LS 341 AA Contemplation & Action   
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Assignment #6: What does “contemplation” mean from a Christian/Dominican perspective, and what are the implications for action?

This assignment has four parts. Combined, the four parts are worth 100 points. They are designed to extend our investigation of contemplation, meditation and prayer into an examination of how Dominicans understand the link between contemplation and action.

It will provide you with a starting point for understanding why the University asks you to demonstrate social responsibility. The Liberal Arts Studies learning outcome on Social Responsibility asks you to:

* identify social implications of a belief in inalienable human rights.
* promote peace by working for justice and the common good.
* learn and apply responsible stewardship of the environment.

This assignment will also give you an opportunity to reflect on the Religious Studies learning outcome that ask students to “reflect on the wisdom of religious traditions in understanding the meaning of life.” Two of the four learning outcomes for this outcome are as follows:

* Students will be able to identify sacred narratives and texts, beliefs, practices and moral values associated with some of the world’s major religious traditions.
* Students will be able to identify developments in religious doctrines and traditions in various historical-cultural contexts.

Finally, it will also allow us to work on various aspects of the Critical Thinking and Communication learning outcomes.

**Part One**: Christianity’s sacred narratives, texts, beliefs, practices and moral values.

This part is worth 30 out of the 100 points.

Working in pairs, define each of the following terms using Google searches. Be sure to confirm that the websites that you are using have credible sources and citations.

Christianity

-A religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Monotheism

- (mono) means one. This is the belief that there is only one God.

Torah

-The first five books of the Bible.

Name any three of the 613 Jewish Commandments:

1. To honor the old and the wise.
2. Not to take revenge.
3. Not to bear a grudge.

Messiah

-The promised deliverer of the Jewish nation.

Jesus of Nazareth

-The central figure of the Christian religion.

John the Baptist

-The Jewish prophet who baptized Jesus.

Baptism

-The sprinkling of water on one’s forehead, admitting them into the family of God (Christian church).

Paul the Apostle (Saul of Tarsus)

-Christian missionary to the Gentiles. Author of many Epistles. Not present at Last Supper.

New Testament

-The second portion of the Christian Bible.

Bible

-Christian scriptures, divided into two testaments. Compiled of 66 books.

Codified

-The arrangement of laws into a systematic code. Typically in writing.

Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

-He rode in on a donkey’s back, palm leaves, days before Last Supper.

Eucharist

-Christian ceremony that commemorates the Last Supper. Bread, wine, etc.

Last Supper

-The last time that Jesus ate with his disciples before his crucifixion.

Crucifixion

-The nailing of “criminals” on a wooden cross. Jesus was crucified.

Gentiles

-People who are not Jewish.

Great Fire of Rome

-Urban fire that caused devastation, lasted for almost six days.

What happened to Paul and Peter as a result of the Great Fire of Rome?

-Paul and Peter were martyred during this persecution.

Gospel of Matthew: who wrote it, when, and where?

-Written by an anonymous author sometime between 60 and 80 CE, in Syria (probably).

Last Judgment

-Outlined in the book of Revelation. At the end of the world, the lord will come back to make a final judgment.

What does the Gospel of Matthew verse 19 lines 16 to 21 say about Christian moral values? To get into the Kingdom of heaven, one must:

* Not:
  + murder
  + commit adultery
  + steal
  + bear false witness
* honor thy father and thy mother
* love thy neighbor
* sell what thy has
* give to the poor

What does the Gospel of Matthew verse 25 lines 31-46 say about how Christians are supposed to behave? To get into the Kingdom of heaven, one must:

* feed the hungry
* give drink to the thirsty
* take in a stranger in need
* clothe the naked
* visit the sick and those in prison

In a few sentences, describe the persecution of Christians under the Roman emperors Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian.

Under Decius- Everybody under the Roman Empire (besides Jews) had to perform a sacrifice to the Gods

Under Valerian- ordered all Christian ministry to perform sacrifices to the Roman gods and prohibited Christians from holding meetings in cemeteries

Under Diocletian- purged the army of Christians, condemns Manicheans to death, and surrounded himself with public opponents of Christianity. (wiki)

Edict of Milan

-The agreement to treat Christians kindly in the Roman Empire.

Holy Trinity

-The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Saint Francis of Assisi and the Christmas Crèche

-Better known through the Nativity scene. The first Christmas. He did this so that his congregation could get a true feel for the birth of Jesus.

Society of Jesus (Jesuits)

-The male religious congregation of the Catholic Church.

Ignatius of Loyola

-Spanish knight that found the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits.

Part Two:

This part is worth 10 of the 100 points

Now that you have a firm grounding in Christianity’s sacred narratives, texts, beliefs, practices and moral values, do all of the following:

1. Watch this YouTube video and describe in a few well-written sentences how Christian **contemplation**, which Father Martin calls “Ignatian Contemplation,” can be compared and contrasted with Christian **meditation**, as described in Basil Pennington, in his essay, “Centering Prayer: An Ancient Christian Way of Meditation,” which you read for Assignment 3. How are Christian meditation and Christian contemplation similar, and how are they different?

Father James Martin, “Ignatian Contemplation,” YouTube video, 3:40, <http://youtu.be/Cw1ZXdBtCug>, (Published April 30, 2014).

-Christian Contemplation is more about putting yourself in certain situations of the Bible (stories). And contemplating life that way. This is more of a creative way of viewing things.

-Christian Meditation is intense prayer. The main focus of this prayer is to center everything going on around you and in your life. The tactic used to do this is to focus on one word while you pray. If one’s mind begins to wander, then one must resort back to their word.

Part Three:

This part is also worth 10 of the 100 points

We will visit Holy Rosary Chapel during class. Do all of the following:

1. Buddy up and select a work of art (sculpture, stained glass window, or one of the Stations of the Cross).
2. Sit and **contemplate** the artwork.
3. Draw what you see, each of you creating your own drawing.
4. Write notes on your drawing about the subjects, text, colors, forms, etc., to demonstrate that you have looked closely at the work.
5. Record the subject of the work and look it up online.
6. Print out one page of a website explaining the significance of the subject.
7. Attach your printout to your drawing.

Part Four

This part is worth 50 of the 100 points

Read Patricia Walter, O.P., “Higher Education in the Dominican Tradition,” which is a paper she delivered at the Dominican Higher Education Colloquium, June 16, 2012; and answers the following questions. I have uploaded a copy of the paper to the course website.

In her introduction, Walters says that her paper will examine education in the Dominican tradition in two specific ways. What are those two ways?

1. discourse toward a common sense
2. education toward the common good.

On pages 3 and 4, she makes an analogy about poor vision and says, “What we see depends on where we stand, our social location. Our interpretations and judgments about what we’ve experienced are often flawed.” What is the corrective?

-Contemplation is the corrective.

How does Walter Burghardt define contemplation?

-Burghardt defines contemplation as “a long, loving look at the real”.

Who wrote the following: “The essence of a contemplative attitude… is a constant willingness to be taken by surprise”?

-Monika Hellwig

What did Dominic de Guzmán, who was the founder of the Dominican order, do when there was a famine in the 12th century?

-He sold all of his handwritten books that were special to him so that he could buy food for the people who were dying of hunger.

What did the adherents of Catharism or Albigensianism believe?

-They believed that there were two gods. These two gods were the good god of the purely spiritual, and the evil god who created all of the material things in our world.

On page 6, Walters explains that Dominic created the [Dominican] Order of the Preachers as a response to the conditions that he witnessed. What were those conditions?

-war and the impact on all dimensions of creation and humanity (?)

Fill in the blank. According to Walter, the Order was founded “not so much as a path of holiness for its members, but…

“especially for the preaching and salvation of souls.”.

On page seven, she writes that Edward Schillebeeckx, OP, uses the analogy of Dominican spirituality as weaving two threads together. What do these two threads (the warp and woof) represent?

-The cross-grain of tradition and new religious responsibilities.

At the bottom of page seven and the top of page eight, Walters says that we are in a more momentous shift than the one that Dominic faced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. What are the decisions “involving deep values and beliefs” that concern her?

* The nature of reality
* About God
* About human relationships with:
  + God
  + One another
  + Everything that inhabits the Earth
* Our commons

Summarize in your own words why you think Walters quotes the 2001 General Chapter of the Dominican men, on the bottom of page nine. What point is she trying to make?

I think that she is trying to prove that point that it would as detrimental to not study the questions of peace, justice and stewardship as it would the traditional studies of the Dominicans. She may be trying to prove the point that we need to not be so narrow minded about what is studied, and try and truly look into what is important.

On page ten in her essay, Walters focuses on the three “basics” of the Dominican charism (Charism means ‘gift from God.’), “embedded in our memories and characteristic approach to life, in our structures, prayers, and ministries.” What are these three basic charisms?

1. God
2. Creation
3. Humanity

Walters distinguishes between hearing from the police chief and hearing from the architect or mayor. What point is she trying to make?

-That we associate persons’ titles to feelings. When we hear “the police chief wants to see you” we get an eerie feeling, as opposed to the mayor or architect wanting to see you.

Why does she quote the Dominican St. Albert the Great on the bottom of page ten? What does this quote say about the kinds of things that interest Dominicans?

-This quote says that everything under the heavens should interest the Dominicans.

-She uses this quote to reiterate her point that we Dominicans should study more than just the traditional things, they should be studying all of God’s creation.

Walters names four “gifts of grace and outcomes of formation and education” that do not seem to be part of human beings at their birth. What are these gifts of grace?

1. Just- to be guided by truth, reason, justice, and fairness
2. Temperate- to be self-restrained, keeping opinions neutral and moderate
3. Courageous- to possess courage or bravery
4. Prudent- to be careful in your decisions and actions

⇑Look up those four adjectives in an online dictionary and write a one-sentence definition for each.

On page 11, Walters names several famous Dominicans on page eleven and quickly characterizes some of their key contributions. Look up the following Dominicans online and record here in a couple of sentences for each how they responded to the real problems of their day.

Catherine of Siena

-St. Catherine responded by spreading her grace upon the people so that when they saw her, the first thing they would do is confess.

Bartolomeo de las Casas

-Served people of other countries. He did not discriminate between races and thing like that.

Gustavo Gutierrez

-He would have responded by helping the poor of today’s generation as well as that of his.

On page 12, Walters quotes J. D. G. Dunn, who explains that dialogue results in five benefits. Read his rambling quote and tease out the five benefits of dialogue that Dunn mentions.

1. Sharpens insights
2. Gives ability to for new points
3. Gives ability to tackle issues
4. Opens up one’s mind to fresh insight
5. Opens mind to new perspective

At the bottom of page twelve and top of page thirteen, Walter compares the “royal consciousness,” and “the prophetic consciousness.” To what extent does her list of “prophetic” concerns correspond to the list of issues mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew—requirements for Christians to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? (See page four of this assignment.) Provide some specific examples that appear in both lists.

-It does not correspond with the list in the Gospel of Matthew to a very large extent. However, a correlation that we see in both is the mention of strangers. In the Gospel of Matthew, we are told to take in strangers who need a place to stay, the prophetic concerns also point attention to “the strangers”.

On page thirteen, she says, “The common good is an extraordinarily difficult concept for those of us raised in the dominant culture of the United States to understand.” What are the conditions of our “dominant culture”?

-These conditions include peace, the meeting of basic material needs, and the active regard for human rights.

On page 14, Walters defines “true education.” Fill in the blanks:

True education is a formal and transformational process in which habits of the mind and heart are developed, in which character is shaped, in which the capacity not only to know oneself, one’s own history and culture but also to move out in empathy and compassion to others is enlarged.

Have you done any of the following at Siena Heights? If so, provide an example or two:

* Work to improve the human rights of others.
* Promote peace by working for justice and the common good.
* Apply responsible stewardship of the environment.

I promoted peace by working for justice and the common good by working at MIS as security as a fundraiser, as well as parked cars in an orderly fashion. This made it possible for people to go about their days peacefully while they were in the parking lot, which tends to be a place where a lot of havoc and anger comes out of people.