

# Religion and the End of Man

In creating us, God gave us the power and right to choose which path we should follow in life: either the path of obedience, or the path of disobedience to His commandments. The first seems wearisome and full of thorns, but reward comes in the end: happiness with God. The second seems full of pleasures and roses, but punishment awaits the traveler at the end: eternal damnation in hell.

Each must choose for himself. We may find the choice a hard struggle. We shall be strengthened in the choice of the difficult path if we remember that we belong to God, that He loves us, that He will help us and is waiting for us at the end of the road -- of obedience.

What is the destiny of man? -- Man's high destiny is to go to God, because man comes from God, and belongs entirely to God.

1. Our reason tells us that Someone made us. That Someone is God.

Nothing can proceed from nothing. If there had ever been a moment when nothing existed, nothing would ever have existed. Therefore, because we exist, we know Someone who made us also exists; that Someone is God. "He made us, and not we ourselves" (Ps. 99:3). "All things have been created through and unto Him" (Col. 1:16).

2. Our reason also tells us that God must have made us for some purpose. God made man to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy forever with Him in the next. God made us for Himself. The end of man, as of all creation, is the glory of God; to manifest the divine perfections, to proclaim the goodness, majesty, and power of God.

"The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. 16:4). Whether he wishes to or not, man must manifest God's perfections, dominion, and glory. Man's very existence does this; even his sins will in the end show forth God's infinite holiness and justice.

3. Through glorifying God, man is destined to share His everlasting happiness in heaven. Man was created chiefly for the life beyond the grave; this present one is merely a preparation for the eternal life.

In this life we are exiles, wanderers, pilgrims. Heaven, the Home of God, is our true country, our true Home. There God wants to share with us His own unmeasured bliss. "For here we have no permanent city, but we seek for the city that is to come" (Heb. 13:14)

4. We belong to God. Since we are His creatures, we have certain duties towards God which we must fulfill. Religion teaches us what these duties are.

What is Religion? -- Religion is the virtue by which we give to God the honor and service due to Him alone as our Creator, Master, and Supreme Lord. It is by religion that we know, love, and serve God as He commands us to know, love and serve Him.

It is by religion, then, that we fulfill the end for which we were made, and so save our soul. In order to practice this virtue, we must:

1. Believe all the truths revealed by God.

In religion we learn about God and His perfections. We learn something about His great love for us. We learn what is right and what is wrong. We learn what God commands us to do. We learn about the future that He has prepared for us.

2. Carry Out in our lives what we learn about the duties we owe to God, about His commands and wishes. Mere knowledge is not religion, and will avail us nothing. The devil has knowledge, but he has no religion. Religion includes the service of God in fulfilling what we have learned of our duties towards Him. Religion is not a matter of feeling; it is a matter of will and of action.

Our Lord says: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:28). The Apostle St. James said: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (Jas. 1).

How can we prove that all men are obliged to practice religion? -- We can prove that all men are obliged to practice religion, because all men are entirely dependent on God, and must recognize that dependence by honoring Him and praying to Him.

1. It is absolutely necessary for us to practice religion. God gives us no choice in the matter. Our chief business in life, the business which God commands us to attend to, is to go to God. And this depends on our practice of religion.

It is by religion that we fulfill the purpose for which we were created. By believing what God has revealed, we know God. By knowing God, we cannot help but love Him. By practicing what we learn and obeying God's commands, we serve Him. "He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me" (John 14:21).

2. Many people spend their lives in a vain pursuit of riches, honors, and pleasures. But these never satisfy the heart of man even on earth. Besides, they have to be left behind when the hour of death comes.

From whom do we learn to know, love, and serve God? -- Men learn to know, love, and serve God from Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who teaches us through the Catholic Church.

1. The study in which Jesus Christ teaches us about God and how to know, love, and serve Him, is the study of Religion. It is the most important study anyone can undertake. The neglect of this study is the root cause of crime in the world at present. Without a knowledge of God men give way to their basest passions.

Our salvation is much more important than a knowledge of physics, poetry, or history. All our science and knowledge, with our wealth and honors, will be profitless if we do not save our soul. "What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

2. This study needs thought and attention. We need to listen to a good teacher. We cannot study it well by ourselves alone.

The deacon Philip asked the Ethiopian reading Holy Scripture, "Dost thou then understand what thou art reading?" But he said, "Why, how can I, unless someone shows me?" (Acts 8:31).

Who are those that advocate no study of religion? -- Those that advocate no study of religion are generally termed free-thinkers, agnostics, skeptics, and rationalists.

1. These thinkers claim that all problems can be solved by the use of the intellect alone, without necessity of any principle, law, dogma or authority.

"Freedom of thought" has a pleasant sound, but it is against reason; by it the mind is fettered by error. We submit our minds freely to natural and scientific truths; that is true freedom. If there is no freedom of thought in mathematics, why in religion?

2. "Freedom of thought" is evidently a contradiction; we are not free to think what is not the truth. There are fundamental laws that bind the intellect.

For instance, are we free to believe that the sun revolves around the earth, even if it appears to do so?

3. The intelligent man, in order to attain the kind of freedom humanly possible, should find out to which authority he must submit; he must discover which is the Law. And this is why the rational man studies Religion, to find out this fundamental Law.

## The Apostles' Creed

The Apostles, before they parted, gathered together in Jerusalem in the first Council of the Church. There they decided to put down in a brief statement their principal doctrines, so that their teachings might be uniform wherever they preached. This statement of the articles of faith we call today "The Apostles' Creed." It was formulated in order to put into fruition the

command of Our Lord: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Where do we find the chief truths taught by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church? -- We find the chief truths taught by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church in the Apostles' Creed.

1. A creed is a summary or statement of what one believes. "Creed" comes from the Latin *credo*, which means I believe; that is, I accept or hold true something on the word of another.

"I believe," with relation to the Apostles' Creed, means that I firmly assent to everything contained in it. I believe it exactly as if I had seen those truths with my own eyes. I believe it on the authority or word of God, Who cannot deceive or be deceived.

2. The Apostles' Creed is so called because it has come down to us from apostolic times, and contains a summary of the principal truths taught by the Apostles.

The Apostles' Creed is repeated at Baptism, as a declaration of faith. In ancient times it was required before Baptism, as a sign of fitness for reception into the Church.

3. The Apostles' Creed has come down to us intact, except for a few clauses added by the Church later, in order to counteract various heresies. These additions, however, are not new doctrines, but a clarification of what the Creed already contained.

Thus the words "Creator of heaven and earth" were added to counteract the Manichaean heresy that the world was created by the principle of evil; and the word "Catholic" was added, to distinguish the True Church from churches springing up around it. As our Lord said, "And you also bear witness, because from the beginning you are with me" (John 15:27).

4. There are several other creeds used by the Church, in substance identical with the Apostles' Creed.

The Nicene Creed, which is said in the Mass, was mainly drawn up at the Council of Nicea, in the year 325. The Athanasian Creed is said by priests in the Divine Office for Sunday.

Into how many articles may the Apostles' Creed be divided? -- The Apostles Creed may be divided into twelve articles.

1. All the articles are absolutely necessary to faith: if even one article is omitted or changed, faith would be destroyed. It is symbolical to divide the Apostles' Creed into twelve articles, because the Apostles numbered twelve; thus we are reminded that the Creed comes to us and was taught by the Apostles of Our Lord.

2. The following are the articles:

I. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;

II. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord;

III. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;

IV. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

V. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead;

VI. He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;

VII. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

VIII. I believe in the Holy Ghost;

IX. The Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints;

X. The forgiveness of sins;

XI. The resurrection of the body;

XII. And life everlasting. Amen.

The twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed contain the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, one God in three distinct Divine Persons, -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, -- with the particular operations attributed to each Person. The Creed contains three distinct parts. The first part treats of God the Father and creation. The second part treats of God the Son and our redemption. And the third part treats of God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification.

What act of religion do we make when we say the Apostles' Creed? -- When we say the Apostles' Creed we make an act of faith.

1. Christian faith is a supernatural gift of God which enables us to believe firmly whatever God has revealed, on the testimony of His word. By it we believe in the truth of many things which we cannot grasp with our understanding.

For example, we believe in God, although we cannot see Him. We believe in the Trinity, although it is beyond our understanding. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (He. 11:6).

2. Faith does not require us to believe in anything contrary to reason. When we believe what we cannot perceive or understand, we act according to reason, which tells us that God cannot err, lie, or deceive us. We therefore put our trust in God's word.

In many natural things we often believe what we do not see, as sound waves and atoms, on the testimony of scientists who have studied them. Thus we act within reason; but how much more reasonable it is to believe on the word of God!

3. A great reward in heaven awaits those who suffer persecution or die for the faith or some Christian virtue. The number of martyrs who have died for the Catholic faith is estimated at more than sixteen millions.

All the Apostles suffered persecution, and all except St. John suffered death by martyrdom, for their faith. St. John the Baptist was beheaded because he censured Herod for violating the law of marriage. St. John Nepomucene was put to death because he refused to violate the seal of confession. "Therefore, everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven" (Matt. 10:32)

4. Neglect of the study of the truths of our religion is frequently the cause of lukewarmness, a bad life, and final apostasy and impenitence. We should be zealous in studying the Christian doctrine, in the catechism and religion lessons, in sermons, missions, and retreats.

If we have any doubts, we should consult our priests; God will not forgive ignorance if we voluntarily neglect the means He has granted to dissipate it.

## God the Supreme Being

God created the world in six days. On the first day He made light and darkness, day and night. On the second day He made the sky and divided the waters. On the third day of Creation, God caused dry land to appear out of the waters, and bade plants to spring forth from the land. On the fourth day God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. On the fifth day He made creeping things, birds and fishes. On the sixth day God made beasts, and finally, man. Then on the seventh day God stopped working: He rested. "The heavens show forth the glory of God." (Ps. 18:2).

Who is God? -- God is the Supreme Being, infinitely perfect, Who made all things and keeps them in existence.



1. God made everything -- men, beasts, plants, planets, stars, everything. Not only that; God keeps everything in existence. Were He to take away His hand from what He created, everything would disappear into nothingness quicker than thought. Without a cause, there could be no effects. Without God, could there be anything at all?

"In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). "In him were created all things" (Col. 1:16). "It is he who gives to all men life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:25).

2. The traditions of all nations and races support the idea of the existence of God. All nations and peoples have an inner conviction of God's existence; their intellect supports their instinctive trust.

Even among the wildest, most remote, and most degraded pagans there is invariably found the worship of some deity recognized as supreme, on whom man depends. There are savage peoples without ruler, laws, or even settlements, but never without some god that they worship with prayer and sacrifice.

What do we mean when we say that God is the Supreme Being? -- When we say that God is the Supreme Being, we mean that He is above all creatures, the self-existing and infinitely perfect Spirit.

"I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no god" (Is. 44:6). "'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end,' says the Lord God. 'who is and who was and who is coming'" (Apoc. 1:8)

What is a spirit? -- A spirit is a being that has understanding and free will, but no body, and will never die.

1. God is a pure spirit. As God has no body, when we speak of His eyes and His hands we only speak in a figurative manner, in order to make ourselves more understandable according to our human way of speaking.

Our Lord said to the Samaritan woman at the well: "God is spirit; and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Yet God has often taken on visible forms, in

order to be seen by men. Thus he showed Himself in the form of a dove at the baptism of Jesus, and in the form of tongues of fire on Pentecost. God is neither a dove nor tongues of fire; He merely assumed those forms in order to be seen by mortal eyes.

2. Angels and devils are pure spirits. Men are only partly spiritual, because they have a body. Man's soul is a spirit, absolutely independent of matter, and by creatures indestructible.

As spirits, God and men have this in common, though in different degrees: all have understanding, intellect, and free will. By his free will man can even defy his Creator, God.

What do we mean when we say that God is self-existing? -- When we say that God is self-existing we mean that He does not owe His existence to any other being.

1. God made us, but who made God? God said to Moses, "I am who am" (Exod. 3:14). He exists of Himself, deriving His Being from no other. God is the First Cause.

All other beings and things owe their existence to God. In comparison to Him, we are nothing.

2. Man can never have a complete knowledge of God. Man is finite and cannot fully understand the infinite. A cup can contain the immensity of the ocean more easily than man can fully understand the Infinite God.

We know God only partly, from the order, harmony, and existence of things, from our conscience, and from God's revelations to man.

What do we mean when we say that God is infinitely perfect? -- When we say that God is infinitely perfect, we mean that He has all perfections without limit.

God is immense and eternal, "an ocean without shore or bottom," the unchangeable Being that only Himself can fully understand: "Of his greatness there is no end" (Ps. 144:3)

1. God is so great and wonderful that He needs nothing to make Him greater or more wonderful. He possesses all perfections, countless, innumerable, illimitable, boundless.

God cannot be better, holier, or more perfect than He already is. He is at the acme of perfection, the uncreated, the Infinite. "Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee" (3 Kings 8:27).

2. So perfect is God that He is infinitely incomprehensible, incapable of being completely understood. Reason can verify the revelation that God made of Himself. But when we make our reason or our emotions the final authority, we make ourselves our own god, and shut the road to the supernatural, the Infinite.

God alone can bridge the chasm that yawns between the finite and the infinite. When we take advantage of His grace to seek Him in loving trust, He holds out His hand, a Father calling to children, to cross the chasm safely to Him.

3. The Creator is above all the created, though something of Him, some likeness of His Being, may be found in every creature. But even were all creatures, from the most glorious seraphim to the lowliest of moss, to combine their powers and perfections, theirs would be a faint shadow of God's all-encompassing supremacy.

What are some of the perfections of God? -- Some of the perfections of God are: God is eternal, all-good, all-knowing, all-present, and almighty.

God's perfections do not exist separately in Him, but are one and identical with Himself. They are only various manifestations of His one nature and perfection. In God, for example, His goodness is one with His wisdom and power. His perfections, besides being one and the same in Him, are also identical with Him: that is, God Himself is infinity, wisdom, goodness, power.

## The Perfections of God

God is eternal: He has no beginning and no end. Before there ever was anything, there was God. He always was, is, and ever will be. With God there is no time: everything is present. We cannot imagine eternity, but we can understand what it is to be without beginning or end.

#### 4. The Perfections of God

What do we mean when we say that God is eternal? -- When we say that God is eternal, we mean that He always was and always will be, and always remains the same.

1. God had no beginning; there never was a time when there was no God. God can never cease to exist; He will have no end. He will always be living, immortal.

There is no time with God: with Him there is neither past nor future; everything is present. "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3:8). "Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world was formed, from eternity and to eternity thou art God" (Ps. 89:2). "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (Apoc. 1:8).

2. God will always remain the same. He is the "Father of lights, with whom there is no change" (Jas. 1:17).

God cannot change. The God that is God now is the same God that has ever been, the same God that will ever be, from and throughout all eternity, the "Father of Lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration" (Jas. 1:17).

What do we mean when we say that God is all-good? -- When we say that God is all-good, we mean that He is infinitely lovable in Himself, and that from His fatherly love every good comes to us.

1. God is Himself love. Love is part of His nature. Compared to God's infinite goodness, the goodness of man is nothing, only the shadow of a shadow.

Men, creatures of God, are good because God made them to His image and likeness. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Ps. 33:9).

2. Out of His goodness, God created angels and men, although He had no need of them. God loves His creatures far more than a mother loves the children she has borne.

God gives us the beautiful world to live in. He takes care of our body and soul. He showers benefits and graces on us day after day. He prepares for us a place in heaven. Above all, He sent His Son down to earth to die for us.

What do we mean when we say that God is all-knowing? -- When we say that God is all-knowing, we mean that He knows all things, past, present, and future, even our most secret thoughts, words, and actions.

1. God is all-knowing. Before His eyes all secrets, even the most hidden, are clear, even secrets that will not be thought of by man until the end of the world.

God knows us for what we are: we cannot hide anything from Almighty God. "All things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we have to give account" (Heb. 4:13).

2. God, all-knowing, will one day make everything known to everybody, disclosing our entire lives for all to read and know.

If we think of this power of God to see and know all things, and His promise to make everything manifest on the last day, we can more easily resist temptations to sin. "For there is nothing hidden that will not be made manifest; nor anything concealed that will not be known" (Luke 8:17).

What do we mean when we say that God is all-present? -- When we say that God is all-present, we mean that He is everywhere.

1. God is all-present, because there is nothing that can have existence apart from Him. All creation exists in Him as thought exists in the mind. There is no place where God is not.

"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" saith the Lord" (Jer. 23:24). "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). However, we must not make the mistake of thinking that God, in Whom everything exists, is limited by this everything. He has no limits, and exists outside as well as in all creation.

2. God is all-present, present everywhere, at the same time. He is not like man, that cannot be in two places at the same time. God is wholly everywhere at the same time.

The presence of God should be an incentive for us to do everything to please Him. As we are careful never to do anything wrong in the presence of our mother, how much more careful should we be in the presence of God! "Shall a man be hid in secret places, and I not see him?" (Jer. 23:24).

3. Although God is everywhere, we do not see Him, because He is a spirit, and cannot be seen with our eyes.

Similarly, we cannot see our own soul or that of another. "God is spirit, and they who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

What do we mean when we say that God is almighty? -- When we say that God is almighty, we mean that He can do all things.

1. God can do anything, by a mere act of His will. Nothing is impossible to God.

"Things that are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27). The only thing God cannot do is to make a contradiction:-- He cannot will wrong, because wrong is a contradiction of His goodness.

2. God's omnipotence or power is known to us especially by the magnificence of creation, and by His miracles.

Yet God created all the immensity of the heavens with nothing except His word. "Be light made. And light was made" (Gen. 1:3). In the same way Our Lord worked many of His miracles. "Great is the Lord ... of his greatness there is no end" (Ps. 144).

Is God all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-just? -- Yes, God is all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-just.

1. God is all-wise. The more we learn of the wonders of the universe, the more we are amazed by the infinite wisdom of God, by His almighty power.

His knowledge is infinite. He knows how to direct all things to the highest ends, and by the most fitting means.

2. God is infinitely holy in Himself. He loves good and hates evil. Therefore He is also all-just. He will punish the wicked and reward the good. "Be ye holy, because I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2).

Partial justice is done in this life, for often the good are happy, and the wicked are tormented by their conscience. But complete justice will not be accomplished till the next life.

3. God is infinitely merciful.

He gives sinners time for repentance. He receives us back with joy when we repent. But merciful as He is, we must not presume on His mercy, for "God will not be mocked." "The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long suffering and plenteous in mercy" (Ps. 102:8). "He is long-suffering, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

## Divine Providence

Many people make themselves miserable worrying over the future. They should have more trust in Divine Providence. Let them do the best they can, and leave the rest to God, Who cares for them. Our Lord said, "Look at the birds of the air: they do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value than they? ... Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or, 'What shall we drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' for your Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be given you besides" (Matt. 6:26-33).

Does God see us? -- God sees us, and watches over us with loving care.

1. God preserves and governs the world. If He were to take away for one instant His sustaining power, the whole creation would at once fall back into nothingness.

It is as if He held us in His hand. If He withdrew it for a moment, we would be nothing. "When thou shalt take away their breath, they shall die, and return again to the dust" (Ps. 103:29)

2. Nothing happens without the will or permission of God. Our Lord tells us that not one sparrow falls to the ground without the will of our Heavenly Father, and that the very hairs of our head are numbered.

God is to the world and men as the engine is to a train, as the pilot is to a ship. He guides the whole universe and all creatures. He guides the nations. "Cast all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7)

What is God's loving care for us called? -- God's loving care for us is called Divine Providence, His plan for guiding creatures to their proper end.

1. Divine Providence is good, constant, and just. It watches over even the humblest and most despised creature on earth.

Of the paternal tenderness of God, Holy Scripture speaks thus: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands; thy walls are always before my eyes" (Is. 49:15,16).

2. God has special care for those who are poor, despised, and forgotten by the world. He has often shown forth His glory by means of the humble.

So poor shepherds were the first to receive news of the birth of the Saviour. So poor fishermen were His Apostles. So a poor maiden was His Mother.



If Divine Providence is good, why do poverty, sickness, sufferings, and other physical evils exist? -- Physical evils are often the result of the weakness of creatures in body and mind.

Although we often do not understand God's arrangements, we must have faith and exclaim with the Apostle: "How incomprehensible are God's judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" (Rom. 11:33).

1. Physical evil is partly a punishment for actual sin. It serves to sanctify the good, and helps them attain eternal salvation. The greatest sufferers have often been the greatest saints. God sends suffering to the just man in order to prove his love.

So holy Job lost everything he had, yet loved God more. So Tobias became blind and poor, and only proved his love for God.

2. God never sends anyone suffering beyond his strength. To gain merit, we must be patient and resigned under suffering. Let us imitate Our Lord in the Garden, whose prayer was, "Father, not my will, but thine, be done!" Our Lord taught us to say, in the Our Father, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

He who resigns himself joyfully to the will of God, in sickness, death, poverty, persecution, and other misfortunes, obtains true peace of heart; he will be blessed even on this earth.

3. God often sends physical evil to sinners in order to bring them back into the right way. It serves as a warning to them.

Among those who were converted through bodily sickness, we may mention St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius of Loyola.

4. Sufferings can be a boon, and should be welcomed. By sufferings, patiently accepted, the punishment due for sin is diminished or cancelled. The more we suffer in this world, the less would we have to pay in the next life, in purgatory.

As St. Paul said, "I am filled with comfort; I overflow with joy in all our troubles" (2 Cor. 7:4). "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us." And St. Ignatius spoke from experience when he

said, "When God sends us some great trouble, it is a sign that He designs great things for us, to raise us to great holiness."

If Divine Providence is just, why do the good often suffer misfortunes, and the wicked enjoy prosperity and honors? -- The misfortunes and satisfactions of the world are not real and lasting, and cannot gauge God's justice.

1. No sinner has true happiness; his conscience will not give him inner peace. Riches, honor, and pleasures can never give peace to the spirit. On the other hand, no lover of God has true misery, for he possesses inner peace and a good conscience. Real reward and punishment begin only after death.

On earth sinners are rewarded for whatever good they do. Their good fortune lasts only for this life. The just are punished on earth for whatever sins they may have committed. Their reward is full in the other life.

2. We must therefore resign ourselves lovingly to the will of God. Thus we shall have peace of mind even in the midst of the greatest trials. Suffering should remind us that this is not our true home, and that we are citizens of heaven.

"The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing" (Ps. 22:1). "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, because thou hast saved my soul" (Ps. 30:1, 8).

Is God responsible for sin? -- God is not responsible for sin; sin is the result of man's wrong use of his free will.

1. God does not will or cause sin; He forbids it and will punish the sinner. He permits sin for His own reasons, to sanctify the good, by trying them and giving them opportunities for more faithful obedience.

God created man free to choose good or evil. He wishes us to choose good, in order that we may merit heaven. But since we are free, we can, if we so wish, choose evil. God is not responsible for our sins.

2. Even the evil that God permits to happen, He turns to our good. He draws good out of evil.

The wicked persecutions of the Church make the Gospel better known and loved among the just. Thus the patriarch Joseph said to his brothers, "You thought evil against me, but God turned it into good" (Gen. 50:30). "For those who love God, all things work together unto good" (Rom. 8:28).

## Existence of God

Adam and Eve, our first parents, knew God in the Garden of paradise. God spoke to the patriarchs and prophets, and gave them messages for the rest of men. God gave the Commandments to Moses. Our Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself, came and taught about God.

From Adam and Eve down to the present, all men have acknowledged the existence of God. Even pagans and primitive peoples recognize a Supreme Being, a god. They have sacrifices, and they worship some deity whom they recognize as superior and supernatural, on whom man depends.

How do we know by our reason that God exists? -- We know by our reason that God exists, because of:

1. The existence of the world.
2. The order and harmony of the whole universe.
3. The testimony of our conscience.

How does the existence of the world prove the existence of God? -- The existence of the world proves the existence of God, because it could not have come into existence by itself.

4. Everything in the world had a beginning. Men, animals, plants, the earth, planets and stars, -- all had a beginning. They could not have come into existence by themselves. They must have been made by Someone Who had no beginning. Planets and men could no more have made themselves than a watch can make itself.

The astronomer Kircher had a friend who denied the existence of God. During a visit one day, this friend saw a globe in the study of the astronomer. -- "This is an interesting globe," said he; "Who made it?" -- "Why," replied Kircher, "it just made itself!" The friend had a hearty laugh at the idea. Kircher asserted, "It would be much easier for a little globe like that to make itself than for the immense globe of the earth to create itself."

5. When we see footprints on the sand, we conclude that someone has passed that way. The universe is filled with the footprints of a Supreme Creator. Every single existing thing or being gives clear testimony of Him. A light cannot kindle itself; after it is kindled, it will go out in a few hours. But the light of the sun in the heavens has burned for thousands of years and continues to burn.

How do the order and harmony of the universe prove the existence of God? -- They lead us to infer the existence of a Supreme Architect and Preserver of surpassing skill.

6. The heavenly bodies go along their appointed courses age after age. The seasons succeed one another year by year. There is splendor, beauty, arrangement, and order everywhere. The whole universe is governed and preserved by immutable law.

If you plant an orange seed, you are certain an apple will not spring from it. Every morning you are sure the sun, when it rises, will appear in the east. At night you can go peacefully to sleep, assured that after your rest the day will come again.

7. To say that this universal order is the result of accident, or that the planets direct their own courses, is as foolish as to say that an automobile goes sensibly around the city streets running itself.

"The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (Ps. 18:2). God is the Intelligent Cause.

8. Long ago the pagan Cicero said: "When we contemplate the heavens, we arrive at the conviction that they are all guided by a Being of surpassing skill."

And Cicero also says, "There is no nation to be found so savage as to be ignorant of the existence of God." The great astronomer Newton often uncovered and bowed when God's name was uttered.

How does the testimony of our conscience prove the existence of God? -- By our conscience we can distinguish right from wrong.

9. Our conscience approves the right and condemns the wrong. Thus within ourselves there is a recognition of a Supreme Lawgiver to whom we are responsible, Who will reward the good we do, and punish the evil.

"Only the fool says in his heart: There is no God" (Ps. 13:1).

10. Those who persist in denying the existence of God in spite of external and internal testimony are atheists who are eaten up by pride, or live vicious lives, or both. Of them Our Lord said:

"Seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, neither do they understand ... For the heart of this people has been hardened, and with their ears they have been hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest at any time they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their mind, and be converted, and I heal them" (Matt. 13:13-15).

Divine Revelation

Divine Revelation comes down to us by two means: through Holy Scripture, written down under divine inspiration, and through Tradition, handed down orally from Apostolic times. We read the Bible with great respect, for it is the Word of God.

We treat Tradition with as great reverence, for God speaks through Tradition as well. It is wrong to believe the Bible alone without Tradition. That is like believing the Word of God written in the morning and denying it spoken in the afternoon.

Can we know God in any other way than by our natural reason? -- Besides knowing God by our natural reason, we can also know Him from supernatural revelation.

11. God has often revealed Himself to men through means beyond the ordinary course of nature. This is supernatural, or Divine Revelation, as opposed to the natural revelation of Himself that God makes in the external world, and the revelation He makes through our natural reason and conscience.

Some revealed truths are beyond the power of the human understanding; we could never, by our own abilities, have known such truths if God had not revealed them. For instance, could we by ourselves have known about the Blessed Trinity, had God not revealed it?

12. The public revelation of truths to men by God began with Adam and Eve and ended at the death of Saint John the Apostle.

Private revelations have been made to holy persons, such as those of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary, and those of Our Lady of Lourdes to St. Bernadette. But these private revelations are never proposed to the faithful as articles of faith. When the Church approves them, it merely states that there is nothing in them contrary to faith or morals.

How may Divine Revelation be classified? -- Divine Revelation may be classified into pre-Christian and Christian revelation.

13. Pre-Christian revelation may be divided into:

- a. primitive revelation, made to Adam and Eve;
- b. patriarchal revelation, made to the patriarchs; and
- c. Mosaic revelation, made to Moses and the prophets.

God spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise. He spoke to Abraham, to Noe, sending Noe to preach to sinful men before the Flood. He sent Moses to the Israelites when Pharaoh oppressed them. The patriarchs and prophets were called messengers of God, and often received from Him extraordinary powers, of miracles and prophecy, in order that they might be believed.

14. Christian revelation contains the truths revealed to us by Jesus Christ, either directly or through His Apostles.

Our Lord commanded His Apostles to teach all these truths to the end of time. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations."

Why should we believe in Divine Revelation? -- We should believe in Divine Revelation because God, Who is its Author, cannot deceive nor be deceived.

15. No reasonable man can believe in any truth until he is sure it is revealed by God. We know that God is the Author of Revelation because He has proved it by external acts, especially by miracles and prophecies.

The writers who made Divine Revelation known worked under direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Who is, therefore its Author.

16. Miracles are extraordinary works perceptible to the senses, that cannot be accomplished by the mere powers of nature. They are brought about by the action of a higher power.

The coming to life of a dead man is a miracle. So is the instantaneous cure of a man blind or paralytic from birth. Our Lord and the Apostles worked many miracles.

17. Some extraordinary works never before heard of or known but invented are not miracles. They are mere discoveries of previously unknown processes or combinations.

An example is the radio. And so were the first telegraph, telephone, wireless, phonograph, etc. All of these are very wonderful. Even today people in general do not understand them fully. But they are not miracles, because they are produced by the forces of nature as harnessed through the ingenuity of man.

18. Prophecies are predictions of future events that could not have been known by natural means. For the confirmation of the faith, or for the benefit of men, God raised up prophets. Generally speaking, the gift of prophecy is a sure sign that the possessor is a messenger of God.

The prophets told about the coming of the Messias. Their prophecies were fulfilled when Christ came on earth. The major prophets were Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, and Daniel. They are distinguished from the twelve minor prophets, because of the greater volume of their prophecies. Forecasting the weather correctly is not prophecy. It is the result of a scientific knowledge of natural facts.

How has Divine Revelation come down to us? -- Divine Revelation has come down to us through Holy Scripture, written down under divine inspiration, and through Tradition, handed down orally from Apostolic times.

19. From Adam and Eve, at different times, God inspired men to write down His revelations. These passed from generation to generation as sacred books.

For pre-Christian revelation, there were forty-five of these sacred books, composing the Old Testament. They were jealously guarded by the Israelites, the Chosen People, whom God Himself had chosen to keep His truths intact for the instruction of future generations.

20. Finally our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, came to earth to reveal Divine truths to men. After His death, His Apostles and disciples wrote about Him and His teachings.

There are twenty-seven of these books, composing the New Testament. With the forty-five books of the Old Testament they were scattered in different parts of the world, until the Church gathered them together into one Book, Holy Scripture, or the Bible.



21. The deposit of faith which Jesus Christ entrusted to the Church is made up of two parts: Holy Scripture, and Divine Tradition, this latter being composed of the truths passed down by word of mouth, and not written down till after the death of Christ's Apostles and disciples, principally by the Fathers of the Church.

Divine Revelation was completed at the death of the last of the Apostles. Since that time no new revelation has been made for the instruction of the whole of mankind. Whenever the Church decides a point of faith, it does so according to Scripture or Tradition. It simply finds out what has been revealed from the beginning.

### Holy Scripture, or The Bible

The Bible is the best Book in the world. It is the Word of God. It is better than any other book that has ever been written or ever will be written. Catholics are not only permitted, but urged, to read the Bible. They must read a version approved by the Catholic Church. Catholic Bibles have the necessary explanations for the guidance of the faithful. To find a text in the Bible, as Matt. 16:26, turn to the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 16, verse 26. All texts are found in the same manner.

What is Holy Scripture, or the Bible? -- It is the Word of God written by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and contained in the books of the Old and the New Testaments.

a. The seventy-two sacred books, together forming the Bible, were composed by forty writers in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The period of composition covers at least 1,300 years, from Moses, to St. John the Evangelist.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days has spoken to us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1).

b. The writers were inspired by God. By a supernatural influence God enlightened their mind and moved their will to write all that He wished, and only that. They acted as free instruments of God, Who directed them and preserved them from error.

The writers of Holy Scripture were, however, not passive instruments. Each writer brought his personality with him into what he wrote. The writers were like skilled painters who paint from the same model. The products are similar and all correct, but with differences according to talents.

Is God the Author of the Bible? -- Yes, God is the Author of the Bible.

c. An author is not the stenographer that writes down what he is told, but the one who tells what is to be written. Since God is the Author, the Bible cannot contain any error.

"All Scripture is inspired by God" (2 Tim. 3:16) . Copyists and printers, however, can and do make mistakes in copying the Bible.

d. Since the Bible is the Word of God, it must be treated with the greatest reverence.

This is why we take solemn oaths on the Bible, stand up when the Gospel is read, and have incense and lights used when the Gospel is sung at solemn High Mass.

Can the books of the Bible be proved to be reliable historical records? -- Yes.

e. Science throughout the years has been proving itself the handmaid, instead of the enemy, of the Bible. Recent excavations and researches have proved that such distant events as the Fall of Jericho, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the Deluge, really and actually happened, and are no mere figures of speech.

Sir Charles Marston, the eminent British archaeologist who has worked extensively in Palestine, firmly declares that far from being mere mythology, the Old Testament is, substantially, contemporary eyewitness accounts of events set down as they took place. Remains he has found include information on events that took place in the times of Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Jeremias the Prophet; even the name of Abraham has been found. Tablets found in Babylonia and Assyria refer to the Deluge.

f. The Old Testament was recognized by Jesus Christ, approved by Him, and often quoted by Him. Evidences from the New Testament prove that this was written by Christ's Apostles and disciples.

The style of the Gospels shows clearly that they were written by Jews. That the writers lived in the first century is shown by the vividness of their knowledge about Jerusalem, which was destroyed before the end of that century. The earliest Christian writers testify to the reliability of the Gospels; the consent of the churches of the time proves such reliability.

g. The Gospels have not been changed by the passage of centuries. This can be proved from the oldest copies, from ancient translations and quotations. The Gospels could not have been altered, because the fervor of the early Christians carefully guarded them.

When in the fourth century St. Jerome was ordered by Pope Damasus to gather all existing texts of the Bible and translate them into Latin, there were some 35,000 ancient copies. After thirty-four years of labor, he finished the translation, our Catholic Bible, called the Latin Vulgate, from which the Catholic English version has been made.

How is the Bible divided? -- The Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

h. The Old Testament, written before Christ, consists of forty-five books:

a. Twenty-one historical books relating to the earliest ages of the world, or to the history of the Jews, among which books are the five books of Moses and the four books of Kings;

b. Seven doctrinal books, made up of maxims and prayers, among which are the Psalms and the Proverbs; and

c. Seventeen prophetic books, of four greater and twelve lesser prophets, among which books are Isaias, Jeremias, and Daniel.

i. The New Testament, written after the Ascension of Christ, consists of twenty-seven books, as follows:

- a. The four Gospels according to Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, containing the story of the life of Christ;
- b. The Acts of the Apostles, by St. Luke, containing the history of the Apostles after the Ascension of Our Lord into heaven;
- c. Twenty-one epistles by Sts. Paul, James, Peter, John, and Jude; and
- d. The Apocalypse by St. John.

The four Gospels and the Acts are mainly historical. The Epistles are doctrinal. The Apocalypse is prophetic.

Who are the four Evangelists? -- The four Evangelists are Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

j. St. Matthew was one of the twelve Apostles. Before he followed Our Lord, he was a tax-gatherer or publican called Levi.

Matthew was the first Evangelist to write the Gospel, about six years after Our Lord's Ascension. His work, written in Hebrew for the Jews of Palestine, was translated into Greek in the time of the Apostles. His work shows Jesus as proving Himself to be the promised Messiah.

k. St. Mark was the disciple of St. Peter, and wrote according to what he heard from St. Peter himself.

He wrote for the Christians of Rome about ten years after Our Lord's Ascension. St. Peter approved what he wrote, which shows Christ as the Son of God.

l. St. Luke was converted by St. Paul and became his disciple.

He wrote about twenty-four years after Our Lord's Ascension, for a distinguished citizen of Rome. His work contains many details about the Blessed Virgin.

m. St. John was Christ's Beloved Disciple. He wrote about sixty-three years after Our Lord's Ascension.

The last of the Apostles to die, he wrote in his old age to testify, against heretics who had arisen, that Jesus Christ is true God.

## Divine Tradition

Before the 15th century when printing was invented, the Bible was reproduced by copying in longhand. We should be very grateful to the monks and nuns of ancient times who labored lovingly, making manuscript copies of old documents that had come down from earliest times. Without this loving care, we would not have our Holy Bible today.

Are all the truths revealed for us by God found in the Bible? -- Not all the truths revealed for us by God are found in the Bible; some are found only in Divine Tradition.

n. The Bible itself states that it does not contain all that God revealed.

"There are, however, many other things that Jesus did; but if every one of these should be written, not even the world itself, I think, could hold the books that would have to be written" (John 21:25)

o. The truths of Divine Revelation which have not been written down in Holy Scripture have come to us by the Tradition of the Church.

St. Paul bade the Thessalonians: "Hold the teachings that you have learned, whether by word or by letter of ours" (2 Thess. 2:15).

What is meant by Divine Tradition? -- By Divine Tradition is meant the revealed truths taught by Christ and His Apostles, which were given to the Church only by word of mouth and not through the Bible, though they were put in writing principally by the Fathers of the Church.

p. In a wide sense Tradition embraces the whole teaching of the Church, including the Bible, since it is only from the Church that we have the Bible. In a stricter sense Tradition includes only what was handed down orally from the Apostles.

The Apostles themselves say that there is much that they have delivered to the faithful by word of mouth (2 John 12; 1 Cor. 11:2). Among many examples of truths in Tradition, not clearly manifested in Holy scriptures, are: the exact number of sacraments, the time of institution of some sacraments, the books that make up the Bible, the Baptism of infants, and Sunday observance.

q. All the truths of Divine Tradition now have found their way into books. From the first Christian centuries the practices and doctrines of Tradition were preserved by saintly teachers whom we call Fathers of the Church. They were disciples of the Apostles, contemporaries of those disciples, or disciples of the disciples. These holy and learned men instructed the Church in the years of its first growth.

Chief among the Fathers of the first six centuries (date is of death), are: the Doctors of the Church (see below), and Saints Clement of Rome (99), Ignatius of Antioch (107), Polycarp (155), Justin (165), Irenaeus (202), Cyprian (258), Dionysius (265), Gregory Thaumaturgus (270), Optatus (372), Martin of Tours (397), Gregory of Nyssa (398), Epiphanius (403), Celestine I (432), Vincent of Lerins (450), and Caesarius of Arles (542).

r. Besides the writings of the Fathers, the truths of Divine Tradition may be found chiefly in: (a) writings of the Doctors of the Church; (b) decrees of Popes and Church councils; and (c) the liturgy of the Church as found in the Missal and rituals.

We call "Doctors of the Church" those ecclesiastical writers, noted for learning and holiness of life, who have by Church authority been proclaimed with that title, and whose feasts have been extended to the whole Western Church. Among the Fathers of the Church, these are honored as Doctors: Saints Hilary (368), Athanasius (373), Ephraem (378), Basil the Great (379), Cyril of Jerusalem (386), Gregory Nazianzen (389), Ambrose (397), John Chrysostom (407), Jerome

(420), Augustine (430), Cyril of Alexandria (444), Peter Chrysologus (450), Leo the Great (461), and Gregory the Great (604).

Among the outstanding Doctors of the Church of the Middle Ages are: Saints Peter Damian (1072), Anselm of Canterbury (1109), Bernard (1153), Thomas Aquinas (1274), Bonaventure (1274), Albert the Great (1280). Of later Doctors we have: Saints Peter Canisius (1597), John of the Cross (1605), Francis de Sales (1612), Robert Bellarmine (1621), and Alphonsus Liguori (1787).

Why must Divine Tradition be believed as firmly as the Bible? -- Divine Tradition must be believed as firmly as the Bible because it also contains the word of God.

s. Several years passed before the Gospels were written down. In the meantime, Christians had to depend on Tradition solely: Tradition is older than the New Testament.

When the books composing the New Testament were written, the various writers had some definite and immediate purpose in mind. For example, St. Paul wrote his Epistles to the various churches of Gentiles that he had converted, to remind them of his teachings in his absence. St. Luke wrote his Gospel for the citizen of Rome, Theophilus, to instruct him in the new religion. St. John's Gospel was to combat heresies denying the divinity of Christ.

t. If the Church teaches any doctrine that cannot be found in Holy Scripture, it will be found in Tradition, and therefore traceable to the Apostles.

Those who follow up the course of a river gradually draw near the source, and discover whence the waters flow. In the same way we can trace the historical sources of the teachings of the Church and arrive at their source: the Apostles themselves.

u. Divine Tradition teaches us all the doctrines that were taught by the Apostles. It comes to us from the Apostles. Every single doctrine the Church teaches comes direct from the Apostles. The Church does not issue new doctrines.

The four Evangelists wrote their relations of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in widely separated places; it is a proof of authenticity that the Gospels agree in their essentials, and often even repeat the very same words. When the writers of the New Testament did begin to write,

they did not intend to set down all the details of Catholic faith and practice, but only such points as were immediately interesting or that needed clarification.

Without Tradition, would we know what the Bible is? -- No.

v. Tradition teaches us what books belong to the Bible. By tradition the Church kept intact all the books of the Bible for fifteen hundred years before the existence of denominations that nevertheless assert the Church does not care for the Bible.

Protestant denominations reject Tradition. Consequently, they cannot agree about which books to include in the Bible. One denomination eliminates one part, other denominations omit other parts, according to the respective private interpretation.

w. Having rejected Tradition, Protestants cannot be certain that the books they have accepted are genuine. On whose authority have they accepted what they have? Protestant Bibles, the most popular of which is called the "King James version," omit all or parts of the Books of Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Machabees (I and II), and parts of Esther and Daniel.

Luther rejected the Epistle of St. James, because the Apostle said that faith without works is dead. Luther and followers omitted the Apocalypse, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Epistle of St. Jude.

## The Church and Divine Revelation

Before printing was invented about 1450, books could be reproduced only by making manuscript copies on parchment or sheepskin. A complete Bible cost a fortune, because of the time and expense necessary for copying. Copyists made mistakes, or abbreviations which others misunderstood. The illustration shows manuscripts in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the languages oftenest used in early Bible copies. They give an idea of the difficulties before the invention of printing.



Did Christ intend the Gospel to be proclaimed by the circulation of the Bible? -- No; it was mainly by preaching that He intended to convert the nations.

Our Lord said: "Go, make disciples of all nations." "Preach the Gospel to every creature." "He that heareth you heareth me." Christ did not say: "Go and make all nations read the Bible."

x. The Apostles never circulated a single volume of the Bible, but "they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them" (Mark 16:20). The New Testament was not written till Christianity was already established.

Christ bade His Apostles teach all men "to observe all commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). He commanded them to preach, not necessarily to write.

y. God did not intend Holy Scripture to be our rule of faith independently of a Living Voice. Even under the Old Law, the Jews, in spite of their great veneration for Holy Scripture, never dreamed of a private appeal to the Word of God.

When a religious dispute arose, it was decided by the high-priest and the Council. Their decision was to be obeyed under penalty of death. Thus the Jews did not appeal to the dead letter of the law, but to the living voice of the tribunal that God had established.

z. When Christ came on earth, He did not change this order of things. On the contrary He commanded the Jews to obey their constituted teachers, however disedifying their private lives might be.

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The Scribes and the Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, that they command you, observe and do" (Matt. 23:2-3).

aa. Until the Protestant outbreak in the sixteenth century (1517), no attempt had ever been made to have any people governed by the dead letter of the law in either civil or religious affairs.

No one certainly pretends to live in society according to his own private interpretation of the civil laws. When cases come up, they are always decided by a competent tribunal.

Why cannot the Bible be the sole guide to salvation? -- It cannot, because:

bb. It is not within the reach of every one. If it were the only guide, it should be within the reach of every inquirer, for God wishes all men to be saved.

If the Bible were the only guide to eternal salvation the primitive Christians would have been at a disadvantage, for the books that make up the Bible were gathered together only after the Church was established. Even when the parts were put together, for centuries there were very few manuscript copies. Copies remained few till the invention of printing in the fifteenth century.

If the Bible were the only guide to salvation it would be of little help to those unable to read, as well as to the great mass of mankind today, who have neither the knowledge nor the capacity to penetrate the meaning of the written word.

cc. The Bible is difficult to understand, frequently full of obscurities and difficulties, even for the learned.

St. Peter himself said of the Epistles of St. Paul, that they have "certain things difficult to understand, which the unlearned and unstable distort, just as they do the rest of the Scriptures also, to their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16). The Fathers of the Church, who spent their whole lives in the study of the Bible, all pronounce it full of difficulties, needing careful interpretation.

dd. The Bible does not contain all the truths necessary for eternal salvation.

For example, every Christian is obliged to sanctify Sunday. But nowhere in the whole Bible, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, is there one word authorizing the sanctification of Sunday.

On whose authority do we accept the Bible as the Word of God? -- We accept the Bible as the Word of God on the authority of the Catholic Church.

ee. By God's command, the Catholic Church proclaimed the truths of Divine Revelation, as contained in both Holy Scripture and Tradition.

Before His Ascension, Our Lord said to the Apostles: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you ... and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20).

ff. It was the Catholic Church that in the fourth century declared which books were inspired by God and which were not. For fifteen hundred years the Catholic Church was the sole guardian of the Bible.

The Bible was not always as it is now, a compact book, bound neatly. For several centuries the Bible was in separated fragments, scattered over Christendom. At the same time other books under the name of Scripture were circulated among the faithful.

gg. It is the Church that assures us that the translation from the original languages is faithful. The Bible needs an interpreter because it is frequently very difficult to understand. The Catholic Church alone was empowered by God to interpret the Bible. No one is allowed to interpret it contrary to the teaching of the Church.

The Protestant denominations who favor private interpretation have divided and subdivided for the same reason. No two of them interpret the Bible in the same manner. If we are really to interpret the Bible privately, we must know the original languages in which the books were written. How many can have that knowledge?

Did God intend Holy Scripture to be our rule of faith? -- No, God intended our rule of faith to be the Living Voice of the teaching Church.

The Apostles and their successors have always taught mankind, especially by preaching. Thus the Church fulfills the command of Jesus Christ, and will fulfill it to the end of the world, as He promised. If Our Lord wanted the Bible to be our rule of faith, why did He not write a book, instead of founding a Church?

We can know the true meaning of the doctrines contained in Divine Revelation from the Catholic Church, which has been authorized by Jesus Christ to explain His doctrines, and which is preserved from error in its teachings by the special assistance of the Holy Ghost.

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:8).

## One God in Three Persons

A good concrete illustration of the Blessed trinity is an equilateral triangle. Such a triangle has three sides equal in every way, and yet distinct from each other. There are three sides, but only one triangle. As we see in this illustration, each Divine Person is different from the other two, but all three are God. Each one is God, distinct from the two others, and yet one with them. The three Persons are equal in every way, with one nature and one substance: three Divine Persons, but only one God.

Is there only one God? -- Yes, there is only one God.

"I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God" (Is. 44:6). There can be only one God, because only one can be supreme, all-powerful, and independent of all.

How many Persons are there in God?-- In God there are three Divine Persons -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

hh. In speaking of the "Persons" in God, we do not use the term in exactly the same way we use it when speaking of people. We use it only for lack of a word to show our meaning better.

In speaking of a man as a "person," we mean that he is an intelligent being, acting individually for himself. The acts he performs belong to him and he is responsible for them -- he himself, not his tongue, nor his mind, nor his whole body even, but the whole of himself.

We speak of three "Persons" in God because to each belongs something we cannot attribute to any other: His distinct origin.

From all eternity the Father begets the Son, and the Son proceeds from the Father. From all eternity the Father and Son breathe forth the Holy Ghost, and He proceeds from Them, as from one Source.

Are the three Divine Persons really distinct from one another? -- The three Divine Persons are really distinct from one another.

"So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity nothing is afore or after, nothing is greater or less; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, as in aforesaid, the unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in unity is to be worshipped." (From the Athanasian Creed.)

ii. This is the simplest way by which the distinct origin of each Divine Person has been explained: God is a spirit, and the first act of a Spirit is to know and understand. God, knowing Himself from all eternity, brings forth the knowledge of Himself, His own image. This was not a mere thought, as our knowledge of ourselves would be, but a Living Person, of the same substance and one with the Father. This is God the Son. Thus the Father "begets" the Son, the Divine Word, the Wisdom of the Father.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

jj. God the Father, seeing His own Image in the Son, loves the Son; and God the Son loves the Father from all eternity. Each loves the other, because each sees in the other the Infinity of the Godhead, the beauty of Divinity, the Supreme Truth of God. The two Persons loving each other do not just have a thought, as human beings would have, but from Their mutual love is breathed forth, as it were, a Living Person, one with Them, and of Their own substance. This is God The Holy Ghost. Thus the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, "proceeds" from the Father and the Son.

"But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me" (John 15:26)

kk. But we are not to suppose that once God the Father begot the Son and now no longer does so, nor that once the love of the Father and the Son for each other breathed forth the Holy Ghost, but now no longer does. These truths are eternal, everlasting.

God the Father eternally knows Himself, and continues to know Himself, and thus continues to bring forth the Son. God the Father and God the Son continue to love each other, and their delight in each other continues to bring forth the Spirit of Love, God the Holy Ghost. In a similar way, fire has light and color. As long as there is fire, it continues to produce light. As

long as there is fire with light, there is produced color. But all three exist at one and the same time.

ll. In this imperfect way we vaguely see that God must necessarily be three Divine Persons, because only in that way can God with His Divine Knowledge and Will be complete in Himself.

Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to us of the Blessed Trinity when before the Ascension He said to His Apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19)

What do we mean by the Blessed Trinity? -- By the Blessed Trinity we mean one and the same God in three divine Persons.

mm. The Father is God and the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. Omnipotence, and especially the work of creation, is attributed to God the Father.

God the Father could have created millions of beings instead of you yourself; but He chose you out of a love wholly undeserved, saying, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). Let us then cry in thanksgiving, "Abba, Father!" (Rom. 8:15). Let us show our gratitude by avoiding all that could displease God the Father, by trying to please Him with virtue, by trying for greater perfection, in obedience to that injunction of Our Lord's: "You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48)

nn. The Son is God and the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. To God the Son we owe our redemption from sin and eternal death; by His death He gave us life.

For us God the Son debased Himself, taking the form of a servant, ... "becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8). In Holy Communion we are united with Him, for He Himself said; "He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him" (John 6:57). In return we should be "other Christs," and, as the Apostle urged, "walk even as He walked."

oo. The Holy Ghost is God and the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. He manifests Himself in us particularly in our sanctification. The word "Ghost" applied to the Third Person means "Spirit."

At our Baptism God the Holy Ghost purifies us from all sin and fills our souls with divine grace, so that we become truly children of God, sons and heirs, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ. By Baptism we become living temples of the Holy Ghost: "Or do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

In return for such benefits we should make our body the instrument for the glory of God, keeping it from all stain of sin, adorning it with virtues. "Glorify God and bear him in your body" (1 Cor. 6:20). Let us keep our souls a sanctuary for the Holy Spirit, that God may be happy to dwell in us.

## Unity of the Blessed Trinity

"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. ... But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of The Holy Ghost is one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. ... 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 Ghost is of the Father and the Son: not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. ... And in this Trinity nothing is afore or after, nothing is greater or less, but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal" (From the Athanasian Creed).

Are the three divine Persons perfectly equal to one another? -- The three divine Persons are perfectly equal to one another, because all are one and the same God.

"Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father Uncreated, the Son Uncreated, and the Holy Ghost Uncreated. The Father Infinite, the Son Infinite, and the Holy Ghost Infinite. The Father Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal, and yet they are not Three Eternals but One Eternal. As also there are not Three Uncreated, nor Three

Infinite, but One Uncreated, and One Infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not Three Almighties, but One Almighty." (From the Athanasian Creed.)

All three Persons are equal in every way, equal in power and glory. The attributes and external works of God are common to all three Persons. However, in human speech we attribute certain works to each Person.

Thus we attribute to the Father the works of creation, to the Son the work of redemption, and to the Holy Ghost the work of sanctification. In reality these works belong equally to all three.

How are the three divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, one and the same God? -- The three divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are one and the same God because all have one and the same divine nature.

pp. Each of the divine Persons is God.

"So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord. And yet they are not three Lords but one Lord. For, like as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge every Person by Himself to Be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, there be three Gods or three Lords." (From the Athanasian Creed.)

qq. There are three Persons, but only one Being. The Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost. The Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is neither the Father nor the Son.

It was the Son Who became man and died for us, not the Father or the Holy Ghost. But when we receive God the Son in Holy Communion, we also spiritually receive God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. The Blessed Trinity then dwells in us as in a Temple.

Can we fully understand how the three divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are one and the same God? -- We cannot fully understand how the three divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are one and the same God, because this is a supernatural mystery.



rr. A supernatural mystery is a truth which we cannot fully understand, but which we firmly believe because we have God's word for it. A supernatural mystery is above reason, but not contrary to it. No man can explain a mystery; neither can anyone know it unless it is revealed by God. "Great art thou, O Lord, in counsel, and incomprehensible in thought" (Jer. 32:19).

It is not unreasonable to believe in a supernatural mystery. There are many natural mysteries around us that no one has yet been able to explain, yet we believe them: electricity, magnetism, force, and many of the processes of life.

ss. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is a strict mystery; that is, we cannot learn it from reason, nor understand it completely, even after it has been revealed to us.

The doctrine contains two truths our reason cannot fully understand: (1) that there is only one God; and (2) that each of the three Persons is God. We can understand each of these truths separately, but not when taken together.

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is not a contradiction. We do not say that there are three gods in one God, nor that the three divine Persons are one Person.

We only say that there are three Persons in one God, that is, three Persons, and one nature or essence. Somewhat similarly, the soul of man has will, understanding, and memory, but it is only one soul. Also, the sun has form, light, and heat, but it is only one sun. Three flames put together make only one flame.

Why do we believe in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity? --We believe in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity because God Himself revealed it to us.

"Thy word is Truth" (John 17:17). The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is the greatest of all mysteries. We believe it because God has revealed it to us, but we cannot fully understand it. It would be foolish to refuse to believe just because we cannot understand; that would be like a blind man who refuses to believe there is a sun, because he cannot see it. Is God limited because we are?

tt. The Jews did not explicitly believe in the Blessed Trinity, although there are references to the mystery in the Old Testament.

Before making man, God said: "Let Us make man to Our own image" (Gen. 1:26). David says: "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand."

uu. Our Lord Jesus Christ revealed the mystery. He said:

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). "But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me" (John 15:26).

vv. The Blessed Trinity manifested Itself at the baptism of Jesus Christ.

God the Father spoke from the heavens; God the Son was baptized; God the Holy Ghost descended in visible form, in the form of a dove.

When do we profess our faith in the Blessed Trinity? -- We profess our faith in the Blessed Trinity especially when we make the sign of the cross.

ww. We also honor the Blessed Trinity every time we say the doxology or "prayer of praise": "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end."

The Feast of the Blessed Trinity, called Trinity Sunday, is kept on the first Sunday after Pentecost.

xx. All the sacraments are administered in the name of the Blessed Trinity.

On our death-bed the Church through the priest will comfort us with the words: "Even though he hath sinned, he hath not denied the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Creation

God is almighty. He can make anything from nothing, by a mere act of His divine will. It was thus that He created the heavens and earth and everything that is in them. Man can make many wonderful things, but he must make them out of something. He must use the things God created. Before he can make a stone house, he must have stone, cement, brick, etc. But God needs nothing to make anything. Only God could create the very first thing or matter in the universe.

What do we mean when we say that God is the Creator of heaven and earth? -- When we say that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, we mean that He made all things from nothing by His almighty power.

"All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing" (John 1:3) "For in him were created all things" (Col. 1:16).

yy. In the beginning God alone lived. Then out of nothing, by His almighty power, He created heaven and earth, and all things in heaven and on earth. Only God can create; that is, He alone can make something out of nothing. Time began with this creation. Before it there was only eternity.

"Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world was formed, from eternity Thou art God" (Ps. 89:2).

zz. God created heaven and earth, and everything in heaven and earth. By this is meant everything which is not God. "Heaven" refers to the angels and their abode; and "earth" to all the material universe, including the earth, stars, planets, and all things and beings in them.

God created everything by an act of his will. "He spoke and they were made; he commanded and they were created" (Ps. 32:9).

aaa. In its first book, Genesis, Holy Scripture tells the story of Creation. In the beginning all was void and empty and dark; that is, there was nothing but chaos, which God Himself had created. Then out of this chaos God brought about order and law, creating heaven and earth.

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2).

In how many days did God create the world? -- God created the world in six days, resting on the seventh day.

bbb. These "days" of creation were not necessarily days of twenty-four hours like those we have today, since our sun had not yet appeared. Catholic theologians commonly interpret them as long periods of time. Thus the "seventh day" is still going on. For Holy Scripture says that on that day God rested; that is, He ceased to create new kinds of things.

The Hebrew word for "day" may stand for a day, a week, a month, a century, or any indefinite period of time. Fundamentalism is an enemy of Science; it takes the "days" of Creation as of 24-hour periods, like the periods we call "days" in our time.

ccc. Very probably the sacred writer divides creation into six days in order to consecrate each day of the week by connecting it with one or more of the Creator's works; and to impress on the Jews the divine command to sanctify the seventh day.

In the creation, God worked from the lower to the higher: He first made plants, and then He created the animals that would use them for food. Man was the crown of His earthly creations; all other works in the material universe, were for man's enjoyment and use.

a. On the first day, God said: "Be light made," and light was made. Then He divided light from darkness, and called the light Day and the darkness Night. On the second day, God made the sky or firmament and divided the waters.

The "heaven" thus made is the material heaven in which the stars, the moon, and the sun pursue their courses.

b. On the third day, God made dry land to appear, bade it bring forth plants.

In its account Holy Scripture concerns itself chiefly with our earth. Originally a fiery ball of gaseous matter, it gradually lost its heat, and land began to appear, apart from the sea. The

moisture and warmth encouraged the development of organic life, the beginning of which had been implanted by God in the original primary matter.

c. On the fourth day, God made the sun, moon, and stars. On the fifth day He made creeping things, birds, and fishes. On the sixth day, He made beasts and cattle. Finally, "God created man to His own image."

Man is different from the animals in his possession of reason and free will. Surpassing them all in dignity, he is the crown of God's creations, the one for whom the world had been made ready.

d. On the seventh day, God "rested ... from all His work which He had done."

On the seventh day God ceased to make new kinds of things. This "seventh day" continues to the present; everything that is "made" now is a development or a combination of already existing matter. It is true that "nothing is new under the sun." However, God continues to work in this sense: that He preserves and governs created things, and that He creates souls for those to be born.

Is there no contradiction between the account in the book of Genesis, and the latest discoveries of science, concerning the origin of matter? -- No, there is not the least contradiction between the account in the book of Genesis, and the latest discoveries of science, concerning the origin of matter.

An apparent contradiction arises through the mistake of uninformed persons, who forget that the Church reads the Bible bearing in mind the principal object of the sacred writers.

ddd. In writing the account of the creation, the sacred writer, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, wished to impress upon the Jews (for whom he was writing) that there is but one God, and that He created the entire universe, living and lifeless.

At that time the Jews were surrounded by idolatrous peoples who believed in the existence of many gods, and worshipped all kinds of creatures, even the sun, moon, plants, animals, and images.

eee. In pursuing his aim, the sacred writer used the form that was most effective, under the circumstances, to convey his meaning. It is a popular form: that is, it relates historical events in popular expression and order.

The words used, while in themselves not scientifically exact, are in conformity with ordinary speech, and understandable by ordinary people. In the same way today we say, "The sun rises in the east", even when we know through the investigations of science that the sun does not "rise" at all. Events are set down in an order not necessarily scientific, but suited to the understanding of a primitive people, and therefore of all mankind. We must remember that the sacred writer was not aiming to teach physics or anthropology, but Faith.

### Revelation and Science

Do Revelation and Science contradict each other? -- No; Revelation and Science do not, and cannot, contradict each other, for both are of God.

fff. There may at times be an apparent conflict between faith and science; but this is only apparent, and never real. God cannot contradict Himself. He cannot lead us into error.

True Science is the handmaid of Religion. Science and the scientific method are means of arriving at the truth, and Religion is Truth. The greatest scientists have been Christians; a majority of outstanding leaders in science were Catholics, and many were priests. Only the shallow dabblers in science absurdly pretend that there is a conflict. The apparent conflicts arise from false interpretations, as when one takes for scientific truth what is false or not proved, or accepts as a doctrine of faith something not taught by the Church.

ggg. There can never be a real conflict between Revelation and Science, because they deal with entirely different spheres. Revelation is concerned with Faith and spiritual things; physical Science is concerned only with material things.

The Bible's purpose is to teach salvation; but people make the mistake of considering it a treatise on Science. St. Thomas and St. Augustine taught that when the Bible describes some phenomenon of nature, it sets it down in terms of its appearances.

hhh. No scientific experiment or theory can dispense with the necessity of a Creator. Unless His existence is accepted, we can never explain: (a) the origin of matter, even the most elementary; (b) the origin of motion; (c) the origin of the very first living organism, and of the spiritual soul of man; and (d) the origin of the order and law so apparent in the universe.

What are the only difficulties found by some scientists in the Biblical account of the creation? -- The only difficulties found by some scientists in the Biblical account of the Creation are connected with the order or sequence of events followed in the Book of Genesis.

iii. If we study the proper interpretation, even these difficulties will be found not to exist.

The account in the Book of Genesis is in logical, not chronological, order. The writer groups together similar works of creation, for the easier understanding of a primitive people.

jjj. The Church has not made any positive definition of the way in which the Biblical account of Creation is to be interpreted.

Catholics are free to accept the interpretation that they prefer, so long as they also accept the fact taught: that God created the whole universe and everything in it.

kkk. Neither Revelation nor Science gives a definite answer to the question concerning the age of the world. Geologists assert that long periods of time were necessary for the formation of the various strata of the earth's surface. Astronomers assert that some stars are a million light-years from the earth.

A Catholic is free to hold on this point whatever he believes is a sound and scientific conclusion. The estimates of scientists vary.

As a practical demonstration that there is no contradiction between Divine Revelation and Science, we here list some of the thousands of scientists who through the ages have been practising members of the Catholic Church and at the same time outstanding in Science. These men not only found no conflict between science and religion, but became more firm in their faith as they delved deeper into science. As Marconi, one of the greatest scientists of our time,

declared: "Science alone is unable to explain many things, and most of all, the greatest of mysteries -- the mystery of our existence. I believe, not only as a Catholic, but also as scientist." We do not include here the names of Catholics preeminent in navigation, architecture, art, music or literature, limiting ourselves to natural and physical science.

### Some Catholic Scientists

Algue, a priest, invented the barocyclonometer, to detect approach of cyclones. Ampere was founder of the science of electrodynamics, and investigator of the laws of electro-magnetism.

Becquerel, Antoine Cesar, was the founder of electro-chemistry. Becquerel, Antoine Henri, was the discoverer of radio-activity.

Binet, mathematician and astronomer, set forth the principle, "Binet's Theorem." Braille invented the Braille system for the blind.

Buffon wrote the first work on natural history. Carrell, Nobel prize winner in medicine and physiology, is renowned for his work in surgical technique.

Caesalpinus, a Papal physician, was the first to construct a system of botany. Cassiodorus, a priest, invented the watch.

Columbo discovered the pulmonary circulation of the blood. Copernicus, a priest, expounded the Copernican system.

Coulomb established the fundamental laws of static electricity. De Chauliac, a Papal physician, was the father of modern surgery and hospitals.

De Vico, a priest, discovered six comets. Descartes founded analytical geometry.

Dumas invented a method of ascertaining vapor densities. Endlicher, botanist and historian, established a new system of classifying plants.

Eustachius, for whom the Eustachian tube was named, was one of the founders of modern anatomy. Fabricius discovered the valvular system of the veins.

Fallopian, for whom the Fallopian tube was named, was an eminent physiologist. Fizeau was the first to determine experimentally the velocity of light.

Foucault invented the first practical electric arc lamp; he refuted the corpuscular theory of light; he invented the gyroscope. Fraunhofer was initiator of spectrum analysis; he established laws of diffraction.



Fresnel contributed more to the science of optics than any other man. Galilei, a great astronomer, is the father of experimental science.

Galvani, one of the pioneers of electricity, was also an anatomist and physiologist. Gioja, father of scientific navigation, invented the mariner's compass.

Gramme invented the Gramme dynamo. Guttenberg invented printing.

Herzog discovered a cure for infantile paralysis. Holland invented the first practical sub marine.

Kircher, a priest, made the first definite statement of the germ theory of disease. Laennec invented the stethoscope.

Lancist, a Papal physician, was the father of clinical medicine. Latreille was pioneer in entomology.

Lavoisier is called Father of Modern Chemistry. Leverrier discovered the planet Neptune.

Lully is said to have been the first to employ chemical symbols. Malpighi, a Papal physician, was a botanist, and the father of comparative physiology.

Marconi's place in radio is unsurpassed. Mariotte discovered Mariotte's law of gases.

Mendel, a monk, first established the laws of heredity, which gave the final blow to the theory of natural selection. Morgagni, founder of modern pathology; made important studies in aneurisms.

Muller was the greatest biologist of the 19th century, founder of modern physiology. Pashcal demonstrated practically that a column of air has weight.

Pasteur, called the "Father of Bacteriology," and inventor of bio-therapeutics, was the leading scientist of the 19th century. Picard, a priest, was the first to measure accurately a degree of the meridian.

Regiomontanus, a Bishop and Papal astronomer; was the father of modern astronomy. Scheiner, a priest, invented the pantograph, and made a telescope that permitted the first systematic investigation of sun spots.

Secchi invented the meteorograph. Steensen, a Bishop, was the father of geology.

Theodoric, a Bishop, discovered anesthesia in the 13th century. Torricelli invented the barometer.

Vesalius was the founder of modern anatomical science. Volta invented the first complete galvanic battery; the "volt" is named after him.

Other scientists: Agricola, Albertus Magnus, Bacon, Bartholomeus, Bayma, Beccaria, Behalm, Bernard, Biondo, Biot, Bolzano, Borrus, Boscovitch, Bosio, Bourgeois, Branly, Caldani, Cambou, Camel, Cardan, Carnoy, Cassini, Cauchy, Cavaliere, Caxton, Champollion, Chevreul, Clavius, De Rossi, Divisch, Dulong, Dwight, Eckhel, Epee, Fabre, Fabri, Faye, Ferrari, Gassendi, Gay-Lussac, Gordon, Grimaldi, Haüy, Heis, Helmont, Hengler, Heude, Hilgard, Jussieu, Kelly, Lamarck, Laplace, Linacre, Malus, Mersenne, Monge, Muller, Murphy, Murray, Nelston, Nieuwland, Nobili, Nollet, Ortelius, Ozaman, Pelouze, Piazzzi, Pitra, Plumier, Pouget, Provancher, Regnault, Riccioli, Sahagun, Santorini, Schwann, Schwarz, Secchi, Semmelweis, Spallanzani, Takamine, Tieffentaller, Toscanelli, Tulasne, Valentine, Vernier, Vieta, Da Vinci, Waldseemuller, Wincklemann, Windle, and a host of others, too many to mention.

## The Angels

Whoever we are, wherever we are, each of us has always a guardian angel at our side. He sees everything we do: both good and evil. We should always be very careful not to offend or hurt him. We should often thank him for his love and care. We should ask him to intercede with God for us in our necessities. We should pray to him often, especially in temptation or danger.

Which are the chief creatures of God? -- The chief creatures of God are angels and men.

1. God created angels and men for His own external glory. Their creation was a reflection of His wisdom and greatness.

By reason alone we cannot know that angels exist. However, reason indicates that in the orderly sequence of creatures from the lowest to the highest, there would be a greater gap between man and God, did not the angels exist.

2. God created angels and men for their good and happiness. They find their happiness in their union with God. God did not create angels or men for His own happiness; He is perfectly happy in Himself alone.

What are Angels? -- Angels are created spirits, without bodies, having understanding and free will.

Angels are spiritual beings superior to man and inferior to God; this is of faith. We do not know the number of angels, but we can infer from Holy Scripture that their number is very great.

1. Before the creation of man, God created hosts of angels. They are pure spirits, without bodies, in contrast to men, who have both body and spirit.

When angels or devils appear to men, they assume human form or some other visible shape. Thus the angels that appeared to the Blessed Virgin and to Zachary assumed human form. The devil that tempted Eve appeared as a serpent.

2. Even demons are pure spirits. They were angels before they became devils.

The word "angel" means messenger, and angels have often been sent by God to make known His will to men. Even the devils do service to God, since God always turns the attacks of the devil to show forth more brightly His own glory.

What gifts did God bestow on the Angels when He created them? -- When God created the angels He bestowed on them great wisdom, power, and holiness.

1. Angels are the most excellent beings created by God. They are nobler in nature than men. They know more, and have greater power. Of all God's creatures, angels resemble Him most.

We can imply the knowledge of the angels from the words of Our Lords: "But of that day (the day of Judgment) and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but the Father only" (Matt. 24:36). The power of angels was shown in Egypt when one destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians; another angel destroyed the hosts of the Assyrian King, for blaspheming God.

2. The angels were not created equal. They rank according to the amount of gifts given, and the work assigned to them.

In the Bible nine choirs of angels are mentioned: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominations, virtues powers, principalities, archangels, and angels.

Did all the angels remain faithful to God? -- Not all the angels remained faithful to God; some of them sinned.

1. God gave free will to the angels, as He did to men. He put them to a test, in order to make them earn the happiness of heaven.

We do not know the exact nature of the test which God gave the angels.

2. In this trial, many angels, using their free will, refused to submit themselves to God; for this serious sin they were punished.

"For God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but dragged them down by infernal ropes" (2 Pet. 2:4). Wherever the devils were later permitted to go, they had in a way their hell with them, for they were forever deprived of the love of God.

What happened to the angels who remained faithful to God? --The angels who remained faithful to God entered into the eternal happiness of heaven, and these are called good angels.

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you, their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father" (Matt. 18:10).

1. The good angels behold the face of God continually, praise and glorify Him, and are perfectly happy in His presence.

Angels are commonly represented with wings to show the speed with which they pass from place to place. They are also shown as small children to show their innocence and perpetual youth. They have harps to indicate their perpetual praise of God, and lilies, to symbolize their perfect purity.

2. When we say that the angels were in heaven before their test, we do not mean that they saw God. They were very happy where God had placed them, but they did not see God until they had been proved.

How do the good angel help us? -- The good angels help us by praying for us, by acting as messengers from God to us, and by serving as our guardian angels.

Our Lord Himself said of little children: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones for I tell you, their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

1. The good angels are God's messengers, and often reveal God's will to man.

The angel Raphael accompanied Tobias on his journey. The angel Gabriel was sent to the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation. Angels appeared to the shepherds at the Nativity. An angel was sent to St. Joseph after the departure of the Magi, and after the death of Herod. Angels appeared to the women at Christ's sepulchre, and to Mary Magdalen.

2. Certain angels have special charge of nations, communities, churches, etc.

Our Lord Himself several times spoke of angels; especially the guardian angels.

How do our guardian angels help us? -- Our guardian angels help us by praying for us, by protecting us from harm, and by inspiring us to do good.

1. Our guardian angels are given special care of us, watching over each from birth to death.

We should always love and pray to our Guardian Angel who never leaves our side. The Church celebrates the feast of the Guardian Angels on October 2.

2. Our guardian angels put good thoughts into our minds, moving our will to what is good. They protect us in dangers of soul and body. They offer our prayers and good works to God. They pray for us. They help us in our work and needs.

"He hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 90:11). For instance, angels kept Daniel safe in the lions' den, and the three young men in the fiery furnace. We often here of little children meeting with accidents and escaping unhurt. But the chief work of our guardian angels is to keep us safe from the devil.

## The Devils; Temptation

It was the archangel Michael who led the good angels: "And there was a great battle in heaven; Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels. And they did not prevail, neither was their place found any more in heaven" (Ap. 12:7,8).

What happened to the angels who did not remain faithful to God? -- The angels who did not remain faithful to God were cast into hell, and these are called bad angels, or devils.

"Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

1. We also call them demons or fallen angels. Led by the most excellent of the angels created by God, Lucifer or Satan, the bad angels refused to obey God when He tested them. God did not give them a chance to repent, but cast them at once into hell.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer. ... Thou saidst in thy heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, ... I will be like the Most High,'" (Is. 14:12-14). Jesus said, "I was watching Satan fall as lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

2. God did not create devils, but glorious angels. The rebel angels turned themselves into devils by their sin.

By one grave sin against God these angels of light became vile demons, and were condemned to hell for all eternity. We should draw a lesson from this and determine never to sin.

What is the chief way in which the bad angels try to harm us? -- The chief way in which the bad angels try to harm us is by tempting us to sin.

1. The bad angels tempt man and try to draw him away from God. Often the devil appears as an angel of light, and we are tempted by evil which appears good. Under this guise the devil is most dangerous.

"Be sober, be watchful! For your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet 5:8-9).

2. Without God's permission, the devil can do us no harm. God sometimes permits the devil to tempt just men, to cleanse them from imperfections.

Our Lord Himself was tempted by the devil. God permitted Job to be harmed bodily by the devil. Saint Anthony, Saint Teresa, and many other saints suffered from the temptations of the evil one. But these temptations only drive the just to greater love of God. "The life of man is a warfare" (Job. 7:1).

3. Sometimes devils are permitted to enter the body of a man, exercising power over his faculties; this is called diabolic "possession". At other times devils torment one from without; and this state is called diabolic "obsession".

When God permits diabolic obsession or possession, it is to show in some way His glory, or to punish sin, convert sinners, or provide some means for the practice of virtue.

4. In cases of diabolic possession or obsession, the aid of the Church should be sought; for the Church received from Christ the power of exorcism. This is the act of driving out or warding off evil spirits. It is only with the permission of his bishop that a priest is permitted to exorcise evil spirits.

5. The Church forbids Catholics to have anything to do with spiritism. This is calling up the spirits of the dead.

Some manifestations are spirit-rapping, table-lifting, slate-writing, apparitions, communications through mediums in a state of trance. Most of the spiritist seances are fraudulent, but sometimes the devil manifests himself. God can permit the souls of the dead to return to earth. But there is no indication that He permits Himself to obey mediums. The devil may sometimes impersonate the spirits of the dead. Satan is old and skillful in deceit, and can assume the appearance of an angel of light.

Do all temptations come from the bad angels? -- Some temptations come from the bad angels; but other temptations come from ourselves and from the persons and things about us.

1. This is what we mean when we say that temptations come to us from the flesh, the world, and the devil.

The evil inclinations of our weak and corrupted nature tempt us to sin. The world, with its sinful wants and vanities, tempts us to sin. The devil goes about continually tempting us, making use of both our nature and the world for his evil purposes.

2. In itself, temptation is not a sin. It becomes sinful only when: (a) we bring it upon ourselves by carelessness or overconfidence; (b) we play with, take pleasure in, or yield to it.

The greatest saints have often been most strongly tempted. Our Lord even permitted Himself to be tempted. Thus we see that temptation is not a sin, because we are not responsible for it.

3. God permits us to be tempted in order to try us, to let us win an eternal reward.

God subjected the angels to a test. Those who passed it are now enjoying Him in heaven, their reward. "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee" (Tob. 12:13).

God permitted the devil to tempt our first parents. Temptations serve to keep us humble. God permits all mankind to have temptations but never temptation beyond their strength to resist. "God is faithful and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength" (1 Cor. 10:13).

4. The stronger the temptation, the greater the graces God gives for its conquest.



The conquest by the saints of wicked temptations have made them greater saints. Christ Himself was tempted by the devil, to gluttony, to avarice, and to pride. He wanted to show us that by resisting we may rise to greater love of God. Good men who are worried because so many temptations assail them should remember that ants quickly gather over a jar of honey; the devil strives to catch the good, because he is already sure of the wicked.

Can we always resist temptations? -- We can always resist temptations, because no temptation can force us into Sin, and God will always help us if we ask Him.

The length of time during which a temptation persists does not make it sinful, if we continue resisting it. A temptation may attack us all our lives, but as long as we fight it, or pay no attention to it, as long as we do not yield, we commit no sin. We have not been conquered, and God will reward us for the good fight.

1. No temptation can do us harm if we obey God's laws and keep away from sin. If we resist, temptation will flee from us.

Our lot for all eternity depends entirely on ourselves. God votes for heaven; the devil votes for hell. The deciding vote is ours. Shall we vote for heaven or for hell? "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

2. When assailed by temptation, one must at once resist. It is easier to conquer temptation at the beginning than later on, just as a fire is easier to put out at the outset.

Since nothing can be done without divine grace, one must pray. One must imitate the Apostles who had recourse to Jesus when a storm arose. Let him say at once, "Lord, make haste to help me!"

3. Some remedies against temptation are:

a. Watchfulness and prayer.

"Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation" (Matt. 26:41). Avoid idleness, keeping always occupied, either by work, or by wholesome recreation. If evil thoughts enter the mind, think of other things, in this way ignoring the temptation.

- b. Frequent confession and Holy Communion.
- c. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Guardian Angels.

## An Image of God

The Book of Genesis describes the creation of the first man and the first woman in these words: "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs. ... And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman" (Gen. 2:7, 21, 22). Such was the creation of Adam and Eve, our first parents. God gave them power over all created things: the earth, the beasts, birds, fishes, plants, and all things else.

What is man? -- Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God.

Before the creation of man, God said, "Let us make man to our image and likeness; and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26).

1. God formed the body of man from the slime of the earth; but He breathed the soul into man's body. In this way the soul came direct from God, and indicates closer likeness to Him.

We should always reverence our likeness to God, trying to perfect it by making our soul as holy as possible. Once the enemies of a king tried to make his son do something wrong. But the youth proudly and resolutely answered, "No! I am the son of the king!" By Baptism man

becomes the adopted son of God, Who is infinitely higher than any earthly king. His soul is like his Father in Heaven.

2. The soul of man is different from the soul of brute animals. Animals have senses and instinct, but neither reason nor free will. Free will is that power of the soul to choose whether to act or not to act.

If a horse has not eaten for a day, and you put some hay before him, he will eat, because his instinct moves him to do so. But a hungry man may fast for days, and still refuse to eat however hungry he may be, if he wills not to eat. The difference between man's free will and animal instinct is that a man can say "No" to himself.

3. The soul and the body are not loosely connected parts of man; they are united in a substantial union. The soul is not located in any particular member of the body, but is whole and entire in each part

Is this likeness to God in the body or in the soul? -- This likeness to God is chiefly in the soul. Man continues in this likeness to God only when he remains in God's grace, for then he is a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4).

1. Like God, man's soul is an immortal spirit, with understanding and free will. Some deny the existence of the soul, because it cannot be seen; yet the same people would not deny the existence of human reason, even if this cannot be seen, either.

Some claim that man has two souls, one good and one evil, striving for mastery. But the struggle that we often experience comes from only one soul with different tendencies arising from the fact of our being made of both body and soul, partly material and partly spiritual. In a living person, the soul should not be considered apart from the body; their union is as close as the relation between a musician and his instrument at the hour of a concert.

2. Through his two faculties of the soul, understanding and free will, man obtains dominion over the material world, as God possesses power over the entire universe.

As God said before creating man: "Let him have dominion over the beasts and the whole earth" (Gen. 1:26). Through his likeness to God, man has the power to know the true, the good, the beautiful, so far even as to know the Source of all truth, goodness, and beauty, God Himself.

How can we prove that the soul of man is immortal? -- We can prove that the soul of man is immortal, because man's acts of intelligence are spiritual; therefore, his soul must be a spiritual being, not dependent on matter, and hence not subject to decay or death.

If even matter cannot totally disappear, however small the particle, how can the soul of man, of a far higher order, be thought to suffer extinction?

1. Man has mind and will. He can reflect, reason, plan for the future, make judgments, remember. These prove his soul spiritual. Such a soul cannot die as the body does.

Man longs for an ideal state of perfect happiness, such happiness as is impossible to attain on earth. This universal longing must have been placed in men's souls by God Himself; it is a desire for the infinite happiness of a union with the Creator. If, therefore, man's soul were not immortal, he would have no chance to realize his dream of bliss, and God would be cruel in implanting the longing for it in his breast.

2. There have been many instances of the dead appearing to the living. In the Gospel, Moses and Elias appeared on Mount Thabor to Christ and three of His Apostles. At Christ's death, many who were dead rose and appeared in Jerusalem.

The Blessed Virgin has through the centuries continued to appear to men; such instances are almost innumerable. Saints have also returned to earth to comfort or instruct the living; even souls in purgatory have returned, to beg for prayers. We must, however, be very careful about believing in particular instances of appearances by the dead; the devil can and often does use this instrumentality to trick the gullible.

3. Belief in the immortality of the soul and a life after death is universal among mankind, including the most primitive peoples.

In the Bible are many instances of the belief of the Jews in another life, where the souls of the dead would be. For instance, one of their laws forbade holding with the dead. The Greeks and Romans believed in Tartarus and Elysium, places for the dead. Other nations have different

cults to the dead, especially during their burial ceremonies. Such cults would be meaningless did those who took part in them not have an idea of another life for departed souls.

4. If the soul were not immortal, the wicked who commit evil all their lives would go unpunished. The just who suffer continually on earth would not receive any reward. This would be injustice impossible to the perfect justice of God.

If even man, imperfect as he is, can see innumerable examples of injustice in life, could not God? Would He not have a way of correcting such injustice? And if so, since it cannot be corrected in this life, there must be another, where immortal souls go to obtain perfect justice.

5. Holy Scripture, the Word of God, teaches that the soul is immortal.

"And many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always" (Dan. 12:2). Our Lord Himself said to the good thief, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). "And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matt. 10:28). "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:32).

## Adam and Eve: Our First Parents

Our first parents were perfectly happy in Paradise. If they had not sinned, they would never have died or suffered from sickness and sorrow. When the time came for their leaving the earth, they would have been taken body and soul to Heaven. The tree of life grew in Paradise. By eating of its fruit Adam and Eve were preserved from death, sickness, and all manner of weakness of the body. All these gifts were lost as a punishment of the sin our first parents committed.

Who were the first man and woman? -- The first man and woman were Adam and Eve, the first parents of the whole human race.

1. God made Adam's body out of the slime of the earth, and breathed an immortal soul into it (Gen. 2:7). God then cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and taking one of his ribs formed it into Eve (Gen. 2:22).

Adam's body was formed from the earth. But his soul was immediately created out of nothing by the almighty power of God. The soul of every person is created in this way. We do not inherit our soul from our parents; it comes directly from the hand of God at the same moment that we receive life.

2. Adam and Eve were our first parents. All of mankind makes up one great family.

Sacred Scripture says that before the creation of Adam "there was not a man to till the earth" (Gen.2:5) ; and that Eve was the "mother of all the living" (Gen. 3:20). Legends of all races tell of an original happiness from which man fell, and of a flood that covered the earth.

a. All men have common bodily characteristics.

The beat of the pulse, the temperature of the body, the physical structure, and even such faculties as the sense of smell, of sight, of hearing,--all these vary little among different races. Differences are results of variations in climate, food, ways of living, and opportunity.

b. Emotionally and intellectually all races are the same.

Researches have discovered a universal sameness in ideas of right and wrong; there is a universal moral code, even among the most primitive of tribes. For example, all men consider wrong the murder of those who are not enemies, cruelty to children, incest, and irreverence. If the moral code were the result of fear of reprisal, why was not stealing considered wrong when committed against an enemy? Science almost compels the conviction of the origin of mankind from only one pair of ancestors; Religion declares it.

What was the chief gift bestowed on Adam and Eve by God? -- The chief gift bestowed on Adam and Eve by God was sanctifying grace, which made them children of God and gave them the right to heaven.

1. God created Adam and Eve in the state of innocence and holiness. This made them pleasing to God, and full of love for Him. It made them children of God, and therefore heirs of heaven. This state of innocence we term "sanctifying grace".

"God filled them with wisdom and the knowledge of understanding... He created in them the science of the spirit, he filled their heart with wisdom. ... And their eye saw the majesty of his glory, and their ears heard his glorious voice" (Ecclus. 17:6,11).

2. God's abiding grace made Adam and Eve so happy that their happiness almost equaled that of the angels.

"Thou hast made him a little less than the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honor" (Ps. 8:6).

What other gifts were bestowed on Adam and Eve by God? -- The other gifts bestowed on Adam and Eve by God were happiness in the Garden of Paradise, great knowledge, control of the passions by reason, and freedom from suffering and death.

If our first parents had not sinned these gifts would have been transmitted to all men as the possession of human nature.

3. God put Adam and Eve in the "paradise of pleasure", a garden which contained all kinds of plants, flowers, birds, and beasts, - everything good that could be imagined.

All the birds and beasts were perfectly obedient to Adam and Eve. In the midst of the garden grew the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Near it was the tree of life, which protected Adam and Eve from disease.

4. God also gave Adam and Eve infused knowledge; that is, without experience or study they knew all that full-grown persons needed to fulfill the purpose of their creation, and as educators of men.

For example, Adam knew the indissolubility of marriage; his insight helped him give suitable names to the animals.

5. God blessed Adam and Eve with a freedom from subjection to their lower appetites, such as impurity, drunkenness, etc. They had no inclination to evil.

Their will was free from all weakness, weakened by no sensual desires. On account of the absence of rebellion of the flesh against the spirit, they felt no shame even though they were naked in Paradise.

6. Lastly, God gave Adam and Eve freedom from bodily disease and death.

Adam and Eve were created immortal, and were made free from all subjection to sickness, which is the prelude to death. Had Adam and Eve been faithful to God, they would never have died, nor suffered disease.

What commandment did God give Adam and Eve? -- God gave Adam and Eve the commandment not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree that grew in the garden of Paradise.

7. God wanted Adam as head and representative of the human race to merit heaven. And so, after granting him His abiding grace, and blessing him with wonderful gifts, and giving him the Garden of Paradise to live in, He commanded him not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree.

"Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death" (Gen. 2:16,17). The fruit of the forbidden tree was not evil in itself, for in Paradise God did not place anything bad. It was bad only because it was forbidden; and if Adam and Eve partook of it they would have disobeyed God.

8. If Adam and Eve had been faithful to God, they would have passed without disease and without bodily death from their earthly Paradise to heaven, God's home, where they would see Him face to face.

All the children of Adam, the entire human race, would have been born as Adam had been Created, in a state of friendship with God, and with all his gifts. If one had sinned, he would have been punished by God, but not being the head of the entire human race, he would not have passed on the stain to his descendants. Everybody would then have suffered for his own sins alone.

Did Adam and Eve obey the commandment of God? -- Adam and Eve did not obey the commandment of God, but ate of the forbidden fruit.

The devil tempted Eve to eat of the fruit. and she ate; then she gave some to Adam, and he also ate (Gen. 3:1-13).



## Evolution and the Bible

Although there are some points of similarity between the skeletons of man and the ape, the differences are numerous and fundamental. As one scientist remarked, evolutionists might as well claim that man descended from any other form of life, because differences between man and the ape are as important as between man and other forms. The ape has neither chin nor forehead, its foot grasps like a hand. Its teeth are not arranged in close rows. If it were forced to stand erect, it would be looking upwards, not forward. The average weight of its brain compared to that of its body is as 1 to 70. For man the ratio is 1 to 35. The ape cannot speak articulately.

How did the body of the first man originate? -- According to the Bible, the body of the first man was made by God from the slime of the earth.

"And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth" (Gen. 2:7).

1. The natural and obvious meaning of these words from the Book of Genesis is that the body of Adam was made directly by God from created substance. Such is the traditional Catholic interpretation.

The Church teaches that the Genesis account is substantially historically true. But Catholics are not forbidden certain liberty of interpretation. For example, the "day" of creation is not necessarily - and not probably -- our 24-hour day. We may consider the work done by God in one "day" as an immediate act, or as the result of a long period of development through the functioning of natural forces.

2. Holy Scripture was not written for the purpose of serving as a technical reference work in science. The sacred writer's aim was to tell the story of creation, for the belief of the people, not for scientific investigation.

What is the theory of evolution? -- Evolution is a theory concerning the origin and development of plants, animals, and man.

1. The theory holds that life began with the simplest forms, then developed into more complex forms, until at last the most complex form, man, was "evolved".

Some evolutionists hold that the monkey or ape and man both developed from a common ancestor. Darwin's first man was a highly-developed ape. "Man when he was in honor did not understand; he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them" (Ps. 48:21).

2. Many speak as if the theory of evolution had been thoroughly and scientifically proved. This is not so; at present conjectures still largely underlie the theory. Natural science alone can never explain how the first human body was actually produced.

Unaided, it cannot explain the origin of inorganic matter, or the origin of life in the simplest organism. Divine Revelation alone can give the answer to the origin of man, and of all created things.

3. The evolutionists based their theories on the discovery of the so-called "missing link," from which the first man is supposed to have developed, a link between man and the ape. There is no such "missing link". All skeletons discovered have been proved to be either of genuine men or of real apes. Of the distinguished modern scientists who deny that evolution is an established fact, we might mention: Fabre, the outstanding naturalist of modern times; Millikan, the great physicist; John Burroughs, the naturalist; Professors Richet (Paris), and Henderson (Harvard); Dr. Dwight, the anatomist; Alexis Carrel, and Sir Bertram Windle.

4. However, even if the theory of evolution could be scientifically proved, even if a "missing link" should be discovered, the theory would not be opposed to Catholic doctrine, which merely requires belief in the immediate creation of Adam's soul, in the image of God. Any "evolution" was surely begun by an Intelligent Cause: God.

We therefore take literally the Book of Genesis, which tells of the peculiar creation of man, of the formation of the first woman from the first man, of the original happiness of our First Parents in the state of justice, of their integrity and immortality, of the test to which God put them, of their transgression of the divine command at the instigation of the devil in some form, of the loss of the original innocence, and of the promise of the Redeemer.

What is the origin of the human soul? -- God directly creates every human soul out of nothing.

1. From the very beginning, God has created every human soul out of nothing.

Thus He created the soul of Adam, when after forming his body, He "breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Every human soul is created at the same moment that one comes to life, at conception.

2. Man's soul is not produced from some other soul or matter. It is spiritual and simple. It did not exist before the person lived. It did not come to exist after he was already alive. Man's life is due to his soul. As soon as the soul leaves the body, life ceases.

The investigations of scientists have discovered a singular universality and sameness in ideas of right and wrong, a moral code, in all races and peoples, however primitive. These are universally looked upon as wrong: the wanton murder of one not an enemy, stealing from one's own group, maltreatment of children, irreverence, incest, adultery. If this attitude resulted from fear of reprisal, why is not murder considered wrong when against an enemy? Why has incest always been regarded as wrong, when primitive men surely could have no idea of the evils of inbreeding? One must conclude that this universal conscience comes from One Source.

3. Man's soul is not derived from his parents. Only his body is derived from them. There is no possible "evolution" of the soul, for it is a spiritual substance, not subject to the laws of physical nature, and could not possibly be developed from a lower or material form of life.

Manifestations of the soul, like cleverness, talent, traits of character, etc., by which children resemble their parents, are due to the attributes of the body that they derived from their parents, or to training in the family. If one holds a colored glass to the light the reflection will have the color of the glass. But the glass did not make the sun whose reflection is cast. Is even the mind a product of evolution? The most primitive man is capable of abstract reasoning. The most intelligent beasts cannot think in concepts.

How many centuries were there from Adam to Christ? -- The Church has never given a decision; this question will perhaps never be answered.

1. It is generally admitted that the Bible teaches nothing definite on the matter. The line of patriarchs, which it gives, with their ages, probably contains many gaps.

A man is said to be a son of another, whereas he may only be a remote descendant. In the same way the Bible speaks of Our Lord as the Son of David, although David preceded Him 1000 years.

2. Some Catholic theologians state that the age of man may be stretched to ten, or one hundred thousand years or even longer. Neither scientists nor theologians have come to a definite solution.

## Original Sin

God punished Adam and Eve for the sin they committed. "And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the earth from which he was taken" (Gen. 3:23). All the calamities in the world today, war, disease, poverty, etc., are consequences of Adam's sin. We inherited all the weaknesses that were part of his punishment.

What happened to Adam and Eve on account of their sin? --On account of their sin Adam and Eve lost sanctifying grace, the right to heaven, and their special gifts; they became subject to death, to suffering, and to a strong inclination to evil, and were driven from the Garden of Paradise.

1. Adam and Eve immediately lost God's abiding grace and friendship, their holiness and innocence: they lost sanctifying grace.

This was the worst punishment. Having lost sanctifying grace, they lost the right to heaven, to see God.

2. They lost their special gifts: they became subject to suffering and death.

Their minds and wills were so weakened that they became inclined to evil, subjected to temptation. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3:16-19).

3. God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Paradise.

"And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure" (Gen. 3:23,24).

4. Some wonder how the eating of one fruit could have been so grievous a crime. We must remember that God gave Adam and Eve every blessing. He only required them, as proof of their faithfulness, to abstain from eating the fruit of one tree.

Doubtless Paradise was filled with trees having more delicious fruit than the forbidden tree. Pride and disobedience and ingratitude caused them to sin. They defied God, and despised His threats. They wanted to be as Powerful and great as God.

What has happened to us on account of the sin of Adam? --On account of the sin of Adam, we, his descendants, come into the world deprived of sanctifying grace and inherit his punishment, as we would have inherited his gifts had he been obedient to God.

"Therefore as through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death has passed into all men" (Rom. 5:12).

This sin in its is called original sin. It is the state in which every descendant of Adam comes into the world, totally deprived of grace, through inheriting the punishment, not of Adam's personal sin, but of his sin as head of the human race. This sin is called original because it comes down to us through our origin, from Adam.

Thus all men are born in sin, that is, they are born without the friendship of God, and with no right to heaven. Original sin does not come to us from Eve. but from Adam alone, since God made him representative and head of the whole human race. Eve was punished for her disobedience, as Adam was, but did not pass on her guilt to all mankind. Our original sin comes from our first father.

1. Because of original sin, heaven was closed to all men until the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord instituted the sacrament of Baptism in order to restore to us the right to heaven that Adam had lost.

A person after baptism is in the state of grace and free from sin. If he dies immediately after baptism, even if he had committed sins, he goes straight to heaven. His sins and their punishment are all forgiven him.

What are the chief punishments of Adam which we inherit through original sin? --The chief punishments of Adam which we inherit through original sin are: death, suffering, ignorance, and a strong inclination to sin.

1. By original sin we became subject to disease and death. This was part of the punishment God laid on Adam.

"In what day soever you shall eat of it, you shall die the death" (Gen. 2:17).

2. Our whole nature became inclined to evil. Our reason is in perpetual conflict with our passions.

Even after our souls are cleansed of original sin by baptism, the corruption of our nature and other punishments, such as sickness, evil inclinations, etc., remain. "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil" (Gen. 8:21). "The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17)

Is God unjust in punishing us on account of the sin of Adam? --God is not unjust in punishing us on account of the sin of Adam, because original sin does not take away from us anything to which we have a strict right as human beings, but only the free gifts which God in His goodness would have bestowed on us if Adam had not sinned.

1. All mankind must suffer for the sin of Adam because he was the head and representative of the whole human family.

In much the same way. the ruler of a country represents the whole people. He declares war or makes peace, and the people are affected by his acts. When Alfonso XIII of Spain was dethroned, his children lost their right to the throne through no fault of their own. So also the children of a rich man who goes bankrupt lose all the inheritance they hoped for, through no fault of theirs.

2. We should have shared in Adam's blessings of soul and body without any merit of our own, if he had not sinned. In the same way we share in his guilt.

If Adam had not sinned, we would have been born in the state of holiness and grace that had been his. Each man, however, would have been free to commit actual sin, and to be cast into hell. However, not being the head of the human race, he would not have transmitted his sin to all mankind.

Was any human person ever preserved from original sin? --The Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from original sin in view of the merits of her Divine Son, and this privilege is called the Immaculate Conception.

"And when the angel had come to her, he said, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women'" (Luke 1:28).

1. From the very first moment of her conception the Blessed Virgin was preserved from all stain of original sin. She was conceived and born without original sin.

God, having ordained that Mary was to be the Mother of His Son, could not permit her soul to lack for a single instant all those graces that would make her most pleasing to Him.

2. Our Blessed Mother's soul was created as pure and spotless as the soul of Eve. Where Eve committed sin and lost her spotlessness, our Mother Mary kept herself pure and spotless to the end of her life.

We commemorate the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on December 8.

3. St. John the Baptist was cleansed from original sin while he was still in the womb of his mother. He was born free from sin, but he was, like us, conceived in sin.

## Actual Sin

Christ permitted Himself to be tempted by the devil. After Our Lord's forty days' fast in the desert, the devil appeared to Him and tempted Him to gluttony, to pride, and to avarice. But

Our Lord resisted the devil and sent him away. Then angels came to minister to Him. God wishes to show us that temptation, far from being a sin in itself, is a source of merit if we resist firmly. Then God will send us His blessings and consolations, and we shall be dearer to Him after our successful fight against temptation.

What is actual sin? --Actual sin is any wilful thought, desire, word, action, or omission forbidden by the law of God.

1. There are two general classes of sins: original and actual. Original sin is the kind of sin that we inherit from Adam. Actual sin is the kind of sin that we ourselves commit. In general, when we speak of "sin" we mean actual sin.

Sin is an offense against God, a violation of His commandments. To sin is to despise God, to disobey Him, to offend Him. One who sins takes the gifts that God has given, and uses them to insult Him.

2. No person exists who does not sin, however holy he may be. The only human being who was created without sin, and never committed sin, was the Blessed Virgin; this was a special privilege bestowed on her because she was to be the Mother of our Saviour.

St. John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

In what way do we fall into sin? --We fall step by step from temptation into sin.

The different steps at times follow each other rapidly and are accomplished in the twinkling of an eye.

1. Sin is not committed without temptation. First an evil thought comes into the mind. This in itself is not sinful; it is only a temptation.

A man may be in a jewelry store looking at some jewels. The salesman turns away to talk to someone else, leaving a precious diamond ring on the counter. The thought enters the man's mind that it would be easy for him to take the ring and walk away unnoticed. This is temptation, not sin.



2. If we do not immediately reject the thought, it awakens in the mind an affection or liking for it.

If the man in the above example does not resist and reject the thought, but plays with it, and becomes pleased with the idea, he thereby gives partial consent, and commits a slight sin.

3. Next the thought is followed by an evil desire in which we take pleasure.

If, still playing with the thought, the man wishes that he could take the diamond ring without being noticed, the consent is complete, and he commits a sin in his heart (interiorly).

4. The resolution to commit the sin when occasion presents itself follows. Then the exterior act is committed.

Finally, the man glances to see if the salesman is still busy. Then he takes the ring and walks away with it. Thus the wish or desire has been translated into an exterior act. Even should the man be prevented from stealing, he is guilty of grave sin.

Why is an exterior sin more evil than an interior sin? --An exterior sin is more evil than an interior sin, because it is attended by worse consequences.

1. An exterior sin often causes scandal, and is more severely punished by God here on earth as well as after death.

Drunkenness reduces the drunkard and his family to poverty and sickness. Impurity destroys the body, sometimes producing insanity. Murder often leads the culprit to the electric chair.

2. And worse, an exterior sin increases the malice of the will, and destroys the sense of shame. The repetition of exterior sins forms the habit of sinning, and vice is formed. The conscience goes to sleep, and the sinner becomes so hardened that he no longer sees the evil and wickedness of his sin.

Thus it becomes easier and easier for him to commit sins of a worse kind. His state becomes worse and worse until finally he becomes a hardened sinner who believes himself sinless.

Are all evil acts sinful? --Not all evil acts are sinful; there may be times when such acts are not sinful, as:

1. When we do not know that the act is sinful.

Noe became intoxicated, but committed no sin, because he was not aware of the strength of the wine. So one might by mistake take poison instead of medicine and die, but he would not be guilty of suicide. Such an act is termed a material sin.

2. When the act is done through no fault of our own.

If one is not aware that a certain day is a day of abstinence, and eats meat, he commits no sin. Again, one might by pure accident and through no negligence on his part drop a loaded revolver. Even if it explodes and kills a person, he is not guilty of murder.

3. When we do not consent to the evil.

A stronger man may take our hand, and in spite of our refusal and protest force it to drop a lighted match into a gasoline tank. Even if there is an explosion and a whole town is set on fire, we are not guilty of arson. In the same way, as long as one does not consent to an evil thought, it remains a temptation, and he commits no sin.

When are we guilty of sins which we ourselves do not commit? --We are guilty of sins which we ourselves do not commit when we cooperate with another person's sins.

1. We share in another's sin: (a) by counsel; (b) by command; (c) by consent; (d) by provocation; (e) by praise or flattery; (f) by silence; (g) by assistance; (h) by defense or concealment; and (i) by not punishing the evil done.

Thus rulers, legislative leaders, parents, employers, teachers, superiors, owners of shows and theatres, editors, publishers, and others in a position of responsibility, may easily render themselves guilty of the sins of others. One who is to blame for another's sin is as guilty as if he had committed the sin himself.

2. One who tempts or provokes another into sin is perhaps the more guilty of the two.

Our Lord says: "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it were better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).

How many kinds of actual sin are there? --There are two kinds of actual sin: mortal sin and venial sin.

1. Another classification is: (a) sins of thought; (b) sins of desire; (c) sins of word; (d) sins of deed; (e) sins of omission.

If we take pleasure in thinking proudly of ourselves, we sin by thought. If we cannot rest content because we envy somebody's clothes and wish we had them, we sin by desire. If we get angry and say angry words to someone, we sin by word. If we are so angry that we begin striking the person, we sin by deed. If we do not do what is our duty, such as going to Mass on Sunday, we sin by omission.

2. Sins are also classified into (a) our own sins; and (b) sins in which we cooperate and for which we are responsible.

We must not be presumptuous and over-confident. We must remember that when we do not sin, it is only through the grace of God. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). A humble distrust of ourselves is a preservative against sin.

## Mortal Sin

Mortal sin is the greatest evil in the world. It separates us from God. Because of our mortal sins, Jesus Christ suffered agonies and died on the cross. To strengthen our resolution not to commit sin, we should remember also that even a single mortal sin is enough to send us to hell.

What is mortal sin? --Mortal sin is a grievous offense against the law of God.

1. Any wilful thought, word, action or omission, in serious violation of God's law, is a mortal sin. Examples of mortal sin are blasphemy, wilful murder, adultery, arson, robbery, etc. Mortal sin occurs as soon as God is no longer our final end in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Each mortal sin we commit is a three-fold insult to Almighty God: it insults Him by rebellion or disobedience, by ingratitude, and by contempt.

2. Circumstances of person, cause, time, place, means, object, and evil consequences enhance or decrease the guilt of the sin.

Thus mortal sins, although all mortal, differ in the weight of their guilt.

Why is this sin called mortal? --This sin is called mortal, or deadly, because it deprives the sinner of sanctifying grace, the supernatural life of the soul.

1. Without sanctifying grace, the soul is displeasing to God, unclean, and can never behold Him or be with Him in heaven.

Without sanctifying grace, the soul is without God; and without God, the devil makes the soul his habitation. "Know thou and see that it is an evil and bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God" (Jer. 2:19).

2. The sinner loses charity towards God and his fellow-men, and by the weakening of his will and the darkening of his intellect, is liable to fall into other mortal sins.

The devil cries to his subordinates, "God hath forsaken him; pursue him and take him, for there is none to deliver him" (Ps. 70:11).

3. Without sanctifying grace, the soul is truly "dead"; and if an adult dies in that state, he will suffer the torments of the damned.

The word "mortal" comes from the Latin mors, which means death. St. John Chrysostom said, "Sinners are dead while they live, and the just live after they are dead."

Besides depriving the sinner of sanctifying grace, what else does mortal sin do to the soul? -- Besides depriving the sinner of sanctifying grace, mortal sin makes the soul an enemy of God, takes away the merit of all its good actions, deprives it of the right to everlasting happiness in heaven, and makes it deserving of everlasting punishment in hell.

1. Man was made for God, and what an awful calamity it would be to become His enemy! It would be as if the food which was made to support and sustain man should all of a sudden turn to poison him instead.

Through mortal sin, the sinner becomes a stranger to divine love, and to the love of neighbor; his heart turns cold because he has put out the flame of charity by grave sin. His reason, a gift of God, is obscured, and he fails to perceive the things of God. Thus a sinner the more he sins, becomes more insensitive to evil; his will is finally so weakened that all conscience is lost, and he falls into greater and greater sins more and more easily.

"Adulterers, do you not know that the friendship of this world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of this world becomes an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4).

2. During all the time that the sinner remains in mortal sin, all his good works do not help him to heaven: he earns no merits until he gives up his state of mortal sin.

As the Apostle says, "If I give my body to be burned and have not charity, I am nothing." One who falls into mortal sin may be compared to a merchant coming into his home port, laden with all kinds of treasures collected from abroad, upon which he has spent years of labor and incalculable wealth. Just as he enters the harbor his ship is torpedoed, and he saves nothing for all his trouble. In a similar manner, one who dies in mortal sin gains nothing, however numerous the good works he may in life have performed.

3. However numerous the merits previously earned by the sinner, however many his good works, if he dies with only one mortal sin on his soul he goes to hell forever.

Is this not something to be feared? It is because mortal sin presupposes a hatred of God. Let us be reasonable men, and consider the utter folly of selling our birthright, God and heaven, for the mess of pottage that is sin and its effects. "Then he will say to those on his left hand, 'Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire'" (Matt. 25:41).

What three things are necessary to make a sin mortal? --To make a sin mortal, these three things are necessary:

First, the thought, desire, word, action, or omission must be seriously wrong or considered seriously wrong. - The matter must be grave, something very important.

A slight act of vanity or impatience is not serious matter, but murder is. Things seriously evil are known to be such from Sacred Scripture, Tradition, the teachings of the Church, or from their nature.

Second, the sinner must be mindful of the serious wrong. - He must have full knowledge and reflection or attention, and know that what he does is grievous.

The person must know the malice and evil of what he is doing. A man who steals a precious diamond ring in the belief that it is glass has not full knowledge. A man who throws a lighted match thoughtlessly aside may throw it into a gasoline tank and cause an explosion, but he has not full attention. "For I formerly was a blasphemer, a persecutor and a bitter adversary; but I obtained the mercy of God because I acted ignorantly, in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13).

Third, the sinner must fully consent to it. -He must do it of his own free will, saying deliberately, "I will do this."

When one realizing what he is doing, still freely does it, he gives the matter deliberate consent. Therefore infants and idiots cannot commit mortal sin; they cannot fully realize what they do.

Is mortal sin a great evil? --Mortal sin is a great evil, the greatest evil in the world, a greater evil than disease, poverty, or war, because it separates us from God.

"But they that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul" (Job. 12:10).

1. It is a rebellion against and contempt of God, the blackest ingratitude towards Him.

Our heavenly Father gave us everything we have, and in return we offend Him. We desecrate His temple. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). By mortal sin a vile and insignificant creature offends and insults the infinite Creator.

2. It is crucifying Christ again, "since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and make him a mockery" (Heb. 6:6).

We can never fully realize the malice of mortal sin. We can get a small idea of it by remembering that God sent His own beloved Son to suffer untold agonies, to save us from its consequences.

3. Mortal sin must be a most terrible thing indeed to make a just and merciful God create hell for the everlasting punishment of the rebellious angels and of sinners who die with even only one mortal sin.

Even considering only its temporal penalties mortal sin is great folly. Upon it follows moral disquiet; the sinner loses the serenity and cheerfulness of the just soul. "The wicked are like the raging sea, that cannot rest" (Is. 57:20). Sickness and want are often consequences of sin, as well as loss of a good reputation.

## Venial Sin

We are prone to look upon venial sin as of no consequence, and to be careless about guarding against it, forgetting that it is second only in evil consequences to mortal sin. In Holy Scripture we see from many examples how God regards venial sin; even in this life He has punished it most severely. For only a slight doubt about God's mercy, because of the wickedness of his people, Moses was punished: he was not permitted to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.

What is venial sin? --Venial sin is a less serious offense against the law of God, which does not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and which can be pardoned even without sacramental confession.

1. A sin can be venial in two ways:

a. When the evil done is not seriously wrong. If we sin against God in matters of slight importance, we commit venial sin.

Grumbling when told by Your mother to open the window is not gravely wrong; it is a venial sin.

b. When the evil done is seriously wrong, but the sinner sincerely believes it is only slightly wrong, or does it on the spur of the moment, without sufficient reflection, or without full consent of the will.

Stealing an expensive diamond ring is seriously wrong, but if the sinner took it in the belief that it was only a cheap imitation, the sin had not full consent, and is venial. If one eats meat on a day of abstinence, thinking it only a slight sin to do so; or if one in a sudden outburst of anger insults a companion seriously, he commits a venial sin for lack of sufficient reflection and consent.

2. Examples of venial sin are impatience, slight faultfinding, lies that harm nobody.

The word "venial" comes from the Latin *venialis*, meaning easily pardonable. Even the most just of mortals falls into venial sin again and again. God permits this to keep us humble. The most imperfect of mortals attains a very high degree of perfection as soon as he can avoid all deliberate venial sin: as soon as he does not commit any sin deliberately, with full advertence and consent.

3. If a person is in the state of grace, venial sins are forgiven in many ways without necessity of confession.

Provided one has sorrow and a sincere resolution not to commit the sins again, they are forgiven not only by Confession, but also by Holy Communion, by acts of contrition, prayer, good works, etc.

4. A distinction exists between venial sins and imperfections. Imperfections are faults that arise from ignorance or weakness, not from a bad will.

For instance involuntary distractions in prayer, "white lies" told while telling a story or in exaggerations or jokes, bad manners that hurt no one much, are imperfections. We should, however, try to avoid all imperfections, for they are not praiseworthy, are often a cause of irritation to others, and make us accustomed to doing what is not correct.

How does venial sin harm us? --Venial sin harms us by making us less fervent in the service of God, by weakening our power to resist mortal sin, and by making us deserving of God's punishments in this life or in purgatory.



1. Although venial sin is not a grievous offense against God, it is nevertheless a great moral evil, next alone to mortal sin.

It is like a drop of ink in a glassful of clear water; the ink, however little, takes away the clearness.

2. If often committed, venial sin weakens the will, lessens our power to resist evil, and makes it easier for us to fall into mortal sin.

"He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little" (Ecclus. 19:1). "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in a very little thing is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). A great fire is started by a tiny breeze. Venial sin, by weakening the will, makes us indisposed for good, and lukewarm in God's service.

3. Venial sin deprives us of many actual graces we need for resisting temptation.

When a mirror is dusty, it cannot reflect the image clearly; similarly the mirror of the soul, when dusty with venial sin, cannot reflect the light of grace and justice. God will not bestow his blessings and graces on one whose soul is disfigured by venial sin, as a distinguished personage is not expected to embrace a man who is disfigured by a skin disease.

4. Venial sin deprives us of heaven for a time.

If we die with venial sins on our souls, or without fully satisfying for them, we have to expiate for them in purgatory.

5. A great desire not to offend God in the least is the best proof of love and loyalty towards our heavenly Father.

Holy Scripture shows many instances of God's hatred for venial sin, which He punishes severely even on earth. For her curiosity, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt. "But I tell you, that of every idle word men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36).

How can we keep from committing sin? --We can keep from committing sin by praying and by receiving the sacraments; by remembering that God is always with us; by recalling that our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost; by keeping occupied with work or play; by promptly resisting the sources of sin within us; by avoiding the near occasions of sin.

1. Prayer and the sacraments protect us from sin. They are like a strong fortress against which the enemy strikes in vain, and within which the soul remains safe in the grace of God.

When the Apostles were in danger on the lake of Genessareth, they had recourse to prayer. We are ever in danger from sin while we live; let us build up around us a rampart of prayer. God will protect us, as He protected the Apostles; He will answer our prayer. The soul nourished by the sacraments is strong, and will not easily succumb to sin; as a healthy body does not easily succumb to disease.

2. Even good people fall into sins, frequently because they forget God's presence. Let us remember that the eye of God is always upon us, every single moment. Then, if we love Him, we would never sin, never insult His presence by sin.

If we had a distinguished personage before us, would we commit indecent acts? Would we steal, or use bad language? But is not God the most distinguished of all persons, and is He not always looking on us?

3. When we are in the state of grace, our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

God dwells in it as Jesus Christ lives in the tabernacle. If we remember this always, we shall be greatly helped in avoiding sin.

4. The most practical way of avoiding sin is to keep occupied with work or play. Man must do something; if he does not do something good, he will do something evil.

A busy instrument cannot be used in doing mischief. Robbers will hesitate to enter a house where the occupants are busy. If we are occupied in doing good, we have no time to sit idly and wag our tongues in gossip.

## Occasions and Sources of Sin

Vice is easily formed, but requires great struggle to overcome it. The longer a man indulges in vice, the harder is the struggle. He becomes its slave. He is completely carried away by his passions. Only the great grace of God, coupled with a resolute will, can eradicate vice, once it is strongly rooted in a man's nature. This is one reason why we must be most careful to avoid sin, in order not to become victims of vice. If we are so unfortunate as to fall into sin, we must at once repent and resolve to avoid it in the future.

What are the near occasions of sin? --The near occasions of sin are all persons, places, or things that may easily lead us into sin.

Most common occasions are:

1. Bad companions. One who provokes or leads us into sin is not our friend. We must stop going with that companion.

One rotten apple in a basket of good apples quickly rots the rest. The same is true of human beings. Sin is a contagious disease. If we do not wish to be infected, we must go far away from it.

2. Dance halls. Not every dance is sinful. But many dances are occasions of sin; and public dances without the presence of respectable adults are extremely dangerous. A safe rule to follow is never to go to any place where you would be ashamed to take your virtuous mother or sister.

In many dances, the women tend to dress with extravagance and immodesty, just to "follow the fashion". Sometimes, too, dances are an occasion for the taking of liberties, due to late hours, and the spirit of unrestrained pleasure.

3. Bars and liquor saloons. These are very proximate occasions of sin, leading to intemperance, and worse evils.

Those who frequent saloons are likely to be not only habitual drunkards, but constant gamblers, who neglect their homes and duties, become involved in disputes, and finally end badly even in the temporal sense.

4. Obscene literature. Bad newspapers and magazines are no less dangerous because their wickedness is often not apparent, many hiding their evil under the guise of cleverness, science, art, etc.

Bad periodicals gradually undermine faith and make one insensitive to evil. It is the duty of every Catholic to subscribe to a Catholic periodical, and never to favor a wicked press.

5. Bad books. Many novels are harmless; some are very helpful, but many are positively wicked. We must be very careful in the selection of the books we read. There are national book clubs under Catholic auspices. Among them may be mentioned the Catholic Book Club, and the Pro Parvulis Book Club, headquarters of both of which are in New York City.

These book clubs send members lists of books of merit according to literary standards, and not offensive to Catholic morals. They publish reviews of current fiction most useful for the general reader. We must remember that poisonous food will only kill the body, but poisonous reading kills the soul.

6. Indecent pictures and shows. Today many moving pictures and theatrical shows are not decent. We must be careful to choose only the good, those approved by the National Legion of Decency. This Legion, working under the hierarchy, each week issues a list giving the moral evaluation of current films; it reviews and classifies. It asks every Catholic to take a pledge not to patronize lewd pictures.

This pledge is nothing extraordinary for any decent person, Catholic or non-Catholic; it merely puts down clearly something that any upright person is obliged in conscience to do.

The Legion of Decency was formed in order to unite the laity with the hierarchy in a persistent drive to prevent the showing of lewd pictures. If every decent person kept away from such obscene shows, the producers would surely make better pictures. Supply is according to the demand; we get what we ask for.

How should we act towards occasions of sin? --We should never seek, and always try to avoid, occasions of sin.

1. It is wrong voluntarily to seek the occasions of sin.

"He that loveth the danger shall perish in it" (Ecclus. 3:27). However, those who by their calling or other necessity are continually exposed to such dangerous occasions, as priests, officials, doctors, and others, must put their trust in God, Who will give them grace and protect them.

2. We must avoid occasions of sin as soon as we perceive them.

If one goes to the theatre and sees that the play is an indecent play, he must stand up and leave at once. Otherwise he commits a sin. He will fall into further sin, and commit besides the sin of not avoiding the occasion.

What are the chief sources of actual sin? --The chief sources of actual sin are: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth, and these are commonly called capital sins.

They are called capital, from the Latin caput (which means head), because they are the heads or sources of all sins. Thus they originate sins of luxury, gossip, excessive ambition, etc.

1. They are called capital sins, not because they are the greatest sins in themselves, but because they are the chief reasons why men commit sin. They are the origin of every sin, all other sins arising from them as from their fountainhead.

These sins are termed deadly, because they are either mortal of their own nature, or may easily become mortal. They may be mortal or venial according as the matter is serious or less serious.

2. These sins are called vices, because they produce permanent disorders in the soul. They are the seven fatal diseases of the soul, which end in death.

He who will be a friend of God must divest himself of these vices. Before we can plant the beautiful garden of virtues, we must root up the thorns and weeds growing out of these deadly sins.

Does God punish sin? --Yes, God punishes sin, partly in this life, but chiefly after death.

1. In this life sinners suffer from remorse of conscience, fear, and unhappiness. Their sin often brings upon them disease or death, the hatred and scorn of their fellow-men, and other temporal punishments. Even on earth, "the wages of sin is death".

Thus a robber or murderer is ever afraid his crime will be detected. If it is discovered, he is sent to prison or to the electric chair.

2. The punishment of the sinner is fully meted out to him only after death. Then the unrepentant sinner is punished in hell. Justice is not always done in this world, where the wicked often prosper and the just are made to suffer.

On earth, God rewards the sinner for whatever good he may do. It is only in the next life that the evil he does is given its full and just punishment.

Pride, Covetousness, Lust

Pride makes one admire himself, in the belief that his excellence, imagined or real, is the result of his own worth. Our Lord condemned pride in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (1). Jesus said that the humble and repentant publican was justified in the eyes of God, while the proud Pharisee went home unjustified. Covetousness is one of the ugliest of sins. It was a sin of Judas. He loved money so much that he even betrayed Our Lord for thirty pieces of silver(2).

What is pride? --Pride is an inordinate love of one's own excellence, an excessive self-esteem.

Our Lord is the best example of meekness and patience. Did He use His almighty power to punish those who did Him evil? For hours He hung meekly on the cross, until He died. Every day God is patient with sinners, giving them time to change their ways. God, the Supreme One, is not proud.

1. The proud man overestimates himself, and believes himself the source of his own excellence. The virtue of humility, which disposes us to acknowledge our limitations, is opposed to pride.

Some are proud of their appearance; others of their family, talents, position, money, and the virtues they imagine, they possess. Even if we do have excellent abilities or possessions, we should not be proud of them, remembering that they all come from God. Instead, we should be humbly thankful, and see in what way we can make a return to God for such gifts. "Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 16:5).

2. Pride may be called the mother of all vices, for most sins can be traced to it. From pride arise ambition, vanity, presumption, disobedience, hypocrisy, obstinacy in sin.

"For pride is the beginning of all sin: he that holdeth it shall be filled with maledictions and it shall ruin him in the end" (Ecclus. 10:15). "Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words, for from it all perdition took its beginning" (Tob. 4:14). Pride was the sin of our First Parents, who wanted to be as great as God. It was the sin of King Pharaoh; he was so proud that in spite of the miracles Moses worked, he refused to be convinced. For this God "hardened his heart" (Exod. 9:12); that is, God permitted him to close the window of his soul against the grace of the Holy Ghost, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected thee" (1 Kings 15:26).

3. The proud man tries to attract notice and praise, strives after honors, distinctions, and other worldly favors.

He is over-confident in himself, and despises the assistance of God. Pride was the sin of Lucifer. The proud man pretends to be greater than he is, and tries by all manner of means to attract the praise of others, even using false humility to do so.

4. God hates pride, and punishes it severely, He often punishes secret pride by withdrawing His assistance from the proud man. And deprived of God's aid, the proud man often falls into grievous sins leading to his humiliation.

"The beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God" (Ecclus. 10:14). "God resists the proud" (1 Pet. 5:5). "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled" (Luke 14:11). Thus the proud King Herod was eaten up by worms and died. Thus, the proud Roman Empire fell and

became nothing. Our Lord pointed out the pride in the heart of the Pharisee, and praised the humble publican.

5. If we, however, despise sin as beneath us, that is not pride, but a virtuous self respect.

A decent regard for cleanliness and neatness is not vanity. The ambition to exceed in good things, as in studies, in order to make the best use of God's gifts, is to be commended. God wishes us to be His excellent children. (See Chapter 44, on Humility, Liberality, Chastity)

What is covetousness? --Covetousness is the excessive love for, and seeking after, wealth and other worldly possessions.

1. Covetousness is also called avarice. A covetous person strives for more riches than he requires, and is never content, however much he already possesses.

He greedily clings to what he has, and is stingy and hates to give anything away. For money Judas betrayed the Lord. "There is not a more wicked thing than to love money; for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale" (Ecclus. 10:10). "Take heed and guard yourselves from all covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15).

We meet with covetous persons among both rich and poor. Often among the rich there is money without avarice, and among the poor, avarice without money.

2. From covetousness arise hard-heartedness towards the poor, lying, cheating, usury, defrauding laborers of wages, and other sins.

"Those who seek to become rich fall into temptation and a snare . . . For covetousness is the root of all evils" (1 Tim. 6:9-10). It destroys faith, for the avaricious are so absorbed in money-getting that they have no time for their spiritual welfare.

3. To provide for one's future and that of one's family is praiseworthy. To avoid waste and extravagance is a virtue.

To accumulate even considerable wealth, by proper means, is not wrong. The rich, however, must remember their obligation to use their wealth for the glory of God, not for their own pride.



4. Liberality, which disposes us rightly to use worldly goods, is opposed to covetousness. (See Chapter 44, on Humility, Liberality, Chastity)

The avaricious man is very foolish. He works hard all his life and becomes hated by men: he earns besides eternal damnation after death and all for nothing. When he dies all he has are a few feet of earth for his grave; his money is left to heirs who most probably ridicule his miserliness or waste the money to gain which he lost his soul. "For when he shall die, he shall take nothing away; nor shall his glory descend with him" (Ps. 48:18).

What is lust? --Lust is the inordinate seeking of the pleasures of the flesh.

1. Lust defiles a man as no other sin does. It degrades man to the level of the beast. Pride is the sin committed by Lucifer, avarice by Judas, and lust by the brute.

Of all vices, lust is most severely punished on earth. It leads to loss of health and reason. It was the cause of the Deluge. It was the cause for the destruction with fire and brimstone of Sodom and Gomorrha. "But immorality and every uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becomes saints" (Ephes. 5:3).

2. Those tempted to lust should remember that man was made to the image and likeness of God. Will they so rashly destroy that image, to make themselves like to beasts? In fact, beasts are better than lustful men, for beasts act in that manner from instinct; they have no soul like God.

Impurity weakens the will and darkens the understanding. For this reason amendment is very difficult, and the sinner falls into many other sins. So Solomon, who yielded to lust, finally lost all his wisdom and turned to worship false gods.

3. From lust spring jealousy, hatred, murder, loss of faith, despair, instability, worldliness, selfishness, and other sins.

The consequences of lust are seen in the case of Henry VIII. It was the cause of his apostasy, and his apostasy dragged an entire nation into similar apostasy. "For know this and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous one (for that is idolatry) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Ephes. 5:5) (See Chapter 44, on Humility, Liberality, Chastity)

4. Sodomy, or sins against purity by persons of the same sex, is a form of lust.

#### Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth

Our Lord showed how hateful gluttony is in the parable of the rich man, Dives, and the poor Lazarus (1). Dives was so greedy that he would not even give scraps to Lazarus, who sat at his gate. But when Dives died, he went to hell, while Lazarus went to heaven. The brothers of Joseph (2), were so envious of him that they sold him to some merchants going to Egypt. God rebuked their sin by blessing Joseph in Egypt, and causing him to be in a position to help his envious brothers later.

What is anger? --Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure, combined with a desire to inflict punishment on the offender.

1. An angry man loses his reason. In anger a man will do what he afterwards regrets. From anger arise hatred, revenge, (quarreling, blasphemy, contumely, and murder. The virtues of patience and meekness are opposed to anger. (See Chapter 45 on Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love)

Anger, or wrath, is a temporary madness. A man with this vice flies into a rage at every little thing. He always puts the blame of his anger on others, and even when he is alone he gets angry. "The wrath of man does not work the justice of God" (Jas. 1:20).

Wilful murder, one of the "sins that cry to heaven for vengeance," arises from anger.

When the first willful murder took place, and Cain killed his brother Abel, God said to Cain, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth" (Gen. 4:10).

2. He who indulges in anger injures his health, becomes hated, incurs damnation.

Many men have had a stroke of paralysis brought on by anger; some have even died. If anger is so hurtful to the body, how much more to the soul!

3. When we feel ourselves becoming angry, we should never speak or act, but try to calm ourselves by prayer.

St. Francis de Sales said: "I have made an agreement with my tongue never to utter a word while my heart is excited." "Let every man be slow to speak and slow to wrath" (Jas. 1:19).

4. If we should be so unhappy as to have offended anyone by our anger, we should hasten to apologize.

"Do not let the sun go down upon your anger" (Ephes. 4:26)

5. A just anger against sin and injustice is praiseworthy. We may hate the sin, but not the sinner.

Christ had this just wrath when He drove the sellers from the Temple. Holy Scripture says, "Be angry and do not sin" (Ephes. 4:26).

What is gluttony? --Gluttony is an excessive desire for or indulgence in food or drink.

1. Gluttony is greediness, intemperance in eating and drinking. Of the gluttonous, St. Paul said that "their god is the belly" (Phil 3:19). We should not be either too greedy or too dainty about the nourishment we take. The virtue opposed to gluttony is temperance.

We should not eat more than we need to support life. "We do not live to eat, but eat to live." We must not take what is injurious to health, even if its taste is pleasing. We must have regular hours for our meals. We should not be too particular about food, eat what is set before us, and not get angry when a dish is not very appetizing. The purpose of food is to give strength for the work we do while still on earth preparing for our final end.

2. Gluttony produces dullness of mind, laziness, and sensuality. The vice of drunkenness is a terrible evil, leading to worse sins. A man when drunk loses his reason, and often makes a

fool of himself. If reason is the chief difference between man and the beast, why should one extinguish it by drunkenness?

"The sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:14). "He who sows in his flesh, from the flesh also he will reap corruption" (Gal. 6:8). It is well for young people to abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking till after they are twenty years of age. If they do this, the likelihood is that they will not contract vice. (See Chapter 45 on Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love)

Note: Smoking is against the 5th commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." (RMO) Saint Maximilian Kolbe is the patron Saint of SUBSTANCE ABUSE which includes alcohol, tobacco, heroin, marijuana, crack, cocaine, and any other substances that are abused.

What is envy? --Envy is a bitter feeling at the excellence or good fortune of those who are better or happier, with a desire to rob them of what they have.

1. Envy consists in discontent or anger at the success of another, as though it were evil to oneself. It also consists in rejoicing over another's misfortune, as if it were a good to oneself.

Envy is against the commandment of God to love our neighbor. It is the mark of the petty mind and the hard heart. The devil envied Adam and Eve in Paradise; Cain envied Abel, whose offering was pleasing to God. Some are, so envious that they even envy the holiness of others, but without any desire or attempt at imitation. This was the case with the Pharisees, and their envy led them to plot the death of Jesus Christ.

2. Envy leads to calumny, gossip, detraction, hatred, scandal, and other sins. An envious man looks on everything with malice; as a result his envy does not even make himself happy, but destroys his peace of heart.

The sons of Jacob were envious of their brother Joseph because he was the favorite son. Their envy led them to sell him into Egypt. Often the envy in a man's heart causes him to be so soured on the world that he sells himself for nothing to the devil.

3. A form of envy, one of the greatest sins, is envy at another's spiritual good. This is a most diabolical sin; it shows that the sinner has closed his heart against the charity of God, and instead houses God's enemy, Satan. The virtue opposed to envy is charity, or brotherly love. (See Chapter 45 on Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love)

What is sloth? --Sloth is the neglect of one's duties, spiritual or temporal, through laziness.

1. The rule of the universe is activity; life and movement may be found in all nature. The slothful man is the exception; and he by his laziness goes against nature.

"Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom" (Prov. 6:6). The slothful keep putting off doing anything till tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, which often never comes.

2. Many complain of hard luck, but often misfortunes come from laziness. The virtues of diligence and zeal are opposed to sloth.

Even on earth, most rewards go only to the industrious and energetic.

3. Spiritual sloth is called lukewarmness. It is also called tepidity.

The lukewarm person would like to have the rewards given by God, but will not move a finger to serve Him. As soon as it is necessary to exert himself, he shrinks from the effort. Great Sinners have been known to become great saints, but the lukewarm, never. Holy Scripture says: "I would that thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth" (Apoc. 3:15,16).

4. Sloth leads to many sins; idleness begets vice. The lazy neglect good works.

If man has no useful occupation, his natural activity turns to all kinds of mischief. A busy person avoids many temptations. (See Chapter 45 on Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love)

The Promise of the Redeemer

Second Article of the Apostles' Creed

Immediately after the Fall, God promised a Redeemer to Adam. He forgave man, although He had not forgiven the rebel angels. He was more merciful to man than to the angels. In making the promise, God spoke of the Blessed Virgin, who was to be the Saviour's Mother.

Did God abandon man after Adam fell into sin? --God did not abandon man after Adam fell into sin, but promised to send into the world a Saviour to free man from his sins and to reopen to him the gates of heaven.

God could have abandoned man as a consequence of Adam's sin; then the human race would have suffered eternal separation from Him.

1. The promise was first made to Adam before God sent him out of Paradise. God said to the serpent who had tempted Eve: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head" (Gen. 3:15)

In this passage, the woman spoken of is the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her seed is Our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Redeemer promised by God. God said that there would be complete enmity between Our Lord with His Mother on one side, and the devil with his followers on the other.

2. This promise was renewed several times to the Patriarchs of the Old Testament: to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. Because Abraham remained true to the worship of God in the midst of idolatry, God led him to Canaan. As a reward for his obedience, God promised, "I will make of thee a great nation ... and in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2,3). This promise was repeated twice.

The same promise "in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed" was repeated to Abraham's son Isaac, and to Isaac's son Jacob. Finally, hundreds of years later, God commanded the prophet Nathan to repeat to King David the very same promise, "He shall build a house to My name, and I will establish his kingdom forever" (2 Kings 7:13)

3. Later, God sent the Prophets. Through them He foretold many things about the Redeemer: about His birth, His Person, His sufferings. His death, and His final glory.

God enlightened the Prophets so that they could speak in His name to the Jews or Israelites' the descendants of Abraham. There were about seventy prophets, the last being Malachias, who lived some 450 years before Christ.

4. God chose the Jews as the people among whom the promised Saviour would live; for this reason we call the Jews the "chosen people". God prepared them for the coming of the Saviour: by heavy trials, by severe laws, by miracles, by prophecies.

The selection of the Jews did not mean rejection by God of the other nations. Every renewal of God's promise recalled blessings in which all were to share. Even among other nations there were just men, In Greece, Socrates spoke against the worship of idols. Holy Job lived in Arabia. The Magi were of the East. Vergil the poet prayed the virgin-born Son to come and reign over His people.

Why did God wait thousands of years before sending the Redeemer? --God wished men to realize the enormity of sin.

1. God wished men to see how low they could sink without His help. He wanted the world to prepare for the Redeemer.

Men became so wicked that God destroyed all in the Deluge, except Noe and his family. God permitted men to sink into the deepest misery, so that they might be roused to a longing for the promised Saviour. When the Saviour at last came, all nations were sunk in idolatry and wickedness except the Jews. Even among the Jews there was continuous dissension and sin.

2. From the time of Adam the true religion was preserved till the advent of the promised Saviour by the patriarchs, prophets and other holy men inspired by God to teach and lead his Chosen People.

In spite of the imperfection of the old religion, there was always only one true religion. It was but a shadow of the perfection that was to come, but was the true religion before Christ: the Jewish Faith.

Who is the Saviour of all men? --The Saviour of all men is Jesus Christ.

Men would know the Saviour by certain signs which God revealed through the Prophets.

1. Of His advent the Prophets spoke:

a. The Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, when the Jews were no longer free.

"And Thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity" (Mich. 5:2). "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations" (Gen. 49:10)

b. The Messiah was to be born of a virgin of the House of David.

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Is. 7:14)

c. The Messiah would be preceded by a precursor who would preach in the desert.

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight in the desert the paths of our God" (Is 40:3).

d. A new star was to announce the birth of the Messiah; He would be adored by kings from distant lands bringing Him gifts.

"A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a scepter shall spring up from Israel" (Numb. 24:17). "The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents: the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts" (Ps. 71:10)

e. Many children would be put to death at the time of His birth.

"A voice was heard on high of lamentation, or mourning, and weeping, of Rachel (representing the Jews) weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not" (Jer. 31:15).



2. Of the person of the Messiah the Prophets spoke: He was to be the Son of God. He would work great miracles, and teach the people. He would be King of a new kingdom, which was not to be destroyed, and was to include all nations.

"The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (Ps. 2:7). "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free" (Is. 35:5-6). "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed ... and it shall consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).

3. Of His sufferings the Prophets spoke:

He was to enter Jerusalem riding on an ass. He would be betrayed by one who ate at the same table with Him. He would be abandoned, mocked, beaten, spat upon, scourged, crowned with thorns, and given gall and vinegar to drink. Lots would be cast for His garments. His hands and feet would be pierced with nails. He would die between two evildoers.

4. All the prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He is the Redeemer, the Saviour that God in His mercy had promised.

The angels announced Him as the Redeemer to the shepherds when He was born, and to St. Joseph in a vision. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son" (John 3:16)

## The God-Man

Throughout the centuries God sent prophets to predict different events and facts concerning the promised Saviour. Among the most important prophets were Jeremias, Isaias, Daniel, and Ezechiel. Daniel predicted the exact time of the birth of the Redeemer. He said His kingdom would have no end, and would embrace all kingdoms. Isaias prophesied that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, would be both God and Man, and would die patiently and willingly like a lamb for our sins.

What is the chief teaching of the Catholic Church about Jesus Christ? --The chief teaching of the Catholic Church about Jesus Christ is that He is God made man.

1. Christ Himself said that He is God. The Jews understood His claim literally, and He was condemned to death for blasphemy, for making Himself the Son of God.

Christ said: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18). "And the high priest said to him, 'I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, 'Thou hast said it'" (Matt. 26:63). "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

2. Christ proved His claims by wonderful miracles, by prophecies, by His knowledge of all things, and by the holiness of His life.

These miracles Christ worked in His own name, not as His followers did, who worked in the name of God. He simply said: "I will, be thou made clean" (Matt. 8:3)

Christ Himself appealed to His miracles as a testimony of the truth of His doctrines and divinity, saying: "If you are not willing to believe me, believe the works" (John 10:38) . Christ foretold future events. Among other things, He predicted His passion, death, and resurrection, the treason of Judas and the perpetuity of His Church.

3. The Apostles, the followers of Christ Himself, plainly taught that Christ is God, and died in testimony of their faith.

St. John says: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." "And the Word was made Flesh." St. Paul writes: "In him (Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). St. Thomas openly professed the divinity of Christ when he said: "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). St. Peter said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

4. The Church teaches that Jesus Christ is God. Its teachings have spread throughout all nations, in spite of untold obstacles.

The Church has grown by the simplest of means, its spread ever accompanied by wonderful miracles, by which God designs to show forth the truth of the Church. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ is the foundation of the Christian religion.

5. Even the enemies of the Catholic Church have admitted their belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Napoleon, about to die, said: "I know men, but Jesus Christ was more than man. My men deserted me in the field when I was there leading them. Christ's army has been faithful for centuries. A Leader who has an army which functions though He is dead is not man."

Why is Jesus Christ God? --Jesus Christ is God because He is the only Son of God, having the same divine nature as His Father.

"And they all said, 'Art thou, then, the Son of God?' He answered, 'You yourselves say that I am' ' And they said, 'What further need have we of witness? For we have heard it ourselves from his own mouth'" (Luke 22:70-71)

1. Man after the Fall was unable to regain of himself his former holiness. He became like a sick man who could not arise from bed. He needed Someone to raise him up. Since the sin he had committed had been an offense against an Infinite God, the atonement needed had to be by an Infinite One, the Son of God Himself.

"God so loved the world that he gave his onlybegotten Son" (John 3:16). "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

2. Christ is called the "Word". Just as the thought in our minds finds expression in a word, so the Son of God dwelling in the bosom of His Father was shown to the world when the Word became man.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1: 1,14).

Why is Jesus Christ man? --Jesus Christ is man, because He is the Son of the Blessed Virgin, and has a body and soul like ours.

1. The birth of Jesus Christ is a fact of history. He was born of Mary, who was espoused to a carpenter named Joseph, who lived in Nazareth of Galilee.

The archangel Gabriel said to Mary, "The Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God."

2. Jesus Christ is true man, because He has a body and soul like ours. He derived His human nature from His mother.

History tells us of Jesus Christ, Who preached in and about Jerusalem over nineteen hundred years ago. Many records tell of His appearance, of His words, of His actions, of His teachings. Nobody doubted that Jesus Christ was a Man, for He could be seen and touched like other men. He lived and died Just as men of all times live and die.

How can we prove that the religion God has revealed through Christ is worthy of belief? --We can prove that the religion God has revealed through Christ is worthy of belief, because:

1. Jesus Christ, announcing Himself as the true Son of God, whose coming was foretold by the prophets, preached doctrines which He said all must believe.

If Christ is God, then the religion He established is true, and the Church He founded is the true Church. We can believe everything He says, even without understanding it, because God cannot err.

If Jesus Christ were not God, then Christianity would be a farce, and the sooner it were done away with the better. If Christ were not God, then He were an impostor who, by claiming divinity, had led billions into error for almost 2,000 years.

2. Christ worked wonderful miracles, which showed that the God of truth approved His teachings.

Christ worked so many miracles publicly that all flocked to Him to be cured. "But when John had heard in prison of the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples to say to him, 'Art thou he who is to come, or shall we look for another?' And Jesus answering said to them, 'Go and report to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise, the poor have the gospel preached to them'" (Matt. 11:2-5)

- a. Christ performed miracles on inanimate objects, as when He changed water to wine, calmed the storm, multiplied loaves.
- b. He healed in an instant the sick, the blind, the lame. He expelled devils.
- c. He raised the dead to life; as the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Naim and Lazarus. Even His enemies acknowledged His miracles. The Pharisees planned to kill Lazarus, because the Jews believed in Jesus as a result of the miracle.
- d. He worked miracles on His own Person, as in the Transfiguration, Resurrection, and Ascension.

## Our Lord Jesus Christ

Our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true Man. As God, He is equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. He is infinite, almighty, eternal. As man He has a body and soul like ours. Jesus Christ has two natures which cannot be separated, but which are distinct: the human, and the divine. But He is only one Person-the Divine Person. Jesus Christ is not a human Person.

Is Jesus Christ more than one Person? --No, Jesus Christ is only one Person; and that Person is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Throughout the Gospels we can read about Jesus Christ as only one Person,-eating, sleeping, talking, and dying, as only one Person.

1. A "person" is a being that is intelligent and free, and responsible for his actions. We attribute to him whatever good or evil he does in the use of his human powers, because he owns or controls those powers.

I am a human person, and everything I do is done by a human person. But Christ is a Divine Person, since He is God. Whatever Jesus Christ did while He was on earth was of infinite dignity, since it was the work of a Divine Person.

2. Jesus Christ is Our Lord, the Son of God the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God and true Man. We call Him "Our Lord" because as God He is Lord and Master of all, and as our Saviour He redeemed us with His Blood.

Christ is our Creator, Redeemer, Lawgiver. Teacher, and judge. All these we mean when we say Our Lord. St. Paul says: "He is the Blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords ... to whom be honor and everlasting dominion. Amen" (1 Tim. 6: 15,16).

3. There is only one Person, the Divine Person, in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not a human person. Everything in Him even as Man is divine and worthy of adoration.

When we adore the Sacred Heart, or the Precious Blood, we do not adore mere flesh, but the flesh united to the divinity. In Christ the human and the divine are inseparable.

How many natures has Jesus Christ? --Jesus Christ has two natures: the nature of God and the nature of man.

1. A "nature" is a substance that is complete in itself as a source of activity. It differs from "person" in that while "person" determines what an individual is, "nature" determines what an individual can do.

Saint Thomas Aquinas' teachings on "nature" ([Please Click Here](#))

Saint Thomas Aquinas' teachings on "person" ([Please Click Here](#))

In Jesus Christ Our Lord there are two natures: His divine and His human nature. Therefore He could and did act as God; He could and did act as man, while all the time He was God the Son.

2. Because of His Divine nature, Christ is truly God; because of His human nature, He is truly man. In His Divine nature He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Son, the Eternal Word. He took His human nature from His Mother.

It was to the Blessed Virgin that the Archangel Gabriel announced: "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32).

Therefore Jesus Christ is both God and man; He has both Divine and human powers; He has knowledge, can will and act as God and as man. For example, with His human nature Jesus worked, ate, spoke, felt pain. But it was His divine nature that enabled Him to become transfigured, walk on the waters, raise the dead.

3. These two natures were united in a Divine Person Jesus Christ, the God-Man. They were intimately united, but they remained distinct. Neither was absorbed by the other. When iron and gold are welded into one solid mass, they continue to retain all their individual properties distinct from each other. The union of the divine and human natures in Christ is called the hypostatic union.

Christ is true God and true man; this is why we call Him God-Man. Beings obtain their nature from their origin; for this reason a child has a human nature, from its human parents. Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, has His origin from God the Father, and hence He has a divine nature; moreover, as man He was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and thus His human nature. This is why Christ often referred to Himself indiscriminately as "Son of God" or "Son of Man".

4. As a consequence of these two natures, Christ had also two wills.

We can see this very clearly in His prayer in the Garden of Olives before His Passion. He said: "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." He was referring to His human will, for His divine will was surely the same as His Father's.

What does the name Jesus mean? --The name Jesus means Saviour or Redeemer.

1. Our Lord is called Jesus because He came to save men from sin, and to open the doors of heaven to them.

Before the birth of Our Lord, an angel appeared to St. Joseph and said: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus" (Matt. 1:21). At the Annunciation the angel Gabriel had spoken the same words to Mary.

"After eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus" (Luke 2:21).

2. We should say the name of Our Lord with great reverence. We should bow our head every time we utter it.

"In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. 2:10). The symbol IHS is composed of the first three letters of the name Jesus in Greek.

What does the name Christ mean? --The name Christ means "The Anointed One".

1. "Christ" is a Greek word, with the same meaning as "Messias". In the Old Law it was the custom to anoint with oil prophets, high priests, and kings.

Our Lord is the greatest of the Prophets. He is the High Priest Who offers Himself for all mankind. He is the King of angels and men. Therefore it is fitting that we should call Him Christ. He truly is the Anointed One.

2. We are called Christians because we are disciples of Christ. We believe in His teachings, and obey His commandments. The followers of Christ were first called Christians at Antioch.

NOTE: We are also called Christians because we are members of the Holy Roman Catholic Church in the same way that being a member of the Jones family is indispensable to being a "Jones." (RMO)

"Can a Protestant be a Christian?" (Part 1)([Please Click Here](#))

"Can a Protestant be a Christian?" (Part 2)([Please Click Here](#))

Those who deny the doctrines of Christ, especially His divinity, are not Christians. Unfortunately, many today are Christians only in name.

3. Jesus Christ was announced to the world through many types. By "types" we mean persons or actions which strongly suggested or foreshadowed Christ. "Types" are to the reality what a photograph is to the actual person; but for lack of the reality, types are a good substitute, to give an idea of the substance foreshadowed.



Some of the types of Jesus Christ were: the gentle and just Abel, who was murdered by his brother; Noe, who alone persevered and saved the human race from extinction by his justice; Isaac, who willingly carried the wood on which he was to have been sacrificed; Joseph, who was sold for a few pieces of silver, but later saved his brethren from death; Moses, who freed the Jews from slavery and led them to the Promised Land; David, who was born poor, did great deeds for his people, and became King.

## The Incarnation

### Third Article of the Apostles' Creed

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And when the angel had come to her, he said, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women.' When she had seen him she was troubled at his word, and kept pondering what manner of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus'" (Luke 1:26-31).

What is meant by the Incarnation? --By the Incarnation is meant that the Son of God, retaining His Divine nature, took to Himself a human nature, that is, a body and soul like ours.

1. The Incarnation is the greatest act of humility possible. By it the Son of God, eternal, almighty, infinite, voluntarily took upon Himself human nature with its weaknesses. He circumscribed Himself with a human body that would feel sickness and pain, and with a human soul that would cause Him agony.

Incarnation means "becoming flesh". Thus the Son of God took a human body and soul and united it to His divine Person. Without ceasing to be God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man at the same time. The divine nature of Christ is from all eternity. Only His human nature began at the Incarnation.

2. By virtue of the Incarnation Jesus Christ came to earth. This is a mystery which we can never fully understand, but must be content to honor and adore.

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Christ as man was like us in all things except sin. He could not sin, because He is God. But in all other things He was like us: he had a human body, a human soul, a human will. Can we understand this with our reason? Hardly. As St. John Chrysostom said: "I know that the Son of God became man. but how, I do not know." God, Who produced the universe from nothing, also caused the Incarnation.

How was the Son of God made man? --The Son of God was conceived and made man by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Three persons of God cooperated in the Incarnation, but only the Second Person took on flesh: only He took to Himself a human nature.

1. The Incarnation is peculiarly the work of the Blessed Trinity. They formed a human soul and a human body, and these they united to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity: the result was Our Lord Jesus Christ, God-Man.

To the power of the Holy Ghost we attribute the Incarnation, because the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity peculiarly expresses the Spirit of Love: and the Incarnation is the supreme example of God's love for men.

2. It was fitting that God the Son should become incarnate, rather than the Father or the Holy Ghost; for the Son proceeds from the Father, and could be sent by Him.

God the Son then could, as the fruit of His Redemption, send God the Holy Ghost. Thus through the Son of God we became adopted sons of God.

When was the Son of God conceived and made man? --The Son of God was conceived and made man on Annunciation Day, the day on which the Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God.

1. In Nazareth of Galilee lived the Blessed Virgin Mary. One day the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and said: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28).

Mary was surprised. The angel said: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus." This event is called the Annunciation commemorated by the feast on March 25.

2. Mary knew that the angel was sent by God. She answered: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38)

At these words of the Blessed Virgin, Jesus Christ became man in her womb, and the incarnation was accomplished.

3. The mystery of the Incarnation is commemorated daily by the Angelus, a prayer said by Catholics morning, noon, and night, at the ringing of the Angelus bell.

The Angelus bell is rung in a particular way: at the verse, it is sounded three times: a pause follows while the Hail Mary is recited. "This procedure is repeated three times for the three verses and three Hail Marys. Then follows continual ringing while the Prayer is said.

During the Easter time the prayer Regina Coeli (Queen of Heaven) is substituted for the Angelus. Those who do not know these prayers by heart, or who cannot read, may say five Hail Marys instead.

Did Jesus Christ have human parents? --Jesus Christ had a human mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, but He had no human father.

1. The Blessed Virgin was Christ's mother as man, but not as God.

However, the Blessed virgin is truly the Mother of God, because the humanity and divinity of her Son are inseparable. In a similar way we call our parents mother and father, although they only gave us our body, and not our soul.

2. Christ had no human father. The Blessed Virgin remained a virgin all her life. The conception of Our Lord is a great miracle and a mystery that we cannot understand. We can only accept it as true on the word of God, Who is almighty.

St. Joseph was the legal spouse of Mary, but both of them preserved their virginity, consecrating it to God. They always lived together as brother and sister. St. Joseph was only the guardian or foster father of Our Lord.

3. We should honor and love Saint Joseph, because Our Lord honored and loved him. Holy Scripture calls him a just man. He was a most pure man; and this is why God selected him as the virgin spouse of Mary, to care for her and the Child Jesus.

Jesus loved St. Joseph and obeyed his slightest wish. Mary even called Joseph the father of Jesus.

4. It seems that Saint Joseph was born in Bethlehem of Judea. But at the time of the Annunciation, he and Mary were living in Nazareth of Galilee. He was a carpenter. It appears that he died before the beginning of Christ's public life.

The memory of Saint Joseph was venerated from the very earliest centuries. In 1870 Pope Pius IX declared Saint Joseph Patron of the Church. He is also patron of a happy death. We should invoke his protection often. His feast, kept on March 19, has been celebrated since the 15th century.

## The Nativity

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds in the same district living in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them and the glory of God shone round about them, and they feared exceedingly. And the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all the people; for there has been born to you today in the town of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord' "

When was Christ born? --Christ was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Christmas Day, in Bethlehem, more than nineteen hundred years ago.

1. When Jesus Christ was born, the Jews were no longer independent. In 64 B.C. Pompey reduced their kingdom and subjected it to Rome.

Because the Jews were always plotting rebellion against Rome, the Jewish king was replaced by Herod, a Gentile, the first non-Jew to become king. Thus the scepter was "taken away from Juda", and the time predicted for the Messiah had arrived.

2. Today we reckon dates from the birth of Christ. This has been the continuous custom since the time of Charlemagne, although many rulers from the 5th century had adopted the practice.

However, there is an error of some four to six years. Generally, it is supposed, as a matter of historical fact, that Christ was born 7-5 B.C. An error in the calculation of dates in later centuries produced this anomaly.

3. Bethlehem is a little town in Judea, near the city of Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary went there in obedience to the Emperor at Rome, who had commanded all his subjects to register in the towns of their ancestors.

Joseph and Mary were both descended from King David, whose city was Bethlehem; this is why they went to register there. They tried to find a place to stay in even for only a night, but could find refuge nowhere. And so they sought shelter in a poor stable; there Jesus was born.

4. Jesus was born in a stable, a poor place. He preferred poverty and humiliation in order to suffer more for us.

He wished to show Himself a friend of the poor, and to teach that the best way to heaven is through humility, and detachment from worldly goods.

5. The Church celebrates the Nativity on December 25. The feast is called Christmas. On this day every priest is granted the privilege of saying three Masses: one in commemoration of

Christ's eternal birth from God the Father; another in remembrance of His temporal birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and a third to recall His spiritual birth in the hearts of the faithful.

The word "Christmas" comes from Christ and Mass. The feast is so called because on that day the Mass commemorating the birth of Christ is said.

6. An angel appeared to shepherds and told them of the Nativity. A star led three Magi (Wise Men) to Bethlehem.

The shepherds represented the poor. The Magi represented the rich. All offered their gifts to the Infant Jesus. Our Lord does not look at the price of our gifts, but at the purity of our hearts.

The Church commemorates the adoration of the Magi on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6. "Epiphany" means manifestation. In the persons of the Magi, who were not Jews, Our Lord was manifested to all nations of the earth, who were at the time lost in paganism. With the Magi, we are called to the Truth; the Old Testament was ended, and the world had entered upon a new Covenant with God. And if, like the Magi we offer Jesus Christ the gold of our love, the myrrh of self-sacrifice, and the incense of our prayers, we too shall be united with God.

7. Many churches and homes set up a crib at Christmas. This custom, although of very ancient origin, was popularized by St. Francis of Assisi.

In the year 1223, he visited Pope Honorius III and sought approval of his plans to make a scenic representation of the Nativity. Having obtained the Pope's consent, Francis left Rome, and arrived at Greccio on Christmas Eve. There in the church he constructed a crib, grouping around it images of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, of the shepherds, the ox, and the ass. At the midnight Mass St. Francis acted as deacon. After singing the words of the Gospel, "And they laid Him in a manger" , he knelt down to meditate on the great gift of the Incarnation. And people around saw in his arms a Child, surrounded by a most brilliant light.

Since then the devotion to the crib has spread far and wide. The crib remains in church until the octave day of the Epiphany. At the proper time the images of the Three Kings and their retinue are added, making a daily advance towards the crib.

Most homes also set up a decorated Christmas tree. It is a reminder of the tree of the cross. The boxes of Christmas gifts remind us of the great Gift that God sent us.

Santa Claus, the jolly and beloved distributor of Christmas gifts, is an American adoption of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, of the fourth century. This Saint is popular in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, where he is made the secret purveyor of gifts to children on December 6,

his feast day. The custom was brought to New York by the Dutch, quickly spread throughout the United States and became absorbed into the Christmas celebration.

What incidents in Our Lord's life were closely connected with the Nativity? --The following incidents in Our Lord's life were closely connected with the Nativity: the Circumcision, the Presentation, and the flight to Egypt.

1. The Child received the name Jesus when He was eight days old. He was circumcised, according to the custom of the Jews. At the Circumcision Jesus began His role of Mediator between God and man, shedding His blood for the first time for us.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for He shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). "Therefore God . . . has bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. 2:9,10). "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you" (John 16:23). The feast of the Circumcision is celebrated on New Year's Day. Thus the Church teaches us to begin everything in the name of Jesus.

2. When Jesus was forty days old, His Mother presented Him in the Temple at Jerusalem. In imitation, though the rite is essentially different, mothers today after childbirth seek the blessing of the Church in a thanksgiving ceremony called "churching".

The feast of the Presentation is celebrated on February 2. It is also called the purification of the Blessed Virgin, or Candlemas Day. On this day candles are blessed and carried in procession, in memory of the words of holy Simeon, when Jesus was presented in the Temple. He said Our Lord was "a Light of revelation to the Gentiles".

3. Mary and Joseph took the Child Jesus to Egypt to save Him from King Herod, who wanted to kill Him.

An angel appeared to Joseph and told him to take the Child Jesus and His mother away to Egypt. They stayed in Egypt until the death of King Herod. Then an angel appeared to Joseph and bade him return to the land of the Jews.

## The Hidden Life of Jesus Christ

After the finding in the Temple, Jesus returned with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth. There He lived with them, doing all He could to help His Mother and St. Joseph in their work. Jesus, God Himself, obeyed mortals, because He wanted to set us an example. He lived a life of obedience, humility, and poverty in Nazareth till He was about thirty years old, This hidden life teaches us, among other things, the value in the eyes of God, of prayer, humility and obedience.

How may the life of Jesus Christ be divided? --The life of Jesus Christ may be divided into three parts: His childhood to the time when He was twelve years old; His hidden life, to the time when He started His teaching; and His public life, to the time of His death.

1. After the murder of the Holy Innocents, the Child Jesus lived in Egypt with His mother and St. Joseph until the death of Herod, then returned with them to the Holy Land.

An angel appeared to Joseph and said, "Arise, and take the Child and his Mother, and go into the land of Israel" (Matt. 2:20). Just as St. Joseph had obeyed without question when told to take the Child to Egypt, so now he obeyed, knowing that God Who watches over the birds of the air would watch over those given into his charge.

2. The Holy Family lived in Nazareth. From there, every year Mary and Joseph went to worship at the Temple of Jerusalem. When Jesus was twelve years old, He went along with His parents to celebrate the Pasch at Jerusalem. Then Mary and Joseph left the city to return to Nazareth, but Jesus remained behind without their knowledge.

"But thinking that he was in the caravan, they had come a day's journey before it occurred to them to look for him among their relatives and acquaintances. And not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him" (Luke 2:44-45) We can only imagine the distress of Mary and Joseph upon having lost Jesus, most precious to them, the Child that had been entrusted to their care. And what was their joy when after three days search they found Him in the Temple, in the midst of the wise men there, hearing and questioning them! Mary told how great had been her grief when she said, "Behold, thy father and I have been seeking thee sorrowing" (Luke 2:48). But Jesus replied, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49)



Jesus dearly loved Mary and Joseph, but He did not hesitate to cause them pain and part from them, in order to obey His heavenly Father's will. In imitation of Him, many young people leave home and their dear parents, to enter the priesthood or a religious congregation, to serve God completely.

3. Some non-Catholic interpreters insist that Jesus had brothers, that He was not the only Son of Mary. Those spoken of in the Gospels as the "brethren" of Our Lord (Matt. 13:55), were His blood relatives; it was the practice among the Jews to call near relatives "brethren".

So Abraham called his nephew Lot in this manner: "Let there be no quarrel between me and thee.... for we are brethren" (Gen. 13:8). As St. John Chrysostom wrote, Our Lord on the cross would not have needed to commend His Mother to his Apostle John, if she had had other children.

How long did the hidden life of Jesus Christ last? --The hidden life of Jesus Christ lasted from His return to Nazareth at the age of twelve until He entered into public life, at the age of thirty.

1. Of this part of Christ's life all we directly read from Holy Scripture are two statements: "And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.... And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and men" (Luke 2:51, 52). In these two sentences is contained the history of eighteen years of the life of Jesus Christ, the God-Man.

In the Temple, at the early age of twelve, Jesus had proved His wisdom before the doctors of the law. As St. Luke writes, "And all who were listening to him were amazed at his understanding and his answers" (Luke 2:47). But did He continue after this unusual and favorable beginning; did He stay on to preach His doctrine? No; instead, He meekly followed His parents as a young child of that age, and went to live with them in obscurity in Nazareth.

2. The actions of Jesus Christ are intended for us as examples and instructions, as much as His words. As He said, "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also should do" (John 13:15) The hidden life of Jesus is for us a perfect model of humility. He lived in poverty and lowliness: the Mother He chose was a poor woman; His foster-father was a carpenter; the town in which He spent the greatest part of His life was an obscure place despised by the Jews: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)

By His hidden life Jesus Christ teaches us to learn holiness and wisdom before we presume to teach others. He teaches us, by living in obscurity, to fight against our vanity, which makes us

desire to be doing only what seems great and important, which makes us desire to be praised and noticed. By His hidden life Our Lord teaches us to subdue our pride, to live day after day without impatience or complaint, unknown to the world, and even despised, if that is the will of God for us; then we shall have true peace of heart. And so Jesus said, "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29). For long years of obscurity in Nazareth, He was just "a carpenter's son".

3. The hidden life of Jesus Christ is for us a perfect model of obedience: "And He was subject to them." The God of all created things, almighty and infinite, was subject to two poor and unknown mortals. He obeyed them in all things, promptly, constantly, cheerfully, and with great love.

Let us model our obedience on this perfect pattern. Let us obey our superiors as representatives of God, giving them due respect and prompt obedience. When our parents command us, and we go about doing what they want, but with murmuring and without spirit, is that the obedience that the Child Jesus gave in Nazareth? When we have to do some unpleasant or difficult task, let us imitate Jesus in His very words: "Yes, Father, for such was thy good pleasure" (Matt. 11:26).

In this way our obedience will be like that of Jesus, supernatural; we shall obey human beings for the love of God; we shall really be obeying God Himself, in the persons of those He has placed over us. By the example of His hidden life our Lord set the principle for the religious life, particularly for that in contemplative orders.

4. Jesus "advanced in wisdom and grace before God and men." Although He possessed all wisdom and grace from the first moment of His mortal life, He manifested them only gradually and in a way that was in keeping with His years.

We can obtain much merit before God without doing any striking actions, by merely being humble and obedient in the place of life in which it has pleased God to put us. If Christ the Son of God, God Himself, was content to be humble, poor, and unknown, to do common tasks day by day for the greater part of His earthly life, is there any reason why we should be ever trying to exalt ourselves, to attract admiration, ever to feed our vanity?

Our Lord spent the three years of His public life teaching, healing the sick, working miracles to prove His mission and Divinity. One of His most wonderful miracles was the raising of Lazarus. Lazarus had been dead and buried four days. But Jesus went to the sepulchre and ordered the stone closing it to be taken away. Then He cried: "Lazarus, come forth!" And Lazarus came forth from the grave. Because of this miracle, the Pharisees became more envious, and even planned to kill Lazarus, so as to make it appear that Jesus had not raised him from the dead.

When did Christ begin His public life? --Christ began His public life when He was about thirty years old.

1. After spending long years in obscurity and humble toil, Jesus Christ next entered upon a period of activity, going about and teaching publicly. He left His home in Nazareth, and began His public life by an act of great humility: His baptism at the hands of St. John the Baptist in the river Jordan.

The mother of St. John the Baptist was St. Elizabeth, cousin of the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. John lived a life of very rigorous penance in the desert, preparing himself for his role of forerunner or precursor of the Saviour. About two years before Christ started His public life, John the Baptist went out of the desert, and began to preach penance; he baptized in the Jordan all those who believed in his teachings and wished to begin a new life.

St. John the Baptist was the forerunner or precursor of Christ. He spoke to the people of the coming Messiah, and pointed Jesus out to them as the "Lamb of God." He was put to death by Herod, because he reproved the ruler for his immoral life.

Jesus came to John to be baptized; immediately afterwards, as Our Lord came out of the river, the Holy Ghost came down upon Him in the form of a dove, and a Voice from heaven was heard saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

2. After His baptism, Jesus went into the desert, where He fasted forty days and forty nights. This teaches us to look upon baptism as a call to penance, and to prepare for all kinds of activity by mortification and prayer.

The forty days of Lent are intended to commentate the forty days' fast of Our Lord. Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday till midnight of Holy Saturday.

3. After Our Lord's long fast, the devil was permitted to tempt Him. Christ rebuked the devil, and angels came to minister to Him.

From this temptation of Our Lord we know that a temptation is not sinful. As long as we resist the devil, we are pleasing to God, however strong may be the temptation that assails us. "God is faithful and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also give you a way out that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor.10:13).

How long did Christ's public life last? --Christ's public life lasted about three years, during which He went about preaching, teaching, and doing good.

1. Upon His return from His forty-day fast in the desert, Jesus called His first disciples. In a few days He performed His first miracle, changing water into wine at a marriage-feast in Cana, at the request of His Mother, although, as He told her, His time had not yet come.

Among the outstanding works of Jesus during the first year of His active life were: He drove sellers out of the Temple, saying they made it a "den of thieves". He cured the ruler's son, Peter's mother-in-law, the paralytic at the pool, the daughter of Jairus. He calmed the tempest.

2. Jesus began the second year of His public life by an act of utmost significance: He chose from the many that followed Him, "the Twelve", His twelve Apostles, Himself calling them Apostles. In the Sermon on the Mount He summarized His teachings; it is the law of love taking the place of the law of fear.

During the second year of His mission, Christ performed many miracles, among which were: the cure of the centurion's servant, of the widow's son at Naim; the first multiplication of the loaves; He walked on the water, and bade Peter walk on it, too. He forgave Mary Magdalen, and sent the Apostles on their mission. He began teaching in the form of parables, comparing what He wanted to teach with common things. Among His parables of this period were: the sower, the tares and wheat, the mustard seed, the pearl of great price.

3. In His third year of teaching, Jesus went to Galilee and Phoenicia, because in Judea where He had been teaching, the Pharisees for envy and jealousy sought to kill Him. In Phoenicia He gave in to the entreaties of a Gentile, a Canaanite, who persevered in asking Him to cure her daughter.

In Galilee Jesus cured a deaf-and-dumb man, using signs that the Church has adopted in its baptismal ceremonies; he performed the miracle of the second multiplication of the loaves. On Mount Thabor He was transfigured in the presence of Peter, James, and John. Among other cures were those of the ten lepers, and the man blind from birth. He promised the primacy over all to Peter, paid the tribute to Caesar, forgave the woman caught in adultery, sent out his seventy-two disciples on a mission, called the rich young man, instructed Mary and Martha, and was the guest of Zacheus. He told the parables of the unmerciful servant, the Good Samaritan, the lost sheep, the lost goat, the greater supper, the unjust steward, the prodigal son, Dives and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the publican, the laborers in the vineyard.

4. Finally, at the end of His public life, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. By this time the envy of the Pharisees was so great that they determined to bring about the death of Jesus; Judas came as a ready tool.

Magdalen anointed Our Lord, as He said, for His burial. He entered Jerusalem in triumph riding on an ass, with children waving palms and singing. He told the parable of the husbandmen and the heir, to show the Pharisees that He knew of their designs against Him. And last of all, He ate the Last Supper with His Apostles, there instituting the Holy Eucharist.

What was Christ's aim in His public life? --Christ's aim in His public life was to teach what God requires all to believe and practice, so that all may enter the kingdom of heaven.

1. For this purpose He gathered some seventy-two disciples, and from them chose twelve Apostles, to whom He gave special instruction and training. By them He established His Church, which was to carry on His work after His death, to continue teaching what He had openly and publicly taught.

He spoke to large crowds, sometimes numbering four or five thousand people, as when He multiplied the loaves and fishes. Christ taught in the simplest manner, so that all might understand without difficulty. He used plain, homely words. He often used signs and parables, and illustrated His meaning by examples from nature and common life.

2. In the doctrines He taught, a leading idea is: "Seek first the kingdom of God."

He taught a new rule of faith, and gave new commandments. He taught the precept of love, even for our enemies. He revealed certain mysteries: such as those of the Blessed Trinity, of His own divinity, of the Last judgment. He instituted the seven sacraments.

## The Passion

### Fourth Article of the Apostles' Creed

After the Last Supper, Jesus went with His Apostles to the Garden of Gethsemani. And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). After praying three times the same prayer, Jesus said to His disciples: "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go. Behold, he who betrays Me is at hand" (Matt. 26:45-46). Judas had come.

What important events marked the end of Our Lord's public life? --The following events marked the end of Our Lord's public life: His solemn entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper He ate with His Apostles, and finally, His passion and death.

1. Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem in triumph, riding on an ass, with children waving palms and singing.

The Church commemorates the entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. On that day palms are blessed, and there is a procession, in memory of the palms that the joyous people waved at the entrance into Jerusalem of Our Lord. Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. The week following it is called Holy Week.

2. On the Thursday evening after His entry into Jerusalem, Jesus ate the Paschal Supper with His Apostles. We call it the Last Supper, for it was the last meal He ate before His death.

The Jews celebrated the feast of the Pasch in memory of their deliverance from Egypt. They had been saved by the blood of the paschal lamb.

3. After the Supper, Our Lord washed the feet of the Apostles. He did this to teach us humility.

In commemoration, the celebrant of Holy Thursday Mass today washes the feet of twelve men, after the Gospel.

4. After the washing of feet, Our Lord instituted the Blessed Eucharist, said the first Mass, and gave His Apostles their first Holy Communion.

What is meant by the Redemption? --By the Redemption is meant that Jesus Christ, as Redeemer of the whole human race, offered His sufferings and death to God as a fitting sacrifice in satisfaction for the sins of men, and regained for them the right to be children of God and heirs of heaven.

A redeemer is one who pays in order to get back something lost. He gives satisfaction, compensation for an offense or injury done another.

1. No creature could, of himself, make satisfaction for sin. Sin offends an infinite God, and therefore would need infinite satisfaction. Therefore Someone Infinite, Jesus Christ, had to offer that satisfaction.

Jesus Christ suffered and died as man; as God He could neither suffer nor die. He suffered excruciatingly in order to make full reparation for sin, and to impress on us the great evil of sin. Even only one sin is so abominable to God that not all the deluges and fires can wipe off the stain. Only the blood of God Himself can do so. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:6).

2. Christ died for all men, without exception. He is the Redeemer of all men. Not all men are saved because not all accept the graces which Christ merited for us by His death. Many do not believe in Him. Of those who believe, many lead sinful lives.

"Christ also loved us and delivered himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5:2). We can never realize fully that God died for us. We can never repay Him in this life or the next. The only way we can show our appreciation is to live according to His will.

What were the chief sufferings of Christ? --The chief sufferings of Christ were His bitter agony of soul, His bloody sweat, His cruel scourging, His crowning with thorns, His crucifixion, and His death on the cross.

Christ had often foretold His Passion. "For he was teaching his disciples, and saying to them 'The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and having been killed, he will rise again on the third day'" (Mark 9:30). Again: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the Scribes; and they will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and put him to death; and on the third day he will rise again" (Mark 10:33-34).

1. From the Last Supper, Christ went with His Apostles to the Garden of Olives to pray. There He was overwhelmed with sorrow and agony, so that He sweated blood.

Our Lord looked forward to His agony, saying to His Apostles, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do as the Father has commanded me. Arise, let us go from here" (John 14:31). In the Garden, Jesus felt so sad at the sins of men and at what would befall Him that He said, "My soul is sad even unto death" (Matt. 26:38). To His Father, He cried out in pain, "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). In agony, "his sweat became as drops of blood, running down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44).

2. Jesus Christ was betrayed by Judas, seized by soldiers, led before the high priest, and condemned to death. The Sanhedrin, the council of the Jews, headed by Caiphas the high priest, condemned Jesus to death for the crime of blasphemy, because He claimed to be Christ the Son of God.

"Then the high priest, standing up, said to him, 'Dost thou make no answer to the things that these men prefer against thee?' But Jesus kept silence. And the high priest said to him, 'I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'Thou hast said it.' ... Then the high priest tore his garment, saying, 'He has blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?' And they answered and said, 'He is liable to death'" (Matt. 26:62-66)

Jesus Christ was led to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judea, to have His sentence confirmed. At the time the Jews were forbidden by their Roman masters from putting anyone to death without the confirmation of the Governor. Pilate questioned Christ time and again, but had to say to His accusers: "I find no guilt in Him."

The Jewish Priests and Pharisees hated and persecuted Jesus because they expected the Messiah to be an earthly king. They were so wicked that in spite of the proofs of Christ's divinity, they



would not believe a poor man could be the Messiah. They hated Jesus; He had rebuked them for their sins.

3. But Pilate wished to please the Jews, and had Jesus scourged, Jesus was bound to a pillar, His clothes torn off; strong men with whips, cords, and straps with iron spikes scourged Him, and the whole body of Our Lord was one great wound.

"And the soldiers, plaiting a crown of thorns, put it upon his head, and arrayed him in a purple cloak. And they kept coming to him and saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him. Pilate therefore again went outside and said to them, 'Behold, I bring him out to you, that you may know that I find no guilt in him.' Jesus therefore came forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them, 'Behold the man!'"

4. At last, fearing that if he did not permit Jesus to be put to death the Jews would accuse him before Caesar, Pilate gave in to the insistence of the Jews and delivered Him to them to be crucified.

Christ was made to carry His cross through the streets of Jerusalem to Mount Calvary. He was nailed to the cross about noon, dying three hours afterwards, crucified between two thieves.

## Calvary

During Holy Week the Church lives again the passion and death of Christ. On the first day, Palm Sunday, the solemn entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is celebrated by the blessing of palms (1), followed by a solemn procession. At the Mass of this day, as on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, the story of the Passion (3) from each Evangelist is read. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week the Tenebrae are celebrated: the fifteen candles are put out one by one, to symbolize the flight of the disciples (2), and the death of Our Lord. On Holy Thursday morning a pontifical Mass is celebrated, in cathedrals only; at this the holy oils (4) are blessed. Commemorating the Last Supper at which the Holy Eucharist and the Priesthood were

instituted, Holy Thursday Mass takes place in the evening, with the washing of feet (5) to commemorate Christ's washing of the Apostles' feet. At the Good Friday service, emphasis is given to the veneration of the cross (6) . Holy Saturday services are held at night, beginning with the blessing of the new fire (7); from this the Paschal candle is lighted (9), a reminder of Christ, Light of the world. The five grains of incense imbedded in the candle remind us of His wounds. Four Lessons (10) are read; the baptismal water is blessed and taken to the font (8). The Mass commemorates, Our Lord's glorious Resurrection (11).

When did Christ die? --Christ died on Good Friday.

During the three hours that Christ suffered on the cross, He spoke seven times. We call these the seven words:

1. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
2. "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise."
3. "Woman, behold thy son.... Behold thy mother."
4. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
5. "I thirst."
6. "It is consummated."
7. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Where did Christ die? --Christ died on Golgotha, a place outside the city of Jerusalem.

Christ was crucified on a hill called Calvary, outside the city of Jerusalem.

St. Augustine says that on the cross Our Lord bent His head to kiss us, extended His arms to embrace us, and opened His heart to love us. How thankful we should be to Christ for His love! "He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8).

What took place at the death of Christ? --At the death of Christ the sun was darkened, the earth quaked, the veil of the Temple was rent, the rocks split, and many of the dead arose and appeared in Jerusalem.

1. The tearing of the veil of the Temple at the death of Christ marked the end of the Jewish religion as the true religion. This Jewish religion had been a figure of the True Church, and when the Church was established, was no longer needed: types and figures had to give way to reality.

The veil of the Temple concealed the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of the Temple.

2. We must not, however, make the mistake of thinking that Christianity ended the moral laws-laws regarding good and evil that were taught by the Jewish religion. Christ came not to destroy, but to perfect, the Old Law.

The authority of the Temple and its officers was now placed in the Church established by Christ, in the hands of His Apostles. The ceremonial laws of the Jews relating to worship were abolished.

3. The Church commemorates the passion and death of Christ on Good Friday. The solemn afternoon service consists of four parts, the veneration of the cross being the chief feature. All may receive Communion.

After the Holy Thursday ceremonies the altar was stripped; lights were put out, and bells silenced.

4. After His death, Our Lord's body was taken down from the cross and laid in the grave which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. Then His disciples rolled up a great stone to close the tomb.

The chief priests and the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate, saying, 'Sir, we have remembered how that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Give orders,

therefore, that the sepulchre be guarded until the third day, or else his disciples may come and steal him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead'; and the last imposture will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go, guard it as well as you know how.' So they went and made the sepulchre secure, scaling the stone, and setting the guard (Matt. 27:63-66)

What do we learn from the sufferings and death of Christ? --From the sufferings and death of Christ we learn God's love for man and the evil of sin, for which God, who is all-just, demands such great satisfaction.

1. It was not necessary for Jesus to suffer so intensely in order to redeem all men. As His merits are infinite, He could have wiped away the sins of a thousand worlds by shedding one drop of His blood. But He chose to suffer agonies because He loves us.

"Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep ... I am the good shepherd; and I know mine and mine know me. ... and I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10:11-15).

2. From the Passion of Christ we learn the evil that sin is, and the hatred that God bears it. We learn the necessity of satisfying for the malice and wickedness that is sin. Sin must be a horrible thing, to make Jesus Christ the God-man suffer so much.

By Christ's obedience He atoned for Adam's disobedience, for He was obedient unto death. "He was wounded for our iniquities; he was bruised for our sins" (Is. 53:5).

3. The sufferings of Christ, in addition, serve as an example for us, to strengthen us under trials.

Christ gave us an example of patience and strength. If we receive trials, we should accept them with resignation, in imitation of Our Lord, Who suffered so willingly for our sake. We can never have as much suffering as He did.

Churches are built in the form of a cross because within the sacrifice of the cross is reenacted. Within them we remember easily the events that took place that day long ago, when Jesus Christ, Son of God, for love of us suffered and died on the Cross.

Church spires lead us to "seek those things that are above" (Col. 3:1); they are surmounted by a cross, the symbol of our salvation; their bells call us to prayer, communion with God. The church interior is divided into three parts: the porch, where in former times those preparing for baptism and the penitents knelt; the nave, which is the central and main portion, for those attending the Holy Sacrifice; and the choir or sanctuary, where in former times the singers stayed, now reserved for the clergy, and separated from the nave by the communion rail.

## The Resurrection

### Fifth Article of the Apostles' Creed

"Now late in the night of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord come down from heaven, and drawing near rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment like snow. And for fear of him the guards were terrified, and became like dead men. But the angel spoke and said to the women, Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord was laid' " (Matt. 28:1-7).

What do we mean when we say in the Apostles' Creed that Christ descended into hell? --When we say that Christ descended into hell, we mean that, after He died, the soul of Christ descended into a place or state of rest, called limbo, where the souls of the just were waiting for Him.

1. Christ did not go to the hell of the damned, but to the "hell" of the just. In Holy Scripture, it was called "Abraham's bosom". St. Peter called it "a prison". We call it limbo.

Among the souls in limbo were Adam, Eve, Abel, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; Joseph, David, Isaias, Daniel, Job, Tobias, St. Joseph, and St. John the Baptist. They went to heaven at Our Lord's entrance upon His Ascension.

2. Christ went to limbo to announce to the souls waiting there the joyful news that He had reopened heaven to mankind.

"He was brought to life in the spirit, in which also he went and preached to those spirits that were in prison" (1 Pet. 3:19). The souls in limbo could not go to heaven, which had been closed by Adam's sin. It was only reopened to man by the death of Our Lord, by the Redemption. The souls in limbo did not suffer pain, but they longed for heaven. After the release of these souls from Limbo, and their entrance into heaven, this Limbo for the just souls ceased to exist.

While His soul was in limbo, Christ's body was in the holy sepulchre. When man dies, his soul is separated from the body. When Jesus died, His body and soul were separated, but His divinity remained united to both body and soul.

Christ's body did not corrupt in the tomb. It was in the holy sepulchre from Friday evening when He was buried, to Sunday morning, when He arose from the grave. This is why we say Christ rose on the third day, although He was in the grave for only three incomplete days.

When did Christ rise from the dead? --Christ rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death.

1. Christ had often foretold His resurrection.

He said of His own body; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). Before entering Jerusalem He said to His Apostles that He would be put to death and "rise again on the third day" (Matt. 20:19). On the night of the Last Supper He said: "But after I have risen, I will go before you into Galilee" (Matt. 26:32).

2. Even His enemies knew that He had predicted His resurrection. This is why they obtained Pilate's permission to seal the sepulchre and set guards to watch it.

They said to Pilate: "Sir, we have remembered how that deceiver said, while he was yet alive. 'After three days I will rise again'" (Matt. 27:63).

3. Today the entire Christendom celebrates Easter Sunday in memory of the Resurrection. It is the Feast of feasts, commemorating the completion of our redemption by Christ.

Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday following the first full moon of spring; the feast therefore is moveable, and can fall between March 22 and April 25, The Paschal season lasts till Trinity Sunday; till then the joyous alleluia resounds.

Why did Christ remain on earth forty days after His Resurrection? --Christ remained on earth forty days after His Resurrection to prove that He had truly risen from the dead, and to complete the instruction of the Apostles.

1. Christ's resurrection is an undoubted fact on which rests the Christian faith.

St. Paul says: "If Christ has not risen,"vain then is our preaching, vain too is your faith" (1 Cor. 15:14). And according to St. John, an eyewitness: "Many other signs also Jesus worked in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:30-31)

2. In the first place, Christ really died. His death was witnessed by many, both friends and enemies. It was proved by the soldier who plunged his spear into His side. It was communicated officially to Pilate. His bones were not broken, because He was found already dead. His Mother and disciples would never have buried Him had they suspected the least chance of life.

Some unbelievers urge that Christ was dead only in appearance and after an interval recovered from His swoon and left the grave. The loss of blood following the scourging alone would have been enough to cause death, not to mention the wounds He received on the cross.

3. In the second place, Christ really came to life. On the first Easter morning He appeared to Mary Magdalen and the other women who sought Him at the sepulchre. Then He appeared to Peter. In the evening He walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. At night He appeared to the assembled Apostles.

Nor were these witnesses easily deceived. The Apostles did not at first believe the women who told them the Lord had risen. They would not even believe their own senses, thinking the risen Saviour was a ghost. Christ had to call for something to eat, to prove that He was not a ghost. St. Thomas refused to believe the other ten Apostles, who had seen Christ first. He only believed when Our Lord appeared to him and bade him touch His wounds.

4. The Jews bribed the guards to say that while they were asleep, the disciples had stolen the body of Christ.

Such an act was made impossible by Christ's enemies themselves. They had sealed and guarded the tomb. "So they went and made the sepulchre secure, sealing the stone, and setting the guard" (Matt. 27:66). Even supposing the guards to have fallen asleep, the great stone which covered the sepulchre could not have been moved without waking some at least of the guards. Finally, it is a remarkable circumstance that the guards were not punished for this breach of duty.

5. Christ really arose from the dead. For forty days He appeared to many. He conversed, walked, and even ate with them. He spent much time instructing the Apostles.

One of His most important appearances was to five hundred disciples on a mountain in Galilee, when He gave the Apostles the command to go forth into the world and teach. The Evangelists have recorded nine apparitions: but it is evident from their writings (for example, Acts 1:3) that there were other and unrecorded occasions when Christ appeared. Countless of Christ's followers laid down their lives in testimony of the truth of the resurrection. "During forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

## The Ascension

### Sixth Article of the Apostles' Creed

On Mount Olivet, a hill outside Jerusalem, forty days after His Resurrection, Our Lord spoke to the disciples, telling them how the Holy Ghost would descend upon them. "And when He had said this, he was lifted up before their eyes, and a cloud took him out of their sight, And while they were gazing up to heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white garments, and said to them, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to heaven? This Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the some way as you have seen him going up to heaven' " (Acts 1:9-11).



Why did Christ rise from the dead? --Christ rose from the dead to show that He is true God, and to teach us that we, too, shall rise from the dead.

1. The Resurrection is the most important of Christ's miracles. He Himself chose it as the most conclusive proof of His divine mission; the Apostles appealed to it to confirm their teachings. The fact of the Resurrection, by itself alone, proves Christ God.

Christ said repeatedly that He is the Son of God; He said He would rise again from the grave. He did rise, unaided, by His own almighty power; therefore He is as He said, the Son of God. If He were an impostor, God would not have permitted Him to rise again. "But take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

2. Christ bore on His body the marks of the five wounds. The qualities of His risen body were:

a. Agility. It could go with the quickness of thought to all places.

b. Subtlety or spirituality. It was free from hunger, thirst, fatigue, and other needs. It could penetrate material substances.

c. Clarity or brightness. It shone with splendor.

d. Impassibility. It was immune to pain, disease, and death.

3. We are fortunate in having today for veneration a number of relics of the Passion.

The tablet with the inscription "I.N.R.I." is in the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Rome. One nail is said to have been thrown by St. Helena into the Adriatic to calm a storm; another is in the iron crown of the Lombards. Veronica's towel is in Rome. Part of the pillar of the scourging is at Rome, part in Jerusalem. The winding sheets are in Turin, and in Cadonin, France. Of the crown of thorns, part is in Paris, part in Toulouse. All these remind us of the time when "they entreated Him to let them touch but the tassel of His cloak" (Matt. 14:36).

Will all men rise from the dead? --All men will rise from the dead, but only those who have been faithful to Christ will share in His glory.

1. Like Christ, we, too, shall rise from the dead on the Last Day, and our bodies will be reunited with our souls.

"He who raised up Jesus will raise us up also with Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:14). "As Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

2. Those who have been faithful to Christ will be rewarded with the glory of heaven; those that have been unfaithful will be punished in the depths of hell.

"If you have risen with Christ, Seek the things that are above, ... not the things that are on earth." The rewards are given only to the faithful.

When did Christ ascend into heaven? --Christ ascended, body and soul, into heaven on Ascension day, forty days after His Resurrection.

1. The Ascension took place from the Mount of Olives. Christ's Apostles and disciples were present. It was full daylight.

He gave His followers His last instructions. Then He raised His hands and blessed them. He told them to preach the Gospel to all nations, and promised to be with them to the end of the world.

2. While all looked on, He was raised up, by His own power, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

"Now he led them out towards Bethany, and... was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:50-51).

3. The disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Their Master had returned to heaven in glory, and His arrival there had opened to His followers the heavenly gates.

He had earned for men infinite grace, so that they were now able to attain the friendship of God Himself. Christ the King had gone home to prepare a place for men in heaven (John 14:16; 2

Cor. 1:7). We celebrate the feast of the Ascension forty days after Easter, on Ascension Thursday.

What do we mean when we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty? -- When we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, we mean that Our Lord as God is equal to the Father, and that as man He shares above all the saints in the glory of His Father, and exercises for all eternity the supreme authority of a King over all creatures.

1. Christ as God is equal to the Father in all things. But even as man Christ is only next to God. Of Himself, Christ has dominion over all creation, his authority resting on the union of His divine and human natures in the Person of the Son of God.

He is above all the angels and saints. To Sit at the right hand of anybody is a mark of honor from that person. "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool" (Ps. 109:1,2).

2. Christ ascended into heaven in order:

a. To enter into the glory He had merited.

b. To send down the Holy Ghost on His Church.

c. To be our intercessor with the Father.

d. To prepare a place for us in heaven.

What do we mean when we say that Christ will come from thence to judge the living and the dead? --When we say that Christ will come from thence to judge the living and the dead, we mean that on the last day Our Lord will come to pronounce a sentence of eternal reward or of eternal punishment on every one who has ever lived in this world. (Seventh Article of the Apostles' Creed: see Chapter 81 on General Judgment)

1. Jesus Christ will be our Supreme Judge because He is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Apoc. 17:14).

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father and then he will render to everyone according to his conduct" (Matt. 16:27).

2. Christ's teaching has changed the face of the earth. One poor young man, teaching for three years in the hills and valleys of Galilee, and dying a shameful death, has brought light, love, peace, and hope into men's lives, even the lowliest.

Before Christ the world was the abode of sin and vice, idolatry, polygamy, divorce, and slavery. However, the world today, although reformed by Christianity, is far from perfect. This is because many refuse to obey the teachings of Christ. It is our duty to make Christ better known and loved, so that all may "seek first the kingdom of God."

## The Holy Ghost

### Eighth Article of the Apostles' Creed

"And when the days of Pentecost were drawing to a close, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a violent wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, which settled upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak" (Acts 2:1-4).

Who is the Holy Ghost? --The Holy Ghost is God and the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

1. Christ often spoke of the Holy Ghost.

One of the most solemn occasions was when He Charged the Apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

2. On certain occasions, the Holy Ghost appeared in visible form. When Christ was baptized by John the Baptist, the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove. On Pentecost, the Holy Ghost descended with a mighty rushing wind, and rested over the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire.

These signs are symbolic of the action of the Holy Ghost. The form of a dove symbolizes the gentleness with which the Holy Spirit works in our souls. The rush of wind represents the strengthening of the will. The fire represents zeal, fervor, and the illumination of the mind.

3. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

This does not mean that the Holy Ghost began to exist later in time than the Father and the Son. He proceeded from them from all eternity; He is to them as warmth is to fire, existing and proceeding at the same time. There can be no fire without warmth; if there were an eternal fire, there would be an eternal warmth. So since there are the eternal Father and Son, there is the eternal Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the eternal, mutual love that the Father and Son bear each other; but instead of being mere feeling, He is a Person, a Being, God.

4. The Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son, because He is God.

True God as the Father and the Son are, the Holy Ghost is eternal, all-knowing, almighty. The Third Person is called Holy Spirit, from the Latin word spiritus, a breath. He was breathed forth by the Father and the Son. In English we also call Him Holy Ghost. Other names used to refer to the Holy Ghost are: Advocate, Paraclete, Consoler, Comforter, Substantial Love, Spirit of Truth, etc.

What does the Holy Ghost do for the salvation of mankind? --The Holy Ghost dwells in the Church as the source of its life, and sanctifies souls through the gift of grace.

1. Although all Divine works depend on all Three Persons, we attribute the work of sanctification to God the Holy Ghost, because He is the oneness of love of the Father and the Son, and the sanctification of man by grace reveals that boundless love.

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16).

2. After Baptism, we have the Holy Ghost in our hearts and He remains with us as long as we have no mortal sin on our souls. This is the gift of "sanctifying grace".

Then we say that the Spirit of God dwells in us. We should therefore treat our body with great reverence, for it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost is given in a very special manner in the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders.

3. The Holy Ghost is the source of the life of the Church. He consoles, guides, and imparts strength to it, as Christ promised.

"The Church was filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:31). "Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will teach you all the truth" (John 16:12-13).

When was the dwelling of the Holy Ghost first visibly manifested in the Church? --The dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church was first visibly manifested on Pentecost Sunday, when He came down upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire.

After the Ascension, the Apostles together with the blessed Virgin and disciples, men and women, numbering about 120 persons, gathered in the Cenacle, the upper room in Jerusalem where the Last Supper had been taken. There they spent the time in prayer, awaiting the fulfillment of Our Lord's promise: "Wait here in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

1. Jesus had promised to send the Holy Ghost to the Apostles. He said at the Last Supper: "It is expedient for you that I depart. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7) . On Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension, the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles and disciples.

On Pentecost three thousand members were baptized after the preaching of St. Peter. Many believed, because the Apostles had the "gift of tongues" that is, they spoke in one language, but those of different races who listened heard what was said in their own different languages.

2. We celebrate the descent of the Holy Ghost today as Pentecost Sunday, ten days after Ascension Thursday, fifty days after Easter. Pentecost means fifty.

The nine days in the Cenacle while the Apostles and disciples waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit were spent in prayer, the first novena in the Church. "All these with one mind continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:14). In imitation of that first novena, it is our custom today to make novenas especially in preparation for great feasts. We also make novenas of petition or thanksgiving.

How long will the Holy Ghost dwell in the Church? --The Holy Ghost will dwell in the Church until the end of time.

"I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17)

1. The Holy Ghost watches over the Church, protecting it from destruction. From the beginning the Church spread very rapidly. At the death of the Apostles, in spite of persecutions, it was known in all parts of the then civilized world. Thence it has spread to the ends of the earth.

St. Paul could say: "Yes, indeed, their voice has gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18).

2. The Holy Ghost gave testimony of Christ, and strengthened the Apostles to give testimony of Christ.

Our Lord said, "But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me. And you also bear witness" (John 15:26,27). By His descent, the Holy Ghost proved that all Jesus Christ had said and done was true, that He was indeed the Son of God. After the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles gave testimony of Christ by going all over the world, (Acts 1:8), preaching and suffering for Christ, meeting death joyfully (Acts 5:41; Rom. 8:18) , saying, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me."

Sanctifying Grace

A soul in the state of grace is very beautiful in the sight of God. Then we are friends and children of God and heirs of heaven; then we are like the very angels. We must always try to avoid sin. But when the soul has lost the grace of God by mortal sin, nothing on earth can be uglier in God's sight. If we are so careful about our personal appearance before mortals, how much more should we be careful about the appearance of our immortal soul, that God may be pleased with us.

What is grace? --Grace is a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ for our salvation.

1. Grace is a favor, a free gift, granted to us though we have no claim to it. God grants us graces because He is good, not because we deserve them. God grants us graces for the sake of His Son, Who died on the cross to earn for us these graces; we men can never merit these graces.

"All have sinned and have need of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ" (Rom. 3:23-24).

2. The Holy Ghost dispenses the graces of God merited by Our Lord Jesus Christ; He bestows and perfects what is already earned, and acts as the channel of grace.

In a similar manner the sun does not make the plants, but develops what is already planted; without the sun plants would die and be useless to man.

3. The supernatural is that which is beyond natural Powers. It is of two kinds:

a. When the fact is beyond natural powers in the manner of occurrence: as when a blind man instantly can see; and

b. When the fact fundamentally and entirely surpasses all powers of the natural order: as when God imparts a part of His life to man through the gift of sanctifying grace.



4. The assistance of the Holy Ghost is necessary. Without the help of the graces that He dispenses, with merely natural powers, we cannot do the least work to merit salvation. Without God, we are nothing.

In order to reach heaven, we need God's grace; so we say with the Apostle: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5) ; "By the grace of God I am what I am. . . . I have laboured more than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

5. There are two kinds of grace: sanctifying grace and actual grace.

What is sanctifying grace? --Sanctifying grace is that grace which confers on our souls a new life, that is, a sharing in the life of God Himself.

1. By sanctifying grace, our souls are made holy and pleasing to God. It is an abiding or permanent grace, which we gain by baptism, and lose only by mortal sin.

By Adam's sin all mankind lost the friendship of God; that is, we are born in original sin, without sanctifying grace. Our Lord's death won back sanctifying grace for us; it is granted freely at Baptism.

2. A soul to whom God grants sanctifying grace receives not merely a gift from God, but God Himself. The Holy Ghost lives in him and becomes united with him, so that he receives a new life, a new nature.

St. Paul refers to this acquisition of sanctifying grace as the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new. It is as if an old and worn man were suddenly to become a handsome young man full of the vigor of life. The beauty of a soul in the state of sanctifying grace is too great for human eyes to bear. As a child said, when asked how his soul would look immediately after his confirmation, if it could be photographed, "Why, it would look like God!"

What are the chief effects of sanctifying grace? --The chief effects of sanctifying grace are:

First, it makes us holy and pleasing to God.-When we are in possession of sanctifying grace, we are free from mortal sin; the two cannot dwell together. The fire of the Holy Ghost sears away all that God abhors, so that we acquire God's friendship.

However, although free from mortal sin, we do not: with sanctifying grace, become free from the remains of sin. So even saints feel the human inclination to sin, against which the struggle is lifelong, and from which we should gain merit. This human frailty is imbedded in our flesh, and is present in our souls as a result of original sin.

Sanctifying grace, however, although it does not cure us of the weakness of the flesh, strengthens our will, so that for us the war against sin becomes easier. The charity accompanying sanctifying grace makes us more prone to good works, more attracted to God, with minds illumined as to the folly of sin.

Second, it makes us adopted children of God. - With sanctifying grace, the Holy Ghost enters our soul; we are led by His Spirit, and are therefore His children: "For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

"Now you have not received a spirit of bondage so as to be again in fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by virtue of which we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are sons of God" (Rom. 8:15-16).

Third, it makes us temples of the Holy Ghost.-Sanctifying grace brings the Holy Ghost to dwell in us as in a temple. St. Paul says, "For you are the temple of the Living God" (2 Cor. 6: 16).

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, him will God destroy; for holy is the temple of God and this temple you are" (1 Cor. 3: 16,17)

Fourth, it gives us the right to heaven. When we are in sanctifying grace, we are inspired to do good works. The Holy Ghost does not sleep within us, but expands our heart with His grace, and urges our will to do good. And as we are adopted children of God, such actions become meritorious for heaven.

If we are children of God, we are at the same time heirs, and therefore have a right to His Kingdom. "We are the sons of God. But if we are sons, we are heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:16-17)

Why is sanctifying grace necessary for salvation? --Sanctifying grace is necessary for salvation because it is the supernatural life, which alone enables us to attain the supernatural happiness of heaven.

The presence of God in the soul gives it life. When the Holy Ghost is dwelling in the soul, it is enabled to know and love God, to do supernatural works. Speaking of the "gift of God", Our Lord said it "shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto life everlasting" (John 4:14). Without sanctifying grace, the soul is without God; and without God, the soul becomes the devil's.

One cannot gain any merit for heaven as long as he is not in sanctifying grace, what is termed "in the state of grace". For without sanctifying grace one is an enemy of God, and cannot enter His kingdom.

Mortal sin makes the soul displeasing to God, and thus deprives it of sanctifying grace.

## Actual Grace

The case of Saul of Tarsus is one of the most wonderful instances of cooperation with God's grace. Saul of Tarsus was one of the most active persecutors of the early Christians. On the way to Damascus to arrest Christians, Saul was struck down by a brilliant light, and heard a voice say: "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" And Jesus answered, "I am Jesus, whom thou art persecuting. Saul immediately grasped at grace, and asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" From then on he turned his back on his former life, and belonged completely to Christ, till as the incomparable Apostle Paul he was martyred in Rome.

What is actual grace? --Actual grace is a supernatural help of God which enlightens our mind and strengthens our will to do good and to avoid evil.

By actual grace the Holy Ghost shows us the emptiness in themselves of earthly things. He makes us see our own sins, and the true goal of life. By it we can perform a virtuous act or reject a temptation.

Actual grace is transient; that is, it is given to us only when we need it, to perform a good act, or to overcome a temptation.

An example of the wonderful action of the Holy Ghost in enlightening the mind and strengthening the will is the First Pentecost. Before the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were ignorant and afraid; after His descent, His grace made them wise and fearless men, going forth to preach Christ everywhere, ready to die for their faith.

1. God gives us always sufficient grace to be saved. A true Christian should view his whole life in the light of grace. All God's gifts granted for man's salvation are graces.

A good family, a good education,-these are graces. But even sickness and hardships are God's graces, and may be the steps by which to ascend to heaven. And God grants graces to protect us against temptation, never suffering us to be tempted beyond our strength. If we do our part, avoid the occasions of sin, and cooperate with His graces, we shall win.

Is actual grace necessary for all who have attained the use of reason? --Actual grace is necessary for all who have attained the use of reason, because without it we cannot long resist the power of temptation, nor perform other actions which merit a reward in heaven.

We all need actual grace. Sinners need it to rise from sin. The just need it to persevere in good. Without grace, we fall into sin.

Herod was offered actual grace when he heard of the birth of the Messiah from the three wise men; but Herod rejected the grace, and added to his sins.

1. Grace is given to all men, although not in equal amounts. Some receive more, some less. Some ordinary graces are granted to all men; certain extraordinary graces are granted to chosen ones.

God is free to bestow His gifts as He likes. The Blessed Virgin received more than other mortals. Christians receive more than pagans. Those in the state of grace are likely to receive more than those in the state of mortal sin. In a way, our graces depend also on our dispositions. If we are faithful in corresponding with what we get, we receive more abundantly. Often our carelessness and indifference turn away God's graces from us. We reject Him who only wishes to make us saints, whose "delight is to be with the children of men" (Prov. 8:31).

What are the principal ways of obtaining grace? --The principal ways of obtaining grace are prayer and the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

The sacraments of Baptism and Penance give grace to those not possessing it; the other sacraments increase grace in those already in the state of grace.

1. Actual grace is obtained by good works. It is especially obtained by the use of means offered by the Church, such as hearing Mass, sermons, etc., and receiving the sacraments, particularly the Holy Eucharist, which contains God, the Source of Grace.

Although we cannot merit grace by our good works, still our good works can beg God for us, to give us grace. Good works are necessary, for God will not save us without our cooperation.

Actual grace is made to act through various means: through sermons, reading of good books, illness and death, advice of superiors and friends, good example, etc.

The first converts at Pentecost were moved by the preaching of the Apostles. St. Ignatius of Loyola was moved by the reading of the lives of the saints; St. Francis of Assisi, during an illness; St. Francis Borgia, upon seeing the corpse of Queen Isabella. Often God sends us sufferings as a means by which the Holy Ghost may speak to us.

Can we resist the grace of God? --Unfortunately, we can resist the grace of God, for our will is free, and God does not force us to accept His grace.

1. Grace does not force us. It leaves us free to choose between good and evil. The Holy Ghost guides and enlightens, but we can still close our eyes to His grace. If we cooperate, we gain other graces.

As Christ said, "For to him who has shall be given, and he shall have abundance" (Matt. 13:12). He who persists in rejecting the gift of God's grace and refuses to be converted will die in his sin and will be forever excluded from the sight of God. "From him who does not have, even that which he seems to have shall be taken away. But as for the unprofitable servant, cast him forth into the darkness outside, where there will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:29-30). Would it not be an insult to a king if he keeps offering gifts to one of his people, and these gifts are despised?

2. We should be on the lookout for the graces of God, ready to accept them as soon as they are offered. The action of the Holy Ghost on the individual soul is not continuous in particular graces; we must be ready when He comes with special gifts.

Some receive only one summons to the banquet. In the desert, the Israelites who rose late found the manna melted away. There are times of special grace for the Christian, such as Lent, a retreat, etc.

How can we make our most ordinary actions merit a heavenly reward? --We can make our most ordinary actions merit a heavenly reward by doing them for the love of God, and by keeping ourselves in the state of grace.

1. God grants us the right to a heavenly reward for the most ordinary good actions in the supernatural order, provided we are in the state of grace. God does not ask us to do extraordinary things. If we do the most ordinary tasks of the day, like cooking, studying, doing small chores, carpentry work, sewing, and such, in a spirit of love and obedience to Him, our acts will deserve merit before God's eyes.

God does not expect all of us to be great scientists saving thousands of lives each day, great discoverers, great lawyers, great statesmen. Does God need our help? All He wants is our love; and this we can give in the most ordinary daily actions. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God."

2. By mortal sin one loses the merit he has gained from his good actions. It is necessary that he regain that state of grace before he can regain that merit.

To regain God's friendship, we must be sorry for our sins, make a good confession, and resolve never to displease Him again. Then He will give us back the gift of His grace and love, and the merit of all our good works.

## The Theological Virtues

Faith is the foundation of all virtue, for by it God makes Himself known to men. As St. Paul says, "Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen. . . . And without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11 :1,6). It is this supernatural faith that the Chanaanite woman proved, when she persevered in begging Jesus to cure her daughter. Having tested her, He said, "O woman, great is thy faith. Let it be done to thee as thou wilt" (Matt. 15:28).

What are the chief supernatural powers that are bestowed on our souls with sanctifying grace? -- The chief supernatural powers that are bestowed on our souls with sanctifying grace are the three theological virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

1. Good qualities or inclinations, whether natural or supernatural, are generally referred to as "virtues". Virtue is a habit that inclines us to whatever is good.

A single good act does not constitute virtue. For instance, one does not have the virtue of faith if one believes in Christ only once a week.

2. Supernatural virtues enter the soul with sanctifying grace, imparted by the Holy Ghost in the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. With sanctifying grace the soul acquires the supernatural light of faith and hope, and burns with the fire of charity.

These virtues render us capable of being good and doing good for the love and service of God, to act for instead of against Him.

We are not to suppose however that sanctifying grace makes us perfect in the practice of virtue. It gives us the power and the inclination to be good and do good, but to have perfection we must frequently exercise our virtues. We are given the power, but if we do not use it, it remains dormant; similarly, we are given legs to use for walking, but if we refuse to walk, the power is dormant. Virtue is a habit acquired by repeated good acts.

3. Natural virtue enables us to perform good natural acts; it deals directly with things human. Supernatural virtue enables us to perform good acts from a supernatural motive, for the glory of God.

If we are temperate in food and drink because we wish to preserve our health, we have a natural virtue; we act according to reason.

4. Natural virtues compared to supernatural ones are like a photograph compared to the living original. It is only supernatural virtues that will profit us unto life everlasting, since it is only those whose object and life is God.

What are the three theological virtues? --The three theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity.

1. These virtues are called theological, from the Greek term *theos* (meaning God) , because their object is God.

An appropriate symbol for the theological virtues is a living tree. Faith is the root, hope the trunk, and charity the fruit. The root and trunk are valueless if they do not find completion in the fruit. The common symbols depicting these three virtues are: the cross for faith, the anchor for hope, and the burning heart for charity.

2. He who possesses these three virtues has all other virtues in some degree. Without them, he cannot possess any other supernatural virtue nor reach heaven.

We should make acts of these virtues every day. We can say very briefly: "O my God, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee. To Thee be honor, praise, and glory forever."

What is faith? --Faith is the virtue by which we firmly believe all the truths God has revealed, on the word of God revealing them, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

"Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen" (Heb. 11:1). "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

1. Faith is belief in a truth on the word of another, though that truth be not fully understood.

In a trial, the judge believes the testimony of a witness known to be an honest man. When a fact is so obvious as "it is dark at midnight," no belief is needed; that is known and fully understood.

2. Divine faith is belief in a truth or mystery known only because God revealed it. It is grace that helps us to attain faith and to persevere in it, to take God's word for whatever He has revealed.

Faith is supernatural because we cannot by ourselves acquire it. It is a gift of God. It is, however, increased by prayer and continual exercise; the apostles prayed to the Lord, "Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5)

3. Without faith, it is impossible to be saved.

We must not cease praying for increase of faith, for it is necessary for salvation. "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Matt. 16:16). "Without faith, it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).



4. Our faith must be firm and complete; that is, both certain and all-encompassing.

If we are doubtful on any matters of faith, considering opposite viewpoints as possibly true, then we deny God's authority. If we accept some truths, and deny others, then that is denying God altogether.

What is hope? --Hope is the virtue by which we firmly trust that God, Who is all-powerful and faithful to His promises, will in His mercy give us eternal happiness and the means to obtain it.

1. God promised to give man eternal life, and the means to obtain it. In this promise is our hope.

"He that putteth his trust in me shall inherit the land, and shall possess my holy mount" (Is. 57:13).

2. Hope is necessary for salvation. Our hope must be firmly founded in God, Who Promised to give us the means for salvation.

Such firm hope, however, would not exclude reasonable fear of the loss of our soul. Very often we fall far short of the proper use of the means of salvation granted us.

What is charity? --Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves, for the love of God.

1. Charity is the queen of virtues. It unites God and man perfectly in love. It also unites man and man, for the love of God.

To love God above all things, we must be willing to renounce all created things rather than offend Him by sin. We should often speak to God in acts of love, opening our hearts to Him.

2. In heaven faith and hope will cease; for we cannot need faith for what we already know; nor can we desire what we already possess. But for all eternity we shall have charity: we can love God forever.

## Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Ghost

In the picture the Holy Ghost is represented by a dove. It was in that form that the Holy Ghost showed Himself visibly when St. John baptized Jesus. The dove symbolizes gentleness and peace. The Holy Ghost dispenses the graces of God. However, the Holy Ghost produces nothing beyond what Jesus Christ merited. The merits of Our Lord are infinite, for He is God. The Holy Ghost merely perfects, the works of Christ. In a somewhat similar way, the sun shining on a field does not sow new seed; it merely develops what has been sown, making it bloom and bear fruit.

Which are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost? --The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

The gifts are infused in our souls with sanctifying grace. With God the Holy Ghost come sanctifying grace, and inseparably, His gifts.

1. Wisdom is that gift by which we recognize the emptiness of earthly things. By it we come to regard God and spiritual things as of the highest good. Without the gift of wisdom we are indifferent to spiritual matters, avoiding all mortification.

The best example of the effects of the gifts of the Holy Ghost are the Apostles, who after receiving the Holy Ghost became penetrated with His graces.

2. Understanding is that gift by which we are enabled to recognize the true Catholic teaching, and to detect false doctrines. Before the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, they did not understand the divine mysteries Christ revealed to them, often interpreting His words materially.

Saint Clement Hofbauer began his studies late in life, and had just enough instruction in theology to be ordained. But he was often consulted by high officials of the Church on matters of doctrine, because he had the gift of understanding to an extraordinary degree.

3. The gift of counsel helps us to discover the will of God under difficult circumstances.

Before they received the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were inconstant in their thoughts, desires, and actions, at one time full of high zeal, at other times despairing and weak. But Christ promised them the gift of counsel, saying: "Do not be anxious how or wherewith you shall defend yourselves; or what you shall say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you" (Luke 12:11-12).

4. Fortitude is the gift by which we are strengthened under trials, to do God's will.

Before the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were of good will, but they were weak and fearful. For instance, when Jesus was taken prisoner, they all fled. St. John Nepomucene chose to be tortured, and finally cast into the river, rather than break the seal of the confessional.

5. The gift of knowledge enables us to grasp the teaching of the Church, to know God and Jesus Christ Whom He sent.

Before the advent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were ignorant men who did not care for intellectual pursuits; neither were they expert in holiness or the things of God. The saintly Cure d'Ars had made but little study, yet his sermons were so remarkable that even Bishops were eager to listen.

6. Piety is that gift by which we love God as our Father, ever striving to do His will.

Before the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles loved Jesus, but more for their own sakes rather than His, more for the reward He promised than for love of Him. But after Pentecost, what a change! They were ready to suffer death just because they loved Jesus and wished to declare Him everywhere.

7. The fear of the Lord makes us dread sin as the greatest of all evils, and enables us to quell fear of man and human respect.

Eleazer, the old Jewish scribe, chose death rather than offend God by eating, or even pretending to eat, forbidden meats (2 Mach. 6).

8. Besides these seven gifts, the Holy Ghost also grants certain extraordinary gifts, which are given only on rare occasions and to selected persons. Such extraordinary graces are granted principally not for the benefit of the recipient, but of others. They were common during the

early days of the Church, and helped in its rapid spread. Among them are the gift of tongues, of miracles, of visions, and of prophecy. The Apostles received the gift of tongues on Pentecost, so that although they spoke to a crowd of different nationalities and languages, everybody understood what was said.

The Apostles also possessed the gift of miracles, curing the sick, driving out evil spirits, raising the dead to life. Many saints have been blessed with the gift of miracles. The prophets before the coming of Christ foretold future events. A number of the saints have been granted the gift of visions and ecstasies, though this is rare; good examples are St. Francis of Assisi, who received the stigmata of Our Lord's wounds, and St. Catherine of Siena.

How do the gifts of the Holy Ghost help us? The gifts of the Holy Ghost help us by making us more alert to discern and more ready to do the will of God.

1. If we look with discerning eyes, we can see how the gifts of the Holy Ghost have greatly helped the world at large.

As the psalmist sang: "Thou shalt send forth Thy spirit, and they shall be created: and thou shalt renew the face of the earth" (Ps. 103:30). "And hope does not disappoint, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5).

2. The operations of the Holy Ghost were easily discernible among the early Christians.

"And they continued, steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers. And ... many wonders also and signs were done by means of the apostles" (Acts 2:42-43).

3. The difference between the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost consists in this: the virtues enable us to do what our reason directs; the gifts make us follow the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

Which are some of the effects in us of the gifts of the Holy Ghost? --Some of the effects in us of the gifts of the Holy Ghost are the fruits of the Holy Ghost and the beatitudes.

Which are the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost? --The twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost are: charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, and chastity.

1. These twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost are good habits performed under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. They make us happy and contented, and help us to be pleasing to both God and man.

With the fruits of the Holy Ghost it becomes easier for us to persevere in the union with God by the practice of virtue; our heart inclines with charity towards God and our neighbor, and finds it almost natural to be detached from the world.

2. With the gift of sanctifying grace and its accompanying theological virtues, gifts of the Holy Ghost, and their effects, the Christian soul may be said to possess sanctity, to be in the state of Christian perfection.

Sanctity is the fervent surrender of one's self to God and the practice of virtue. It does not require extraordinary works. The Blessed Mother of God the most holy of mortals, never performed any extraordinary works to excite worldly admiration. "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

## Moral Virtues

The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity furnish a strong basis for all other virtues. The cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, are the foundation of all moral virtues. The theological virtues define our relations with God; the moral virtues define our relations with ourselves and our fellowmen. If we have these virtues, we are on the way to perfection.

Are there any other virtues besides the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity? --Besides the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, there are other virtues, called moral virtues.

1. These virtues are called moral virtues because they dispose us to lead moral, or good lives, by aiding us to treat persons and things in the right way, that is, according to the will of God. Moral virtues are opposed to the capital sins.

For example, humility is opposed to pride; liberality is opposed to avarice; chastity is opposed to lust; meekness and patience are opposed to anger; temperance is opposed to gluttony; brotherly love is opposed to envy; and zeal and diligence in what is good are opposed to sloth.

2. Moral virtues are an outgrowth and completion of the theological virtues. The theological virtues perfect our interior being; the moral virtues perfect our exterior. If we sincerely strive after these virtues, we are on the road to perfection.

The theological virtues affect our relations with God; the moral virtues affect our relations with our neighbor and our own selves. For example, faith makes us believe in the existence of God. Temperance makes us regulate our appetites.

Which are the chief moral virtues? --The chief moral virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance; these are called cardinal virtues.

All other moral virtues spring from the cardinal virtues. These are called cardinal from *cardo*, the Latin word for hinge, because all our moral actions turn on them as a door turns upon its hinges. All other moral virtues depend on them.

How do prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance dispose us to lead good lives? --Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance dispose us to lead good lives, as indicated below:

1. Prudence disposes us in all circumstances to form right judgments about what we must do or not do.-It teaches us when and how to act in matters relating to our eternal salvation. Prudence perfects the intelligence, which is the power of forming judgments; for this virtue, knowledge and experience are important.

Prudence shows us how to leave earthly things in order to earn riches for eternity. It is the eye of the soul, for it tells us what is good and what is evil. It is like a compass that directs our course in life. It is opposed to worldly wisdom. "Be prudent therefore and watchful in prayers" (1 Pet. 4:7). Prudence is a virtue of the understanding.

2. Justice disposes us to give everyone what belongs to him.-It teaches us to give what is due to God and to man. It makes us willing to live according to the commandments. Justice

perfects the will and safeguards the rights of man: his right to life, freedom, honor, good name, sanctity of the home, and external possessions.

The just man is an upright man. He gives to every one his due: he gives God worship; the authorities, obedience; his subordinates, rewards and punishments; and his equals, brotherly love. "Render to all men whatever is their due; tribute to whom tribute is due; taxes to whom taxes are due; fear to whom fear is due; honor to whom honor is due" (Rom. 13:7).

3. Fortitude disposes us to do what is good in spite of any difficulty.-It gives us strength to do good and avoid evil in spite of all obstacles and afflictions.

We possess fortitude when we are not hindered by ridicule, threats, or persecution from doing what is right; when we are ready, if necessary, to suffer death. The greatest fortitude is shown by bearing great suffering rather than undertaking great works. No saint was ever a coward. The martyrs had fortitude.

4. Temperance disposes us to control our desires and to use rightly the things which please our senses.-It regulates our judgment and passions, so that we may make use of temporal things only in so far as they are necessary for our eternal salvation. We have temperance when we eat and drink only what is necessary to sustain life, preserve health, and fulfill our duties.

We should strive to be like St. Francis of Sales, who said: "I desire very little, and that little I desire but little." However, temperance does not consist in refusing or denying ourselves what is necessary, thus unfitting ourselves for good works.

Which are some of the other moral virtues? --Filial piety and patriotism, which dispose us to honor, love, and respect our parents and our country. It is, however, no virtue but a sin if we are so prejudiced in favor of our parents that we find no good in others; or if we are so "patriotic" that we see no good in other nations.

The division and mutual antagonisms of nations and peoples in which certain ones profess to find themselves as "superior" can certainly not please God; from them come war and revenge. God is Father of all nations and peoples, without exception.

1. Obedience, which disposes us to do the will of our superiors. Obedience consists not only in doing what is commanded by our superior, but in being willing to do what is commanded. One who grumbles and murmurs while doing what his mother asks him to do is not obedient.

Obedience is a virtue only when one subjects his will to that of another for God's sake, not for material or natural motives. Christ is the model of obedience, for He obeyed completely and lovingly, even to the death of the Cross. "An obedient man shall speak of victory" (Prov. 21:28).

2. Veracity, which disposes us to tell the truth.

We should always be truthful, as children of God, Who is Truth itself. Veracity, however, does not require us to reveal secrets, or to reply to questions about which the questioner has no right to ask. In cases such as these, we should either remain silent, or return an evasive answer. "Wherefore, put away lying, and speak truth each one with his neighbor, because we are members of one another" (Eph. 4:25).

3. Patience, which disposes us to bear up under trials and difficulties.

In sickness and ill fortune, in the difficulties of our occupations, in our weaknesses, let us have serenity of mind, for the love of God: "And bear fruit in patience" (Luke 8:15). "Be patient in tribulation, persevering in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

Besides these, there are many other moral virtues. Religion is the highest moral virtue, since it disposes us to offer to God the worship that is due Him.

Religion is classed under the virtue of justice.

Humility, Liberality, Chastity

At a very early age St. Agnes had such a high regard for the virtue of chastity that she vowed her virginity to God. The Roman authorities, who were persecuting the infant Church, tried to make this child offer incense to the idols, but she refused. Seeing her firmness, the persecutors tried to win her by flattery. She was only thirteen years old, beautiful and wealthy; they offered to marry her to the son of a high official in Rome. But she answered that she was consecrated to her Heavenly Bridegroom. She suffered torture and meekly laid her head on the execution block.



What is humility? --Humility is that moral virtue which disposes us to appreciate and acknowledge our true position with respect to God and our fellowmen.

Jesus Christ often praised and recommended humility. "Unless you turn, and become like little children, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). He always answered the prayers of the humble, as of the centurion (Matt. 8:11). "If any man wishes to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:34)

1. The humble man acknowledges God as the source of all the excellent things he may possess. He recognizes his limitations, his own nothingness, and the uselessness of all earthly things without God.

Compared to God, what are we? All things pass away; only God is eternal. These simple truths will help us keep humble; without God we are nothing. Let us practice the behest of Our Lord. "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29).

2. The humble man knows that earthly things are of value only if they lead us to God. His detachment from all things worldly frees him from all human fear.

In order to become humble, let us think often of the majesty and grandeur of God. Let us contemplate His works, beside which ours would be nothing. Above all, let us remember that without God we would not even exist. Do we feel proud of our wealth? Tomorrow a fire, a business depression, may wipe it off completely. Are we proud of our appearance? An accident, some sickness, would make it as if it had never been. Are we proud of our intelligence? Amnesia would take it all away.

3. The humble man has his best, model in the Son of God Himself, Jesus Christ, Who humbled Himself out of love for men.

"Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29). The Son of God humbled Himself when He came down to earth as man. He came as a poor man, in the eyes of the world the son of a carpenter. His companions were simple fishermen. He associated with the humble, with sinners even. At the Last Supper He washed the feet of His apostles. He was put to death on the cross, the manner of death then most despised.

4. Our Lord continually urged us to humility; as when He said, "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:11).

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican Christ exalted humility; as also He did when, taking a little child, He said, "Whoever, therefore, humbles himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4). And again He said, after preaching to His disciples, "When you have done everything that was commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants" (Luke 17: 10)

5. Humility is opposed both to pride and to excessive and affected self-abjection.

To be humble, a man does not need to belittle his abilities. St. Thomas Aquinas says: That a person should recognize and appreciate his own good qualities is not sin." (See Chapter 25 on Pride, Covetousness, Lust)

What is liberality? --Liberality is that moral virtue, related to the cardinal virtue of justice, which finds expression in generosity towards our fellowmen, disposing us to use material goods rightly.

1. Ordinarily the term is taken with reference to material goods; but in a broader sense it also is with respect to spiritual and intellectual gifts.

Liberality consists in giving, for the love of God, generous help to those in need. Our Lord said, in urging us to do works of mercy, that what is given to the poor is given to Him. Liberality does not depend on the amount given, but in the spirit. A poor man can be very liberal; whereas a rich man who gives millions, but does so only in order to get praised does not have the virtue of generosity.

2. Liberality is opposed to covetousness.

With liberality we become willing for the love of God to help out those in material need. This virtue does not depend on the amount or material value of the gift, but in the goodness of the heart with which it is given. (See Chapter 25 on Pride, Covetousness, Lust)

What is chastity? --Chastity is that moral virtue which disposes us to be pure in soul and body.

Those who keep themselves pure in soul and body are like angels on earth. It was the chaste Apostle John to whom Christ gave the privilege of leaning on His breast at the Last Supper; it was to him that He entrusted His Virgin Mother.

1. Chastity, opposed to lust, disposes us to preserve the mind and body from everything that is impure. Chastity is purity. It is termed the angelic virtue, because it makes men resemble the angels in heaven.

Chastity gives health to the soul and light to the understanding; it aids wisdom and develops strength of character. Judith, a weak woman, had the courage to go into the enemy camp, and returned with the head of Holofernes; of her Holy Scripture says, "Thou hast done manfully and thy heart hath been strengthened, because thou hast loved chastity" (Judith 15:11). Thousands of martyrs died in defense of this virtue of holy chastity.

2. For the unmarried, chastity forbids indulgence of the sexual appetite; for the married, it regulates the use of that appetite in accordance with the dictates of right reason. It is wrong to suppose that chastity is not a virtue for the married. God requires chastity from everyone, in all states of life. A chaste marriage is the basis of the Christian family.

Not all saints are virgins. God requires chastity to be practiced by all, in accordance with the state of life that each has embraced. It may be either absolute (for the unmarried), or relative (for the married).

3. The mere knowledge of facts does not destroy our chastity. It is wilful consent and yielding to impurity that sullies chastity of mind and body.

Jesus Christ, Our Lady, St. Joseph, and other saints surely knew the facts of sex; but such knowledge did not spoil their spotless chastity.

4. Let us be careful of the company we keep, and avoid all occasions of sin to preserve virtue of chastity. Let us form the habit of temperance in all things, so as to strengthen our self-control. We should often have recourse to prayer and the sacraments, receiving these frequently. "Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5: 16). (See Chapter 25 on Pride, Covetousness, Lust)

Let us have a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and ask her daily to preserve us in chastity. The following prayer has in many cases been found efficacious in imploring the Blessed Virgin to preserve one's chastity:

"My Queen, my Mother! I give myself entirely to thee; and to show my devotion to thee, I consecrate to thee this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being without reserve. Wherefore, good Mother, as I am thine own, keep me, guard me as thy property and possession."

Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love

As an example of true zeal we have the Apostle of the Indies, the Patron of Catholic Missions, St. Francis Xavier. Born of a noble family of Navarre, a descendant of kings, he was brought up for a career of earthly power and glory. But he met St. Ignatius, and decided to become a soldier for Christ. Inflamed with zeal, wishing only to reap rich harvests for God, he went through India, Malaya, and Japan planting the seed of the Faith, converting innumerable heathen to Christ. In Japan so fruitful was his apostolate that a generation after him the Christian population still totalled 400,000 souls. He is Protector of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

What is meekness? --Meekness is that moral virtue which disposes us to control anger when offended, and resentment when rebuked.

Meekness however must be distinguished from pusillanimity, which is weakness of spirit, and cowardliness.

1. Meekness is patience between man and man. It is related to the cardinal virtue of temperance, and is opposed to the sin of anger. The patient man keeps calm in the midst of the vicissitudes of life; he preserves his cheerfulness for the love of God.

The motive is important. If we are calm and patient only because we hope to be admired or because we thereby wish to avoid temporal trouble, by indifference, then we do not practice

virtue. Virtue is the result of love for God, doing things for His sake, because it is His law or desire. "By your patience you will win your souls" (Luke 21:19).

2. We must endure with serenity all trials, not merely a part of them, in order to be truly patient.

For instance, some are patient with sickness, but keep lamenting their being a burden to others on its account. Some are patient with others, but have no patience with themselves: for example, they feel irritated if they fall back into old sins. Such persons are not truly patient and meek; they show traces of pride, believing themselves too good to relapse into old sins. "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 16:21).

3. The patient and meek man shows no anger when wrong is done him. He is a peacemaker at heart. However, although we should forgive and forget wrongs for the sake of peace, we must not give in to sin just to avoid opposing others; this would be sinful. Let us keep the peace with all when there is no good reason to break it; this should be our policy.

Our Lord is the best example of meekness and patience. Did He use His almighty power to punish those who did Him evil? For hours He hung meekly on the cross, until He died. Every day God is patient with sinners, giving them time to change their ways.

4. The meek man is master of his own self; he has self-control, and will find it easy to control others. He has peace of mind and will attain heaven, the home of the meek of heart. (See Chapter 26 on Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth)

Let us gaze at Jesus Crucified; He is the supreme example of meekness, the Lamb of God: "And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim" (Jer. 11:19). Indeed, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth" (Matt. 5:4) -the land of the hearts of their fellowmen. As St. Francis de Sales practically said, "One catches more flies with an ounce of honey than with tons of vinegar."

What is abstinence? --Abstinence is that moral virtue, related to the cardinal virtue of temperance, which keeps within bounds use of and pleasure in foods or drink.

This general sense is to be understood as different from the particularized sense of "abstinence" during certain days, such as Fridays of Lent.

1. A temperate man eats only what he needs, does not fully satisfy his appetite, and is not dainty about the kind of food he eats. The virtue of abstinence is opposed to the sin of gluttony.

One who is moderate in eating will be moderate also in many other things, and will escape numerous evils and sins. He always remembers the words of Our Lord: "Not in bread alone doth man live."

2. Temperance is a boon to both soul and body. It improves the health and strengthens the mind. It increases holiness, and aids towards the attainment of eternal life with God.

A temperate man is like a person who travels light. He can move quickly and reach his destination, heaven, more easily. He is not like those who miss every train on account of the numerous bundles to be counted and carried and taken care of during a journey. (See Chapter 26 on Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth)

What virtues are opposed to sloth? --The virtues of diligence and zeal are opposed to sloth.

1. From the days of Adam work has been laid as an obligation on men. God said to Adam: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, until thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken" (Gen. 3:19)

All men must work, whether mentally or bodily. The Apostle said: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). Our Lord worked all His life, and chose working people for His Mother and foster-father. Diligence in labor is a shield against temptation, for thieves do not break into a house full of busy people.

2. In opposition to spiritual sloth, we have zeal. It consists in fervor for our salvation and for that of others, out of love of God. It manifests itself in the propagation of the faith, the sanctification of souls, and making God better known. (See Chapter 26 on Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth)

The zealous man talks to God as often as he can in prayer; he does not forget his religious duties. He loses no opportunity in doing good works, and cheerfully makes sacrifices for the love of God. All his works and sufferings he offers to God, for his own salvation as well as for that of others. He works hard, remembering that "The kingdom of heaven has been enduring violent assault, and the violent have been seizing it by force" (Matt. 11: 12).

What is brotherly love? --Brotherly love is charity towards our fellowmen, our brothers in Christ. (See Chapter 26 on Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth)

Our Lord said: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). And St. John exhorts: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. ... He who does not love does not know God; for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8).

Love and envy cannot live in the same heart. Our Lord says: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (John 13:35) ; and He commands: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you" (Mat. 5:44)

If God commands us to love even our enemies, how much more should we love those who have done us no harm, and avoid envying them! Let us remember that the mark of the Christian is love for his fellow-men; all that we do to others, whether for good or ill, we really do to Our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, when we feel the temptation to envy, let us banish it at once by praying for the person, and try our best to do all the good we can to him. In this way we follow Christ our Master.

## The Eight Beatitudes

And opening his mouth he taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth. Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:1-10). These are the beatitudes; they are thus called, because they bring us happiness on earth as well as in heaven.

Which are the eight beatitudes? --The eight beatitudes are:

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

a. The poor in spirit are those who, however great their wealth, dignity, learning, etc., acknowledge that in God's sight they are poor, and realize that their riches come from God. They are detached in heart and mind from worldly possessions, for love of God. Even in this life they are at peace, a foretaste of heaven.

Thus a rich man may in fact be poor in spirit, if he is not attached to his wealth, but spends it freely for good causes, and is willing to be parted from it at God's will. On the other hand a poor man is not truly poor in spirit, if he is not resigned to his poverty, but envies the rich, if he is poor against his will, or prides himself on some quality of his.

b. In general, the poor in this world's goods are also poor in spirit. They are saved from temptations into which the wealthy fall. This is one reason for seeking poverty voluntarily, according to Christ's counsel.

Our Lord often emphasized the difficulty of salvation when one is rich: "But woe to you rich! for you are now having your comfort" (Luke 6:24). "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, ... and come, follow me" (Matt. 19:21). "With difficulty will a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:23)

c. We are, however, expected to be industrious. Pauperism which is the result of laziness is not a virtue. Beggary which can be avoided is not beneficial either to the individual or to society in general. Each one is obliged to provide for himself and for those dependent on him.

2. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth."

a. The meek are those who bear patiently all the contradictions of life, looking upon them as happening through God's Will or by His permission.

The meek shall have peace of heart and peace of life, loved and respected by all, and at death will "possess the earth" of the living, heaven.



b. Those are also meek who, though of a naturally fiery disposition, master their anger, impatience, or desires for revenge.

The meek man does not get angry or curse or seek revenge. He forgives his enemies, and even wins them by gentle words. He imitates Christ, Who said: "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11: 29).

3. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Here the reference is to spiritual sorrow, grief for sin, one's own sins or the sins of others. It includes a longing amidst the sorrows of life for the joys and peace of heaven.

Mourning for sin is not sadness, for it is not incompatible with spiritual joy. Those who are most penitent feel most gladness upon their release from sin. But to sinners who do not mourn, these words of Our Lord should bring salutary fear: "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep" (Luke 6:25).

4. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied." This refers to those who ardently desire the things of God, truth and perfect virtue, as well as to those who try to become better, more humble and pure, more closely united with God.

Spiritual hunger and thirst is the craving for growth in holiness, a desire to be more pleasing to God, to make daily progress in doing His will. Even in this life they shall taste the joy of divine consolations; in heaven they shall enjoy the full abundance of heavenly bliss.

5. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." The merciful are those who practice the works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, who help others not from human or natural motives simply, but from supernatural ones, from faith, from love of God.

To such people, Christ at the day of judgment will say: "Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in ..." (Matt. 25:34-35).

6. "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." Only those who are not in habitual sin are clean of heart, and possess virtue. They will be rewarded with the vision of God in heaven; and even on earth by the great light given them.

There are several degrees of purity of heart: to the first degree belong those who are free from mortal sin; to the second belong those who are free from deliberate venial sin and all affection for sin; to the third degree belong those who are free from the least ill-regulated affection; to the fourth belong those who are free from the almost imperceptible stains that delay a soul's entrance into God's home; and to the last degree belong those Christians of such purity of life and thought, of such perfection of zeal and intention, that they habitually live for God alone, that they are perfectly united with Him, so that when they close their eyes in death they will fly straight into the Heart of God.

7. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." Men who love peace and preserve it in themselves and among others are beloved by God.

We should also try to reconcile those who are not on good terms with each other. This is a superior degree of the second beatitude.

8. "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Those are blessed who suffer for Christ, religion, or some Christian virtue. They will receive an eternal reward.

Those who faithfully observe the entire law of God and defend the cause of His Church, procure His glory and save souls. In this world those who are active in preserving the rights of the Church are often ridiculed and persecuted; they will be especially blessed.

Our Lord preached the Eight Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. In this sermon He taught something new in the world. Where people had always striven for riches, honors, and pleasures, Christ praised the poor, the humble, the suffering.

If we practice faithfully the doctrine of the eight beatitudes, we shall find the true path of perfection and be happy besides on earth. The Beatitudes contain in substance the law of God and all evangelical perfection.