

**GOD, WHO DO YOU
SAY THAT HE IS?**

God Is!

FAITH IS A GIFT, BUT REASONABLE

- The first section of the Catechism deals with the question of the existence of God.
- When a person has faith, no proof is necessary, without faith, no proof will ever be sufficient.
- I also believe that those who “argue” the loudest, are ultimately trying to convince themselves.
- The Church is guided by Divine Revelation, she understands that to be both the Scriptures and Apostolic Tradition (2 Thes 2:15)

BE READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE...

- I am deeply moved by St. Peter's advice to his people, and I think it behooves us all to put it into practice (1 Peter 3:14b-16):
 - *But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.*

WHERE DO WE COME FROM?

- The short answer is our parents, but where did our first parents come from?
- The Document *Humanae Generis*, attempts to answer this question on “Human Beginnings”, for many Catholics, the answer may be a little surprising
 - Catholics are free to believe in the theory of evolution, so long as they understand God is ultimately behind the process.
 - Catholics are also free to believe in the literal accounts in the first two chapters of Genesis.

FAITH AND REASON ARE FRIENDS AND NOT IN OPPOSITION

- Our religious pursuit helps us understand “why” we are.
- The scientific pursuit is an attempt for the human person to understand “how” things work.
- Many people seem confused and think science can answer why, and religion is to answer how.
- Faith is a gift, but if we put our faith in that which is not true, we can find ourselves doing great damage to ourselves and to others.

WHY IS FAITH REASONABLE?

- A brilliant mathematician, Blaise Pascal, wrote what came to be known as “Pascal’s Gamble”. He felt this was not the reason to believe, but anyone should be able to embrace the following logic.
 - There are two options: God exists, or He doesn’t.
 - If God exists and we make the sacrifices to accept His teachings we will live forever in bliss.
 - If God exists and we reject him we will live forever in eternal torment and pain
 - If God does not exist and we are duped, we may have a little less pleasure and we die and rot with the worms
 - If God does not exist, we may gain some pleasure but we still die and rot with the worms.

SUMMARY OF PASCAL'S GAMBLE

- Simply put:
 - if we make the finite sacrifice to believe, we have the chance for infinite gain.
 - If we choose the finite gain of material comfort we risk infinite loss
- Imagine someone offered you a \$1 bill, knowing that they could demand \$1 million from you in the future, would it not be crazy to accept the risk. While many may buy a lottery ticket at the hope of a monetary fortune.
- Blaise invites us to take the risk, even if we lack faith.

MODERN PHYSICS- AND ITS MYTHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- This is a little tongue and cheek, but the first law of modern physics states that “Matter can neither be created nor destroyed. This fundamental assumption is the basis for understanding the conservation of energy and matter.
- Physics makes this “Assumption” that is found in Greek Myth, namely that matter is eternal.
- Christians answers the question by hypothesizing that God is eternal and created matter out nothing, this answers the “why” there is matter.

THEOLOGY IS A SCIENCE

- St. Thomas Aquinas said that theology is the queen of the sciences, for to do theology well one needs to understand God's nature and how nature reveals God to us.
- Scientific pursuit answers the question how. The “how” seems to relate to God's Revelation. We believe the Catholic Church was established by Christ. The first time the word “Catholic” was used is found at least as early as the 1st Century by an early Bishop.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

- Legend has it that Ignatius was one of the children Jesus held in His arms. Already at this time there were divisions beginning to form. This is a quote from one of his letters:
 - *Shun schisms, as the source of troubles. Let all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ did the Father, and the priests, as you would the Apostles. Reverence the deacons as you would the command of God. Apart from the bishop, let no one perform any of the functions that pertain to the Church. Let the Eucharist be held valid which is offered by the bishop or by one to whom the bishop has committed this charge. Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.^{1,2} It is not lawful to baptize or give communion without the consent of the bishop. On the other hand, whatever has his approval is pleasing to God. Thus, whatever you do will be safe and valid.³*

THE REFERENCES FROM THE QUOTE

- 1 The expression *katholike ekklesia* here it is believed appears for the first time in Christian literature. Later, as in the Catecheses of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *katholike* meant both "universal" and "orthodox". Here the word seems to mean only "universal".
- 2 The etymology of the word catholic comes from two Greek words: *κατα* meaning according to, while *ὀλικ* means the whole, the word has connotations of integrity and in this context where the topic of schisms are addressed, Ignatius is concerned about people going by "according to the whole" teaching of the Apostles and not just bits and pieces or fragments of their teaching.
- 3 Quote and footnote #1 is taken from, *The Fathers of the Church Series, the Volume entitled, The Apostolic Fathers*, translated by Francis X. Glimm, Joseph M.F. Marique, S.J., and Gerald G. Walsh, S.J., CIMA Publishing Co., Inc., NY, 1947, p. 121.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

A PILGRIMAGE TOWARDS GOD

- The Church is filled with saints and sinners. Her purpose is to be a guide, who herself is guided by the Spirit.
- Jesus has already won the victory, but if we believe this it has implications. Our call to holiness is not something we do to avoid hell, but rather reflects our belief and desire to glorify God by what we say and do.
- This is not an easy task, but before we can please anyone, we must come to know them.
- God is love, and this love is revealed through the Body of Christ. The Church believes this Body is composed of all those who serve the Truth.

THE YEAR'S PLAN AT A GLANCE

- ◉ Wk 1-Intro-God Is!
- ◉ Wk 2-God's Word
- ◉ Wk 3-Tradition(Big T,Little t)
- ◉ Wk 4-Salvation History
- ◉ Wk 5-Man for All Seasons
- ◉ Wk 6-Trinity - Faith Basics
- ◉ Wk 7-Mary and the Saints
- ◉ Wk 8-The Pascal Mystery and End Things
- ◉ Wk 9- The 4 Notes - Church
- ◉ Wk10-Advent
- ◉ Wk 11-The Nativity Movie
- ◉ Wk 12-Epiphany
- ◉ Wk 13-Eucharist
- ◉ Wk 14-Service Sacraments
- ◉ Wk 15-Healing Sacraments
- ◉ Wk 16-History of the Church
- ◉ Wk 17-Medical Moral Issues
- ◉ Wk 18-Church Tour
- ◉ Wk 19-Parish Life
- ◉ Wk 20-Final Review

