



General Invitation to Family Catechism Days at St Mary's Shrine

Family Catechism Days are usually held at St Mary's Shrine on the 3rd Thursday of each month (but please check our blog / bulletin for current details). Parents are invited with their children to bring a picnic lunch and join us to eat together if weather allows in the priory garden (or else indoors) around 1pm, that is, following the 12:10pm Holy Mass.

A half-hour catechism class given by an FSSP priest or seminarian starts at 2pm for the children, followed by another class at 2:30pm for the adults. Very small children can skip the classes, engaging instead in crafts or games with volunteers from among the parents.

The course of classes follows the summary sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The notes below give an impression of the material, and are posted here at the request of participating parents. They are probably of limited interest to others not yet attending the course as they are so abbreviated.

The notes will be periodically up-dated as the course progresses.

Please feel welcome to come and join us.



Family Catechism Day

21st July 2016: CCC 44-49—Creation

§44 Man is by nature and vocation a religious being. Coming from God, going toward God, man lives a fully human life only if he freely lives by his bond with God.

§45 Man is made to live in communion with God in whom he finds happiness: When I am completely united to you, there will be no more sorrow or trials; entirely full of you, my life will be complete (St. Augustine, Conf. 10, 28, 39: PL 32, 795}.

§46 When he listens to the message of creation and to the voice of conscience, man can arrive at certainty about the existence of God, the cause and the end of everything.

§47 The Church teaches that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certainty from his works, by the natural light of human reason (cf. Vatican Council I, can. 2 # 1: DS 3026),

§48 We really can name God, starting from the manifold perfections of his creatures, which are likenesses of the infinitely perfect God, even if our limited language cannot exhaust the mystery.

§49 Without the Creator, the creature vanishes (GS 36). This is the reason why believers know that the love of Christ urges them to bring the light of the living God to those who do not know him or who reject him.

Questions for Children:

Who made the sandwiches / clothes / church / trees / sun - stars / you / your parents?

Why did God make you? *“God made me to know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him in the next.”*

Everything in nature speaks of God, points to Him. How? Grass, sunset, volcano. Above all: persons, saints. Everything serves: Life & Understanding

Look out! We can be tackled. How? How get back on track?

Certainty about God. Know there is a queen even if we don't know her name.

Names of God: Father, Son, Spirit. Lord. Jesus. CCC 35: God is Personal

Mission: not for ourselves alone, but for the world.

CCC 31: *Imago Dei*

CCC 32: Proofs from change / causes / purpose / grades / finality

CCC 33: From person—moral sense ('ought', ask re justice); desire; freedom requires meaning; real freedom; immortal soul.

CCC 37: Effects of the Fall—darkening of intellect; weakening of will; rebellion of concupiscence; suffering + death; struggle in environment; threat of satan.

CCC 38: Need Revelation

CCC 39: Openness



Points for Parents:

Responsibility of raising children for God.

CIC 226 §1. According to their own vocation, those who live in the marital state are bound by a special duty to work through marriage and the family to build up the people of God.

§2. Since they have given life to their children, parents have a most grave obligation and possess the right to educate them. Therefore, it is for Christian parents particularly to take care of the Christian education of their children according to the doctrine handed on by the Church.

CCC 2221-2231 Not only numbers, but education, virtues and holiness (grace).

Loyalty to vows gives increase of grace. Unity impossible without grace.

Discipline of children. Communication.

Freedom for children. Discover world, be allowed to fall (God allows this).

Letting go → success.

God brings all things in nature to success. So be comforted in this responsibility.

What are the difficulties today? Outside the home? In the home?



Proofs of God:

CCC 32, 34: 5 Proofs

CCC 40-43: Analogy of Being; Dionysius; Lateran IV

3 vias to speak of God: *affirmativa, eminentia, negativa*

Liber XXIV philosophorum: “God is an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere”

Quinque viae (I q.2 a.3): Change; Causes; Contingency; Grades; Finality

1st Way → Argument *ex motu* — **Unmoved Mover** (*primum movens immobile*), a cosmological argument. We observe change (the reduction of potency to act); there cannot be an infinite regress; there must be an unchanged changer. *ACTUS PURUS* brings all natures to perfection.

2nd Way → Argument *ex causu* — **Uncaused Cause** / Ultimate Efficient Cause, another cosmological argument. In all reality which we experience, an effect must have ‘actio’ behind it. Thus efficient causes imply the existence of a First Cause that is uncaused, i.e. that possesses in itself the sufficient reason for its existence. This is God. The First Cause necessarily transcends the ‘chain of causes’. He is not the ‘1st in the chain’, for He is not part of the chain, but cause of the entire chain.

3rd Way → Argument *ex contingentia*. Not everything can be contingent, or else nothing could come into being. Rather there must be necessary Being. This is God.

4th Way → Argument *ex gradu*. The graduated perfections of being actually in the universe can be understood only by comparison with an absolute standard that is also actual, i.e., an infinitely perfect Being. This is God. The transcendentals are convertible with being. The more truth or unity or goodness something has, the more being. For substance if not for accident, there must be an absolute, unlimited perfection of these, pure act without any potential. And this must therefore be Absolute Being.

5th Way → Argument *ex fine*. Teleological argument. All objects act toward an end. The intelligence which guides them is God.

Each of the 5 Ways takes as its departure point the visible creation, and strives **toward the First Cause**. It sees **there must be a cause for this world which is not in the same order as this world but transcends it**. The first part of the chain cannot actually be part of the chain, but is what produces the entire chain, being prior to it.



Biblical Names of God

The 7 Holy Names of God in the OT can be divided into 3 groups:

Relation of God to the world: **EI** (The Strong, Powerful); **Elohim** (He Who possesses the fullness of power); **Adonai** (Lord, Commander, Judge)

Intrinsic perfections of God: **El-Schaddai** (The Mighty One); **Elyon** (the Highest); **El-HaKodesh** (The Holy)

Proper Name: **JHWH**, "I AM" → יהוה

Apoc 1:8 gives allows a metaphysical interpretation of "I AM": "ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ." → **All Existence**

Also: **El-Olam** (the Venerable, the Eternal); and Lev 24:11 יהוה → HaShem / The Name.

Jesus called God אבא (Mk 14:36), as then did St Paul (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6).

S.Th. I q.13 a.11 This name **HE WHO IS** is most properly applied to God as:

First, because of its signification. For it does not signify form, but simply existence itself.

Secondly, on account of its universality. For all other names are either less universal, or, if convertible with it, add something above it at least in idea; hence in a certain way they inform and determine it.

Thirdly, from its consignification, for it signifies present existence; and this above all properly applies to God, whose existence knows not past or future, as Augustine says (*De Trin.* v).



Family Catechism Day

18th August 2016: CCC 68-73—Revelation

Re-cap on Creation: explain that damaging the image does not hurt the original.

Read CCC 68-73

Revelation: reason can know that there is Revelation, but cannot attain to the content (i.e. can know the form but not the material). We desire more than our nature can deliver, yet this desire is not to be frustrated. The aim of Revelation is man's Communion with God. We want to know the First Cause—but need grace (freely given) to do so.

Scripture & Tradition **DZ 3006**

Revelation ended in the Apostolic Age. The riches of Faith are to be sought in the Incarnation & Passion.

Two orders of knowledge: natural, and that by faith. Grace as in-debitum. **DZ 3015**

Theology impossible without faith. Each science has its methodology. Reception of Revelation always inter-personal. Faith means accepting the truth on the basis of a witness with authority. St Augustine: "*Nemo crederet nisi videret... esse credendum*" ["No one believes unless he sees it is credible"] **DZ 3008 / 3017 / 3019—God cannot deceive. DZ 3009 - 3010—Harmony of faith & reason.**

revelare—all other gods are man's projections, but YHWH is the Self-Revealing Transcendent. Revelation is not rational knowledge, nor is it experience; rather the initiative is always God's: it is His Self-Communication. He requires of us humility, purity, docility, desire.

Beware transcendental chasm v immanentism. Certain errors:

Pantheism DZ 3023 (*Dei Filius*, Can.3) / Hegelianism DZ 3024

Deism DZ 3027

Naturalism / absolute rationalism DZ 3028

Fideism DZ 3033

Agnosticism / mythologism DZ 3034

Naturalism DZ 3041

Liberalism DZ 3043

The way to God is primarily by faith—in worship and prayer—and secondarily ethical, bzw. moral—rather than purely intellectual.

NT Revelation is history's *causa finalis*—it drives history on, pulling it efficaciously, allured / called by the Bridegroom. "*Revelation possible between persons. It does not threaten our intellect or will (for we must choose constantly), but perfects them. NOT unworthily passive, but Revelation is a GIFT & TASK—it requires our all! It obliges man to press ever deeper into Truth, to make it his spiritual property, to conform his soul to Christ. Always new questions. What great responsibility! (souls hang on it); overcoming such obstacles!*"

Further Reading:



Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, c.2 § / DZ 3006

Ludwig Ott (1955), *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, Book I, Section I (pp.13-17)



Family Catechism Day

15th August 2016: CCC 96-100—Transmission of Divine Revelation

Read CCC 96-100

CCC 74 cf God does not fail in His judgements, nor in His chosen means of communication

Apostolic Tradition & Succession.

Consider line of popes; normally chosen from a pool of bishops—and these are successors of the Apostles, Jesus' chosen men. [*Q: Any difficulties?*]

CCC 75-78 cf Much communication non-verbal: So transmission of the Word is in more than the doctrine alone, for it is in the life & worship of the Church (e.g. hagiographies, art, rites). Theological faculty alone is vulnerable without the Body.

CCC 79 Guaranteed by the Holy Spirit, the seal of unity

cf Vincent of Lerins: “what all men have at all times and everywhere believed must be regarded as true”; cf AL, VIII

CCC 84-93 Interpretation given to the whole Church, under the Magisterium

CCC 94 Growth in Understanding: personally and the Church (doctrine, liturgy, life)

CCC 95 Tradition, Sacred Scriptures & Magisterium—three legs of one stool

Catechism for Children

Show English Bible, the Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

Try 3 methods of transmission. Those present line up eldest to youngest, then transmit: a verse (Mt 27:50; Mk 15:37; Lk 23:46)

an action (arms outstretched; sign of Cross)

passing on the book!



Family Catechism Day

12th August 2016: CCC 134-141 — Sacred Scripture

134 *"All Sacred Scripture is but one book, and that one book is Christ, because all divine Scripture speaks of Christ, and all divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ"* (Hugh of St. Victor, *De arca Noe* 2, 8: PL 176, 642).

135 *"The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God and, because they are inspired, they are truly the Word of God."*

136 *God is the author of Sacred Scripture because He inspired its human authors; He acts in them and by means of them. He thus gives assurance that their writings teach without error His saving truth (cf DV 11).*

137 *Interpretation of the inspired Scripture must be attentive above all to what God wants to reveal through the sacred authors for our salvation. What comes from the Spirit is not fully "understood except by the Spirit's action" (cf. Origen, *Hom. in Ex.* 4, 5: PG 12, 320).*

138 *The Church accepts and venerates as inspired the 46 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New.*

139 *The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their centre.*

140 *The unity of the two Testaments proceeds from the unity of God's plan and His Revelation: the OT prepares for the New and the NT fulfils the Old; the two shed light on each other; both are true Word of God.*

141 *"The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord" (DV 21): both nourish and govern the whole Christian life. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps 119:105)*

Eucharistic: Presence at all Levels

Letter—Aramaic (Jesus) ܐ ; Paleo-Hebrew (King David) ✕ ; Proto-Sinaitic (Abraham) †

Word—"sleep": Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Jonah, Ezekiel, David. **[Prefiguration]**

Sentence—"Are not my words as a fire, saith the Lord: and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer 23:29)—"I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!" (Lk 12:49) **[Power]**

Pericope—"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Dt 6:4ff) **[Living]**

Book—"Give graciously to all the living, and withhold not kindness from the dead. Do not fail those who weep, but mourn with those who mourn. Do not shrink from visiting a sick man, because for such deeds you will be loved. In all you do, remember the end of your life, and then you will never sin." (Sir 6:33-36) "Whoever touches pitch will be defiled, and whoever associates with a proud man will become like him... A rich man does wrong, and he even adds reproaches; a poor man suffers wrong, and he must add apologies." (Sir 13:1-3) **[Incarnate]**

Group—NT, G & E: Incarnation, caput et membra; OT, T & N & K cf. Trinitarian, Father, Son, Spirit

Canon—Miracle that Divine Revelation be thus expressed. God asked Moses to write. Purpose of language.

Christ—The Unique Word of Sacred Scripture

102 Through all the words of Sacred Scripture, God speaks only one single Word, His one Utterance in Whom He expresses himself completely: Cf. Heb 1:1-3

105 "For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and have been handed on **as such** to the Church herself." [DV 11; cf. Jn 20:31; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pt 1:19-21; 3:15-16]



106 God inspired the human authors of the sacred books. “To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while He employed them in this task, made **full use of their own faculties** and powers so that, though He acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever He wanted written, and no more.” [DV 11]

108 Still, the Christian faith is not a “religion of the book”. Christianity is the religion of the “Word” of God, “not a written and mute word, but **incarnate and living**”. [St. Bernard, S. missus est hom. 4, 11: PL 183, 86.]

The senses of Scripture

115 According to an ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two senses of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral and anagogical senses. the profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church.

116 The literal sense is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: “All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal.” [St. Thomas Aquinas]

118 A medieval couplet summarizes the significance of the four senses: *The Letter speaks of deeds; Allegory to faith; The Moral how to act; Anagogy our destiny.*

119 But I would not believe in the Gospel, had not the authority of the Catholic Church already moved me. [St. Augustine, Contra epistolam Manichaei 5, 6: PL 42, 176.]

The Canon of Scripture

120 It was by the **apostolic Tradition** that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books.

122 Indeed, “the economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so oriented that it should prepare for and **declare in prophecy the coming of Christ**, redeemer of all men.” [DV 15]

The unity of the Old and New Testaments

128 The Church, as early as apostolic times [I Cor 10:6,11; Heb 10:1; 1 Pt 3:21], and then constantly in her Tradition, has illuminated the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments through typology, which discerns in God's works of the Old Covenant **prefigurations** of what He accomplished in the fullness of time in the Person of His incarnate Son.

129 Christians therefore read the OT in the light of Christ crucified and risen. Such typological reading discloses the inexhaustible content of the OT; but it must not make us forget that the OT retains its own intrinsic value as Revelation reaffirmed by our Lord himself. [Cf. Mk 12:29-31] Besides, the NT has to be read in the light of the Old. **Early Christian catechesis made constant use of the OT.** [Cf. I Cor 5:6-8; 10:1-11] As an old saying put it, the NT lies hidden in the Old and the OT is unveiled in the New. [Cf. St. Augustine, Quaest. in Hept. 2, 73; Cf. DU 16]

Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church

131 “And such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can **serve the Church as her support and vigour**, and **the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life.**” [DV 21] Hence “access to Sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful.” [DV 22]

132 “Therefore, the **study of the sacred page should be the very soul of sacred theology**, the ministry of the Word, too - pastoral preaching, catechetics and all forms of Christian instruction, among which the liturgical homily should hold pride of place - is healthily nourished and thrives in holiness through the Word of Scripture.” [DV 24]

133 The Church “**forcefully and specifically** exhorts all the Christian faithful... to learn the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ. [DV 25; cf. Phil 3:8 and St. Jerome, Commentariorum in Isaiam libri xviii prol.:PL 24,17B]



Family Catechism Day

17th November 2016: CCC 176-184—Faith

Our Highest faculties—CCC 143 By faith, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God. Cf. **CCC 160 Jesus invites all, coerces none.**

CCC 144 To obey (from the Latin ob-audire, to “**hear or listen to**”) in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God...

Abraham’s faith: going out; living in tents; offering Isaac—CCC 145

To believe is to gain grace, for it is an act of justice—CCC 146 Heb 11:1 “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”: “**Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.**”

OT Faith is in Jesus Christ (cf CCC 147)

CCC 148 **The Virgin Mary** most perfectly embodies the obedience of faith, believing “**with God nothing will be impossible**”. Elizabeth greeted her: “**Blessed is she who believed** that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

CCC 149 Mary never ceased to believe in the fulfilment of God's word [even on Calvary]

150 Faith is first of all a **personal adherence** of man **to God**. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a **free assent to the whole truth** that God has revealed...

CCC 151 ...Believing in God cannot be separated from believing in the One He sent, His “beloved Son”... God tells us to listen to Him. The Lord Himself said to His disciples: “Believe in God, believe also in Me.” ... “No one has ever seen God; the only Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known.”

CCC 152 “...no one can say “Jesus is Lord”, except by the Holy Spirit”

CCC 153 When St Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus declared to him that this revelation [came] from “My Father Who is in heaven”. Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by Him.

Union of Divine & human acts: CCC 154 Believing is possible only by grace and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit... [it] is an authentically human act. Trusting in God and cleaving to [His revealed] truths is contrary neither to human freedom nor... reason.

CCC 155 “Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace.” [STh II-II, 2, 9]

CCC 156 What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe “because of **the authority of God Himself** Who reveals them, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived”. So “that



the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit.” Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church's growth and holiness... her fruitfulness and stability “are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all”; they are “motives of credibility” (*motiva credibilitatis*), which show that the assent of faith is “by no means a blind impulse of the mind”.

CCC 157 Faith is certain. It is more certain than all human knowledge because it is founded on the very word of God who cannot lie.

CCC 158 “Faith seeks understanding”: it is intrinsic to faith [to desire] to know better the One in Whom he has put his faith, and to understand better what He has revealed. St Augustine: “I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe.”

CCC 159 “Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny Himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth.”

CCC 161 Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent Him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation.

CCC 162 Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man. *[Can be lost by certain sins (incredulity, heresy, schism, apostasy), although it can exist without charity.]*

CCC 163-64 Faith makes us taste in advance the light of the beatific vision... Then we shall see God “face to face”, “as he is”... Now, however, “we walk by faith, not by sight”; we perceive God as “in a mirror, dimly” and only “in part”. Even though enlightened by Him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test...

CCC 165 It is then we must turn to the witnesses of faith: to Abraham, who “in hope... believed against hope”; to the Virgin Mary...

CCC 166 Faith is a personal act... the free response [to God]. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone.

CCC 168 It is the Church that believes first, and so bears, nourishes and sustains my faith. Everywhere, it is the Church that first confesses the Lord... Baptism: “What do you ask of God's Church?” “Faith.”; “What does faith offer you?” “Eternal life.”

CCC 171 The Church, “the pillar and bulwark of the truth”, faithfully guards “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”. She guards the memory of Christ's words... from generation to generation hands on the apostles' confession of faith. As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith...



Family Catechism Day

15th December 2016: CCC 228-231 — “I believe in God”

CCC 228 “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD...” (Dt 6:4; Mk 12:29). “The supreme being must be unique, without equal. . . If God is not one, he is not God” (Tertullian).

- Schema Israel: יהוה אחד . Heart, soul, might / measure / resources. Paths of goodness, life, understanding, unity leading to God.
- Identity of God’s attributes: Eternity, Power, Immutability, Omniscience, Mercy
- Simplicity: there is no physical (part-part), metaphysical (act-potency) or logical (genus-specific difference) composition in God.
- St Thomas: “One does not add any reality to being, but is only a negation of division.” S.Th. I q.11 sed c
- Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Divine Names*: “there is no kind of multitude that is not in a way one. But what are many in their parts, are one in their whole; and what are many in accidents, are one in subject; and what are many in number, are one in species; and what are many in species, are one in genus; and what are many in processions, are one in principle.”
- Unity of a human body compared to a carrot; unity of a cultured city compared to barbarians. Recognising the place of each; identity; boundaries.
- Love as the bond of unity. Gravity. Supreme love, supreme unity.

CCC 229 Faith in God leads us to turn to Him alone as our first origin and our ultimate goal, and neither to prefer anything to Him nor to substitute anything for Him.

- Connection between Principle and Goal: One with Power and Wisdom to set us on our way does not aim at a less than Perfect Goal, i.e. Himself.
- Vat. I, *Dei Filius* (cap. ii, *De revelat.*; **DZ 3004**; 3026), expressly identifies God as the **END** of all, not only the origin of all, saying that God, the first cause (*principium*) and last end of all things, can, from created things, be known with certainty by the natural light of human reason.



- The importance of understanding where one has come from (to know who one is); where one is going (to know what to do).
- Outside of the Word is nothing. Mortal sin to prefer anything to God: it is to choose to miss our target, to 'feed' on non-being.

CCC 230 Even when He reveals Himself, God remains a mystery beyond words: "If you understood Him, it would not be God" (St. Augustine).

- **Mystery:** *verum et ens convertuntur.*

St Thomas, I q.12 a.7: "O most mighty, great, and powerful, the Lord of hosts is Thy Name. Great in counsel, **and incomprehensible in thought**" (Jer 32:18-19)...

I answer that, It is impossible for any created intellect to comprehend God; yet "for the mind to attain to God in some degree is great beatitude", as Augustine says...

In proof of this we must consider that what is comprehended is perfectly known; and that is perfectly known which is known so far as it can be known... Everything is knowable according to its actuality. But God, whose being is infinite, as was shown above (Article 7) is infinitely knowable. Now no created intellect can know God infinitely. For the created intellect knows the Divine essence more or less perfectly in proportion as it receives a greater or lesser light of glory. Since therefore the created light of glory received into any created intellect cannot be infinite, it is clearly impossible for any created intellect to know God in an infinite degree. Hence it is impossible that it should comprehend God.

CCC 231 The God of our faith has revealed Himself as HE WHO IS; and he has made Himself known as "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6). God's very being is Truth and Love.

- No composition in God → What He is = Who He is
- St Thomas' (I q.3 a.1-8) *via negationis* to arrive at the absolute simplicity of God. There is no kind of composition in God: a.1 not of parts (for God is not a body); a.2 not of matter and form; a.3 not of quiddity, essence, nature and subject; a.4 not of essentia and esse; a.5 not of genus and difference; a.6 not of subject and accident; a.7 no composite, wholly simple; a.8 does not enter composition with other things
- "steadfast love and faithfulness": Truth, Fidelity, Compact Immutability.
- Love as form of forms



The Athanasian Creed (DZ 75-76)

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. Neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet they are not three eternals but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensible, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty. And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord. And yet they are not three Lords but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord. So are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say; There are three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity none is afore or after another; none is greater or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of substance of His mother, born in the world. Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of that manhood into God. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; He ascended into heaven, He sits on the right hand of the Father, God, Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; and shall give account of their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

This is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.



Family Catechism Day

16th February 2017: CCC 261-267 — The Most Holy Trinity

*CCC 261 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. **God alone** can make it known to us **by revealing Himself** as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

[CCC 236 Through the *oikonomia* the *theologia* is revealed to us; and the *theologia* illumines the *oikonomia*. Cf a person explaining their actions.]

*CCC 262 The Incarnation of God's Son reveals that God is the eternal Father and that the Son is **consubstantial** with the Father, which means that, in the Father and with the Father the Son is one and the same God.*

[CCC 239 Divine 'Fatherhood' is Transcendent Origin with loving authority; 'motherhood' stands for God's Immanence.]

*CCC 263 The mission of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of the Son (Jn 14:26) and by the Son "from the Father" (Jn 15:26), reveals that, with them, the Spirit is one and the same God. "With the Father and the Son he is **worshipped** and glorified" (Nicene Creed).*

[CCC 247 'Filioque' not in the 381 Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, but taught by Church Fathers and Pope Leo I (447 AD). Then introduced liturgically in Spain from C.6th to counter Arianism. Adopted in France, Germany, Italy and in C.11th in Rome. Theologically sound. Shows Church's Magisterium is Living throughout the Body.]

CCC 264 "The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father as the first principle and, by the eternal gift of this to the Son, from the communion of both the Father and the Son" (St. Augustine, De Trin. 15, 26, 47: PL 42, 1095).

CCC 265 By the grace of Baptism "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", we are called to share in the life of the Blessed Trinity, here on earth in the obscurity of faith, and after death in eternal light (cf. Paul VI, CPG # 9).

[CCC 249: Trinitarian formulas in Scripture: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." 2 Cor



13:14; Cf. 1 Cor 12:4 - 6; Eph 4:4-6. Then development of doctrine—not of reality—through generations.]

CCC 266 "Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal" (Athanasian Creed: DS 75; ND 16).

[CCC 252 Giving life to philosophy: "Substance"—Divine Being in its Unity; "Person"—Divine Being in its Trinity, really distinct; "Relation"—basis of real distinction of Persons. **Read CCC 253 & 255:** "Because it does not divide the divine Unity, the real distinction of the Persons from one another resides solely in the relationships which relate them to one another... Indeed "everything (in them) is one where there is no opposition of relationship." "Because of that unity the Father is wholly in the Son and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Son is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son."]

CCC 267 Inseparable in what they are, the divine persons are also inseparable in what they do. But within the single divine operation each shows forth what is proper to Him in the Trinity, especially in the divine missions of the Son's Incarnation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

[CCC 257 God Wills to live the Trinity in us! CCC 260 The ultimate end of the whole divine economy is the entry of God's creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed Trinity. But even now we are called to be a dwelling for the Most Holy Trinity: "If a man loves me", says the Lord, "he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him"]

CCC 258 Thus the Church confesses, following the New Testament, "one God and Father **from Whom** all things are, and one Lord Jesus Christ, **through Whom** all things are, and one Holy Spirit **in Whom** all things are".

Cf. soul in the body v. body in the soul

RECITE The Athanasian Creed (DZ 75-76)



Family Catechism Day

23rd March 2017: CCC 275-278—God's Omnipotence

CCC 275 With Job, the just man, we confess: "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2).

CCC 276 Faithful to the witness of Scripture, the Church often addresses her prayer to the "almighty and eternal God" ("omnipotens sempiternus Deus. . ."), believing firmly that "nothing will be impossible with God" (Gen 18:14; Lk 1:37; Mt 19:26).

CCC 277 God shows forth his almighty power by converting us from our sins and restoring us to his friendship by grace. "God, you show your almighty power above all in your mercy and forgiveness. . ." (Roman Missal, 26th Sunday, Opening Prayer).

CCC 278 If we do not believe that God's love is almighty, how can we believe that the Father could create us, the Son redeem us and the Holy Spirit sanctify us?

CCC 271 God's almighty power is in no way arbitrary: "In God, power, essence, will, intellect, wisdom, and justice are all identical. Nothing therefore can be in God's power which could not be in his just will or his wise intellect."

S.Th. I q.25 a.2 Whether the power of God is infinite?

On the contrary, Hilary says (De Trin. viii), that "*God's power is immeasurable. He is the living mighty one.*" Now everything that is immeasurable is infinite. Therefore the power of God is infinite.

I answer that, As stated above (a.1), active power exists in God according to the measure in which He is actual. Now His existence is infinite, inasmuch as it is not limited by anything that receives it, as is clear from what has been said when we discussed the infinity of the divine essence (q.7 a.1). Wherefore, it is necessary that the active power in God should be infinite. For in every agent it is found that the more perfectly an agent has the form by which it acts the greater its power to act. For instance, the hotter a thing is, the greater the power has it to give heat; and it would have infinite power to give heat, were its own heat infinite...

S.Th. I q.25 a.3 Whether God is omnipotent?

On the contrary, It is said: "*No word shall be impossible with God*" ([Lk 1:37](#)).

I answer that, All confess that God is omnipotent; but it seems difficult to explain in what His omnipotence precisely consists: for there may be doubt as to the precise meaning of the word 'all' when we say that God can do all things. If, however, we consider the matter aright, since power is said in reference to possible things, this phrase, "*God can do all things*," is rightly understood to mean that God can do all things that are possible; and for this reason He is said to be omnipotent. Now according to the Philosopher (Meta. v, 17), a thing is said to be possible in two ways...

It remains therefore, that God is called omnipotent because He can do all things that are possible absolutely; which is the second way of saying a thing is possible. For a thing is said to be possible or



impossible absolutely, according to the relation in which the very terms stand to one another, possible if the predicate is not incompatible with the subject, as that Socrates sits; and absolutely impossible when the predicate is altogether incompatible with the subject, as, for instance, that a man is a donkey.

...For such cannot come under the divine omnipotence, not because of any defect in the power of God, but because it has not the nature of a feasible or possible thing. Therefore, everything that does not imply a contradiction in terms, is numbered amongst those possible things, in respect of which God is called omnipotent: whereas whatever implies contradiction does not come within the scope of divine omnipotence, because it cannot have the aspect of possibility. Hence it is better to say that such things cannot be done, than that God cannot do them. Nor is this contrary to the word of the angel, saying: "No word shall be impossible with God." For whatever implies a contradiction cannot be a word, because no intellect can possibly conceive such a thing.

Reply to Obj 2: To sin is to fall short of a perfect action; hence to be able to sin is to be able to fall short in action, which is repugnant to omnipotence. Therefore God cannot sin, because of His omnipotence...

Reply to Obj 3: God's omnipotence is particularly shown in sparing and having mercy, because in this is it made manifest that God has supreme power, that He freely forgives sins. For it is not for one who is bound by laws of a superior to forgive sins of his own free will.

S.Th. I q.25 a.4 Whether God can make the past not to have been?

On the contrary, Jerome says (Ep. 22 ad Eustoch.): "*Although God can do all things, He cannot make a thing that is corrupt not to have been corrupted.*" Therefore, for the same reason, He cannot effect that anything else which is past should not have been.

I answer that, As was said above (q.7 a.2), there does not fall under the scope of God's omnipotence anything that implies a contradiction. Now that the past should not have been implies a contradiction. For as it implies a contradiction to say that Socrates is sitting, and is not sitting, so does it to say that he sat, and did not sit. But to say that he did sit is to say that it happened in the past. To say that he did not sit, is to say that it did not happen. Whence, that the past should not have been, does not come under the scope of divine power. This is what Augustine means when he says (Contra Faust. xxix, 5): "*Whosoever says, If God is almighty, let Him make what is done as if it were not done, does not see that this is to say: If God is almighty let Him effect that what is true, by the very fact that it is true, be false*": and the Philosopher says (Ethic. vi, 2): "*Of this one thing alone is God deprived—namely, to make undone the things that have been done.*"

S.Th. I q.25 a.5 Whether God can do what He does not?

On the contrary, It is said: "*Thinkest thou that I cannot ask My Father, and He will give Me presently more than twelve legions of angels?*" ([Mt 26:53](#)). But He neither asked for them, nor did His Father show them to refute the Jews. Therefore God can do what He does not.

I answer that, In this matter certain persons erred in two ways. Some laid it down that God acts from natural necessity in such way that as from the action of nature nothing else can happen beyond what actually takes place—as, for instance, from the seed of man, a man must come, and from that of an olive, an olive; so from the divine operation there could not result other things, nor another order of things, than that which now is. But we showed above (q.19 a.3) that God does not act from natural necessity, but that His will is the cause of all things; nor is that will naturally and from any necessity determined to those



things. Whence in no way at all is the present course of events produced by God from any necessity, so that other things could not happen.

Others, however, said that the divine power is restricted to this present course of events through the order of the divine wisdom and justice without which God does nothing. But since the power of God, which is His essence, is nothing else but His wisdom, it can indeed be fittingly said that there is nothing in the divine power which is not in the order of the divine wisdom; for the divine wisdom includes the whole potency of the divine power. Yet the order placed in creation by divine wisdom, in which order the notion of His justice consists, as said above (q.21 a.2), is not so adequate to the divine wisdom that the divine wisdom should be restricted to this present order of things. Now it is clear that the whole idea of order which a wise man puts into things made by him is taken from their end. So, when the end is proportionate to the things made for that end, the wisdom of the maker is restricted to some definite order. But the divine goodness is an end exceeding beyond all proportion things created. Whence the divine wisdom is not so restricted to any particular order that no other course of events could happen. Wherefore we must simply say that God can do other things than those He has done.

Reply to Obj 1: In ourselves, in whom power and essence are distinct from will and intellect, and again intellect from wisdom, and will from justice, there can be something in the power which is not in the just will nor in the wise intellect. But in God, power and essence, will and intellect, wisdom and justice, are one and the same. Whence, there can be nothing in the divine power which cannot also be in His just will or in His wise intellect. ...For God does things because He wills so to do; yet the power to do them does not come from His will, but from His nature.

S.Th. I q.25 a.6 Whether God can do better than what He does?

On the contrary, It is said ([Eph 3:20](#)): "*God is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand.*"

I answer that, The goodness of anything is twofold; one, which is of the essence of it—thus, for instance, to be rational pertains to the essence of man. As regards this good, God cannot make a thing better than it is itself; although He can make another thing better than it; even as He cannot make the number four greater than it is; because if it were greater it would no longer be four, but another number. For the addition of a substantial difference in definitions is after the manner of the addition of unity of numbers (Meta. viii, 10). Another kind of goodness is that which is over and above the essence; thus, the good of a man is to be virtuous or wise. As regards this kind of goodness, God can make better the things He has made. Absolutely speaking, however, God can make something else better than each thing made by Him.

Reply to Obj 3: The universe, the present creation being supposed, cannot be better, on account of the most beautiful order given to things by God; in which the good of the universe consists. For if any one thing were bettered, the proportion of order would be destroyed; as if one string were stretched more than it ought to be, the melody of the harp would be destroyed. Yet God could make other things, or add something to the present creation; and then there would be another and a better universe.

Reply to Obj 4: The humanity of Christ, from the fact that it is united to the Godhead; and created happiness from the fact that it is the fruition of God; and the Blessed Virgin from the fact that she is the mother of God; have all a certain infinite dignity from the infinite good, which is God. And on this account there cannot be anything better than these; just as there cannot be anything better than God.



Family Catechism Day

20th April 2017: CCC 315-324—God the Creator

CCC 315 Creation proclaims God's Wisdom & Goodness. It is aimed at a new Creation in Christ

CCC 316 Creation is the shared work of the indivisible Trinity

CCC 318 'ex nihilo'

CCC 320-323 Creator & Sustainer. Providence

CCC 324 evil not substantial, not created

בְּרֵאשִׁית

- Gen 1:1 “בְּרֵאשִׁית” Rosh Hashanah means “Head / First of the Year” (New Year). Christ is the Head, the First, the Alpha
- Gen 1:2 Two mentions of ‘Face’—personalised creation:
 “וַחֲשֹׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וַיְהִי אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֵף עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:”
- Gen 1:6-8 “יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם” Firmament between the waters. Dry land? Planet earth? These come later. Rather it is Heaven. The more real is the invisible / spiritual. *Firmament >> waters as Heaven >> earth*
- This account is the pattern of creation. Multiple levels / interpretations (though not whimsical). Firmament also form / existence amid potencies. Objects in act. The waters below and above may be read as “what was not” and “what will not” while the Firmament is “what is”.
 Emerging land can signify spirits created for eternity
- Gen 1:7, 9 The obedience of creation: וַיְהִי-כֵן
- Gen 1:9 The ‘assembly’ (as in People / Church) to ‘one place’ (as in the Temple / Christ) for the emergence of dry land (whereby the ‘seas’ here can stand for grace):

“וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל-מָקוֹם אֶחָד”



- The importance of sacred language, set apart: words like 'place' take on great depth. We make a connection between this and the 'place' of the Akedah and then the Temple
- Gen 1:10 God pronounces Judgement'—He sees what is 'good', makes a separation and assigns names:
 - 'Day' v 'night' (Gen 1:4-5) good v evil;
 - 'Earth' v 'seas' (Gen 1:10) nature & grace OR life & death
- Gen 1:12 Creatures participate in generating, each according to its kind. The highest generation of creatures is virginal / interior (as God receives nothing from outside)
- Gen 1:13 "and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind". If acts of charity be the fruit of our life, they are also the seed for new life
- Gen 1:14 Sun, moon, stars as tokens of [Jesus, Mary and the Saints] seasons, days, years. Moon and Earth's shadow rising to converge in Virgo in AD 33 with the Sun in the Ram. God's arrangement from the beginning—Jesus chose the date and time of His death
- Gen 1:15 "to give light upon the earth" = Church Triumphant cares for Church Militant

“וַיְהִי לַמָּאוֹרֹת בְּרִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאֵיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן:” (cf. v.17-19)

- Gen 1:16 BVM to crush satan's head:

“וְאֶת־הַמָּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשַׁלֵּת הַלֵּילָה”
- Gen 1:20 Life from the waters
- Gen 1:21 Life is an act of divine creation: “וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים”
- Gen 1:22, 28 Upon the beasts a blessing and the command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth; then upon man the same, with the added command to take dominion. Cf 'two brothers', and the elder shall serve the younger
- Gen 1:31 “וַיְהִי־טוֹב מְאֹד”—very good



Family Catechism Day

18th May 2017: CCC 350-354—Heaven & Earth

CCC 350-352

- Angels in the OT:
 - Gen 3:24 Cherubim guarding Eden
 - Judg 13:1-25 Angel announces Samson's birth
 - Dan 10:12-21 The prince of Persia
 - Also: comforts Hagar; 3 visit Abraham; 2 rescue Lot; Jacob's vision; Passover angel; obstructs Balaam; ministers to Elijah in the desert; rebukes Israel; defeats Assyria; accompanies Tobit; rescue 3 from fiery furnace and Daniel in lions' den;
- 9 choirs of angels: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, Angels
- The Angel of Portugal (Angel of Peace)
 - Pardon prayer: "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love Thee! I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love Thee."
 - Angel's Prayer: "Most Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit — I adore Thee profoundly. I offer Thee the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifferences whereby He is offended. And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners."
- Angels serve God's glory and our salvation

CCC 344 Solidarity among creatures

CCC 347-349 St Benedict: nothing takes precedence to the work of God (solemn worship). Creation made for the Sabbath. The Eighth Day.



Family Catechism Day

22nd June 2017: CCC 380-384—Man & Woman, in the Image of God

CCC 380 Created in God's image. Given dominion over the earth.

- “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’” (Gen 1:27-28)
 - *God's Plan unfolding: Are there still men on earth? Women? Has man multiplied on the earth? Does he have dominion over fish? Birds? Land creatures? Does he exercise dominion well? Have we built heaven on earth?*
- Dominion to govern as God does, with love

CCC 381 Christ is the Firstborn

- Man is predestined to reproduce the image of God's Son made man, the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), so that Christ shall be the first-born of a multitude of brothers and sisters (cf Eph 1:3-6; Rom 8:29).
 - *Has anyone gone to Heaven yet? Are more likely to follow? Does anyone here aim at and hope for Heaven?*
- Image of the invisible: each spirit—being (memory), knowledge, love
 - *Is God All? Does He know All? Does He love All? Is He / His Knowledge / His Love spiritual or material? Are they substantially identical?*

CCC 382 Body & Soul

- Man links the spiritual and material worlds
- Body & Soul is a unity.
 - *What is a body without a soul? (corpse) What is a soul without a body? (ghost) The disembodied soul longs to be re-united with her body. How will God's Plan come together?*
- Soul created immediately by God (*or who can create something immaterial?*)



- The body is worthy of the soul
- Evolution: a human soul in an ape's body; or an ape's soul in a human body. Both so grotesquely far from possible that no approximation is conceivable.
 - *What alternative is there to Adam & Eve? Cannot be less than 2; incredible to claim it could be more. Unity of man in that all come from Adam.*
- Mystical meaning of making Eve from Adam's rib
- The person transcends the parts
 - *Are you your foot? Leg? Body alone? Sensations alone? Emotions? Thoughts? Experiences? Body & soul without personality?*

CCC 383 Made for community

- From the beginning, created for union with others
 - Male-female complementarity (even in the vocabulary). Seeking completeness.
 - God as entirely Transcendent & entirely Immanent (not in the image of a human. cf Man as entirely human and woman as entirely human)
- Family of Blessed Trinity.
 - *What is the biggest family in God's Plan? Who is the Father? Who is the Mother? What is it's Unity? What is it's Life?*

CCC 384 Paradise

- Revelation makes known to us the state of original holiness and justice of man and woman before sin: from their friendship with God flowed the happiness of their existence in paradise.
- Man in harmony with himself, and in harmony with his environment—original justice.
 - mastery of self allows for mastery over the world
 - *Does anyone ever do what they do not want to do? Anyone not able to do what they want to do? What do we need? (grace)*