct. 18, 2020

Question 5 The attainment of Happiness
Article 7 Whether any good works are necessary that man may receive happiness from God?

The three objections St. Thomas puts forward in presenting "the other side" basically state that good works are not required for happiness. Happiness defined as the ultimate end happiness, not incomplete happiness. In his "on the contrary" he quotes John 13:17 "If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them." The preceding verses speak of Jesus, our Master, washing the feet of the apostles. John 13:16 states we are not greater than our master, therefore we need to do works of service and humility in imitation of Jesus our Master.

In Thomas' "I answer that" he states no pure creature can becomingly gain Happiness, without the movement of operation." He further makes reference to angels who did one "movement of meritorious work" in obtaining happiness. "Man obtains it by many movements of works which are called merits." St. Thomas in this answer points out that only God has the natural capacity for the perfect good which merits happiness with no works.

In replying to Objection 3 St. Thomas answers the quote of Rom. 4:6 about "righteousness apart from works" as speaking of the "happiness of Hope" which is bestowed on us as sanctifying grace in baptism. This grace gives us the ability to perform meritorious acts in movement toward happiness, the last end.

St. Thomas also quotes Philosopher (Ethic, I, 9) as stating "happiness is the reward of works of virtue."

The protestant position of faith alone, without works, is all that is necessary for salvation demonstrates the arguments, or objections, that St. Thomas is writing of. That is answered in scripture in James 2:17, "So, faith by itself, if it has no works is dead."

I conclude that works are necessary for ultimate happiness. Works demonstrate a pure, loving heart that imitates our Lord and responds to His love with gratitude.