

Adult Catechism @ Year 1 Creed

Immaculate Conception

TRINITY

Catechism Paragraphs 232-324

Aquinas College Online Catechist Formation Program VIDEO link 24:29 <https://vimeo.com/32928531>
Part II 38:17 <https://vimeo.com/33092921>

Any Seeds Planted? Any Memories Provoked? Any Questions Raised? Any Actions Prompted?

232 Christians are baptized *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* Mt 28:19
The faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity. St. Caesarius of Arles

233 We are baptized in the **name** of... **not in their names**,
for there is only one God, the almighty Father, his only Son, and the Holy Spirit: the Most Holy Trinity.

234 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in Godself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the *hierarchy of the truths of faith*. The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals God's self to humans *and reconciles and unites with Godself those who turn away from sin.*

236 The Fathers of the Church distinguish between theology (*theologia*) and economy (*oikonomia*). "Theology" refers to the mystery of God's inmost life within the Blessed Trinity and "economy" to all the works by which God reveals himself and communicates his life. Through the *oikonomia* the *theologia* is revealed to us; but conversely, the *theologia* illuminates the whole *oikonomia*. God's works reveal who God is in Godself; the mystery of God's inmost being enlightens our understanding of all God's works. So it is, analogously, among human persons. A person discloses the self in actions, and the better we know a person, the better we understand his or her actions.

237 The Trinity is a **mystery** of faith in the strict sense, one of the *mysteries that are hidden in God, which can never be known unless they are revealed by God*. To be sure, God has left traces of God's Trinitarian being in God's work of creation and in God's Revelation throughout the Old Testament. But God's inmost Being as Holy Trinity is a mystery that is **inaccessible to reason alone** or even to Israel's faith before the Incarnation of God's Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

238 Many religions invoke God as *Father*. The deity is often considered the *father of gods and of humans*. In Israel, God is called *Father* inasmuch as God is Creator of the world (Deut 32:6; Mal 2:10). Even more, God is Father because of the covenant and the gift of the law to Israel, *his first-born son* (Ex 4:22). God is also called the Father of the king of Israel. Most especially God is *the Father of the poor*, of the orphaned and the widowed, who are under his loving protection (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 68:6).

239 By calling God *Father*, the language of faith indicates two main things: that God is **the first origin** of everything and **transcendent authority**; and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all his children. God's parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of **motherhood**, (Is 66:13; Ps 131:2) which emphasizes God's **immanence**, the intimacy between Creator and creature. The language of faith thus draws on the human experience of parents, who are in a way the first representatives of God for humans. But this experience also tells us that human parents are fallible and can disfigure the face of fatherhood and motherhood. We ought therefore to recall that **God transcends the human distinction between the sexes**. God is **neither man nor woman**: God is God. God also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although he is their origin and standard: **no one is father as God is Father**.

240 Jesus revealed that God is Father in an unheard-of sense: he is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father in his relation to his only Son who is Son only in relation to his Father: *No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.* (Mt 11:27)

241 For this reason the apostles confess Jesus to be the Word: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; as the image of the invisible God"; as the radiance of the glory of God and the very stamp of his nature.*

242 Following this apostolic tradition, the Church confessed at the first ecumenical council at Nicaea (325 AD) that the Son is **consubstantial** with the Father, that is, one only God with him. (The English phrases *of one being* and *one in being* translate the Greek word *homoousios*, which was rendered in Latin by *consubstantialis*.) The second ecumenical council, held at Constantinople in 381, kept this expression in its formulation of the Nicene Creed and confessed *the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father.*

243 Before his Passover, Jesus announced the sending of *another Paraclete* (Advocate), the Holy Spirit. At work since creation, having previously *spoken through the prophets*, the Spirit will now be with and in the disciples, to teach them and guide them *into all the truth*. The Holy Spirit is thus revealed as another divine person with Jesus and the Father.

244 The eternal origin of the Holy Spirit is revealed in his mission in time. The Spirit is sent to the apostles and to the Church both by the Father in the name of the Son, and by the Son in person, once he had returned to the Father. The sending of the person of the Spirit after Jesus' glorification reveals in its fullness the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

245 The apostolic faith concerning the Spirit was confessed by the second ecumenical council at Constantinople (381 AD): *We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father.* By this confession, the Church recognizes the Father as *the source and origin of the whole divinity*. But the eternal origin of the Spirit is not unconnected with the Son's origin: *The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is God, one and equal with the Father and the Son, of the same substance and also of the same nature... Yet he is not called the Spirit of the Father alone,...but **the Spirit of both the Father and the Son**.* The Creed of the Church from the Council of Constantinople confesses: *With the Father and the Son, he is worshipped and glorified.*

246 The Latin tradition of the Creed confesses that the Spirit **proceeds from the Father and the Son** (filioque). *The Holy Spirit is eternally from Father and Son; He has his nature and subsistence at once (simul) from the Father and the Son. He proceeds eternally from both as from one principle and through one **spiration**... And, since the Father has through **generation** given to the only-begotten Son everything that belongs to the Father, except being Father, the Son has also eternally from the Father, from whom he is eternally born, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.* Council of Florence in 1438

247 The affirmation of the filioque does not appear in the Creed confessed in 381 at Constantinople. But Pope St. Leo I, following an ancient Latin and Alexandrian tradition, had already confessed it dogmatically in 447, even before Rome, in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon, came to recognize and receive the Symbol of 381. The use of this formula in the Creed was gradually admitted into the Latin liturgy (between the eighth and eleventh centuries). The introduction of the filioque into the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed by the Latin liturgy constitutes moreover, even today, a point of disagreement with the Orthodox Churches.

248 At the outset the Eastern tradition expresses the Father's character as first origin of the Spirit. By confessing the Spirit as he "who proceeds from the Father", it affirms that he comes from the Father through the Son. The Western tradition expresses first the consubstantial communion between Father and Son, by saying that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (filioque). It says this, *legitimately and with good reason, for the eternal order of the divine persons in their consubstantial communion implies that the Father, as "the principle without principle, is the first origin of the Spirit, but also that as Father of the only Son, he is, with the Son, the single principle from which the Holy Spirit proceeds. This legitimate complementarity, provided it does not become rigid, does not affect the identity of faith in the reality of the same mystery confessed.*

249 *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* (2 Cor 13:13; 1 Cor 12:4-6; Eph 4:4-6)

251 In order to articulate the dogma of the Trinity, the Church had to develop her own terminology with the help of certain notions of philosophical origin: *substance, person* or *hypostasis, relation* and so on. In doing this, she did not submit the faith to human wisdom, but gave a new and unprecedented meaning to these terms, which from then on would be used to signify an ineffable mystery, *infinitely beyond all that we can humanly understand.* (Paul VI)

252 The Church uses (I) the term **substance** (rendered also at times by *essence* or *nature*) to designate the divine being in its unity, (II) the term **person** or *hypostasis* to designate the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the real distinction among them, and (III) the term **relation** to designate the fact that their distinction lies in the relationship of each to the others.

253 The Trinity is One. We do not confess three Gods, but **one God in three persons**, the *consubstantial Trinity*. The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but **each of them is God whole and entire**:
The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e. by nature one God. In the words of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), *Each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature.*

254 *The divine persons are really distinct from one another. God is one but not solitary. "Father", "Son", "Holy Spirit" are not simply names designating modalities of the divine being, for they are really distinct from one another: He is not the Father who is the Son, nor is the Son he who is the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit he who is the Father or the Son.* They are distinct from one another in their relations of origin. The divine Unity is Triune.
It is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds.

255 *The divine persons are relative to one another.* Because it does not divide the divine unity, the real distinction of the persons from one another resides solely in the relationships which relate them to one another: ***While they are called three persons in view of their relations, we believe in one nature or substance.*** Indeed *everything (in them) is one where there is no opposition of relationship. Because of that unity the Father is wholly in the Son and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Son is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son.*

256 *Above all guard for me this great deposit of faith for which I live and fight, which I want to take with me as a companion, and which makes me bear all evils and despise all pleasures: I mean the profession of faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I entrust it to you today. By it I am soon going to plunge you into water and raise you up from it. I give it to you as the companion and patron of your whole life. I give you but one divinity and power, existing one in three, and containing the three in a distinct way. Divinity without disparity of substance or nature, without superior degree that raises up or inferior degree that casts down...the infinite co-naturality of three infinities. Each person considered in himself is entirely God...the three considered together... I have not even begun to think of unity when the Trinity bathes me in its splendour. I have not even begun to think of the Trinity when unity grasps me.* Gregory Nazianzus

257 *O blessed light, O Trinity and first Unity!* Hymn for Evening Prayer

God is eternal blessedness, undying life, unfading light. God is love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God freely wills to communicate the glory of his blessed life. Such is the *plan of his loving kindness*, conceived by the Father before the foundation of the world, in his beloved Son: *He destined us in love to be his sons and to be conformed to the image of his Son, through the spirit of sonship.* This plan is a *grace [which] was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began*, stemming immediately from Trinitarian love. It unfolds in the work of creation, the whole history of salvation after the fall, and the missions of the Son and the Spirit, which are continued in the mission of the Church.

258 The whole divine economy is the common work of the three divine persons. For as the Trinity has only one and the same natures so too does it have only one and the same operation: *The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not three principles of creation but one principle.* However, each divine person performs the common work according to his unique personal property. Thus the Church confesses, following the New Testament, *one God and Father **from** whom all things are, and one Lord Jesus Christ, **through** whom all things are, and one Holy Spirit **in** whom all things are.* It is above all the divine missions of the Son's Incarnation and the gift of the Holy Spirit that show forth the properties of the divine persons.

259 Being a work at once common and personal, the whole divine economy makes known both what is proper to the divine persons, and their one divine nature. Hence the whole Christian life is a communion with each of the divine persons, without in any way separating them. Everyone who glorifies the Father does so through the Son in the Holy Spirit; everyone who follows Christ does so because the Father draws him and the Spirit moves him.

260 The ultimate end of the whole divine economy is the entry of God's creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed Trinity. But even now we are called to be a dwelling for the Most Holy Trinity: *O my God, Trinity whom I adore, help me forget myself entirely so to establish myself in you, unmovable and peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing be able to trouble my peace or make me leave you, O my unchanging God, but may each minute bring me more deeply into your mystery! Grant my soul peace. Make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling and the place of your rest. May I never abandon you there, but may I be there, whole and entire, completely vigilant in my faith, entirely adoring, and wholly given over to your creative action.* Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity

261 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is **the central mystery** of the Christian faith and of Christian life. **God alone can make it known** to us by revealing himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

264 *The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father as the first principle and, by the eternal gift of this to the Son, from the communion of both the Father and the Son.* Saint Augustine..

265 By the grace of Baptism *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*, we are called to share in the life of the Blessed Trinity, here on earth in the obscurity of faith, and after death in eternal light. Paul VI

266 *Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal.* Athanasian Creed..

267 Inseparable in what they are, the divine persons are also inseparable in what they do. But within the single divine operation each shows forth what is proper to him in the Trinity, especially in the divine missions of the Son's Incarnation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

THE ALMIGHTY

268 Of all the divine attributes, only God's **omnipotence** is named in the Creed: to confess this power has great bearing on our lives. We believe that his might is universal, for God who created everything also rules everything and can do everything. God's power is loving, for he is our Father, and mysterious, for only faith can discern it when it *is made perfect in weakness...*

God does whatever God pleases. Psalm 115:3

269 The Holy Scriptures repeatedly confess the universal power of God: the "*Mighty One of Jacob*", the "*LORD of hosts*", the "*strong and mighty*" one. If God is almighty "in heaven and on earth", it is because he made them. Nothing is impossible with God, who disposes his works according to his will. God is the Lord of the universe, whose order God established and which remains wholly subject to him and at his disposal. God is master of history, governing hearts and events in keeping with God's will.

You are merciful to all, for you can do all thing. Wisdom 11:23

270 God is the *Father Almighty*, whose fatherhood and power shed light on one another: God reveals his fatherly omnipotence by the way he takes care of our needs; by the filial adoption that he gives us...; finally by his infinite mercy, for he displays his power at its height by freely forgiving sins.

271 God's almighty power is in no way arbitrary:
In God, power, essence, will, intellect, wisdom, and justice are all identical. Nothing therefore can be in God's power which could not be in his just will or his wise intellect. Saint Thomas Aquinas

The mystery of God's apparent powerlessness

272 Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by the experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the Father has revealed his almighty power in the **voluntary humiliation** and Resurrection of his Son, by which he conquered evil. **Christ crucified is thus the power of God and the wisdom of God.** *For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than humans.* It is in Christ's Resurrection and exaltation that the Father has shown forth *the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe.*

273 Only faith can embrace **the mysterious ways of God's almighty power**. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ's power. The **Virgin Mary** is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that *nothing will be impossible with God*, and was able to magnify the Lord: *For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.* Luke 1:37,49, The Magnificat

274 *Nothing is more apt to confirm our faith and hope than holding it fixed in our minds that **nothing is impossible with God**. Once our reason has grasped the idea of God's almighty power, it will easily and without any hesitation admit everything that [the Creed] will afterwards propose for us to believe - even if they be great and marvelous things, far above the ordinary laws of nature.* Roman Catechism

278 If we do not believe that God's love is almighty, how can we believe that the Father could create us, the Son redeem us and the Holy Spirit sanctify us?

THE CREATOR

280 Creation is the foundation of *all God's saving plans*, the *beginning of the history of salvation* that culminates in Christ. Conversely, the mystery of Christ casts conclusive light on the mystery of creation and reveals the end for which "*in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Gen 1:1): from the beginning, God envisaged the glory of the new creation in Christ.

281 And so the readings of the Easter Vigil, the celebration of the new creation in Christ, begin with the creation account; likewise in the Byzantine liturgy, the account of creation always constitutes the first reading at the vigils of the great feasts of the Lord. According to ancient witnesses the instruction of catechumens for Baptism followed the same itinerary. Egeria; Augustine

282 **Catechesis on creation**...concerns the very foundations of human and Christian life: for it makes explicit the response of the Christian faith to the basic question that humans of all times have asked themselves:
Where do we come from? Where are we going?
What is our origin? What is our end?
Where does everything that exists come from and where is it going?
The two questions...are inseparable.
They are decisive for the meaning and orientation of our life and actions.

283 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 humans. 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.*

284 The great interest accorded to these studies is strongly stimulated by a question of another order, which goes beyond the proper domain of the natural sciences. It is not only a question of knowing when and how the universe arose physically, or when the human appeared, but rather of discovering the meaning of such an origin:
Is the universe governed by chance, blind fate, anonymous necessity, or by a transcendent, intelligent and good Being called God?
and if the world does come from God's wisdom and goodness, ***why is there evil?***
Where does it come from? Who is responsible for it? Is there any liberation from it?

285 Since the beginning the Christian faith has been challenged by responses to the question of origins that differ from its own. Ancient religions and cultures produced many myths concerning origins. Some philosophers have said that everything is God, that the world is God, or that the development of the world is the development of God (Pantheism). Others have said that the world is a necessary emanation arising from God and returning to him. Still others have affirmed the existence of two eternal principles, Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, locked, in permanent conflict (Dualism, Manichaeism). According to some of these conceptions, the world (at least the physical world) is evil, the product of a fall, and is thus to be rejected or left behind (Gnosticism). Some admit that the world was made by God, but as by a watch-maker who, once he has made a watch, abandons it to itself (Deism). Finally, others reject any transcendent origin for the world, but see it as merely the interplay of matter that has always existed (Materialism). All these attempts bear witness to the permanence and universality of the question of origins. **This inquiry is distinctively human.**

286 Human intelligence is surely already capable of finding a response to the question of origins. The existence of God the Creator can be known with certainty through his works, by the light of human reason, even if this knowledge is often obscured and disfigured by error. This is why faith comes to confirm and enlighten reason in the correct understanding of this truth: *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.*

287 The **truth about creation** is so important for all of human life that God in his tenderness wanted to reveal to his People everything that is salutary to know on the subject. Beyond the natural knowledge that every man can have of the Creator, God progressively revealed to Israel the mystery of creation. God who chose the patriarchs, who brought Israel out of Egypt, and who by choosing Israel created and formed it, this same God reveals himself as the One to whom belong all the peoples of the earth, and the whole earth itself; God is the One who alone *made heaven and earth.*

288 Thus the revelation of creation is inseparable from the revelation and forging of the covenant of the one God with the one God's People. Creation is revealed as the first step towards this covenant, the first and universal witness to God's all-powerful love. And so, the truth of creation is also expressed with growing vigour in the message of the prophets, the prayer of the psalms and the liturgy, and in the wisdom sayings of the Chosen People.

289 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 humans, 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.

290 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth:*
A. The eternal God gave a beginning to all that exists outside of Godself;
B. God alone is Creator (the verb *create* - Hebrew *bara* - always has God for its subject).
C. the totality of what exists (expressed by the formula *the heavens and the earth*) depends on the One who gives it being.

291 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* (Col 1). 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*.

292 The Old Testament suggests and the New Covenant reveals the creative action of the Son and the Spirit, inseparably one with that of the Father. This **creative co-operation** is clearly affirmed in the Church's rule of faith: *There exists but one God. . . he is the Father, God, the Creator, the author, the giver of order. He made all things by himself, that is, by his Word and by his Wisdom", "by the Son and the Spirit" who, so to speak, are "his hands".* Irenaeus
Creation is the common work of the Holy Trinity.

293 Scripture and Tradition never cease to teach and celebrate this fundamental truth:
The world was made for the glory of God.

God created all things *not to increase his glory, but to show it forth and to communicate it*, for God has no other reason for creating than his love and goodness. Saint Bonaventure

Creatures came into existence when the key of love opened his hand. Aquinas

This one, true God, of his own goodness and 'almighty power', not for increasing his own beatitude, nor for attaining his perfection, but in order to manifest this perfection through the benefits which he bestows on creatures, with absolute freedom of counsel 'and from the beginning of time, made out of nothing both orders of creatures, the spiritual and the corporeal...' First Vatican Council

294 **The glory of God is the human fully alive;** moreover a human life is the vision of God: *if God's revelation through creation has already obtained life for all the beings that dwell on earth, how much more will the Word's manifestation of the Father obtain life for those who see God.* Irenaeus
The ultimate purpose of creation is that God *who is the creator of all things may at last become 'all in all', thus simultaneously assuring his own glory and our beatitude..*

295 We believe that God created the world according to God's 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;** God wanted to make God's creatures share in God's being, wisdom and goodness.

296 We believe that God needs no pre-existent thing or any help in order to create, nor is creation any sort of necessary emanation from the divine substance.

God creates freely out of nothing:

If God had drawn the world from pre-existent matter, what would be so extraordinary in that? A human artisan makes from a given material whatever he wants, while God shows his power by starting from nothing to make all he wants. St. Theophilus of Antioch

297 *I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws... Look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. Thus also humanity comes into being.* Mother of seven sons, 2 Macc 7

298 Since God could create everything out of nothing, God can also, through the Holy Spirit, **give spiritual life to sinners** by creating a pure heart in them, and **bodily life to the dead** through the Resurrection. God *gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.* And since God was able to make light shine in darkness by God's Word, God can also give the light of faith to those who do not yet know God.

299 **Because God creates through wisdom, God's creation is ordered:** *You have arranged all things by measure and number and weight.* The universe, created in and by the eternal Word, the *image of the invisible God*, is destined for and addressed to man, himself created in the "image of God" and **called to a personal relationship with God.** Our human understanding, which shares in the light of the divine intellect, can understand what God tells us by means of God's creation, though not without great effort and only in a spirit of **humility and respect...** Because creation comes forth from God's goodness, it shares in that goodness - *and God saw that it was good... very good* - for God willed creation as a gift addressed to humanity, an inheritance destined for and entrusted to them. On many occasions the Church has had to defend the goodness of creation, including that of the physical world.

300 God is **infinitely greater** than all God's works... Indeed, *God's greatness is unsearchable*. But because God is the free and sovereign Creator, the first cause of all that exists, God is present to God's creatures' inmost being...
God is *higher than my highest and more inward than my innermost self*. Augustine
God upholds and sustains creation

301 With creation, God does not abandon his creatures to themselves...
At every moment, God upholds and sustains them in being,
enables them to act and brings them to their final end. Recognizing this **utter dependence** with respect to the Creator is a source of wisdom and freedom, of joy and confidence:
For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it. How would anything have endured, if you had not willed it? Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved? You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living. Wisdom 11

302 Creation has its own goodness and proper perfection, but it did not spring forth complete from the hands of the Creator. The universe was created *in a state of journeying (in statu viae)* toward **an ultimate perfection yet to be attained**, to which God has destined it.
We call **divine providence** the dispositions by which God guides God's creation toward this perfection:
By his providence God protects and governs all things which he has made, 'reaching mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and ordering all things well'. For 'all are open and laid bare to his eyes', even those things which are yet to come into existence through the free action of creatures. Vatican I

303 The witness of Scripture is unanimous that the solicitude of divine providence is concrete and immediate; God cares for all, from the least things to the great events of the world and its history.

304 And so we see **the Holy Spirit, the principal author of Sacred Scripture**, often attributing actions to God without mentioning any secondary causes.
This is not a "primitive mode of speech", but a profound way of recalling God's primacy and absolute Lordship over history and the world, and so of educating us to trust in God.
The prayer of the Psalms is the great school of this trust.

305 Jesus asks for childlike abandonment to the providence of our heavenly Father who takes care of his children's smallest needs: "*Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?'... Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.*" Matthew 6

306 God is the sovereign master of God's plan. But to carry it out God also makes use of **God's creatures' co-operation**. This use is not a sign of weakness, but rather a token of almighty God's greatness and goodness. For God grants God's creatures not only their existence, but also the dignity of acting on their own, of being causes and principles for each other, and thus of co-operating in the accomplishment of God's plan.

307 To human beings God even gives the power of freely sharing in God's providence by entrusting us with the responsibility of *subduing* the earth and having dominion over it. God thus enables us to be **intelligent and free causes** in order to complete the work of creation, to perfect its harmony for our own good and that of our neighbours. Though often unconscious collaborators with God's will, we can also enter deliberately into the divine plan by our actions, our prayers and our sufferings. We then fully become *God's fellow workers* and co-workers for God's kingdom.

308 The truth that God is at work in all the actions of God's creatures is inseparable from faith in God the Creator. God is the **first cause** who operates in and through secondary causes... Far from diminishing the creature's dignity, this truth enhances it. Drawn from nothingness by God's power, wisdom and goodness, it can do nothing if it is cut off from its origin, for **without a Creator the creature vanishes**. Still less can a creature attain its ultimate end without the help of God's grace.

309 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, as pressing as it is unavoidable and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice. **Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question:** the goodness of creation, the drama of sin and the patient love of God who comes to meet the human by God's covenants, the redemptive Incarnation of his Son, God's gift of the Spirit, God's gathering of the Church, the power of the sacraments and God's call to a blessed life to which free creatures are invited to consent in advance, but from which, by a terrible mystery, they can also turn away in advance. There is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil.

310 **But why** did God not create a world so perfect that no evil could exist in it? With infinite power God could always create something better (Aquinas). But with infinite wisdom and goodness God freely willed to create a world **in a state of journeying** towards its ultimate perfection. In God's plan this **process of becoming** involves the appearance of certain beings and the disappearance of others, the existence of the more perfect alongside the less perfect, both constructive and destructive forces of nature. With physical good there exists also *physical evil* as long as creation has not reached perfection. Aquinas

311 Angels and humans, as intelligent and free creatures, have to journey toward their ultimate destinies by their free choice and preferential love. They can therefore go astray. Indeed, they have sinned. Thus has *moral evil*, incommensurably more harmful than physical evil, entered the world. **God is in no way, directly or indirectly, the cause of moral evil.** God permits it, however, because God respects the **freedom of God's creatures** and, mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it: *For almighty God..., because God is supremely good, would never allow any evil whatsoever to exist in God's works if God were not so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil itself.* Augustine

312 In time we can discover that God in God's almighty providence can bring a good from the consequences of an evil, even a moral evil, caused by God's creatures: *It was not you, said Joseph to his brothers, who sent me here, but God... You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive.* From the greatest moral evil ever committed - the rejection and murder of God's only Son, caused by the sins of all humans - God, by God's grace that *abounded all the more*, brought the greatest of goods: the glorification of Christ and our redemption. But for all that, **evil never becomes a good.**

313 *Everything comes from love, all is ordained for the salvation of man, God does nothing without this goal in mind.* St. Catherine of Siena
Here I was taught by the grace of God that I should steadfastly keep me in the faith... and that at the same time I should take my stand on and earnestly believe in what our Lord shewed in this time - that 'all manner (of) thing shall be well'. Julian of Norwich

314 We firmly believe that God is master of the world and of its history. But the ways of God's providence are often unknown to us. **Only at the end**, when our partial knowledge ceases, when we see God *face to face*, will we fully know the ways by which - even through the dramas of evil and sin - God has guided God's creation to that definitive sabbath rest for which God created heaven and earth.