



# Global Faculty Initiative

**The Faculty Initiative  
seeks to promote the integration  
of Christian faith and academic disciplines  
by bringing theologians into conversation with scholars  
across the spectrum of faculties  
in research universities  
worldwide.**

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Preview Response

## **PRUDENCE OPERATES THROUGH THE INTELLECT**

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Dr. Herdt has provided an excellent rudimentary overview of the virtues. In my particular field of memory and cognitive psychology, the intellectual virtues indeed deserve greater attention. I would like to suggest that the cultivation of some virtues (e.g., *prudence*) may operate through the intellect. Thomas Aquinas suggests the two cognitive faculties upon which *prudence* relies are (1) remembrance of the past and (2) understanding of the present.<sup>1</sup> That is, basic human cognitive processes, such as memory and decision-making, may eventually culminate in intellect (i.e., an integrated form of knowledge). The intellect may then be further refined by being put into practice through the addition of a moral component, resulting in *prudence* - which, in its highest form, is wisdom directed through right action. The cultivation and practice of *prudence* may then help direct individuals to their ultimate end in God. By better understanding basic human cognitive processes, we may discover more about virtue formation and its ultimate effects.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I.22.1.

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