



## **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

21<sup>st</sup> 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

1<sup>st</sup> 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 a unchanged changer. *ACTUS PURUS* brings all natures to perfection.

2<sup>nd</sup> 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 ‘1<sup>st</sup> in the chain’, for He is not part of the chain, but cause of the entire chain.

3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

4<sup>th</sup> 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.

5<sup>th</sup> 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*: **El** (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”: “Ἐγώ 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 יהשם → 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

18<sup>th</sup> 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

15<sup>th</sup> 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!