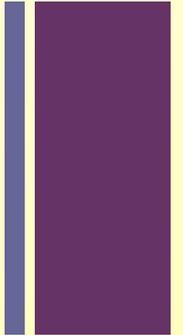




Lent Catechesis

God, Jesus, The Church, You

+ Topics



Mar 7 – Catholic Vision & “Who is God?”

Mar 14 – “Who am I?”

Mar 21 – “Who is Jesus?”

Mar 28 – “What is the Church?”

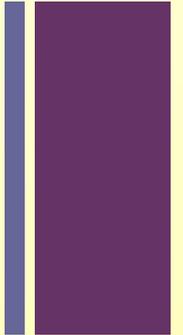
Apr 4 – “What is the good life?”

Apr 11- “How do I pray?”

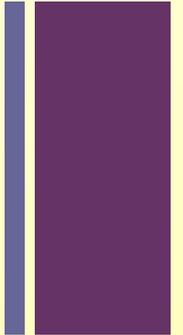
+ Sources

- Natural Reason/ Philosophy / Sciences

- Revelation
 - Sacred Scripture
 - Tradition
 - Church Fathers
 - Saints
 - Church Teaching/ Catechism of the Catholic Church
 - Church Magisterium*

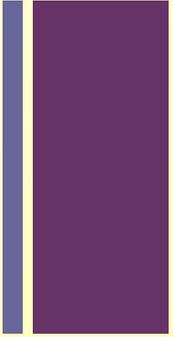


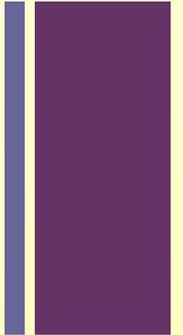
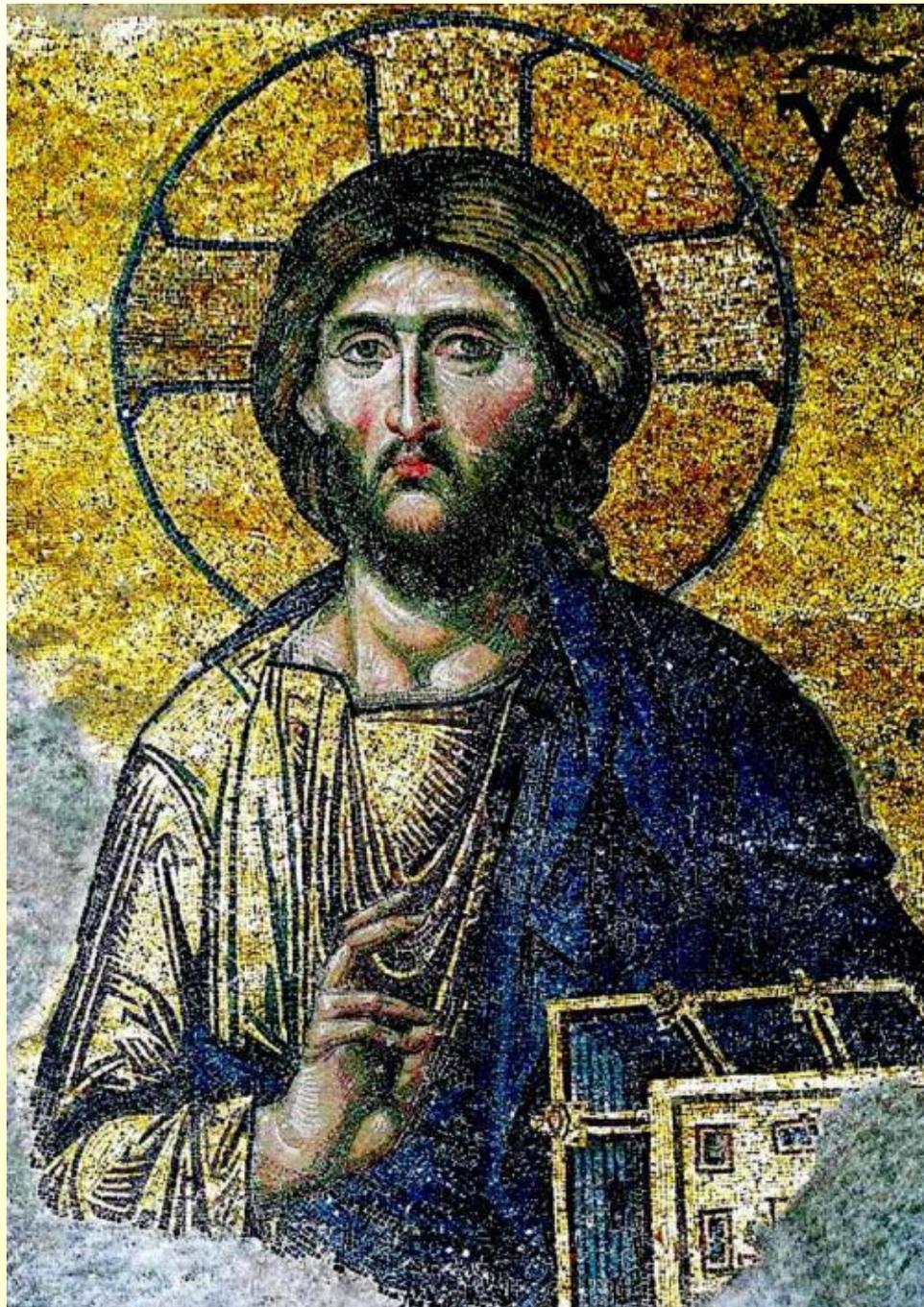
+ The Catholic Vision



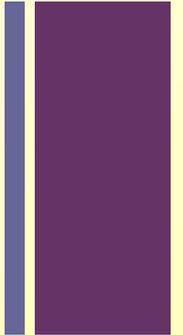
“Enemy occupied territory – that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say in disguise, and is calling us to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.”

– C. S. Lewis



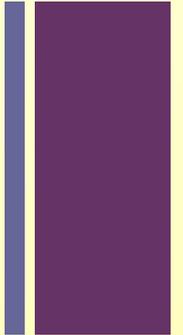


+ The Catholic Vision



- Truth – Faith & Reason
- Realism
- Incarnation
- Sacramentality
- History
- Tradition

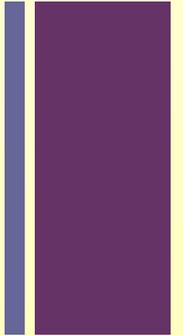
+ Who is God?



- Natural Theology
- Being
- Creation
 - Visible and Invisible
- Subsistent Existence
- Personal
- Revelatory
- Trinity



How can we know?

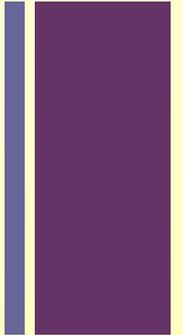


■ Natural Reason

- The “idea” of God comes through:
 - A general and confused way expressed in a desire for happiness
 - A perception of order and harmony in creation
- Rational / Philosophical inquiry
 - Based on questions that stem from our experience of the world
 - Related to the desire for scientific knowledge
 - “How” and “why” are distinct but related questions



Natural Reason – The Five Proofs



1) **Argument from Motion** (Everything in motion was put in motion by something that was in motion before it. But this cannot go back infinitely. There was a First Mover.)

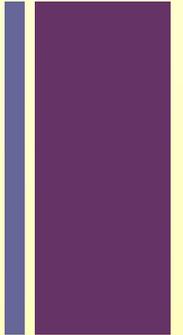
2) **Argument from Causes** (Every thing is an effect of some preceding cause. But this cannot go back infinitely. There is a First Cause.)

3) **Argument from Possibility and Necessity** (Everything in nature is “possible.” It exists because something else existed before it in a certain way. Everything that exists is depending on something that came before it. But this cannot go back infinitely. There is an uncaused-Cause.)

4) **Argument from Degrees of Perfection** (Everything can be said to have a greater or lesser degree of perfection. To speak of degrees of perfection, there must be an exemplar that is perfect according to which things are measured.)

5) **Argument from Governance** (The regularity, pattern, and order of things moving towards their ends manifest an intelligent purpose.)

+ Cosmological Argument



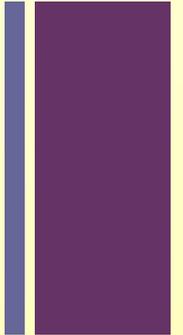
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COJ0ED1mV7s>
- Other arguments for Gods existence:
 - <https://strangenotions.com/god-exists/>

+ East vs. West (Absence vs. Presence)

- Eastern Religions (Generally)
 - Brahman – An impersonal force throughout all existence. The ultimate “self” and reality is “Maya” or an illusion. Brahman is present in every thing but is no thing. All is one and what we perceive is a distortion of that one.
 - “The world is illusory. Only Brahman is real. Brahman is the world.” – Ramana Maharshi
 - The goal of life is “moksha” or self-realization through higher consciousness that you are nothing but Brahman.
 - “The happiness of the drop is to die in the river.” – Al-Ghazali



East vs. West cont.



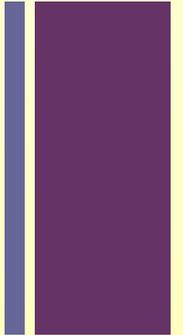
- Abrahamic Religions

- “I am who am” – God, Exodus 3:14

- *This name HE WHO IS is most properly applied to God ... because of its signification. For it does not signify form, but simply existence itself. Hence since the existence of God is His essence itself, which can be said of no other, it is clear that among other names this one specially denominates God, for everything is denominated by its form. (ST I. Q.13, a.11)*



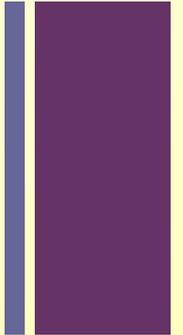
God IS the foundation of existence



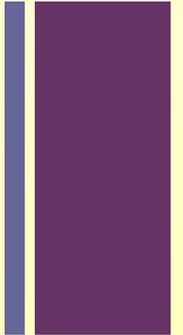
- “Subsistent Existence” (Ipsum Esse Subistens)
 - God enjoys the perfection of his being from and in himself
- Everything we know about God is because of his intentional self-manifestation through creation
 - His goodness is reflected in his work (like an artist through his art)
 - We can reason to God through his effects
 - He wills his creation to share in his goodness and participate in his perfection

+ Some points to remember:

- Reality is really real
- We can actually know things to be true
- Truth is not only in visible things
- Non-material things “exist”, even if they are not measurable
 - Error of *Scientism* – “The only true knowledge is that which can be scientifically proven”
 - Reality is not restricted to scientific explanation
 - Presuppositions and possible questions

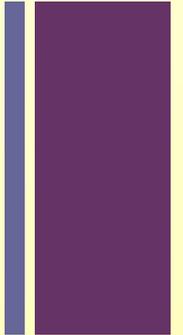


+ Creation



- Different for a reason:
 - *Enuma Elish* –Assyrian creation myth
 - Greek Myths / Philosophies
- Not necessary
- Not eternal
- Not God yet not mediated
- “It was good”
- Rocks are Hard, Water is Wet

+ Visible and Invisible



- Angels
 - Real beings
 - Non-bodily
 - Outside of our time
 - Rational
 - “Angel” is what they do, not “who” they are
 - 9 Choirs – Different functions
 - Fallen Angels

+ **God's Grandeur** BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

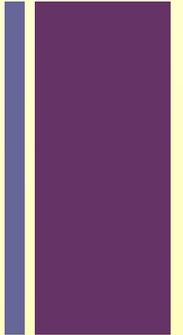
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.





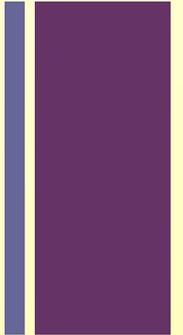
“Question the beauty of the earth, question the beauty of the sea, question the beauty of the air, amply spread around everywhere, question the beauty of the sky, question the serried ranks of the stars, question the sun making the day glorious with its bright beams, question the moon tempering the darkness of the following night with its shining rays, question the animals that move in the waters, that amble about on dry land, that fly in the air; their souls hidden, their bodies evident; the visible bodies needing to be controlled, the invisible souls controlling them; question all these things. They all answer you, 'Here we are, look ; we're beautiful.'

Their beauty is their confession. Who made these beautiful changeable things, if not one who is beautiful and unchangeable? – ST. Augustine

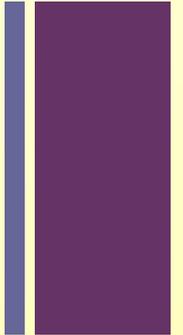


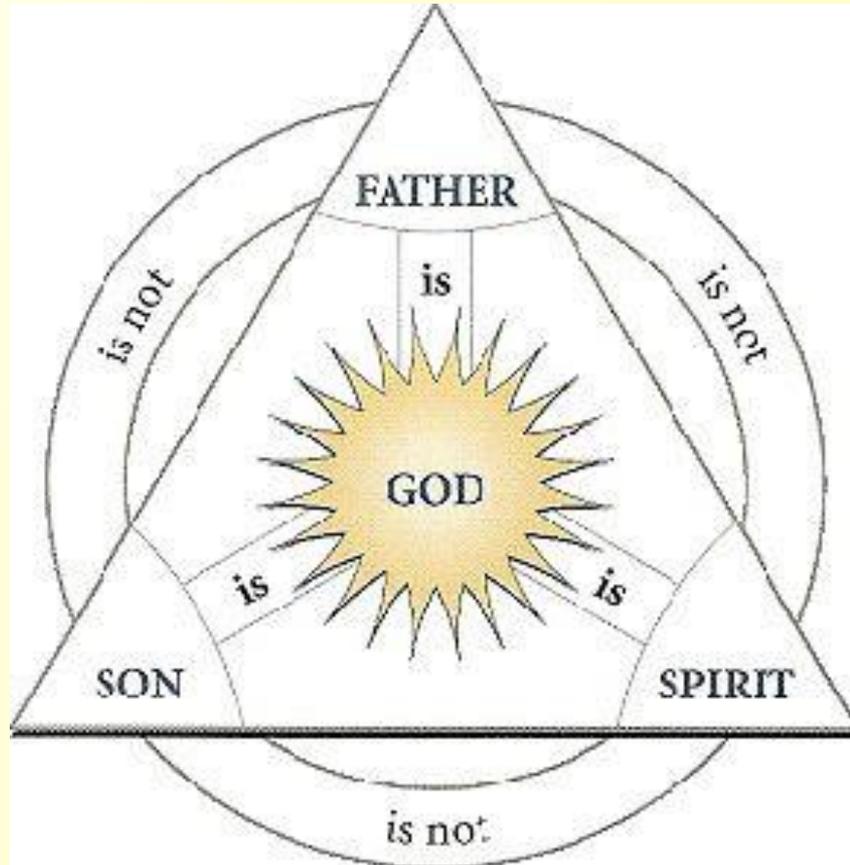
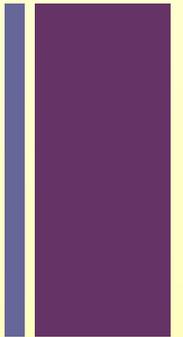
+ God Reveals Himself

- Nature of Revelation
 - Why?
 - How?
- Jesus Christ is the fullness of God's Revelation
 - Words and Gestures
 - What is necessary for salvation

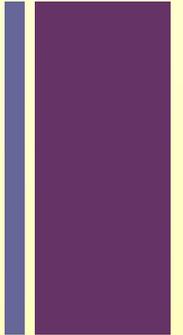


+ God is a Trinity of Persons





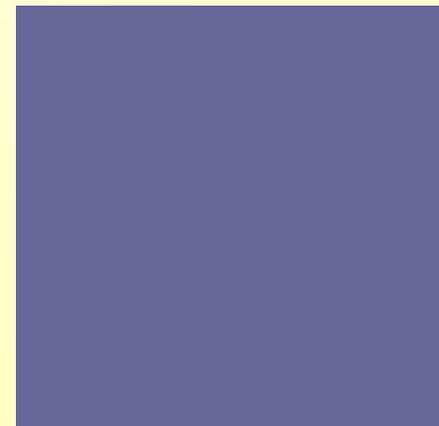
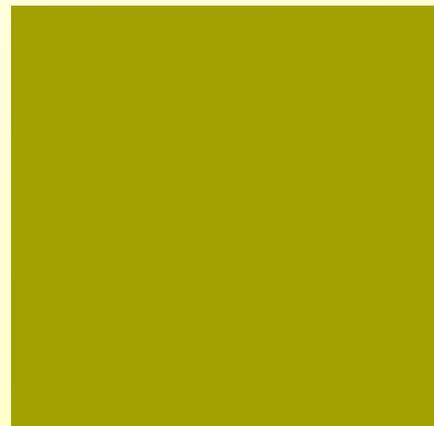
+ Definition



We confess and we believe that the holy and indescribable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one only God in His nature, a single substance, a single nature, a single majesty and power.

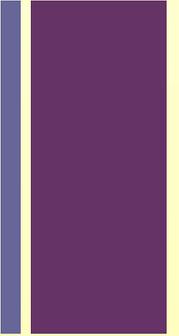
We acknowledge Trinity in the distinction of persons; we profess Unity because of the nature or substance. The three are one, as a nature, that is, not as person. Nevertheless, these three persons are not to be considered separable, since we believe that no one of them existed or at any time effected anything before the other, after the other, or without the other.

Council of Toledo -675 AD

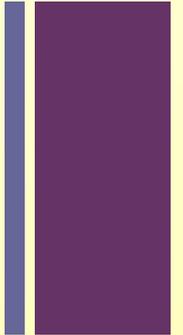


Lent Catechesis

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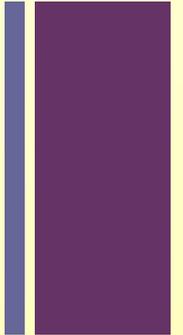
Who am I? – Part of Creation

The glory of God is the living man, the life of man is the vision of God- St. Irenaeus of Lyons

(Cf. John 1 & 3)

God's interior glory springs from the mystery of the divinity. Through the work of creation, it is in a certain sense transferred "outside"-in the creatures of the visible and invisible world, in proportion to their degree of perfection.

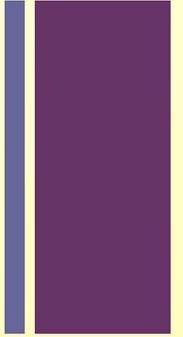
A new dimension of God's glory begins with the creation of the visible and invisible world. This glory is called "exterior" to distinguish it from the previous one. – St. JP II



+ Creation

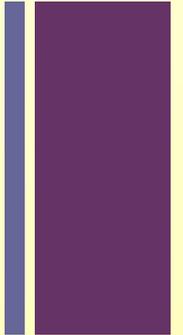
*Let us return again for a moment to the words in which the First Vatican Council expressed the truth about creation and about the Creator of the world. "This one true God, in his goodness and 'omnipotent power,' **not to increase his own happiness, nor to acquire, but to manifest his perfection through the gifts he distributes to creatures,** by a supremely free decision, 'simultaneously from the beginning of time drew forth from nothingness both the one creature and the other, the spiritual and the corporeal...'" (DS 3002).*

*This text makes explicit with a language all its own the same truth about creation and about its finality, which we find in the biblical texts. The Creator does not seek any "completion" of himself in the work of creation. Such reasoning would be a direct antithesis of what God is in himself. He is the Being totally and infinitely perfect. Consequently he has no need of the world. **Creatures, both visible and invisible, cannot "add" anything to the divinity of the Triune God.** – St. JPII*



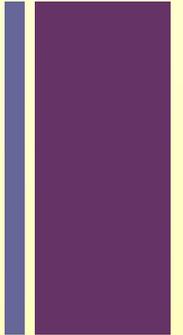


God Creates...

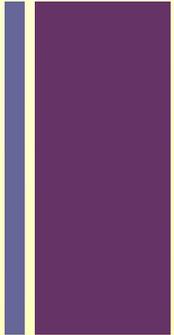
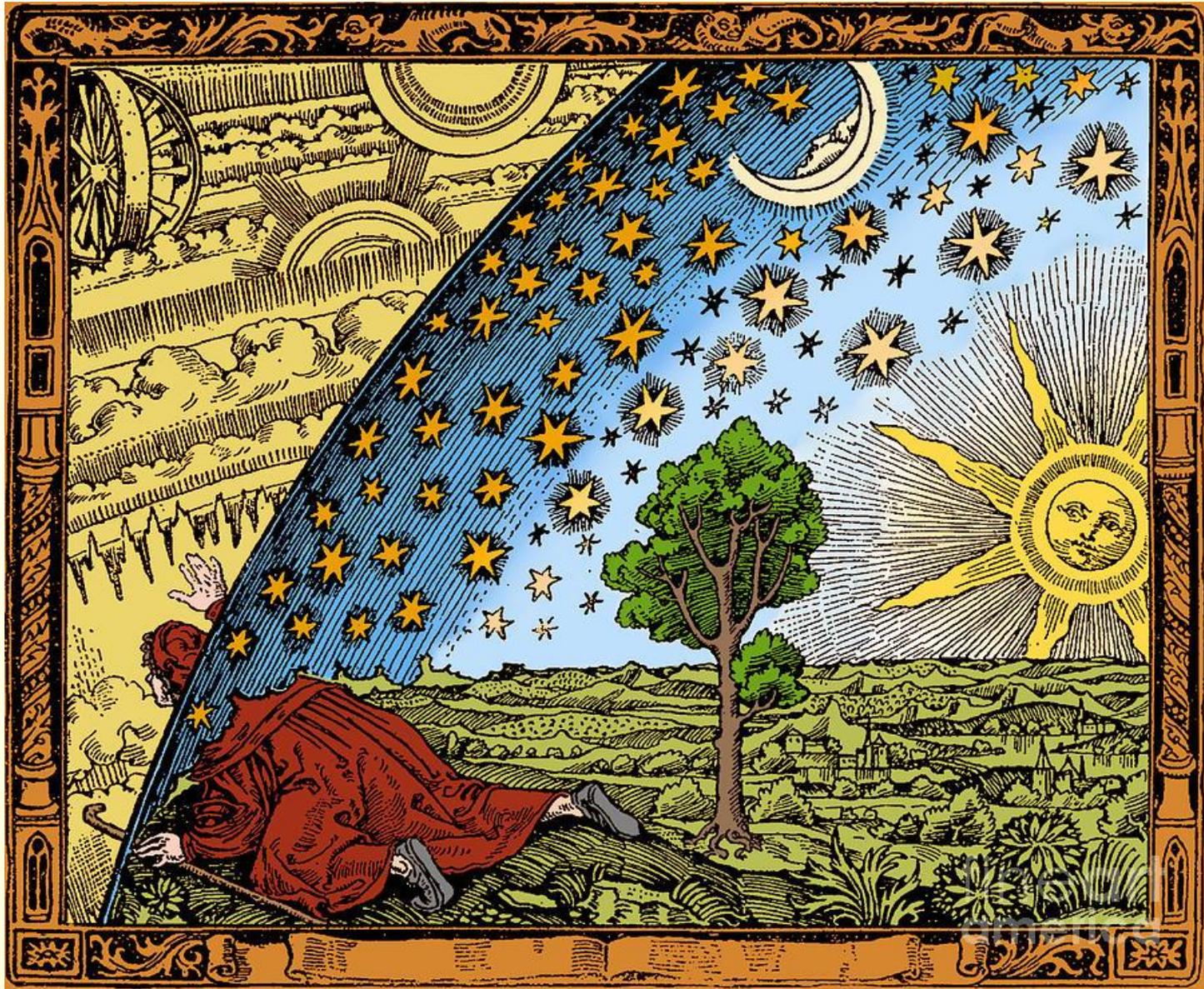


- *Ex Nihilo*
- An ordered and good world
- Transcending his creation and yet remains present to it
- Upholding and sustaining it
- Guiding it by his Providence
 - Scandal of evil
 - *There is not a aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil. – CCC 309*

+ Physics - *Nature*

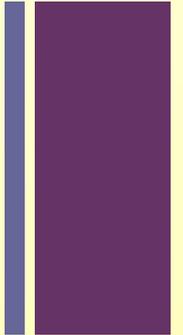


- The way in which things are; the given (natus) way of a thing.
- *“The nature of each thing is to act according to its operation” – St. Thomas Aquinas*
 - *You know it by observing it*
- Nature of the world:
 - Stars
 - Laws of thermodynamics
 - Human nature
 - Etc.
- This includes the laws and tendencies of things not as individuals but as they belong to the category of thing
 - Animals, Natural Law, things measurable by science





Metaphysics – Beyond “*Physics*”



- This plus “Physics” or the study of nature, are the best way to start talking about things, what they are, why they are, how they ought to be, etc.
- Like any biological thing, we can speak of a purpose of a thing according to biological terms.
 - A healthy kitten is obviously different than a sick kitten
 - A flourishing human being is obviously different than an ill, depressed, poorly functioning human being.
- To understand “me” I have understand “human nature”

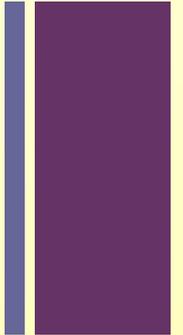


What makes the *human person*?

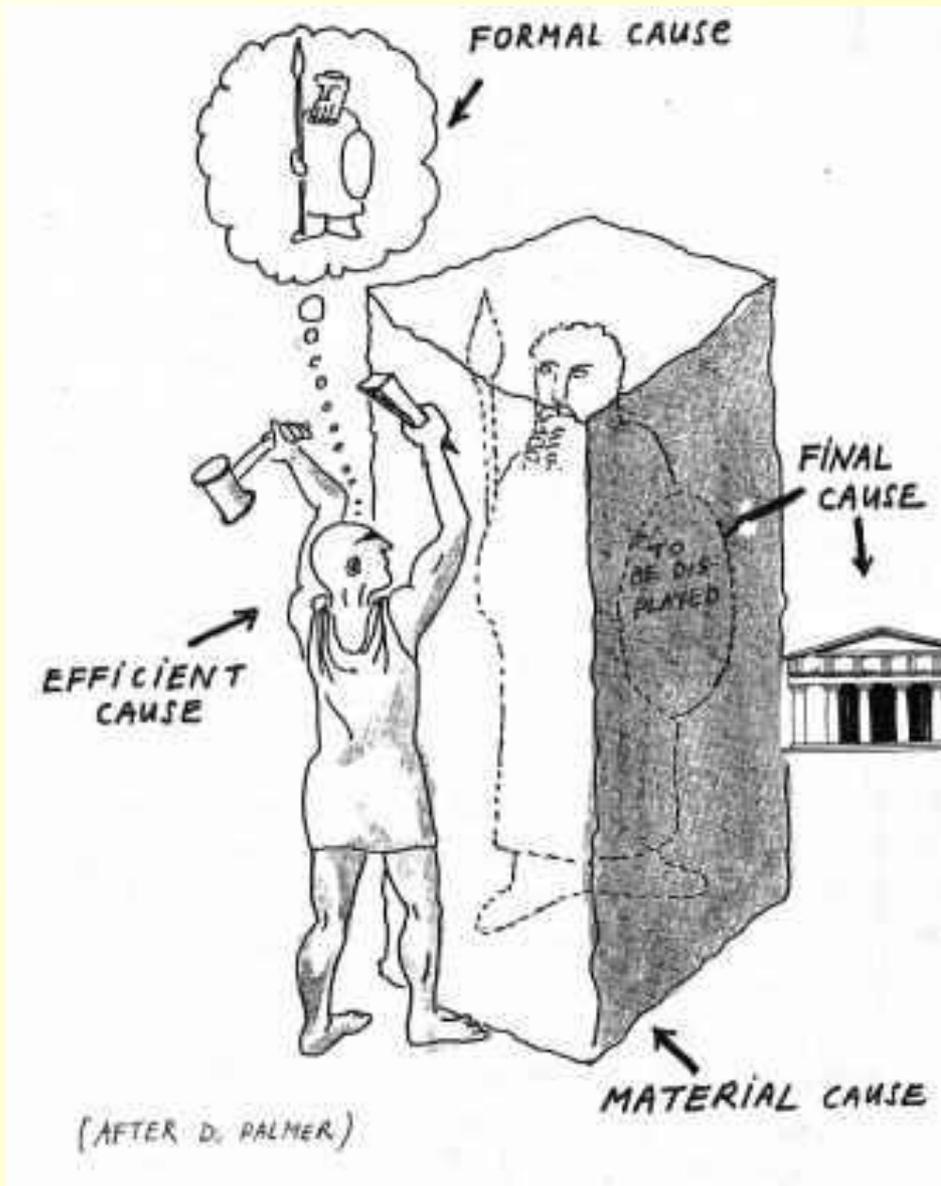
The Four Causes

- **Material** – The stuff its made of (a wooden table is made of wood; a golden coin is made of gold)
- **Formal** – The blueprint /idea of a thing; A wooden table: the wood = matter and “tableness” = form.
- **Efficient** – What makes the thing; a carpenter makes the table as the efficient cause
- **Final** – The purpose of a thing (a table is for setting things on); “Why” it exists, what its for.

<https://simplyphilosophy.org/study/aristotles-four-causes/>

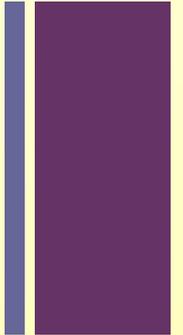


+ Four Causes in a picture





The Four Causes of the Human Being

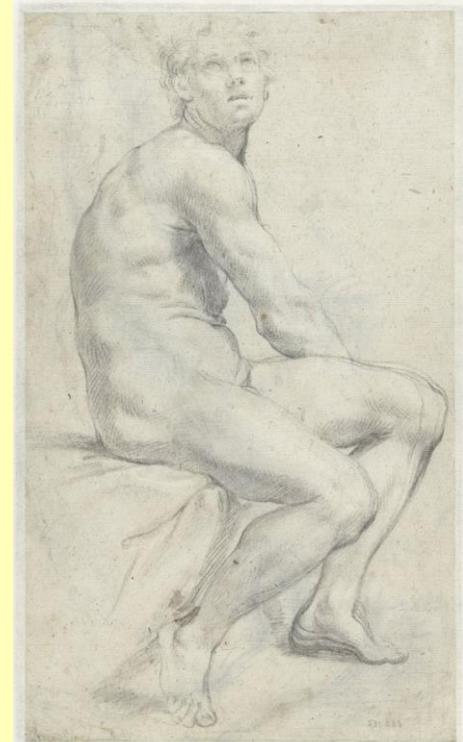


- Material Cause – Matter (animal)
- Formal Cause – Soul (rational)
- Efficient Cause – God & parents
- Final Cause – The Beatific Vision
(Desire for happiness)

Cf. <https://taylormarshall.com/2012/09/aristotles-four-causes-and-how-it.html>

+ Material Cause - Matter

- Biological Organism
 - Which itself implies a soul/immaterial reality
 - Nutritive, reproductive, unity of identity, sensitive, intellectual, rational, etc.
- Senses / Sensibility
 - Five Senses
 - Common Sense
- Sensible Appetite
- Communicates the inner life
- Subject to physical forces and death
- Informed by rational (immaterial) soul





Sense Appetites

Concupiscible Appetites: Simple inclination with respect to sensible object

- *Attraction towards object* (object is good)
- *Repulsion away from object* (object is evil)

- **Love** (good as such)
- **Hatred** (evil as such)
- **Joy** (present good)
- **Sadness** (present evil)
- **Desire** (absent good)
- **Aversion** (absent evil)

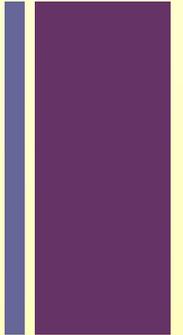
Irascible appetites: Inclination in virtue of an arduous object

- *Good that is difficult to attain*
- *Evil difficult to avoid*
- (N/A - no present good difficult to attain)

- **Anger** (present evil)
- **Hope** (absent but attainable good)
- **Courage** (threatening but *conquerable* evil)
- **Despair** (absent, unattainable good)
- **Fear** (threatening but unconquerable evil)



Formal Cause – Rational Soul

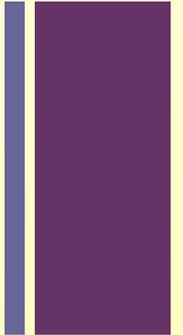


- **Vegetative Powers:** Nutrition, growth, reproduce
- **Sensitive Powers:** Perceive and react to sensations
- **Appetitive Powers:** Ability to desire what is seen/sensed
- **Locomotive Powers:** Able to freely move oneself
- **Rational Powers:** Ability to come to know and act in a reflective way;
 - Intellect
 - Will





Rational Soul



- **Intellect – “To know the truth”**

- Passive (Receive input through senses)

- Perception

- Active (Abstracts from this sense input to determine “what kind of thing” it is)

- Judgment

- Reason

- **Will (Rational Appetite)- “To love the truth”**

- Desires happiness (and, with the guidance of reason, moves to obtain it)

- Always chooses what APPEARS good, even if it is actually bad

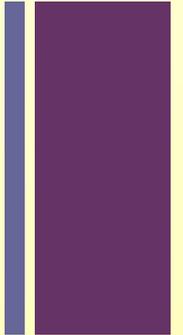
- Inclined by the Intellect

+ Efficient Cause – God (and parents)

- God – Made our immortal soul
 - Thus in his Image and Likeness (*Imago Dei*)
 - We share in his intelligence and freedom
 - Human dignity rooted in this

“Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something but someone.” –CCC 357

“Capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons.” –Ibid.



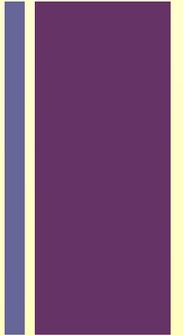
+ Imago Dei

- Made for relationship and communion
 - With others
 - Eternally with God
 - The only creature willed for himself
 - Able to freely chose God or reject him
- Value of person not dependent on *usefulness*, but is an intrinsic quality
- All moral and social teachings of the Church stem from this reality



+ ...and our parents...

- Only humans can beget humans
- With that, the transmission of original sin
 - Fallen Human Nature
 - Darkened Intellect
 - Weakened Will
 - Concupiscence
- Our lineage, our history, our **culture**, our language, much of our self-understanding and psychological traits
- Centrality of the family and relationships in one's identity





- Rights and Responsibility

- Freedom
- Choices

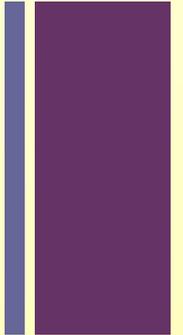
- Stewardship

- Hierarchy of Creatures

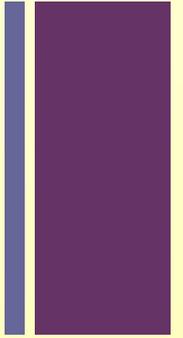
- A religious being

- A moral being

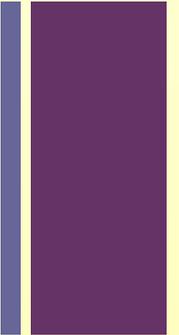
- Conscience: “The interior voice of a human being, within whose heart the inner law of God is inscribed. Moral conscience is a judgment of practical reason about a moral quality of a human action. It moves a person to the appropriate moment to do good and avoid evil.” –CCC



+ Final Cause – The Beatific Vision

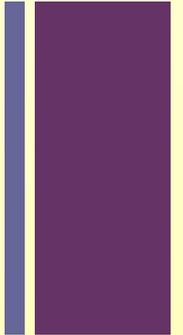


+ *The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment. By his deliberate actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience. Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth. With the help of grace they grow in virtue, avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son¹ to the mercy of our Father in heaven. In this way they attain to the perfection of charity. –*
CCC 1700





Final Cause – The Beatific Vision



We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated. – St. Augustine

How is it, then, that I seek you, Lord? Since in seeking you, my God, I seek a happy life, let me seek you so that my soul may live, for my body draws life from my soul and my soul draws life from you. – Ibid.

God alone satisfies. – St. Thomas Aquinas

+ *We can therefore hope in the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love him and do his will. In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere "to the end" and to obtain the joy of heaven, as God's eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of Christ. In hope, the Church prays for "all men to be saved." She longs to be united with Christ, her Bridegroom, in the glory of heaven:*

Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, even though your impatience makes doubtful what is certain, and turns a very short time into a long one. Dream that the more you struggle, the more you prove the love that you bear your God, and the more you will rejoice one day with your Beloved, in a happiness and rapture that can never end. – CCC 1821



Beatific Vision



- Heaven is Communion with God
 - Sharing in the Life of the Trinity
 - Empowered by the Holy Spirit
 - With God the Father
 - Through Christ the Son

Our Lord does not come down from heaven every day to lie in a golden ciborium. He comes to find another heaven which is infinitely dearer to him—the heaven of our souls, created in his image, the living temples of the adorable Trinity. – St. Therese of Lisieux

Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. – St. Thomas More



Our business is to get to heaven. Everything else is a waste of time. – St. Vincent de Paul