

Session 1: Introduction

HYMN: Come, Holy Ghost



Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
and in our hearts take up Your rest.
Come with Your grace and heav'nly
aid,
to fill the hearts which You have
made—
to fill the hearts which You have
made.

O Comforter, to You we cry,
the heav'nly gift of God most high,
the fount of life, and fire of love,
and sweet anointing from above—
and sweet anointing from above.

To ev'ry sense Your light impart,
and shed Your love in ev'ry heart.
To our weak flesh, Your strength
supply:
unfailing courage from on high—
unfailing courage from on high.

O grant that we through You may come
to know the Father and the Son.
And hold with firm, unchanging faith
that You are Spirit of Them both—
that You are Spirit of Them both.

(Bow) Now let us praise Father and
Son,
and Holy Spirit, with Them one.
And may the Son on us bestow
the gifts that from the Spirit
flow—
the gifts that from the Spirit flow.

PRAYER: See Eph 1:17-19.
Let us pray:
O God,
grant us a spirit
of wisdom and insight
to know You clearly.
Enlighten our innermost vision,
that we may know the great hope
to which You have called us,
the wealth of Your glorious heritage
to be distributed
among the members of the Church,

and the immeasurable scope
of Your power
in us who believe.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your Son,
Who lives and reigns with You
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
— Amen

READING: Mt 10:29-31

The Lord be with you.
— *And with your spirit*
A reading from the holy Gospel
according to Matthew
— *Glory to You, O Lord*
Jesus said to His disciples,
"Are not two sparrows
sold for next to nothing?
Yet not a single sparrow
falls to the ground
without your Father's consent.
As for you,
every hair of your head
has been counted;
so do not be afraid of anything.
You are worth more
than an entire flock of sparrows."
The Gospel of the Lord
— *Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ*

IN BRIEF: WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES

The desire for God
is written in the human heart,
because we are created by God
and for God;
and God never ceases
to draw us to Himself.

Only in God will we find
the truth and happiness
we never stop searching for.
We can say with certainty
that it is God
Who has brought you here today.

In many ways throughout history,
humans have expressed
their quest for God
in their religious beliefs
and behaviour:
prayers,
sacrifices,
rituals,
and meditations. —

Session 1

These are so universal
that one may well call human beings
religious beings.

It is true that God,
the beginning and the end
of all things,
can be known with certainty
from the world He created,
by the light of human reason.
Without this capacity,
we would not be able
to welcome God's revelation.

However, the truths
that concern our relations with God
completely transcend nature.
Moreover, our minds are hampered
in attaining these truths,
not only by the limitations
of our senses and imaginations,
but also
by our disordered appetites.

Accordingly,
we need to be enlightened
by God's revelation,
not only about things
that exceed our understanding,
but also about
religious and moral truths
which in themselves
are not beyond
the grasp of human reason.

BIBLE READING

Gn 1-19

Before we meet again next week
to study "Creation and the Fall,"
we will ask you to read
a number of pages from the Bible.

There you will see
that God made everything good,
but that man introduced evil
by trying to separate himself
from God
and set up on his own,
wanting to know *for himself*
what was good and what was evil.

You will also see how God began
His long search for us,
trying to draw us back to Him.

Introduction

"Do you ever think about *life*?" a student asked as I handed out a quiz. "Do you realize that we're all going to *die*? What's the point of *anything*? What's the point of writing this quiz?"¹

"Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going? Why is there evil? What is there after this life?"²

"No one can avoid this questioning." Everyone seeks "a final explanation, a supreme value, which refers to nothing beyond itself and which puts an end to all [such] questioning.... There comes for everyone the moment when personal existence must be anchored to a truth recognized as final, a truth that confers a certitude no longer open to doubt."³

Why are we here?

First, notice that science does not have the answer. To see this, consider the questions biology teachers ask.

What is the function of the legs in the human body?

Answer: to help the organism move, so that it can get food.

What is the function of the digestive system?

Answer: to get energy from food, so that it can keep the legs working.

True. Given a body, we can see that it needs legs and a digestive system; but why have a body at all? Why have *anything*? "Why is there something rather than nothing?"⁴

What can we do?

Can we figure out why we are here by studying what we can *do*?

This is plausible, but open to error. For example, if you give a razor blade to a man who has never seen one before, he may decide that its purpose is to cut wood. By the time he finds out his mistake, he has ruined the razor blade.

What do we like?

Can we figure out why we are here by studying what we *like*?

Again, this is plausible, but open to error. For example, Adam Smith and Karl Marx noticed that humans like possessions, so they both devised economic systems — capitalism and communism — that treat humans as mere consumers. But possessions do not satisfy us, and "consumerism" can ruin us.

What are humans *for*?

Can we figure out why we are here by studying human nature more deeply? Yes — if our purpose is somehow *contained* in human nature.

For example, Cardinal Jean Marie Lustiger⁵ was taught that, as a Jew, he had a responsibility to make the best of himself in serving the world. Accordingly, he decided to become a doctor.

But, as we shall see, our ultimate destiny is a state totally *beyond* human nature.

That is precisely what Cardinal Lustiger discovered when he became a Catholic at age 14. Accordingly, he changed his mind and decided to become a priest.⁶

1 "In the context of death ... the question concerning life's meaning becomes unavoidable" (Pope Benedict XVI: *Spe Salvi*, 6).

2 "These are the questions which we find in the sacred writings of Israel, as also in the *Veda* and the *Avesta*; we find them in the writings of Confucius and Lao-Tze, and in the preaching of Tirthankara and Buddha; they appear in the poetry of Homer and in the tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles, as they do in the philosophical writings of Plato and Aristotle. They are questions which have their common source in the quest for meaning which has always compelled the human heart. In fact, the answer given to these questions decides the direction which people seek to give to their lives" (Pope John Paul II: *Fides et Ratio*, 1).

3 Pope John Paul II: *Fides et Ratio*, 27

4 Pope John Paul II: *Fides et Ratio*, 76

5 Archbishop of Paris 1981–2005

Choose for ourselves?

Left to ourselves, all we can do is choose — "not without risk" — what seems to be the best theory and make it "the raft" upon which we "sail through life," said Plato.⁷

Somehow, in one way or another, we "shape an answer to the question of life's meaning" and use it to "interpret" the course of our life and "regulate" our behaviour."⁸

The Catholic answer

Of course, the best way to find out what something is for is *to ask the one who made it*.

Who made us?

Catholics believe that God made us.

Can we, then, as Plato put it, "find some word of God" that will carry us through life "more surely and safely" than a human theory?⁹

Christians believe that God has, as a matter of history, told us what He made us for. It is not something we are capable of by nature; it is something much higher. No study of human nature would ever reveal it; God had to tell us. In more technical language, we say that He had to *reveal* it.

If we want to live intelligently, in light of our true destiny, we must learn what that destiny is, and learn it as early as possible.

The best way is to learn it as children, from our parents. But some parents do not know it. And some of those who do know it think that they should not "impose" it on their children, but leave them to find out for themselves. (By the same argument, they should not teach them to brush their teeth, but leave them to find out for themselves.¹⁰)

What God has revealed

The Catholic Church claims to teach what God has told us about the purpose of human life.

At various times in its history, the Church has commissioned theologians¹¹ to summarize this teaching.¹² The latest summary, called the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), was begun in 1985 when Pope John Paul II convoked an extraordinary assembly¹³ of bishops to mark the 20th anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁴

On that occasion, the bishops expressed a desire "that a catechism¹⁵ or compendium of all Catholic doctrine¹⁶ regarding both faith and morals be composed."¹⁷

"I made this desire my own," Pope John Paul II said, "considering it as fully responding to a real need.... For this reason we thank the Lord wholeheartedly on this day [October 11 1992] when we can offer the entire Church this reference

6 His epitaph, written by himself, can be seen in the Paris Cathedral of Nôtre-Dame: "I was born Jewish. I received the name of my paternal grandfather, Aaron. Having become Christian by faith and by Baptism, I have remained Jewish, as did the Apostles. I have as my patron saints Aaron the High Priest, Saint John the Apostle, Holy Mary full of grace. Named 139th Archbishop of Paris by His Holiness Pope John-Paul II, I was enthroned in this Cathedral on 27 February 1981, and here I exercised my entire ministry. Passers by, pray for me. Aaron Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger, Archevêque de Paris."

7 Plato (c 428-348 BC): *Phaedo*, 7; translated by Benjamin Jowett

8 Pope John Paul II: *Fides et Ratio*, 30

9 Plato (c 428-348 BC): *Phaedo*, 7; translated by Benjamin Jowett

10 See Pope John Paul I: *Illustrissimi*, "To Felix Dupanloup."

11 People who study God.

12 For example, there are St. Peter Canisius' Summary of Christian Doctrine (1555) and the Catechism of the Council of Trent, or Roman Catechism (1566).

13 Called a synod.

14 1962-65

15 A manual of instruction in Christian doctrine, from the Greek *katechizo* ("make hear").

16 Truths taught by the Church as necessary for acceptance by Christ's followers, from the Latin *doctrina* ("teaching").

17 Pope John Paul II: Discourse at the Closing of Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, 6

text."¹⁸

The Pope asked that catechists,¹⁹ among others, use the *Catechism* "assiduously" in their mission of "proclaiming the faith and calling people to the Gospel life."²⁰

If you notice how many footnotes in this binder begin "CCC" or "See CCC," you will see how well Father Vince and I have complied. Indeed, in some of our talks, we refer to nothing else except the Bible!

Teach what is right

Long ago, Father Vince and I resolved that we would simply teach the truth rather than explicitly condemn error (unless it became absolutely necessary, as in our talks on the *Commandments* or the introduction to our talk on *Matrimony*.)

When Father was editor of *The BC Catholic*, readers often urged him to publish articles condemning false beliefs or movements. He replied that it was better to teach that 2 plus 2 equals 4 than to teach that 2 plus 2 does not equal 5, 6, 7, *etc.*

One reason for our resolve is that there is no end to such untruths. Another is that it is hard to condemn untruth without being uncharitable to persons. A third (as teachers learn), is that if students hear, see, or read an untruth — no matter how emphatically the teacher condemns it — they often take it in for truth.

Accordingly, in our course, we simply teach the truth.

Evidence

However, we do not just *tell* you what the Church teaches. We try to follow the advice of the apostle²¹ Peter, who said that we should always be "ready to reply" to anyone who asks us for the reason behind the teaching.²²

Do we have reasons?

A colleague once asked me whether my jade pendant was a lucky charm. I said, "No; I'm not superstitious."

"What's the difference between belief in a lucky charm and belief in God?" he asked. (He knew I was Catholic.) I replied that I had evidence for belief in God but no evidence for belief in a jade pendant.

"*Evidence for your belief in God?*" he said. "Isn't faith belief without evidence?"

This idea is quite wrong.²³ If you had no evidence at all that something was true, you would be foolish to believe it and dishonest to try. If you had no evidence that Catholicism was worth considering, you would not be taking this course.

Formal evidence

What constitutes "evidence"?

The dictionary defines evidence as "indication," "sign," or "facts" that are "available as proof."

There are many different kinds of evidence.

- In Mathematics, evidence consists of *reasoning from axioms*.²⁴

For example, if I ask my Math students to prove that a certain angle is a right angle, they are supposed to reason it out from the other information I give them; they are not supposed to get out a protractor and measure it.

- In Science, evidence consists of *observation and measurement*.

For example, if I ask my Physics students to prove that a car accelerates down a slope, I expect them to set up an experiment and take measurements.

18 CCC Introduction

19 People who teach religion

20 CCC Prologue

21 From the Greek *apostolos* ("one who is sent"). The apostles were the twelve men Jesus chose "as His companions whom He would send to preach the good news": Peter and his brother Andrew, James and his brother John, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Philip, Bartholomew (Nathaniel), Matthew, Simon, Jude (Thaddeus), and Judas. See Mk 3:13-19; Mt 10:2-4; Lk 6:12-16; Jn 1:35-49.

22 See 1 Pt 3:15.

23 "Belief without evidence" is not what we mean when we speak of "a leap of faith." For more on this topic, see the talks on "The Light of Faith," "The Contradictions of Atheism," "Prayer," and "Virtue."

24 "Established principle; maxim; self-evident truth."

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- In History, evidence consists of *documents or artifacts*. However, historians also accept the evidence of *language*.²⁵

For example, historians can deduce that in England, after 1066,²⁶ the victorious French "lorded it over" the conquered Saxons, for the English words for domesticated animals come from Saxon German — "cow" (from *Kuh*), "pig" or "swine" (from *Schwein*), "sheep" (from *Schaf*) — while the words for the meat these animals produce come from the French words for the animals: "beef" (from *boeuf*), "pork" (from *porc*), "mutton" (from *mouton*).

- In Law, evidence consists of *testimony given under oath*.

Informal evidence

There are other, less formal, kinds of evidence as well.

- *Authority*. This is the kind of evidence we have for the great majority of what we hold to be true. Briefly, we know it because we were told it by someone we trust.

- *Witness*.

For example, C.S. Lewis²⁷ said that while he was still a convinced atheist, he was struck by the number of his most intelligent colleagues and trusted authors who turned out to be Christians.²⁸

Under the Roman Emperor Licinius, in 320, a group of Christians were exposed on a frozen pond for refusing to deny their faith. Inspired by their fortitude, their guard joined them.

- Our own *experience*.

For example, a former student of mine, a brilliant mathematician, was twenty minutes into an hour-long university Math exam without having been able to answer a single question. He panicked and, although he is an atheist, said a quick prayer. By the end of the hour, he had 100 percent.²⁹

- *Fitness*.

This is the kind of evidence we have for much of what we know: we accept something because it *fits in with* or *makes sense of* things we are already sure of.

For example, Fred asks Laura for help with a crossword puzzle. "It's Keats," he says: "When I behold upon the night's starred face huge symbols of a high' ... something in seven letters."

"Romance, I think," Laura says. "I'm almost sure it is.... It'll be in the Oxford Book of Verse."

"No; that's right, I'm sure," says Fred, "because it fits in with 'delirium' and 'Baluchistan.'"³⁰

When John Straker, trainer of the horse Silver Blaze, is found dead with a sharp, delicate cataract knife in his hand, Sherlock Holmes surmises — nothing more — that he has planned to "nick" the horse's tendons to make it lose its forthcoming race. Then, after enquiry, he hears that three sheep in the nearby paddock have gone lame recently. Now he is sure his surmise is correct. "It struck me that so astute a man as Straker would not undertake this tendon-nicking without a little practice," he explains.³¹

25 See Owen Barfield: *History in English Words*, Chapter III.

26 When the Normans invaded from what is now France.

27 Clive Staples Lewis was born November 29 1898 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He was brought up Christian, but abandoned his faith in about 1912. In 1917 he went to Oxford University. He left it to serve in France, but was wounded in 1918. In January 1919 he resumed his studies, obtaining "Firsts" in Greek and Latin Literature in 1920, in Philosophy and Ancient History in 1922, and in English in 1923. From October 1924 until May 1925, he tutored in philosophy at University College, Oxford, and on May 20 1925 he was elected a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, where he tutored in English Language and Literature for the next 29 years. In 1931 he returned to Christianity. In June 1954 he accepted the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Magdalene College, Cambridge. He resigned his position because of health problems in the summer of 1963 and died on November 22 1963.

28 C.S. Lewis: *Surprised by Joy*, XIV

29 This is the kind of evidence Jesus promised when He said, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Mt 7:7).

30 See Noel Coward: *Brief Encounter*.

Lewis said that he became convinced of the truth of Christianity "not only because I see it, but because *by it I see everything else.*"³²

Referring to the Christian doctrine of original sin, the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote, "Without this hypothesis, man is unintelligible; with it every phenomenon is explicable."³³

Proof

As you will see, the evidence for what Catholics believe comes from reasoning, observation, historical documents, language, authoritative pronouncements, testimony given under oath, the witness of others, our own experience, and fitness.

But will our evidence constitute *proof*?

The dictionary defines "proof" as "evidence that is enough to establish a fact or that helps to establish a fact." There are many different kinds of evidence, so there are many different kinds of proof. Proof does not, as many people think, have to be mathematical or scientific.³⁴

How much evidence does it take to amount to *proof*?

It depends on the person. What is "enough to establish a fact" for one person may not be enough for another; what convinces me may not convince you.

For example, in the movie *Twelve Angry Men*, the jurors retire to consider their verdict pretty well convinced that the accused is guilty of murder. However, as they reconsider the evidence, piece by piece, doubts arise, and each new doubt convinces first one juror, then another, that the accused might be innocent.

For one of them, the overriding piece of evidence is that of a woman who swore that she had been in bed, trying to sleep, but that she had turned and looked through the window just in time to see the accused commit the murder.

Only near the end of the movie does this juror change his mind — when someone points out that the woman, who was not wearing glasses in court, and would not have been wearing them in bed, nevertheless had the marks on her nose that come from wearing glasses habitually.

After that, asked if he still thinks the accused guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, he says, "No. I'm convinced. Not guilty."

What is sufficient to convince us depends on the knowledge, belief, and opinions we already hold about the subject in question. For example, when Stephen Cook filed a suit November 12 1993 accusing Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago of having sexually abused him, bishops all over the United States refused to believe it.

"I know Cardinal Bernardin personally, and I completely and wholeheartedly believe in his innocence," said one cardinal.³⁵ "Knowing him as I do, it is absolutely unfathomable that these charges could be true."

"I do not know the accuser, but I do know the cardinal very well," said another.³⁶ "I categorically do not believe that he has ever been guilty of sexual abuse."

"I know him too well to believe that any of these outrageous allegations could have any basis in fact," said a third.³⁷

Cardinal Bernardin's "categorical" denial of the charge "is certainly in keeping with the man I have known for almost 30 years," said a fourth.³⁸

On the other hand, David Clohessy, US national director of the *Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests*, commended Cook for his courage "in these days of attacks against survivors by the Church." He said he extended sympathy not to priests or bishops, but to survivors of sexual abuse and to Catholics "who will be

31 See Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, "Silver Blaze."

32 C.S. Lewis: *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*, "Is Theology Poetry?"

33 Samuel Taylor Coleridge: *Table Talk*, May 1 1830

34 For a discussion of what constitutes proof, see the talk on "A Place for Science in the Catholic Faith."

35 Cardinal Anthony J. Bevilacqua of Philadelphia, quoted by Catholic News Service

36 Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York, quoted by Catholic News Service

37 Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles, quoted by Catholic News Service

38 Cardinal Bernard F. Law of Boston, quoted by Catholic News Service

shaken by these accusations against one of the folk heroes of the Church."³⁹

What apparently convinced Clohessy did not convince the four cardinals. Why the difference?

The answer is that the accusation *fitted* the knowledge and opinion that Clohessy had of Catholic clergy, while it did not fit the four cardinals' knowledge and opinion of Cardinal Bernardin.⁴⁰

* * * * *

Ask questions

Test the evidence as we present it by asking questions. Make a note of them as they occur to you and ask them as soon as you can: right after you read or hear the talk, if you can. Our contact information is on the back of the calendar at the beginning. We will try to answer them as soon as we can.

However, realize that we might have to delay answering a question until we have completed more of the talks. Very few questions have short answers; you may have to take the whole course.

For example, "If God the Father almighty, the Creator of the ordered and good world, cares for all His creatures, why does evil exist?" To this question, "no quick answer will suffice. Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer."⁴¹

Even when we know what the Church teaches, we may find it difficult to understand. "Christianity claims to be telling us about another world, about something behind the world we can touch and hear and see. You may think the claim false; but if it were true, what it tells us would be bound to be difficult.... If Christianity were something we were making up, of course we could make it easier. But it is not.... We are dealing with Fact."⁴²

On the other hand, we do not have to be geniuses to understand Christianity. Quite the contrary: Jesus said that God has revealed "to the merest children" what He has "hidden from the learned and the clever."⁴³

However, we believe that God *wants* us to know Him and to continue to grow in knowledge of Him. In this, we believe, He takes the initiative, not we.⁴⁴

To those not already Catholic

If you are not already Catholic, consider the evidence we present like a juror considering a verdict.⁴⁵ If it convinces you, you should become Catholic. If it does not, you should *not* become Catholic. People must "adhere" by "personal assent" to "the truth they have discovered"⁴⁶ and that assent must be sincere.

We believe "that God Himself has made known to the human race" how we can "reach happiness in Christ."⁴⁷ We believe "that this one true religion continues to exist in the Catholic and apostolic⁴⁸ Church, to which the Lord Jesus entrusted the task of spreading it."⁴⁹

However, we will not *press* you to accept this belief. You are free to quit after a few sessions or to complete the whole course and reject the Catholic faith at the

39 Quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* November 19 1993

40 On February 28 1994, Cook made a complete voluntary retraction of his charge against Cardinal Bernardin and, at Cook's request, a Cincinnati federal judge dismissed the case. Accuser and accused were reconciled during a two-hour meeting in Philadelphia December 30 1994. Cook died of AIDS September 22 1995; Cardinal Bernardin died of cancer November 14 1996.

41 See CCC 309. In fact, "there is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil" (CCC 309).

42 C.S. Lewis: *Mere Christianity*, Book IV, 2

43 Mt 11:25

44 See CCC 27, 30.

45 If you are already Catholic, you have other motives for accepting what the Church teaches. See the talk on "The Light of Faith."

46 Vatican II: *Dignitatis Humanae* ("Declaration on Religious Liberty"), 3

47 For the meaning of the phrase "in Christ," see the talk on "The Communion Among the Saints in the Body of Christ."

48 Christ found His Church on His *apostles*, His closest followers, from the Greek *apostolos* ("one who is sent").

49 Vatican II: *Dignitatis Humanae* ("Declaration on Religious Liberty"), 1

end of it; we will not harass you in any way.

We believe that humans are "impelled by their nature and bound by a moral responsibility to seek the truth, especially religious truth."⁵⁰ However, "truth can impose itself" on the human mind "only in virtue of its own truth, which wins over the mind with both gentleness and power."⁵¹

Accordingly, we believe that "the human person has a right to religious freedom." By this we mean not that "one religion is as good as another,"⁵² but that "all men should be immune from coercion" in religious matters.⁵³

The course

The course consists of 36 100-minute sessions, down-loadable from www.beholdvancouver.org/catholic-faith-course. In print form, all sessions are available right from the beginning; in audio-visual form, they will be posted every Friday. If you print out the text of each session, you do not have to take notes: you can underline, highlight, insert question marks or asterisks, or add comments on the printed copy.

The sessions are meant to be weekly, so that you have time to absorb the contents of each one before the next. They are assembled in logical order, although you can just "drop in" for a single session that interests you. You can find a calendar and a schedule of the whole course on the website and at the front of the binder.

We begin each session with the contents of the yellow page: a relevant hymn, a prayer, a reading from the Bible, and a brief summary of the topic ("What the Church Teaches"). We end it with a short overview of the Bible reading that we suggest for the coming week. (More on this later.)

The main part of each session is on the white pages. There we try to explain "What the Church Teaches" in some depth. The five asterisks that you see roughly half-way through the session indicate a good time to take a break.

If the talk piques your interest, you can study the topic further, using the footnotes, the bibliography, and the appendices at the ends of the white pages.

There is also a Glossary of some 1,000 religious terms. We define these terms in the white pages as we come to them, but you can use the Glossary to refresh your memory of them or to discover the sessions in which we discuss them.

How you use the white pages depends on how you prefer to take in information: by listening or by reading. Some people read them ahead of time and come to each session with questions. Others read them as we deliver them. Still others do not read them, but keep them as a record of what we have said.

A matter of love

"There are not over a hundred people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church. There are millions, however, who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church."⁵⁴

Accordingly, this course is designed to *teach what Catholics believe*. And in that respect, we can say to you what St. Paul said to the people of Miletus: that we never shrink "from announcing to you God's design in its entirety."⁵⁵

However, as Thomas More⁵⁶ said to his daughter shortly before his martyrdom, "Finally ... it isn't a matter of reason; finally it's a matter of love."⁵⁷

"The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that

50 Vatican II: *Dignitatis Humanae* ("Declaration on Religious Liberty"), 2

51 Vatican II: *Dignitatis Humanae* ("Declaration on Religious Liberty"), 1

52 Pope John Paul II: *Redemptoris Missio*, 36

53 Vatican II: *Dignitatis Humanae* ("Declaration on Religious Liberty"), 2

54 Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen: *Radio Replies*, Volume 1, Foreword

55 See Acts 20:27.

56 Sir Thomas More was Lord High Chancellor of England under King Henry VIII from October 1529 to May 16 1532. When Henry declared himself "head of the Church in England," More resigned; when the King insisted that he take the "Oath of Supremacy," he refused and was executed July 6 1534.

57 Robert Bolt: *A Man For All Seasons*, Act Two

never ends.... all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love."⁵⁸ "Love of God is immeasurably more important than knowledge of God."⁵⁹

However, "love of God is not something that is taught."⁶⁰ All we can do is pass on the Church's *knowledge* of God. And "if a man loves God knowing a little about Him, he should love God more from knowing more about Him; for each new thing known about God is a new reason for loving Him."⁶¹

Bibliography

Catechism of the Catholic Church

C.S. Lewis: *Miracles*, I-VI

C.S. Lewis: *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*, "Is Theology Poetry?"

C.S. Lewis: *The World's Last Night*, "On Obstinacy in Belief"

A Man For All Seasons

Frank Sheed: *A Map of Life*

Frank Sheed: *Theology and Sanity*

Twelve Angry Men

58 CCC 25

59 Frank Sheed: *Theology and Sanity*, 1

60 Basil the Great: *The Long Rules*, 2

61 Frank Sheed: *Theology and Sanity*, 1

Reading the Bible

Introduction

According to the Church document *Dei Verbum* ("The Word of God"), "all the preaching of the Church, as indeed the entire Christian religion, should be nourished and ruled by Sacred Scripture":¹ in other words, the Bible. Accordingly, the Church "forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful" to read the Bible, claiming that "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."²

Anyone studying "The Catholic Faith," therefore, should be reading the Bible.

The Catholic Church discerned which writings to include in the Bible according to the tradition handed on by the twelve apostles, who were Jesus' closest collaborators, chosen by Him. It is not one book, but a collection of 73 books: 46 in what is called the Old Testament (telling of events before Jesus) and 27 in the New Testament (after Jesus' birth). "Testament" can be replaced with "Covenant."

Much of the Bible is written like history. Now anyone who writes history has to decide what kind of facts to include. Most histories focus on politics, war, and imperialism, so they are written in terms of elections, battles, exploration, and settlement. Others focus on economics and technology,³ so they are written in terms of depressions and inventions.

The ancient Jews focussed not on politics, war, economics, or technology, but on God's purpose and action in human affairs. The Bible is not less historical than modern history books, but it is different. If you try to read it like a modern history book, you will miss most of what it has to offer.⁴

People who start to read the books of the Bible in order, from beginning to end, nearly always get bogged down about the third book: the Book of Leviticus. Unless they get advice on what books to select for a first reading, they simply stop.

On the next page, the Bible's books are listed, divided into categories, with the ones we suggest for a first reading marked with asterisks. On the following page is a schedule according to which, if you start reading now, you will finish the suggested books by the end of this course.

You will see that we have selected books from each category: Jewish history, wisdom literature, prophecy, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and Paul's letters. We have also kept in mind ease of reading and relevance to *Christianity*. For example, in selecting from the Prophetic Books, we have concentrated on those which prophesy the coming of the Messiah. We have recommended reading all the Gospels, for they speak directly about Christ, and the Acts of the Apostles, which recounts the history of the early Church.

If you prefer to listen to the Bible on DVD or an MP3 or iPod player, you can order the Catholic New American Bible from www.bible.com, audio bibles, or from Audio Bible, 2358 Braeburn Circle, Tallahassee FL 32309, 1-800-758-0160.

Referring to Bible passages

The name of each book of the Bible has a (fairly) standard abbreviation and each book is divided into *chapters* and *verses*. It is customary to refer to parts of the Bible by name, chapter, and verse. For example,

- "Gn 1:2-6" means the Book of Genesis, Chapter 1, verses 2-6.
- "2 Sm 1-17" means the Second Book of Samuel, Chapters 1-17.
- "Acts 3:4-6,8-9" means the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 3, verses 4-6 and 8-9.
- "Mk 1:2-4, 3:4-6" means the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 1, verses 2-4, and Chapter 3, verses 4-6.

1 Vatican II: *Dei Verbum*, 21. "Scripture" comes from the Latin *scriptura* ("a piece of writing") and *scriptum* ("written"). The Bible is often called "Sacred Scripture" or simply "Scripture."

2 Vatican II: *Dei Verbum*, 25

3 See Roger Burligame: *Machines that Built America* and Ernst Samhaber: *Merchants Make History*.

4 See Scott Hahn: *A Father Who Keeps His Promises*, 1.

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT

OCTATEUCH⁵

* Genesis
 * Exodus
 Leviticus
 Numbers
 Deuteronomy
 * Joshua
 Judges
 Ruth

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

* 1 Samuel
 * 2 Samuel
 1 Kings
 2 Kings
 1 Chronicles
 2 Chronicles
 Ezra
 Nehemiah
 Tobit
 Judith
 Esther
 1 Maccabees
 2 Maccabees

THE WISDOM BOOKS

Job
 * Psalms
 Proverbs
 Ecclesiastes
 Song of Songs
 Wisdom
 Sirach

THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

* Isaiah
 * Jeremiah
 Lamentations
 Baruch
 Ezekiel
 * Daniel
 Hosea
 Joel
 Amos
 Obadiah

Jonah
 * Micah
 Nahum
 Habakkuk
 Zephaniah
 Haggai
 * Zechariah
 * Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT

THE GOSPELS

* Matthew
 * Mark
 * Luke
 * John

THE EARLY CHURCH

* Acts of the Apostles

THE LETTERS OF PAUL

* Romans
 1 Corinthians
 2 Corinthians
 Galatians
 Ephesians
 Philippians
 Colossians
 1 Thessalonians
 2 Thessalonians
 1 Timothy
 * 2 Timothy
 Titus
 Philemon

OTHER LETTERS

Hebrews
 James
 1 Peter
 2 Peter
 1 John
 2 John
 3 John
 Jude

REVELATION

⁵ From the Greek *octa* ("eight") plus *teuchos* ("book"). The first five books — known as the *Pentateuch*, from the Greek *penta* ("five") plus *teuchos* "book") — are revered by the Jews as the "Law," or "Torah": the concrete expression of God's will with respect to His chosen people. Besides a body of legal doctrine, they describe the formation of the People of God: Abraham and the patriarchs, Moses and the oppressed Hebrews in Egypt, the birth of Israel in the Sinai covenant, the journey to the threshold of the Promised Land, and the "discourses" of Moses.

Bible-Reading Schedule
September 3 2023 - May 25 2024

After Session	Week	Bible Reading	√
1	Sep 3 - 10	Gn 1-19	
2	Sep 10 - 20	Gn 20-33	
3	Sep 21 - 23	Gn 34-50	
4	Sep 24 - 30	Ex 1-18	
5	Oct 1 - 7	Ex 19-40	
6	Oct 8 - 14	Jos 1-24	
7	Oct 15 - 21	1 Sm 1-15	
8	Oct 22 - 28	1 Sm 16-31	
9	Oct 29 - Nov 4	2 Sm 1-14	
10	Nov 5 - 11	2 Sm 15-24	
11	Nov 12 - 18	Ps 1-38	
12	Nov 19 - 25	Ps 39-74	
13	Nov 26 - Dec 2	Ps 75-107	
14	Dec 3 - 9	Ps 108-150	
15	Dec 10 - 16	Is 1-17	
16	Dec 17 - Jan 6	Is 18-34	
17	Jan 7 - 13	Is 35-49	
18	Jan 14 - 20	Is 50-66	
19	Jan 21 - 27	Jer 1-18	
20	Jan 28 - Feb 3	Jer 19-35	
21	Feb 4 - 10	Jer 36-52	
22	Feb 11 - 17	Dn 1-14	
23	Feb 18 - 24	Mi 1-7 Zec 1-14 Mal 1-3	
24	Feb 25 - Mar 2	Mt 1-11	
25	Mar 3 - 9	Mt 12-20	
26	Mar 10 - 16	Mt 21-28	
27	Mar 17 - 23	Mk 1-9:1	
28	Mar 24 - 30	Mk 9:2-16	
29	Mar 31 - Apr 6	Lk 1-10	
30	Apr 7 - 13	Lk 11-24	
31	Apr 14 - 20	Jn 1-10	
32	Apr 21 - 27	Jn 11-21	
33	Apr 28 - May 4	Acts 1-13	
34	May 5 - 11	Acts 14-28	
35	May 12 - 25	Rom 1-16 2 Tim 1-4	

