

YOU PRAYED FOR IT!

A Play by Master Gerhardt von Nordflammen

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Cast in order of Appearance:

Announcer

Ignatius

Thomas Aquinas

Teresa of Avila

Meister Eckhart

ANNOUNCER: Hello everybody, and welcome to You Prayed For It, the gameshow that asks the musical question: "Are the ontological implications of Augustine's refutation of Pelagius sufficient to adduce the error of the Waldensians, or are the observations of Bernard of Clairvaux required supplementation?" And now, here's your host: Ignatius of LOYolaaaaaa!

IGNATIUS: Thank you. Hey there! Hey! Great to see ya! Heyyy! Thank you. Thank you.

Well, we've got a letter here from a Mrs. P. Ramirez of Cordova. She says, "I'm a good Christian woman and I go to church every Sunday. I thought you'd like to know that, recently, a local girl named Flora went to the local Moslem judges in our town and denounced that nasty Mohammed as "an adulterer, an imposter, and a villain". They tried to get her to recant, saying that she could believe anything she wanted in private but that they could not just let her say things like that in a Mosque which is where they hold their courts. But she wouldn't recant so they beheaded her and she died a martyr to the faith. Hallelujah!"

Heyyyy! Allright! Let's hear it for the little lady! I'll bet she gave those Moslems something to think about! Y'know, it's like the neo-Platonists used to say about Origen, "I may not agree with him, but he sure has balls!"¹ Okay! Keep those cards and martyrs coming folks!

Now, without further ado, let's get on with the show. Brother Benedict, who are our contestants?

ANNOUNCER: _____, come on down! _____ come on down!

¹ Flora was part of the so-called "zealot" movement; a group of young people who actively sought martyrdom in Moslem Spain by making highly inflammatory denunciations of Islam. She was killed in 851 A.D.

Origen was an Alexandrian Church Father who castrated himself in order to remove the temptations of lust.

- IGNATIUS: Heyyy! Hi there. Are you ready to play You Prayed For It? Alright! You know our rules; we'll ask each of you three questions on Church doctrine. You can ask two of our three guest panelists for an answer, then you choose which one is orthodox. Whoever has the most orthodox answers wins the game. Heyyy! Okay Benedict, let's introduce our guest panelists for today.
- ANNOUNCER: Well, Ignatius, first of all, here's that pillar of theology and author of the runaway best seller Summae Theologica: THOMAS AQUINAS!
- IGNATIUS: Heyyy! Tom baby! Loved your refutation of Averroes. What's your latest project?
- THOMAS: Well Ignatius, I'm working on a little something called Summa Contra Gentiles, which should really throw the pagan for a loop. I can't say too much about it right now, but I'll tell you this much, it's gonna really Aristotelian.
- IGNATIUS: Sounds fantastic. Benedict.
- ANNOUNCER: Let's welcome our next panelist. The Holy See's favorite mystic, the lady who's got an eternal lease on the Lord's dream home; the Interior Castle, here she is: Teresa of Avila!
- IGNATIUS: Teresa, sweetheart, it's good to have you back on the show. You look positively ecstatic.
- TERESA: Oh Ignatius, that's because the angel of the Lord came to me and just pierced my heart again and again with a bolt of divine love!
- IGNATIUS: Hallelujah! Who needs the Big O when you've got the Big G! Right Teresa?
- TERESA: Oh my, yes, Ignatius.
- IGNATIUS: Alright! Benedict.
- ANNOUNCER: Last, let's welcome that harlequin of theology, the black sheep of the Dominican Order: Meister Eckhart!
- IGNATIUS: Meister, snookums, how's the boy?
- ECKHART: Oh, waow. It's, like, mellow, right? It's like, God, y'knaow ... be cool ... be cool.
- IGNATIUS: Right. Okay, it's time to play You Prayed For It.

(Ignatius reads out the six questions allowing the contestants to take their choice of guest theologians and keeping score on right and wrong answers. For Ignatius' information, the answers are as follows:

	<i>St. Teresa</i>	<i>St. Thomas</i>	<i>Meister Eckhart</i>
<i>Question: 1</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>Heretical</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Heretical</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Heretical</i>

QUESTION 1: What is the difference between transubstantiation and transubstitution? Which one is heretical and why?

QUESTION 2: Explain the difference between faith and reason and why one is the superior instrument for the apprehension of God.

QUESTION 3: What is the primary error of the Cathar heretics?

QUESTION 4: Explain the mystery of Trinity.

QUESTION 5: How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

QUESTION 6: Explain, briefly, and simply, the relationship between God, the Creator and man, the creature.

Score:

Contestant 1: _____

Contestant 2: _____

(After all questions have been asked, and all answers given (-- see the following pages for answers)

IGNATIUS: Heyyyy! Congradulations _____, you've just won YOU PRAYED FOR IT. Now here's Benedict to tell you about your fantastic prize package.

BENEDICT: Well, _____, you've just won a year's supply of ofsuntan lotion, a "Fun in the Sand" playset, including pail, shovel, and molding forms illustrating the lives of the saints, a beach umbrella, a pair of sunglasses, and a mantle for your (lord's) helm. All of which you're going to need on your ALL EXPENSE PAID TRIP TO **THE HOLY LAND!!!!** That's right, you'll be whisked in a matter of months from Marseilles to Jaffa aboard the "Topo Gigio", the newest, most luxurious galley in the Venetian fleet. Once in the Holy Land, you'll be staying at the fabulous Kark des Chevaliers conveniently located in the heart of downtown Palestine. Last, to give you good luck on your voyage and vacation, you'll need this piece of the TRUE CROSS guaranteed by the Pope for an ETERNITY of Divine Beneficence.

IGNATIUS: HEYYYY! Whaddaya say to that, huh? Isn't that great! Well, now, _____, you were a little too heretical to win You Prayed For It, but we don't want you to go away empty-handed, so here's Benedict to tell what we're going to give you.

BENEDICT: Well _____, since you weren't orthodox enough to win, we've got some real doubts about the safety of your immortal soul. So, to make sure that it's really saved, we're going to give you an all expense paid life in the DUNGEONS OF THE INQUISITION located in the heart of beautiful downtown Toledo. Here you'll be persuaded to cleanse yourself of your mortal sins by the latest and most up to date implements of torture technology. Once you've confessed and been shriven, you'll be turned over to the secular authorities for the celebration of your new spiritual purity at your very own AUTO DA FE! And all of this thanks to You Prayed For It!

IGNATIUS: Heyyy! Guards, take _____ away! Hey, don't take it to heart, that's the way the Eucharist crumbles. Well, that's it for today folks. Thanks again to our guest theologians, Thomas Aquinas, Teresa of Avila and Meister Eckhart, and thanks to our contestants, _____ and _____ and thanks to you for watching You Prayed For It!

The Answers for Teresa Avila

Question 1: I don't know about you, but whenever I take communion I feel so joyful that sometimes I think I'm just going to burst. To think that I am consuming and taking into my very essence the blessed Jesus is just too much for my poor wicked soul. Oh my! Well, this actual taking of the body and blood of Christ is transubstantiation. Transubstitution is a foolish notion that holds that the wine and host are not the real physical blood and body of our sweet Lord Jesus, but just some sort of symbol. Isn't that silly? I mean, how could one feel such utter rapture from mere symbols? Only the physical presence of the Lord could call up this bliss which is far above the wicked counterfeits of the mind and Satan. Those people who hold that it is mere symbol are just terrible, you know. Why, they are denying the very physical divinity of Christ. I think they will go to hell for it, don't you?

Question 2: Oh my. I'm only a woman and a very ignorant and humble one at that. I can't pretend to know anything about reason you know, it's not in our nature ... that's where the men just excel. But ... if I did know anything about it, I would have to say that it's just no good for understanding God. Why, I see men rushing about all the time explaining this and analyzing that and it's all very nice I'm sure, but when it comes to God, you know, they just fall flat. I mean, how can one's little worldly mind encompass and explain something as big and wonderful as our sweet Lord. You see, God is so great that He just can't be understood by the work of our minds or anything else we have for that matter. To really understand God we must approach Him through Himself. This is what faith is, the art of opening one's self to God through perfect submission to His Will and it is the only sure way to apprehend Him in all His Truth and Glory.

(If St. Thomas is chosen to answer this question (2), Teresa will say "Amen" when he is done.)

Question 3: Oh dear, I can hardly bring myself to speak about those terrible people! Do you know, they say that there are two gods ... now isn't that the silliest thing you ever heard? Why, anyone who has eyes and a good heart can see that there is only one God and that He is our own sweet Lord. But, my goodness, these Cathar people say that there are two and that one is good; the god of light and spirit and the other evil; the god of darkness and matter. Now, isn't that ridiculous? And do you know what else they say? They say that our true God is the god of evil! Why, it just makes my blood boil! I just don't know what to make of this kind of foolishness. Tsk, tsk, tsk. We should all pray that God will reveal His truth unto them and lead them back into the light of Mother Church.

(If St. Thomas or Eckhart answer question 3, Teresa will say "Amen")

The Answers for Teresa Avila

- Question 4: Praise God! Only he could be such a profound and wonderful mystery. The Trinity is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Now, God the Father is the eternal and unmanifested essence of Divinity at all times quite perfect and uncreated. God the Son is the manifest and active Person of the Trinity and is surely very wonderful to us, for by His manifestations and perfect mercy we are able to apprehend God even in our low estate. For, you see, God the Father is great in the glory of His Holy Stillness that we would not even perceive Him were it not for the movement and action of God the Son. Now, God the Holy Spirit is the Love between God the Father and God the Son, which is so great and Divine that it is and must be another Person of the Trinity. As the Son is the manifestation by which we perceive God, the Holy Spirit is the means for this perception, for, God being Love, may only be perceived by Himself, that is, by perfect and unhesitating Love. Now, the most wonderful thing about the Trinity is that it is God, eternal and indivisible. For, these Three Persons have only One Essence and One Being who has been a single Holy Unity since before the beginning of time. Isn't it a marvel! But that's God for you. He's so unlike anyone else and quite able to do just anything!
- Question 5: Why, I should think that as many as wanted.
- Question 6: The relationship is Love, pure and simple Love. Now, since God is Love, the relationship on His side is easy. God loves us ... must love us ... because it is His nature and His will. We, for our part, must strive with all the poor means at our command to emulate His great and divine nature, for by so doing we are brought closer to Him, even into His presence as our Love becomes more perfect in submission to His Will. Oh that God should grant us grace and help us to become perfect in our love for him, for, believe me, the joy of being near Him and loving Him with all your heart is greater than any other joy that you can possibly think of.

The Answers for Thomas Aquinas

Question 1: The miracle of transubstantiation takes place during the sacrament of communion. There, the consecrated host and wine becomes the very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, bringing the communicant into the new covenant proclaimed by His mercy and loving sacrifice for the salvation of all mankind. The foul and heretical doctrine of transubstitution holds that the presence of Christ in this sacrament is symbolic and essential rather than actual and physical. This is contradicted by both scriptures and the works of the Church Fathers and is a most infamous denial of Christ's divinity and the miraculous renewal of the covenant throughout eternity.

Question 2: Reason is the contemplation and interpretation of existence using the mind as its instrumentality. As such, it is highly useful in explaining the world around us and in explicating doctrine for those whose understanding is limited and who must therefore have God presented to them in a worldly framework. Faith is a truer instrument for the apprehension of God, as it is a transcendent means and God is transcendent of all worldly matters, including reason. Thus reason may be used to prove God exists to the satisfaction of the worldly mind, but only faith can demonstrate the truth of God which transcends all proofs. Faith is the superior instrument as reason is the working of man's mind upon God whereas faith is the working of God's Will in man.

(If St. Teresa answers, Thomas will say "Amen".)

Question 3: Their primary error is their belief in a polytheistic dualism derived from Manicheanism, a doctrine whose tenet were utterly refuted and defeated by the Church Fathers. Specifically, they believe that there is a god of light and a god of darkness. The god of light is supposedly pure spirit and uncorrupted by material or corporal contamination, while the god of darkness is ruler of the world and all things of corrupt matter. They identify the god of darkness with the Christian God because He made the world of matter and even descended into matter Himself in the form of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thus does their monstrous error lead them into damnation and perdition.

(If St. Teresa answers, Thomas will say "Amen".)

The Answers for Thomas Aquinas

Question 4: The mystery of the Trinity is that God is One in Three and Three in One. That is, God has one essence and being while also having Three Persons; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These Persons are coexistent and coeternal and One in the Living God. God the Father is the eternal uncreated ultimate beyond all forms or sense, God the Son is the aspect of movement that animates all that is in beings and God the Holy Spirit is the bond of Love between them, which, because of their high and divine nature assumes Himself a coequal Personhood within the Trinity. Having understood the separate nature of each Person of the Trinity and that each is quite separate and distinct in His Personhood from the Others, we must also understand that God is One and in God there is no separation or distinction. This is what we mean by "One Essence"; that the Three Persons are the One True God, not part of God, but God Himself. None came before the Other or was created by the Other. Thus He is Three and Three is He. Praise be to His Name.

(If St. Teresa or Meister Eckhart answers, Thomas will say "Amen".)

Question 5:

THOMAS: What kind of angels?

ANNOUNCER: Um ... Thrones.

THOMAS: Thrones would not dance on the head of a pin.

ANNOUNCER: Allright ... Seraphim.

THOMAS: This is a difficult and weighty question, for the Seraphim are, as all angels are, created beings of pure spirit and a pin is a corporal and material object. Now, while it is true that angels may manifest themselves in terms that may be apprehended by the sensory apparatus of limited beings such as ourselves, as evidenced by the heavenly host which appeared to the shepherds at the time of the birth of the Savior, it is rather questionable as to whether they were there in any understandable physical and material sense. To dance on the head of a pin they would have to translate their forms in such a way so as to be able to stand and move on the same plane of reality as the pin; the physical and material plane as we call it. This would be in violation of their being as creatures of spirit and since angels are in all things obedient to the Will of God, they would not even contemplate such an action. Therefore, I would hold that, while the answer itself is based on false premises and that no angels could dance on the head of a pin because no angels would dance on the head of a pin.

The Answers for Thomas Aquinas

Question 6: God, being the eternal and unified Being, created man out of His Divine Love. Indeed, man is a concrete manifestation of that Love. God's relation to man is eternal and unchanging in that it is pure and continuous outpouring of love. Man's relation to God is like that of a lost child to its mother, a somewhat bewildered wanderer seeking always to return to the source of its creation and nourishment. Man seeks, and must seek to get as close to God as he may, and the road to this closeness is through faith and the acceptance of God's will as embodied in the Holy Mother Church. By having faith and observing faithfully the sacraments of the church, man is freed from the fetters of the world and sin and allowed into the very presence of God Himself, there to praise and glorify Him through ages eternal.

(If Meister Eckhart answers, Thomas will wait until he says: "Waow man, like everything is everything else ...". then burst in with:

THOMAS: Why, that's heresy! Man is not God!

ECKHART: Oh, Aquinas, don't be so anal-retentive!

THOMAS: Look, don't get uppity with *me* Eckhart, that's pantheism you're spouting.

ECKHART: Hey man, answer me this: Isn't the divine essence in each man?

THOMAS: Well yes, but ...

ECKHART: Okay then ...

THOMAS: Wait a minute, just because the spirit of God is the moving force in all creatures, doesn't that mean that they're the totality of divinity?

ECKHART: God is all or nothing' baby. Love, man ... Love.

THOMAS: What are you talking about?

ECKHART: Lead with the heart, baby, not with the brain. Open up, man.

THOMAS: ... Oh, waow ...

The Answers for Meister Eckhart

- Question 1: Okay man ... transubstantiation y'know, is like the physical presence of the Godhead in the sacramental wafer and wine during communion ... okay ... and, like, transubstitution is, like, saying this presence is only spiritual and symbolic. Oh man! Transubstitution is just ... like ... a crock man ... a supreme crock! 'Cause like, y'know, man, hey, it's just too Manichean man ... 'cause like ... y'know man, God is everywhere man ... like in every physical grubby thing ... you look ... and there's God ... oh waow ... anyway, man ... in the wine and host the whole thing gets really heavy man ... so like, you miss the man you got the sin of pride, you know ... putting' yourself above the truth of God, okay ... it's just old Mr. Mind looking to stand alone again ... hey, give up on that trip dude.
- Question 2: Well, y'know man, reason is, like, thinking about stuff, y'know, and like, I mean, how are you going to get at God by thinking, y'know? I mean, all thoughts are abstractions, right? And 'cause there're abstractions they always miss reality ... sometimes by a little bit and sometimes by a lot. So like, man, God is real, right? I mean, He's really real. I mean, there's just nothing' man that's realier real than God. So like, when you reason, when you think about God, you're just gonna miss Him, y'know, 'cause an abstraction just dances around a really real thing ... maybe etches a vague kinda outline of it ... but never really goes to the heart of it. But faith, man, the submission of your will to Gods ... let's Him come straight into your heart, man, and then you just like ... grok the whole trip, y'know? So, like, man, on this question faith is where it's at.
- Question 3: Oh man ... those loonie-tunies. Wow man, like, they're on this weird trip where there's two gods, y'know and like, one of them is the good god of light and spirit and the other's the bad god of darkness and material things. And like, they think God, y'know, like GOD is the evil deity because He like, made the world and appeared in the flesh as Jesus Christ and they're like totally uptight about material things, y'know man ... too many hangups, y'know. It's like they don't know what they're doing, y'know, 'cause, like, God loves the world man. It says in the Bible that He loved it so much He came down as Jesus and, like, just jammed on it, y'know. Like, y'know what I think man, I think these Cathar guys are tuned into Lucifer man, y'know ... the "lightbringer" ... he was an archangel and is pure spirit, y'know, and he's been pissed off ever since man got the ruach adoai, right? These guys better watch out man ... Satan's a bummer, y'know.

(If St. Teresa answers, Eckhart will say "Amen")

The Answers for Meister Eckhart

- Question 4: Okay man. We got one God, right? Right. But, hey, like man, He's a single God with Three Persons; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Well, like, whoa, y'know ... how can there be one that's really three that's really one? Well, hey man, this is God, and He can do anything, dig? So, like, here's where the mystery's at, okay? God the Father is eternal and uncreated in stillness. Man, you could take everything out of Him and He'd never be diminished ... you could add everything to Him and He'd never be increased, He's just ... like ... GOD. Okay now, man ... God is and when God is, God is God the Son, man. God the Son acts and does and creates and is ... so, like, here's these two heavy dudes man, and what do they see man? Hey! Like, God, hey wow, God, y'know man? And man, they are jazzed, 'cause, like, God man, is a real loveable dude, right? So they just Love and that's the Holy Spirit, 'cause a Love as big as God's is God, right? Okay man, so like, those are the Persons of the Trinity ... but like, there's only one essence, only one God ... and, hey, it's not like some dude putting' on masks or one doing the other, y'know, it's really just that one God ... really Three in One and One in Three ... okay? Look, I know man. Whew! It's one heavy mystery.
- Question 5: (*Pulls out a pin ...*) Let's see now ... ahh ... 348 ... no, 349 - Gabe, you little rascal ... 349 man ... hey, but there's still some room ... at least 349, man.

The Answers for Meister Eckhart

Question 6:

ECKHART: Waow man, it's Love, y'know. God can only Love us, 'cause He is Love man, and that's just the way He is. So our job is not to turn away from that Love, y'know. Hey, there's lots of ways to turn away man, but they all boil down to pride, y'know. The kind of pride that makes you go for an illusion that you think yo want instead of God which is what you really want. So screw that shit man, and just love God with everything in you, 'cause if you do that you'll see Him in all His Glory everywhere you look ... everywhere man ...just love ... oh waow ... the eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me ... oh God ... God ... God ... waow man, like everything is everything else ...

THOMAS: Why, that's heresy! Man is not God!

ECKHART: Oh, Aquinas, don't be so anal-retentive!

THOMAS: Look, don't get uppity with *me* Eckhart, that's pantheism you're spouting.

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THOMAS: ... Oh, waow ...