

CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

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“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1). Here in the very first words of Sacred Scripture we begin to answer the question of our origin. Where do we come from? In the same breath we have to ask ourselves “where are we going, what is our final destiny?” The catechism tells us that these two questions are “decisive for the meaning and orientation of our life and actions”. (CCC 282) It is in answering these questions that we come to discover the very purpose of our lives.

So by what means can we give any conclusive answers to these questions? How do we come to know that there is a supreme being who created us and holds everything in existence? The Church teaches that “the existence of God the Creator can be known with certainty through his works, by the light of human reason...” and our faith then confirms and enlightens our reason. (CCC 286) If this is so, we must first take a close look at God’s works, creation itself. In fact, St. Paul tells us that God “made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him...” (Acts 17:26,27) In other words, his creation itself is meant to entice us to seek Him and ultimately find Him. Through creation, he draws us to himself.

Modern scientists often try to answer the question of the origin of the universe without considering the existence of a supreme creator.

Theories continue to be advanced to explain the why and how of creation solely by a series of natural causes, but they fail to see the hand of the

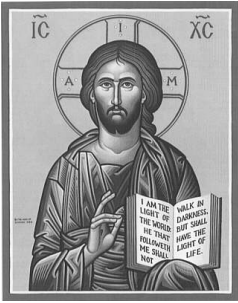
supernatural behind the natural. In the final analysis, they are only theories and we begin to realize that the more we come to know and understand, the more we find we don’t know and can’t quite explain. We continue to discover space beyond that which we had previously known and particles of matter smaller than we had imagined. For example, scientists have discovered particles, which they have named neutrinos, that are constantly passing through everything, including our bodies, by the billions. They are so small that it is estimated that they can pass through concrete 10 light years thick, undisturbed. When we discover and observe the amazing intricacies of creation, particularly our own bodies, can we honestly believe this all came about by chance? What can explain this seemingly infinite creation? Could it be an infinite God? That mysterious communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit who continues to draw us into that communion as we grope for a deeper understanding of what He has created. As St. Paul continues in Acts 17:28, “... in Him (God) we live and move and have our being”. If we accept this, then we can understand that apart from God, the means and purpose of all creation cannot be fully explained.

So what does the Church actually teach about the beginnings of our existence and that of all creation? To begin with, the creeds explain that there exists a transcendent, intelligent and good Being called “God” who created freely, out of nothing, all that exists. The Church does not go so far as to say exactly how everything came into existence, but that God created in

an orderly fashion with the intention of showing and communicating his glory. He desired to come into covenant, to share his very life, with the humanity which he created. This is the expression of God’s all powerful love and the ultimate purpose of all of creation. This truth is revealed throughout Sacred Scripture and salvation history but it is uniquely expressed in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis. (CCC 289) The Church teaches that God has created an ordered and good world, which he transcends (is infinitely greater than) but also remains present to. (CCC 299,300) This creation is not complete, but “in a state of journeying toward an ultimate perfection yet to be attained” (CCC 302) when God will become “all in all”. He continues to guide his creation toward this perfection by what we call “divine providence”. We are called to freely cooperate with God’s direction and care to accomplish his plan and complete the work of creation. When you stop and consider this, it is an awesome responsibility and privilege. One which can only be accomplished by God’s grace. By prayer, obedience and an offering of our work and even our suffering we share in God’s plan for the eternal good of each of us. We become “God’s fellow workers” and co-workers for his kingdom. (CCC 307) May we persevere and continue in this work as we seek God and deepen our understanding of his infinite and wonderful creation!

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THE CATECHESIS OF CREATION



"The question about the origins of the world and of man has been the object of many scientific studies which have splendidly enriched our knowledge of the age and dimensions of the cosmos, the development of life-forms and the appearance of

man. These discoveries invite us to even greater admiration for the greatness of the Creator, prompting us to give him thanks for all his works and for the understanding and wisdom he gives to scholars and researchers. With Solomon they can say: "It is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements . . . for Wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me." (CCC 283)

"Among all the Scriptural texts about creation, the first three chapters of Genesis occupy a unique place. From a literary standpoint these texts may have had diverse sources. The inspired authors have placed them at the beginning of Scripture to express in their solemn language the truths of creation - its origin and its end in God, its order

and goodness, the vocation of man, and finally the drama of sin and the hope of salvation. Read in the light of Christ, within the unity of Sacred Scripture and in the living Tradition of the Church, these texts remain the principal source for catechesis on the mysteries of the "beginning": creation, fall, and promise of salvation." (CCC 289)

"In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God . . . all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." The New Testament reveals that God created everything by the eternal Word, his beloved Son. In him "all things were created, in heaven and on earth . . . all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." The Church's faith likewise confesses the creative action of the Holy Spirit, the "giver of life," "the Creator Spirit" (Veni, Creator Spiritus), the "source of every good." (CCC 291)

"We believe that God created the world according to his wisdom. It is not the product of any necessity whatever, nor of blind fate or chance. We believe that it proceeds from God's free will; he wanted to make his creatures share in his being, wisdom, and goodness..." (CC 295)

"God created the world to show forth and communicate his glory. That his creatures should share in his truth, goodness and beauty - this is the glory for which God created them." (CCC 319)

WHO ARE WE?

"We are not congealed stardust, an accidental by-product of cosmic chemistry. We are not just *something*, we are *someone*. Moreover, we are 'someones' going somewhere. As human beings possessed of an innate, God-given dignity, we have a divine destiny, revealed and made possible by Jesus Christ..."

-Catholic author George Weigel

Thoughtful Questions

Do you recognize the hand of God in all of creation?

Do you appreciate the gift of life you have been blessed with and reflect on the purpose and meaning of that life?

Are you a good steward of God's creation?

The Word of God

"By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear." (Heb 11:3)

"For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made..." (Rom 1:19,20)

"He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or domin-



ions or principalities or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Col 1:15-17)

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Gen 1:26,27)