

## **Did Thomas Aquinas Teach Justification by Faith?**

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and his legacy have become topics of intense debate in some evangelical circles today. There are those who look at him with great admiration and want to be identified as Evangelical “Thomists” and others who think that Thomas is quintessentially a misleading theologian, being at the root of all the errors of Rome. Having this discussion in the background, the paper will focus on Thomas’ doctrine of justification by faith mainly drawing from his *Summa Theologia*. It will be an entry point in the theological universe of Thomas and will provide a case study of his larger theological work.

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### **I. Introduction**

### **II. The Medieval background of Justification**

- A. The Augustinian heritage
- B. The crux of sin and grace
- C. Justification as “Processus”

### **III. Justification in the Commentary to the Romans**

- A. Participatory and transformative categories
- B. Law, gospel and works

#### **IV. Justification in the Summa**

A. The fourfold process

B. The Motus mentis

C. Justification and Merit

#### **V. Conclusion: Did Thomas teach justification by faith? It depends on what you mean by it.**

#### **Helpful Readings**

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-I, qq. 109-114

Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, ed. by J. Mortensen and E. Alancórn (Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012).

M. Horton, *Justification*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018).

A. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei. A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).