

THOMAS AQUINAS' TREATISE ON VIRTUE IN RELATION TO NATIONAL
SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The discourse of saint Thomas Aquinas on Virtues is a monumental work on human activity. It is based on Aristotle's teaching on the final goal of humanity which is human happiness. With the Nigerian nation being practically besieged by sundry forms of vices right from the lowest rung of the societal ladder to the highest echelon of the society; and with corruption and the general atmosphere of insecurity, it is to say the least, a bad tale. This paper is therefore an attempt at making a review of Aquinas' Treatise as a handy guide to our treatment of virtues in relation to the Nigerian situation. It is contended here that once the citizenry who are basically adherents of the various religions (Islam, Christianity and Traditional) are made able to put into practice their different religious values, the ensuing transformation will not only engender peace and security but greater patriotism, dedication and transparency, which will inevitably lead to unity, progress and development. The methodology employed here is that of analytic exposition of Thomas Aquinas' ideologies in juxtaposition to the Nigerian experience. The principle of giving each person his/her due, allowing justice to prevail, respecting human dignity and maintaining some high sense of discipline at the individual and corporate levels are presented as means of curbing our societal ills.

Keywords: National Security, National Interest, Thomas Aquinas

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, there seems to be a revival of interest in the concept of virtues. This is manifest especially as the news media get more replete with news headlines on Nigerians extolling virtues of fellow Nigerians. It is often eulogies galore when receptions are organized in honour of illustrious sons/daughters or when there are birthdays and award-winning, book-launch, house warming, conferment of chieftaincy titles, wedding anniversaries and funeral ceremonies of one kind or the other. As such instances, the citizenry are often enjoined to embrace virtues of hard-work, humility, trustworthiness, transparency, truthfulness, patience, perseverance, magnanimity, self-discipline and the like (and as such, men/women of easy virtues are scorned). Within this context, leaders are admonished to imbibe virtues that enable them to exhibit worthy leadership qualities aimed at engendering peace, security and development. In this light, adherents of various religions are reminded to emulate the virtues embedded in their religion; the citizenry is often challenged to promote Nigeria's virtues, not only to curb the bad press or bad impression outsiders have for the nation but to put Nigeria on a sound footing socio-politically, economically, morally and otherwise. Saint Thomas Aquinas'

Treatise on virtues would be a handy guide to our treatment of virtues in relation to the Nigerian situation.

The discourse of Saint Thomas Aquinas (c. 1224 – 1274) on virtues is embedded in his best known work or *Magnus Opus* known as “*Summa Theologiae*”, a monumental voluminous hard-work. He was a Dominican Friar with an aristocratic background and a contemporary of Albert the Great. His thoughts were presented in relation to Aristotalianism which he imbibed in his earlier years. He, however, believed that human conscience can err, that the unmerited gift of grace is capable of bringing about a change. He is the first medieval thinker to value the State positively by seeing man as a social animal whose capacities are developed to the full only within a political community (Mautner, 2000:393). It is specifically in the first section of the first part of this work (Questions 55-67 of 1-11). The discourse on virtue came out more profoundly in the second question of the Second Part (*Secunda Secundae II-II*) which dwells on human activity. His theory of virtue is based on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, the scriptures and the teachings of the Church Fathers.

It is noteworthy that Aristotle (384 BC) had earlier made a submission that the final goal of humanity is human *eudemonia* (or happiness). Accordingly, Aristotle asserted that, moral virtues are acquired, then perfected by consistently exercising them through a habit (ethos). Besides, he believes that one becomes virtuous by doing virtuous acts. Virtue, according to him, is a state of character and it is concerned with choice, lying in a mean intermediate between two extremes (vices) (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, II 36). The ideas thus expressed above forms the kernel of Aristotle’s teaching which Aquinas depended majorly upon in the formulation of his synthesis.

In fact, it has often been remarked that Saint Augustine is the Plato of the Middle Ages, while St. Thomas Aquinas (1223-1274) is its Aristotle. He is known as an impressive scholar with a reputation for great originality. His writings exhibit how philosophy can provide a framework for Theology. Simply put, Aquinas offers us a Christianized version of Aristotle’s moral theory. This assessment is quite instructive in suggesting that Aristotle’s ethics is a *sine qua non* for that of Aquinas. Aquinas held that all things come from God (*exitus*) and are oriented to God (*raditus*). He argues that humanity can acquire possibilities actually and supernaturally by which means they return to God who is the root. One of such means he refers to as “a good operative habit (*habitus*) productive of good” (Walter, 1935:2082). Furthermore, he believes that the intellect and will are powers of the soul and are actually oriented to the true and the good (Njoku, 2006:80).

2. CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF VIRTUE

For Aquinas, the term virtue (*utis*) denotes power, faculty, aptitude or capacity, the proximate principle of an activity, synonym of *Potentia*, *Potestus* (Deferrari, 1960:1089). St. Augustine’s definition of virtue as manliness (*virtus*) is acceptable to Aquinas. Virtue, as it were, is more than sheer knowledge, as the stoics would have it, it entails willingness to do good. In any case, what Augustine terms “qualities” are referred to as “habits” by Aquinas. According to him, man has an innate natural disposition to grasp the elementary principles of morality and man is disposed to knowing them spontaneously (even without formal studies). And this is technically termed *Synderesis* by Aquinas. *Synderesis* refers to a habit, a natural tendency imparted on us by nature and by which we naturally and spontaneously grasp the fundamental principles of morality. It is infallible. It can never make mistakes and it is present in all men (Omeregbe, 1993:183). In this case, the role of *Synderesis* is to help man to apprehend the fundamental moral principles while conscience is to apply these principles which are by nature abstract. It is conscience that applies them to particular situations. As it were, virtues may seem to be acts (because habits do not earn merits). Yet, virtues are powers, and ultimately human virtues are habits (McInerny, 1998:655).

Virtues are therefore good habits in contradistinction to vices (which are bad). A morally good action, for Aquinas, naturally corresponds to human goodness, discerned by reason (Porter, 1990:92).

Njoku (2006:81) sheds more light on this when he observed that in these conceptual schemes of Aquinas, to pursue ultimate good, it is presupposed that an individual is able to maintain a good order in his own life and character, out of which he consistently pursues the ultimate goal of happiness. In this sense, virtues, in Aquinas are said to be habits that denote a certain perfection of a power. That explains why virtues are not earned in sleep. The term “*habitus*” applied by Aquinas to explain habit has more to do with dispositions. It pertains to one being disposed to some activity or the other because one finds it natural. It is a halfway between a capacity and an action (Davies, 2002:101 – 102). And this is often as a result of constant practice. Practise, they say, makes for perfection. The only way to run well in sports, for instance, is to practice running. In the same token, one gets courageous by summoning courage; temperate by acting temperately; just by acting justly, though these virtues (especially moral virtues can also be infused, as Saint Augustine would have it). Habits for Aquinas should not be misconstrued with our modern understanding of the word. In this vein, virtue means the power that is determinate to an act. The furthest point to which a power can reach is what is virtue. It refers to good use of free-will and proper directedness of power. The classical example Aquinas offers is if a man is capable of carrying a hundred weight and not more, his virtue is put at hundred weight and not sixty. It implies some perfection in relation to action rather than being (q. 55 a²). The power which propels or controls such actions is Reason (q. 55 a³). He harps on the fact that the subject matter of virtue is the power of the soul explainable in three basic ways:

- Virtue as perfection of a power;
- Virtue as an operative habit which proceeds from the soul through a power; and
- Virtue which disposes us to the best “for the best is the end” (q. 58 a¹)

Aquinas argues that a virtue is a habit which perfects a power that a thing has. The powers of the human person (that is the intellect and the three appetitive powers: the will and the two irrational appetites, account for our physical pleasures which we term concupiscible appetites) and also accounts for our emotions of anger and fear which we term irascible appetite (Drefcinski, 2012:2). The genuine peace, happiness and joy or otherwise of individuals and communities are most often determined by healthy or unhealthy desires for materials things, food, sex, etcetera. Good habits are therefore necessary so as to dispose people for authentic happiness. However, we must bear in mind that perfect happiness, as such is only possible with the vision of God in the hereafter.

2.1 TYPES OF VIRTUES

Virtues are categorized into two in Aquinas’ thought in view of man’s positive deeds. In relation to human action, the operative principles are said to be two, namely, the intellect (reason) and the appetite. Every human virtue therefore perfects of either these principles. If it perfects his speculative or practical intellect, it is intellectual virtue, but if it perfects his appetite, it would be a moral virtue (q. 58 a³). According to Aquinas, therefore, there are intellectual and moral virtues.

i) *Intellectual or Speculative Virtues* – are habits of the speculative level. Abstract or theoretical reasoning at this level also needs a type of habit in order to achieve its perfection in goodness. These sort of virtues are learnt. “A virtue which perfects the will, as charity or justice, confers the right use of these speculative habits” (q. 57 a¹). Under this typology, three basic virtues are considered: Wisdom, Science and Understanding (art). Here, the virtues are geared towards “the consideration of truth... as known in itself and as known through another.

What is known in itself is as a principle, and is at once understood by the intellect” (q. 57, a²). The habit that perfects this is known as understanding. “Whereas, a truth which is known through another is understood by the intellect, not at once, but by means of the reason’s inquiry and its term” (q. 57, a²). Wisdom is the virtue that considers first causes. It judges things rightly and puts them in orderly fashion. However, in respect of that which is last in this or that genus of knowable matter, science is what perfects the intellect in the last realm of wisdom, in as much as it demonstrates conclusion from principles (q. 57, a²).

Aquinas holds that these three virtues are distinguishable each from the other but they depend on wisdom; wisdom obtains the highest place, and contains beneath itself both understanding and science by judging the conclusions of science and the principles on which they are based (Njoku, 2006:84). This virtue offers one the capacity to act well but not necessarily the inclination to do so. In which case, the possession of knowledge does not necessarily translate to virtuous living as claimed in Plato’s Protagoras. This was refuted by Aristotle in Book 7 of his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Vicious living is not necessarily due to ignorance. Little wonder then that a highly endowed physician may apply this general knowledge in dastardly butchering human life through induced abortion. In which case, the good that does not engage our appetite is not our good. In other words, the possession of intellectual skill is not a guarantee of the capacity to utilize it in an appropriate manner.

(ii) *Moral Virtues*: These are virtues that are in the appetitive faculty. They produce in us inclinations that are almost natural. It is so called from “*Mos*” in the manner that they are “of a natural or quasi-natural inclination to do some particular action” (I-II q. 58, a¹). They produce dispositions that attune one naturally to act in a certain way that is virtuous. These dispositions come through habitual practice, not through learning. This entails change of life. No two ways. For instance, one needs to perform courageous acts in order to be a courageous fellow. Emotions are tamed by reason, by which means emotions are humanized. Our moral duty lies in making the apparent good to tally with the true good. As it were, moral virtues are found in the appetites of the soul, although they are distinct from the intellectual virtues. They offer a kind of rescue-operation to rectify human desire, which is guided in both sub-rational passions of concupiscence and aversion (Njoku, 2006:85). Aquinas terms some of these moral virtues Cardinal Virtues.

2.2 CARDINAL VIRTUES

According to Aquinas, Cardinal Virtues refer to a group of virtues human beings should be striving for. They are some sort of ideals. These are key virtues around which other virtues hinge (I-II q 61, aa¹⁻², etc). Etymologically, the word “Cardinal” is derived from the Latin word “hinge”. The door rotates, swings or turns on its hinges. Cardinal virtues are, therefore, so called because they form the door or gate through which a person is ushered into an authentic human life. That is, natural human life which is specifically human. Therefore, it is the active life within which the exercise of the moral virtues is laid bare at the sensorial, rational and contemplative levels.

At the level of the senses, the animal or bestial nature is exhibited and pleasures take the uppermost place. But practical reason accords man his rightful position. The human soul is capable of intellectual contemplation (though it is more of an angelic quality). The cardinal virtues are the “principal virtues” and the principles of life and of human action. They are there in order to help man realize active and moral life by the exercise of practical reasoning. The formal principle of virtue then is the good of reason (*ratio bonum*) that is, reason directing itself (Njoku, 2006:86). With this backdrop, four moral virtues are identified as cardinal virtues, viz – Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice. We shall therefore explain them briefly.

2.2.1 PRUDENCE

This is the height of practical reasoning or practical wisdom. It refers to “aptness for a good work which entails wisdom and understanding. However, it also “confers through the work because aptness in use regards appetite” (I-II q. 57, a⁴). It has to do with the right reason of things to be done in contrast with art which is the right reason of things to be made. Here, the action abides in the acting agent. This has to do with the right reason about things to be done, that man be well disposed with regard to the ends and this depends on the rectitude of his appetit. Prudence is of good counsel about matters regarding man’s entire life and the end of human life (I-II q. 57, a⁴). In a nutshell, prudence has to do with counseling in respect of the right proportion in every aspect of the human life.

2.2.2 JUSTICE

Perching on Aristotle’s teaching on Justice, Aquinas holds that Justice pertains to those things that belong to the realm of our relationship with other men. This pertains to rendering the other his due or right” knowingly, consciously or voluntarily and with choice on a rather permanent basis. He does what he oughts spontaneously and readily” (I-II q. 57, a⁴). It implies equity towards the other.

The virtue of a good citizen in Aquinas’ term is general or legal justice whereby a man is directed to the common good (q. 58, a⁶). That is, in regulating the relations with others (distributive justice). On the other hand, by means of temperance and fortitude, man, according to Aquinas relates to himself (commutative justice). Two types of justice are therefore identifiable, distributive and commutative justice.

2.2.3 AFFECTIVE JUSTICE

Under the umbrella of the moral virtues are the four cardinal virtues, but there are two considered by Aquinas as affective virtues, among these cardinal virtues, namely, temperance and fortitude. These virtues squarely address the experience of feeling a strong desire that tempts one away from one’s sense of right or overall goals, and the experience of feeling of a strong fear or aversion that tempts one in the same way (I-II, q. 60 aa⁴⁻⁵). These are qualities of character, which are characterized by action that exhibit self-control in the areas of temptation, contrary to our overall aims and commitments. (Porter, 1990:144).

2.2.4 TEMPERANCE

For Aquinas, temperance (or Latin *Temperantis*) means the general virtue of moderation, since passions drive us to pursue pleasure; temperance restrains the desires for pleasures of touch, that is, in food, drink and sex. Temperance prescribes the restraint which reason dictates in these matters (II.II q. 141, a² and a³). Aquinas believes that shame-facedness which is reaction to evil and honesty which is spiritual beauty forms its integral parts, subjectivity, it has to do with abstinence and sobriety. In a more down-to-earth rendering, Njoku (2006:89-90) opines:

Abstinence moderates the use of food reasonably and it’s opposed to gluttony. Sobriety moderates the use of intoxicating drinks... Chastity regulates the use of sex in reasonable way, and virginity is a virtue; also connected with chastity is that in which a person intends to abstain perpetually from the pleasures of sex. There are also the potential parts of temperance namely: Continence, meekness, clemency and modesty – in words and deeds and dress.

2.2.5 FORTITUDE

In Aquinas' thought, fortitude (*fortitudo*) denotes strength, firmness of the soul in the sense of a general virtue, courage of soul in the sense of particular virtue (Porter 1990:417). This has to do with courage to face life demands and readiness to take certain risks in a bid to defend a good cause. It could even mean readiness to die as in martyrdom. "It restrains fear and moderate audacity" (II-II q. 123, a³). According to Aquinas, three vices which stand in sharp opposition to fortitude are, fear, insensibility and foolhardiness. Other concepts that bear some relationship to this notion are magnanimity, magnificence, patience and perseverance. For Aquinas, fortitude is synonymous with being hungry and thirsty for justice.

In summary, Aquinas in his monumental piece holds that, these virtues serve various purposes, thus: Prudence, perfects the intellect; Justice perfects the will; Fortitude perfects the irascible appetite and Temperance perfects the concupiscible appetites while the theological virtues direct one to the supernatural acts (Gratsch, 1990:108). As it is argued, the intellectual virtues are superior to the moral virtues because they perfect the highest faculty of the soul. Yet moral virtues do more to achieve one's ultimate goal. In this case, the chief moral virtue is considered to be Justice because it modifies the will; the chief intellectual virtue is said to be wisdom because its object, God surpasses all objects of other intellectual virtues; chief Theological virtue is said to be Chastity because it implies union with the beloved. In faith and hope one remains distinct. Moral and intellectual virtues will remain in the next life. For theological virtue, it is only chastity that remains in the next life (Gratsch, 1990:111). Having considered the different categories of virtues, it is pertinent to investigate into the goal of virtues in general.

3. THE GOAL OF VIRTUES IN GENERAL

The aim of virtue is apparently that individuals and State may achieve the good. Virtues make the possessors good persons. However, in studying the theory of virtues from Aquinas' or even Aristotle's view points, there are inevitable hurdles to cross, a lack of coincidence between their terminology and our modern-day understanding of virtue which refers mainly to "moral standards". According to Foot (1978:2), these virtues to us "are moral virtues whereas *arête* and *virtus* also refer to art, and even to excellences of the speculative intellect whose domain is theory rather than practice".

For Aquinas, there are three categories of virtues (intellectual, moral and theological). The intellectual virtues, as the name implies, perfect intellectual powers of the human person in both the theoretical and practical activities. i.e. truth on things made or actions performed. As earlier stated, the three virtues that perfect intellectual powers and understanding, science and wisdom (prudence) which are capable of being misused, prudence is the only intellectual virtue that cannot be misused because it is practical wisdom and unity of virtues. Moral virtues include temperance, courage and justice. Courage tames emotions of fear and gives confidence and perfects irascible appetites. Justice has to do with interactions with people and it perfects the will. Moral virtues as it were, are capable of making the possessors good persons. And the theological virtues (faith, hope and charity) are aids to achieving perfect happiness in heaven in relation to the vision of God. This latter group of virtues come first because they are the ones that set us into the habit of correctly getting at the ultimate.

Our class of virtues does not exactly correspond with what Aristotle calls *aretai ethikai* and "Aquinas" *virtutes morales*. For us, there are four cardinal virtues: Courage, Temperance, Wisdom, Justice (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1805, 1813, 1839, 1849) but Aristotle and Aquinas term only three of these virtues Moral Virtues: Practical Wisdom (Aristotle's *Phronesis* and 'Aquinas' *Prudentia*) they class with the intellectual virtues, though they point out the close connection between practical wisdom and what they call moral virtues; and

sometimes they use *arête* and *virtus* very much as we use *virtues* in contemporary English grammar.

Of their very nature, virtues have the goal of rationally organizing the passions and re-ordering human life so as to bring about harmony by way of discipline or good habits. For instance, human desires (appetites) are organized or ordered by repeatedly refraining from the allurements of sensible pleasures under the guidance of reason. As Magee (2012:1) beautifully rendered it, “virtue” which is “an operative habit” is a good habit productive of good works”. In other words, moral virtues and practical wisdom are acquired through habituation or practice. It frees a person from the constraint of law because the virtuous person is already choosing to act in conformity with law and morality. The person aims at a good end and also makes a right choice as a means to that end.

By virtue, the soul produces good life. It has its own reward which is the Happiness of the virtuous person even if he/she is not given a path on the back or rewarded materially. And we may hasten to add that it promotes Peace, Security and Development. As it were, to be virtuous is to “be great-souled” or “be liberal”. In other words, to be virtuous entails deeper and constant consideration of common-good or others’ interest. This is even more true with the typical African society. In traditional Africa, the morally good person thinks not only of himself/herself but of the good of the community or the larger society within which he/she lives. And he/she means no harm to them.

The virtue of Wisdom, for instance, is a habit or ability which enables one to understand or judge realities in terms of their ultimate causes. Aquinas considers it the chief intellectual virtue because its object is God. It surpasses the objects of the other intellectual virtues. Nigerians, nay Africans are notoriously religious (Mbiti, 1982:2) and one of the merits of any meaningful religion is that it teaches virtue. The virtue of Prudence which falls under the umbrella of Wisdom offers one the “ability to discern the true ends of human conduct and to fashion means proper to effect these ends” (Ekwutosi, 2006:117). So, it guides human activity in choosing the right means to achieving the right ends and goals. For Thomas Aquinas, the work of prudence is to direct our actions to an end. The prudent person knows not only the universal principles of reason, but also the contingencies of life (Gratsch, 1990:168).

Aquinas illustrates with how driving an auto while under the influence of alcohol endangers human life. At one and the same breath, Prudence as an intellectual virtue informs one about the consequences and as a moral virtue it directs human actions. This virtue “determines in what manner and by what means the end is to be achieved in accordance with reason” (Gratsch, 1990:168). As he further expresses it, Prudence is: “Ever careful, watchful and solicitous that a person’s conduct be right. One can exercise prudence in seeking one’s own good (personal prudence) or the good of one’s family (domestic prudence) or the good of the community or State (political prudence).”

To the above three subjective parts or species of Prudence, St. Thomas adds the fourth: *Military Prudence* – which seeks to repel the attack of an enemy (Gratsch, 1990:169). Such authentic and perfect prudence which takes counsel (*eubulia*), judges (*sinesis*) with good judgment in practical matters, *gnome* – judgment according to higher principles especially in extraordinary affairs and commanding a right while putting the true end of human life into focus is found only in the just. This virtue could be infused by God (supernaturally) but there also exists room for learning (naturally) with experience and time.

This is quite instructive for not only religious education, as such, but moral upbringing and general value orientation of the citizenry from the cradle. Parents, teachers, religious leaders, civil authorities, political leaders certainly have a stake in this respect. For St. Thomas, eight integral parts of Prudence are discernible, thus, one must remember the past, have a right understanding of the principles at stake, be prepared to learn from others, be capable of making comparisons, be an apt reasoner, have foresight, take account of circumstances, and exercise caution (Gratsch, 1990:169).

Among those acts (sins) which stand against prudence, St. Thomas mentions, lust, negligence, craftiness, guile and covetousness. In a nutshell, by lust one's mind gets totally absorbed in inordinate affairs/ambitions; by negligence one is guilty of lack of concern for either the good of others, one's good or that which pertains to God; by craftiness, one uses illegitimate means to attain certain ends (good or evil); by guile, the crafty person's plan is being executed through words or deeds; by covetousness, he acts greedily (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 25:13). This very last point remains the bane of our underdeveloped, corruption-ridden, highly depraved and impoverished nation, Nigeria. As it is wittily said, "there can be enough for our needs but we can never have enough for our greed." On the other hand, charity demands that we do not lie under oath, but is that not fast becoming the norm in our socio-political setting?

It is in the light of the above that the virtue of justice is very crucial. For Thomas, Justice means "giving each one what is his or hers by right" (Gratsch, 1990:179; Kreeft, 1990:448). Kreeft's (1990:461) framework shows that all the moral virtues that are about operations agree in the one general notion of justice, which is in respect of something due to another. He further explained that "the thing due is not of the same kind in all these virtues: for something is due to an equal in one way, to a superior, in another way, to an inferior, in yet another; and the nature of a debt differs according as it arises from a contract, a promise, or a favour already conferred." Corresponding to these various kinds of debt there are various ways whereby we pay our debt to God e.g. Religion; Piety (respect), by which we pay our debt to our parents or to our country; Gratitude, whereby we pay our debt to our benefactors, and so forth.

The right to a just wage and decent working conditions (See *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII, 1891 on dignity of workers or human beings), right to freedom of worship – in a pluralistic State (see *Nigerian Constitution*) and how Judges should not be partial (Lev. 19:15), for instance, are cases in point. Virtue in the soul produces good life (Mbukanma, 2000:79).

Thomas thinks of Fortitude or Courage as the virtue that prevents one from doing what is unreasonable or sinful through fear of being injured or of dying (Gratsch, 1990:191). This is the virtue mainly associated with soldiers, heroes or patriots who are ready to live and die for a just cause. e.g. Martin Luther, Jnr; Nelson Mandela; and Murtala Muhammed. Obviously, this was the virtue exhibited by Nuhu Ribaadu – as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) czar; Dora Akunyili in her hey days as the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) boss; and currently, by Professor Attahiru Jegah as Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and recognized as *Newswatch* man of the year 2011 for successfully breaking the nation's long chain of frustration over its failed electoral process (*Newswatch*, January 16, 2012. p.11). In this case, the courageous person is called upon to take aggressive action against an evil that threatens to engulf him or his society or nation as is the case with a soldier who defends his country against an enemy. Sometimes, a courageous person is called upon to stand firmly in the face of danger, endure it, and bear up under it, as in the case of a martyr who suffers for the cause of Christ (Gratsch, 1990:191).

The brave person is moved by a moderate anger in the face of evil. The supreme act of fortitude is Martyrdom. The person in question is prepared to sacrifice even his/her life out of love for God and humanity. According to Thomas, the quasi-integral parts of fortitude include Magnanimity, Magnificence, Patience and Perseverance (Gratsch, 1990:193). Magnanimity is associated with statesmen, reformers and philanthropists. The individual who possesses a great soul is able to expend great sums of money in accomplishing great tasks; by Patience he/she possesses impulse against passions and is able to withstand sorrow with equanimity; and by Perseverance, he/she persists over a long time in doing good because he believes that delays are not necessarily denials.

The virtue of Temperance, is yet another virtue on which St. Thomas dwelt so deeply. But for our purposes here, we shall simply summarize it. The virtue denotes acting temperately

or reasonably. It has to do with the pleasures connected with the use of food, drink and sex. There is a pleasure necessarily and naturally connected with the use of these things, which are required for the preservation of the individual and the species. Temperance does not touch that pleasure; but it enables one to use the restraint which reason dictates in these matters (Gratsch, 1990:196).

As stated above, temperance refers to pleasure from table and bedroom. It perfects concupiscible appetite. Opposed to it is the vice of insensibility and overindulgence. Intemperance, according to Thomas is the most disgraceful of sins, because it lowers us to the level of animals (Gratsch, 1990:197). He further explains that, “the first integral part of temperance is what Thomas calls shame facedness and honesty... The subjective parts of temperance are abstinence and sobriety (which deals with the pleasures of eating and drinking, and chastity and purity).” This virtue stands against gluttony, drunkenness, lust (e.g. fornication, adultery, incest, masturbation, bestiality and homosexuality or lesbianism). The potential parts of Temperance include continence, meekness and clemency, modesty – which embraces humility, studiousness, modesty in words and deeds, and in dress (Gratsch, 1990:198 – 204).

4. RELEVANCE OF THE DISCOURSE ON VIRTUES IN RELATION TO NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Though St. Thomas Aquinas lived in the scholastic or medieval era, our contemporary Nigerian society or Africa has a lot to learn from his sound and ever-relevant thoughts on virtues. The problem of insecurity in Nigeria has remained so topical since the independence of Nigeria in 1960 and has become even more palpable especially with the inauguration of democratic governance on May 29, 1999. This porous nature of the security situation in Nigeria has lingered on as a disturbing challenge despite all efforts being made at both the national and international levels to curb the situation. The sad tale is that nobody is free; it has left the entire citizenry from the top to the bottom of our society in a very precarious state.

Over the years, Nigeria has witnessed rising cases of assassination, violent conflicts, armed banditry and violent crimes, religious clashes and the emergence of ethnic political militias that threatened the lives and property of citizens (Jooji, 2003:91). This is a nation where even the Attorney General of the Federation, Chief Bola Ige’s assassination on March 5, 2003 is still shielded in mystery up till today. How then does one bring into serious consideration other sundry political assassination cases? Is it the assassination of Harry Marshal the National Vice Chairman of the South-South Zone of the All Nigerian People’s Party? That of Barnabas Igwe, the former Nigerian Bar Association Chairman of Onitsha Branch in Anambra State along with his wife who were cold-bloodedly murdered on September 1, 2002? That of Engr. Funsho Williams and Dr. Ayodeji Daramola who were former gubernatorial candidates of the People’s Democratic Party in their respective states of Lagos and Ekiti? Or is it the gruesome murder of a Plateau State Senator Dangtong Gyang Dayliop and the Majority Leader of their House of Assembly, Hon. Gyang Fulani which left many people injured in its wake? (*The Sun*, July 9, 2012:2).

The most recent issues that startle the populace includes the murder of a Police Commissioner in Enugu. And as if that was not enough, the killing of about forty-six policemen and ten members of the State Security Services (SSS) at Alakio in Nasarawa State (Agbaegbu, 2013:8; Suleiman, 2013:42).

Worse still, the *Boko Haram* menace with its devastating tentacles through suicide bombing and other violent attacks on innocent Nigerians with the sprawling effect of scaring prospective investors, remains, to say the least, not only a sour but sad tale. The *Boko Haram* group which means in Hausa Language “Western education is forbidden” is originally known as *Jama’atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda, Wati Wal Jihad* – that is, people committed to the

propagation of the Prophet's teachings and Jihad (Mechan and Speier, 2011:6). This is somewhat a 'home-grown' terrorist group that romances with some politicians with ulterior motives (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013:289). Aside the high profile bombing of the Abuja Nigerian Police Headquarters on June 16, 2011; the United Nations house in Abuja was torched on August 26, 2011. It is on record that this group alone has unleashed well over fifty-three attacks on Nigerians, leaving in their trails death toll of well over three-thousand-six-hundred lives between July 27, 2009 and June 30, 2013 (Adapted from Agbaegbu, 2013:10; Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013:289). These dastardly experiences have not only further dented the already battered image of Nigeria and Nigerians but have also continued to deter otherwise interested investors from investing in the Nigerian economy. Yet, the group seems to have defied all security arrangements to such an extent that the security outfits of the government of the day regard them as being simply elusive. The all-important question begging for answer in the minds of many a Nigerian is "who will bell this cat?" (Egbunu, 2012:13). If the virtue of justice is anything to go by, why should fellow Nigerians take laws into their hands to unleash mayhem on others for taking to Western education or is it for not worshipping God in their own way? Meanwhile, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has abundant provision for freedom of religion. (*The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, Chapter 4, n.38). Does any religion or Islamic Religion (which is the religion of peace) for that matter, allow killing of innocent citizens? Experts have often harped on the fact that the Holy Prophet Mohammed (NSW) never approved of the killing of innocent people (*Quran* 2: 256). Little need reminding ourselves of the essence of being guided by the traditional principle of "live and let's live". As a matter of fact, one's freedom should stop where other people's rights begin.

Insinuations are rife on *Boko Haram*, *Al Qaeda* and *Hezbollah* connections. In this light, it continues to beat one's imagination why Hezbollah the Lebanese militant group and other Arab terrorist groups should think of choosing Nigeria as a base to launch attacks on their targets (Agbo, 2013:21; Amochie, 2013:4; Ige, Ajayi and Salem, 2013:5).

A more recent development is the step whereby an increased military campaign strategy against the *Boko Haram* insurgents commenced May 14, 2013 following the declaration of State of Emergency in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States. This shows however, that an unrelenting effort is being made in the right direction (Agbaegbu, 2013:21). Latest reports indicate that soldiers block food and fuel supplies to the *Boko Haram* enclaves. And patriotic youths have decided to take the bull by the horns in pushing the insurgents off the vicinity (Ijagba, 2013:1). More so, the new collaborative dawn in the fight against terrorism and insurgency in Africa whereby the Nigerian and United States Security Services are being inundated with information claiming to have clue on the whereabouts of the wanted leader of the *Boko Haram*, Mohammed Abubakar Shekau (Agbaegbu, 2013:1) is a welcome development. Perhaps, this great motivation is due to the offer of financial inducement by the United States government of particularly \$7 million on the *Boko Haram* leader (Omodeleola, 2013:11).

The above cases and many other politically-motivated violence; ethnic and religious crises, dastardly activities of ethnic militia agitations, have all combined to keep the nation in a relative perpetual insecurity. Come to think of what has become of the otherwise peaceful Plateau State owing to ethnic/religious crises besieging the land and especially the spate of insecurity affecting core-north in general owing to ethnic and religious clashes; the ever-lingering threats of destroying Oil-wells and burning of Mosques (and Churches?) by those under the guise of Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) (Gabriel, 2013:14). So also, the spate of kidnapping in the South-East, along with certain untoward activities of the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSOB), is called to question. This entire scenario calls for a redefinition of the concept of security so as to enable us chart the way forward.

4.1 REDEFINING THE CONCEPT OF SECURITY

Considering the prevailing situation at the global level and especially for Africa and Nigeria in particular, there is a growing need for redefining the concept of security. This is necessary, owing to the fact that there naturally exists a symbiotic relationship between national security and sustainable development. The need for a consensus on what constitutes Security or insecurity cannot be gainsaid. Booth (1994:2) contends that human security is ultimately more important than the state security. Two perspectives are discernible from Nwanegbo and Odigbo's (2013:286) framework: First, the neo-realist theoretical angle which is predicated on the primacy and centrality of state as major provider and one having the primary responsibility. The second approach, refers to a postmodernist or pluralist view which seeks to displace the state as a major provider of security. In this latter case, greater emphasis is placed on non-state actors. This point is in line with Imobighe's (2001:76-77) definition which sees security as not only freedom from dangers or threats but also ability to protect, develop and promote cherished values and legitimate interests, so as to enhance peoples' wellbeing. This also implies freedom from danger to life and property. For Ighodalo (2012:22) also, the promotion of human security has the central focus of the new development paradigm. This is because, building of arms or ammunitions do not bring peace, security and political stability. Eradicating poverty, hunger, diseases through sustainable development programmes, holds the key to enduring national security (McSweeney, 1999:127; Kraliman, 2003:3; Rothschild, 1995:68).

In defining Security, Nnoli (2006:16) also shows an obvious development versus security nexus. To him, National Security is a cherished value associated with the physical safety of individuals, groups or nation-states, together with a similar safety of their other most cherished values. He further explains how it denotes freedom from threats, anxiety and danger (objectively) and that absence of fear of whether threat, anxiety or danger will materialize, constitute the subjective dimension. Lasswell and Kaplan (1950:13) also hold the same view in their treatment of "High Value Expectancy". This was also captured by Adekanye (cited in Jooji, 2003:98) as depicting helping people to regain their job security, income security, industrial security and the security of life itself which leads ultimately to self actualization. Put differently, the security of the nation must necessarily be understood in terms of the security of the individual citizens who live in peace with access to basic necessities of life while fully participating in the affairs of their society in freedom and enjoying all fundamental human rights (*The Kampala Document*, 1992:9).

Security therefore would not just be about national interests, but real safety of the people in the face of any form of disasters, be it famine, flood or epidemic. It is first and foremost, aimed at the protection of the ordinary people in view of the environment and their means of livelihood. As Nnoli (2006:18) has it, it entails three basic elements in the contemporary setting: First, protection of the environment from reasonable degradation by combating among other things, acid rain, desertification, forest destruction, ozone pollution and global warming. Second, collective security. And third, poverty eradication in all its ramifications.

As a matter of fact, the viability of the economy of the state, the quality of their leadership and/or political maturity, their ability to motivate the citizenry and ability to meet the basic needs of the citizenry and provide raw materials for their industries and ultimately have a formidable military leadership and power in defense of the people's territorial integrity, are all brought into cognizance. In categorizing security into different shades for individuals, groups or state, it is pertinent to note that nobody experiences perfect or absolute security. People experience it in different degrees as it varies along a continuum.

The other dimension is the inept and corrupt crop of leaders that constitute obstacles to the development of the nation. Those on the political platforms mount the saddle, most often, through all forms of malpractice, not excluding election rigging, assassination of opponents,

ritual murder, kidnapping, thuggery and other nefarious activities. As a matter of fact, the virtue of Justice which ought to guide the rule of the game is thrown to the dogs and the process of mounting the leadership saddle, the oath of office taken in most cases remains only a drama. This seems to have become a trademark on many of our African/world leaders. Under whatever guise, Ossama Bin Laden of Saudi Arabia (the late al-Qaeda leader); Saddam Husseini (the dictator of Iraq from 1979 – 2003); Muammar Gaddafi (the murderous dictator of Libya); Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; Charles Taylor of Liberia; Idi Amin of Uganda and Sani Abacha of Nigeria, etcetera who committed heinous crimes against humanity are classic examples of leaders (religious, civil or military) who meted out blatant injustices and cruelty on the people. The James Ibori saga is a case in point. In fact, this singular case has become a metaphor of a kind where injustice wears the garb of decency in our law-courts. The former Delta State Governor who had a clean bill from the Nigerian judiciary and is jailed in London for thirteen years after a battle to escape the long hand of justice for looting the State's treasury and money laundering (*Newswatch*, April 30, 2012, p.22) is a classic case out of many involved in greed and corruption. As one journalist aptly and beautifully puts it, "only one is down, but many are still standing". And in this connection, the Nigerian judiciary which is supposed to be the hope of the common man is being indicted. That explains why an irate Nigerian once recommended that:

Members of the bench and bar found to be dining with criminals be shown the way out and severely punished by the legal and professional authorities in the efforts and determination to having a zero-level corruption tolerance. EFCC, ICPC, NOA and Police Force and other law enforcement agents are called upon to cooperate (Nigerian Tribune, May 17, 2012).

As a matter of fact, the judiciary has nosedived and has almost become a shadow of itself. The Ibori saga is only one in a thousand-and-one cases awaiting just verdict all over the nation. Cases abound where the politicians, civil or public servants, bank executives loot the treasury with impunity. The recent fuel subsidy scandal raging between Farouk Lawal and Otedola Femi over the mass-media is yet another unfortunate development. The proverbial banana peels in the National Assembly which has hitherto consumed the likes of Chuba Okadigbo, Adolphus Nwagbara, Dimeji Bankole and a host of others seem not to have abated.

Indeed, as it is often said, there may be enough for our needs, but never enough for our greed. It is all too evident then why job opportunities are lacking and where and when opportunities are even offered, payment of just remuneration as at when due are all too difficult to come by. The contract of the government with the people to cater for their welfare is being breached with reckless abandon even in the basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing. Crime is on the increase, vicious living such as armed-robbery, pen-robbery, kidnapping, militancy, thuggery, sexual promiscuity, 'sextortionism', prostitution, rape, ritual murder, drug addiction, drug trafficking, alcoholism, nudity, yahooism, fraudsterism, gangsterism and the like, have become the order of the day. Many of these evils are often associated with not only ignorance and lack of education but unemployment and poverty, consequent upon the mismanagement of our rich natural and human resources and other factors, many Nigerians have been left in abject poverty and lack basic human needs such as adequate food, decent shelter and proper clothing. Health services and education have also gone out of the reach of the commoners. As such the entire atmosphere has created a capitalist economy whereby the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer at the end of the day.

As the school environments which are supposed to be the citadel of learning of wisdom and virtues are left uncatered for; hospitals turned into almost mere consulting clinics and roads are turned into death traps and even families which are expected to be the cradle of home-spurn

character are left in disarray, the religious institutions whether churches or mosques and their clerics are left with almost nothing to show for their avowed roles in the society.

Before our very eyes and with our common resources, children of the rich are sent overseas or at best, to better private colleges or universities, while the children of the poor are left in the government-owned public schools to contend with incessant strikes with its attendant consequences of dilapidated infrastructures or lack of learning equipments, and even lack of teachers. This is in direct contradiction to the avowed National policy on Education which is founded on the principle of freedom, equality and justice (*National Policy on Education*, 2004:1,n.a). Choice courses are given to the children of the rich and at graduation, choice jobs await them even before their mandatory Service year ends. Their holidays are to choice countries overseas, and most often at the expense of tax-payers. In this context, widows, orphans and the less privileged in the society certainly have little or no say. This is perhaps, a land where you would have a say if and only if you have the right connections. It is where god-fatherism, nepotism, sectionalism, ethnicism, favouritism, or as it is officially called, “quota system” wears the official toga. And due to lack of employment for the teeming populace of our burgeoning radical and dynamic youths, crime wave is on the increase. And have our prisons not become torture chambers or jungles for training more hardened criminals instead of being reformatory or rehabilitative centers? And worse of all, religion which is supposed to be an integrative and unitive instrument has inadvertently turned itself into a source of division, violence and insecurity in many circumstances.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

As can be gleaned from the above investigation, St. Thomas Aquinas treatise on virtues brings to the fore in a most glaring manner the role of various virtues. These virtues, as it were, could be utilized in enhancing not only the statecraft through democratic governance and leadership but also by means of leading virtuous lives at the various individual corners of life. The moral virtues, for instance, are meant to promote peace, cohesiveness and security by enabling conscientious thoughts and actions. This engenders patriotism in the individual concerned and motivates others into working for the better development of the fatherland.

The virtue of Justice has to do with human interaction as it brings into cognizance the need to imbibe such values as would promote the rights and dignity of other individuals while seeking for peace, progress or development of the state. And the virtue of wisdom assists one to judge issues appropriately in relation to their ultimate ends. It is thus submitted here that if every citizen is made able to put into practice the values embedded in our rich religious cultures, we shall, no doubt, yield fruits of unending peace, security, greater dedication, transparency and patriotism which are crucial ingredients to ensuring the much needed progress and development.

National Security is a *decideratum*, a *sine qua non* for all flourishing growth and development of the Nigerian nation. All hands must therefore be on deck to ensure that various actions and inactions which are inimical to this goal be totally avoided. The basic causes of insecurity and lack of development which are so well-articulated by some scholars ought to be addressed accordingly. Thus, first and foremost, the root causes of ethno-religious conflicts which are most prevalent in the land and which are mostly occasioned by allegations of neglect, marginalization, religious or ethnic bigotry, nepotism and all forms of discriminations or victimization ought to be adequately addressed in the rightful quarters. Secondly, the rampaging youth unemployment which has kept an unimaginable proportion of the Nigerian populace below poverty level needs appropriate redress by creating job opportunities. More so, because this leaves them more vulnerable to illicit and criminal activities. Thirdly, electoral politics presently involves the do-or-die mentality or mindset. This has caused so much damage to life and property. There is urgent need therefore to curb such aberrations. Finally, the systemic

political corruption which has become a second nature to political officeholders leaves much to be desired.

That apart, the general conception of security from the state-centric perspective which places premium on the state ought to be moderated to reflect humano-centric which takes cognizance of human rights and national development as the best yardstick.

The leadership of the country should be ready to lead by example. The security agents too ought to display greater sense of commitment, discipline and patriotism. This will engender peaceful and harmonious cooperation and development.

By and large, it is noteworthy that security is the responsibility of all and sundry. It is not just the task of the government or security agents. This therefore calls for a corporate sense of responsibility as all efforts should be made to eschew all forms of threat to human life and property, and in the same token, to be ready to expose all shades of threat to life and property. In a nutshell, the conscientious practice of such virtues as are well enunciated in St. Thomas Aquinas' treatise is indispensable to any enduring search for healthy national development and peace.

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