

The relationship between faith and reason

[Life](#), [Relationships](#)



“ Faith and Reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth” Explain the dangers for a theologian when faith and reason are divorced from each other. Use at least one example of a Christian teaching that shows the harmony of faith and reason The harmony of faith and reason are the grounds upon which many Christian teachings are built.

This relationship enhances elements of both constructs, however the danger of separating reason from faith is that reason will endeavour to prove literally and most logically which would cause the ultimate goal and question to be lost in deliberation and, on the other hand, separating faith from reason would cause faith to be viewed as mere fable or superstition. The two must cooperate in equal conjunction in order for the human spirit to rise to the contemplation of truth as proposed in the encyclical letter ‘ Fides et Ratio’ by the late supreme pontiff Pope John Paul II.

Reason could be simply defined as the logical conclusion drawn from literal occurrences or the confirmed nature of a tradition or practise. However more elements of Reason hold true in addition to the prospect of something that can be ‘ proven’. Reason is generally understood as the principals for a methodological inquiry, whether intellectual, moral, aesthetic or religious. 1 Any acquisition of intellectual knowledge, through either direct understanding or argument is a representation of ‘ reason’

The Internet Encyclopaedia ofPhilosophyHebrews 11: 1 states that “ faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see”. The basis of faith is usually adapted from the authority of revelation whether that be direct (God speaking directly to a person), or indirect (books of the bible,

sermons by priests, etc). Faith depicts a trust in God and his promises to his people. Pope John Paul II stated that through Christian teachings, what humans cannot see or touch is confirmed by faith²

Pope John Paul II, not only addresses the fallacious assertions of modern philosophers, but offers a remedy by demonstrating the truth of the Aristotelian or Thomistic worldview, showing that faith and science are by no means contrary to one another, but that it's essential for the progression of humanity—of any kind—that faith and science (or reason) be used together. ³ The separation of the two cause a confusion, previously experienced by philosophers, that sections faith and science/reason as two detached entities.

Viewing this detachment in its simplest formation, the human thinker surmises that for one to be faithful to God, and a religious being, they must reject all elements of reason and commit solely to the concepts of faith. Alternatively, one who would believe in a greater percentage of reason must be atheist as any rejection of God is inherently a rejection of faith itself. As the world develops and humans become more knowledgeable, it becomes impossible to deny certain facts; however this becomes a danger to all religious communities as by simplest thinking, trusting in any evidence is perceived as a rejection of trust in God.

Herein lies the dangers for theologians; prior of course to John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio* ^{2 3} *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul II Catholic Champion that acknowledges that “ reason and faith cannot be separated without diminishing the capacity of men and women to know themselves, the world and God in an appropriate

way ...There is thus no reason for competition of any kind between reason and faith: each contains the other, and each has its own scope for action”

As individuals, we must affectively reason within our own contexts and founded understandings of the world which we live, thus this will help us engage in our faith to make sense of the world we observe. 4 Noticeably it can be understood that faith, tradition and reasoning are intertwined within one another, you cannot have one without the other and all 3 elements are essential components in understanding and living ones faith.

The harmony of faith and reason is best seen through the story of creation. “ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible” 5. This passage highlights the significance of the contributions from both faith and reason through Genesis and the early books of the bible to the validity of belief. Plato tried explaining man’s position in the world and the beginning of our time through the allegory of the windowless cave.

In the simplest form, the cave presents the backdrop upon which a play of shadows takes place. The men in the cave watch this play being executed from a light source as the only reality they know. While rumours flare of an outside ‘ world’ the play continues, and ‘ reason’ creates speculation over what is about to happen next and theories are developed regarding the purpose. Over time, reason will explain most aspects of the show, but would only hold 4 5 Fides et Ratio, John Paul II 94 Hebrews 11: 3 vidence enough to understand the earliest moments of the show. To reach full truth, faith needs to be introduced to actually believe in the initial source of light. Furthermore

to the prospect, faith and reason question what happens if the light sources goes out; for the play will not " die" as death is merely an understood element of the play. No one was around at the time of creation and no one has a direct knowledge of what happened; so reason cannot confirm whether or not God did it.

But reason does suggest that the universe is operating and therefore must have had a beginning. It is very intricately designed, from the basic laws of physics to the incredible complexity of the human brain. Whether a person looks at the beauty and exclaims, " There must be a God! " or whether that person has to sit down and calculate the probability of these things happening by chance, the conclusion of the honest seeker is that nature does not explain itself. Furthermore the reasonable belief in Genesis 1: 1, " In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth" is a sheer step of faith rather than an uninformed stab in the dark. The ideas and theories of past philosophers have greatly affected the divorce between faith and reason however John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio* has significantly helped the church and her people understand and feel comfortable with the concept of a ' circle' holding both entities together in a strong union where one feeds off the other.

Theologians face a danger when thinking opposed to the late pope's discussion as the concept draws contradictions and confusion from believers that leads to the assumption that they are less than faithful in the eyes of God for considering reasonable and proven evidence. Olsen, Ross *Faith and Reason: What is the Relationship?*