Raymond JNC Cruz 2/27/2014

TH 151 – Y Final Exam

1. **Relativism [moral relativism, secularism and pluralism]**

Relativism is the mindset that there is no absolute truth, that all truth is relative to a person, and that all perspectives are equally valid. It is a common secular movement today in societies which have adopted pluralism.

Pope Benedict XVI describes relativism as a “modern dictatorship.” Aside from this, relativism can also be considered as a new religion altogether. Alongside Christianity, Islam, and other major world religions, relativism has been influencing almost all modern communities today.

Although the relativist philosophy of considering all truths equally valid is theoretically a solution to all conflict stemming from unacceptance (since everyone can justify his or her actions), there is a major contradiction in relativist thinking. If all truths are valid depending on individual perspective, then everyone can perform any action the he or she wills to do. A person can steal, and yet it is justified since there is truth in her action. One can kill without any legal infringement since there is truth in his act of murder. The recognition of an action whether it is right or wrong is unnecessary, since everyone’s actions are right from their point of view. Morality will be rendered as an obsolete concept.

An example of modern-day relativism is the issue of abortion. From the Christian point of view, abortion is morally wrong. Technically, it is an act of murder, but there are legal arguments that disprove that claim in some cases. From another perspective, however, abortion is perfectly acceptable. Using the relativist way of thinking, it can be said that both sides of the issue are valid, therefore there is no need to address the issue, but in reality, abortion is an issue that clearly needs a resolution. Another major issue today is Russia’s anti-homosexual sentiments. For the relativists in the Russian government, there is truth in what they are doing, therefore leading them to think that there is no moral issue. Relativist thinkers think that their philosophy will perpetuate a utopia for the whole world, but what is really happening is that relativism is plunging us into a dystopian society.

1. **The Gospel of John**

The Gospel of John was written to prove that Jesus was the Son of God, and that he is the source of eternal life for all those who believe in him (John 20:31).

The Prologue to John’s Gospel sets the context in which the Gospel takes place. In the Prologue, John is portrayed as the witness and testifier of Jesus as the Son of God.

John 7:37 is alluding to Isaiah 55:1, *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”* Jesus is repeating God’s offer, in which He is offering eternal life to those who will believe. He is fulfilling God’s role in Isaiah 49:10, *“They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water.”* In John 8:12 he declares himself as the light of the world. The verse has many alliterations in the Old Testament, bust most notable of Isaiah 49:6, *“He says: It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”* Indeed, Jesus as the light of the world will bring about salvation for all people. People only need to believe in him to receive the Kingdom.

Mr. Hutchison, thank you for guiding us through our synthesis of theology during our last semester as college students in the Ateneo. You have helped us greatly in sustaining our faith in our current environment of relativism, secularism, and pluralism. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude for understanding our current situation as seniors going through our toughest semester, since we usually come to class already with what little energy we have left spent due to all of our other academic requirements, and oftentimes we tend to doze off (“praying”, as you called it) mid-lecture, especially me and my seatmate Aaron up front (I would like to offer my sincerest apologies for this). I hope you will enjoy your tenure as a professor of theology in the Ateneo. Many new experiences await, as many new faces will be coming through the doors of each of your classrooms. Again, thank you very much, and I hope you enjoyed teaching us as much as we enjoyed being in your class. ☺ **+AMDG+**