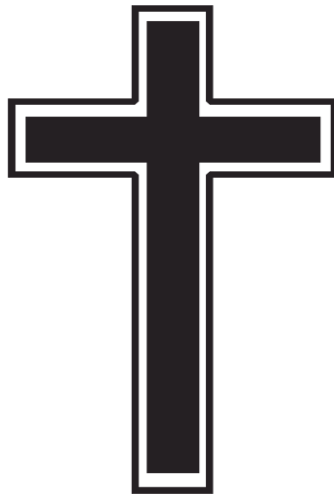


Catholic Christianity: Origins and Meanings

Course Information



Name:

Teacher:

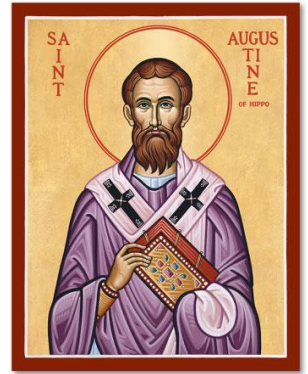
Information for Students

This course information booklet covers all areas of GCSE Paper 1 Section 1:

Area of study	Content
Catholic, Christian and Non-religious views about the origin of the universe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Concept of creation ex nihilo ➤ Catholic, Fundamentalist Christian and Jewish views of creation ➤ Non-religious views of the origin of the universe ➤ Big Bang, Evolution and Catholic beliefs
Catholic views about the sanctity of life and Humanist criticisms of this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Catholic beliefs about the sanctity of life ➤ Catholic, Liberal Christian and Jewish views toward abortion ➤ Peter Singer & the Humanist challenge to the sanctity of life (quality of life argument) ➤ Catherine of Siena and the Imago Dei
Different Genesis Accounts of Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Comparison of the first and second Genesis accounts of creation ➤ Catholic beliefs about the nature of human beings and their relationship with creation ➤ Catholic, Jewish and Humanist views on preserving the planet and environment with reference to 'Laudato si'
Catholic & Fundamentalist Christian beliefs about the Bible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Catholic, Fundamentalist Christian and Jewish views toward the Bible ➤ The different literary forms of the Bible & Genesis ➤ Whether the Bible can be accepted as literal revelation from God
Art and Symbol and what they reveal about God and Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The meaning of Michelangelo's 'Creation of Adam' and what it teaches about creation, God and human beings ➤ The 'Tree of Life' Apse Mosaic – meaning and symbols within it ➤ Symbol of the cross
Catholic Social Teaching & Interfaith Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is the imago Dei? ➤ Catholic social teaching on justice, peace and reconciliation ➤ Know the teachings of 'Gaudium et Spes 78'
The work of CAFOD and SVP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How CAFOD reflects Catholic beliefs about the dignity of human beings ➤ How SVP reflects Catholic beliefs about the dignity of human beings ➤ How both groups show the importance of 'love of neighbour' and respecting creation

Catholic beliefs about Creation

Christians refer to the act of God bringing the universe into being as Creation. Nothing existed before God created it. Only God creates, because he is **omnipotent** or all powerful. This idea of creating out of nothing is called in Latin, creation **ex nihilo**. This belief can be found in the Bible. It can also be found in the writing of **St. Augustine**.



Source of Wisdom St. Augustine Confessions xii, 7

“You, O Lord... made something in the Beginning...and you created this thing out of nothing.”

Differing Christian attitudes to the Creation Story

The story of creation was written thousands of years before modern science existed. Christians understand the story in different ways, depending on whether they interpret the Bible text literally or non-literally.



Some Christians take a **fundamentalist** approach. They believe that the account of creation as it appears in the Bible is an accurate account of what happened – this belief is known as **creationism**. They believe that the creation of the world and everything in it took place in six calendar days, exactly as the book of Genesis says. This stems from the view that the Bible is the direct word of God, which is never mistaken.

Catholic Christians think that the creation story is not meant to be taken literally. They try to harmonise the scientific and biblical accounts, claiming that each ‘day’ of the creation story is actually billions of years. Catholics read the stories of creation in a symbolic way, believing that they reveal some important things about the nature of the world and humanity. Although the two accounts of creation in **Genesis** have different details, they share the same truths.

Jewish Beliefs about Creation

In Jewish belief, God is the creator and source of all life. Each week Jews celebrate the **Sabbath**, recalling that God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh.

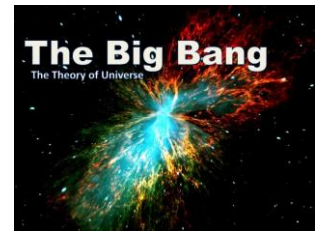


Jews share the two stories of creation with Christians as they are in Genesis which is the first book of the **Torah**, the Jewish written law. Some **Orthodox Jews** believe these stories are true accounts. They were revealed to Moses by God on **Mount Sinai**. Others, like **Reform Jews**, think that the creation accounts are stories which shouldn't be taken as historical facts. They are open to interpretation.

Some Orthodox Jews would have difficulties accepting modern scientific ideas. They would reject Evolution and the Big Bang. Others may believe that God started the universe through the Big Bang and has guided the creation of life through Evolution. They still have faith in God as a sustainer and provider.

The Big Bang

The branch of science which studies the origins of the universe is called cosmology. The current scientific thinking about the creation of the world is that it was caused by the **Big Bang**. This claims that all matter was originally concentrated into a tiny point which, as a result of a massive explosion in space 13.7 billion years ago, expanded into the universe and is still expanding today. This explosion or Big Bang caused particles and atoms to be formed. This led to the formation of stars and planets. This theory has led some people, like **Stephen Hawking**, to doubt the existence of God completely, saying that we can explain how the world without the need for a creator God. Powerful telescopes can detect evidence of background radiation which is thought to be left over from the initial expansion at the start of the universe.



The Catholic view of the Big Bang Theory

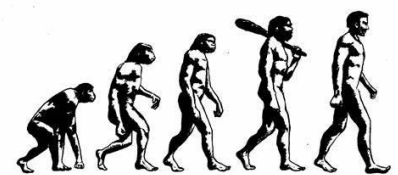
Catholics are happy to accept the Big Bang, as this theory supports their belief that God created the universe out of nothing. Many Christians accept the scientific explanations, but say that we must understand Genesis **symbolically**, not as a scientific explanation of the beginning of the world, but as a theological statement about the world's relationship to God. In fact the **Big Bang Theory** was put forward by a Catholic priest, **Father Georges Lemaitre**. Science explains how the Universe came about and Genesis explains why the universe began.

Conflict between Science and Religion?

Many people think that Science and Religion are in conflict over the origins of the Universe. This is not the case. There is only a problem if a person chooses to interpret the Bible literally. For some **Fundamentalists** they are very critical of scientific ideas because they appear to contradict the truth that God has formed all life through his own power. Even if the scientific view is correct in saying that the universe began with a Big Bang, have they really solved the question of 'where does the universe come from?'. It is reasonable to ask what caused the Big Bang. Christians would argue that this is God.

Scientific theories of Evolution

According to science, life came about as a result of a process known as **Evolution**. This idea was proposed by **Charles Darwin**. This is the idea that organisms gradually change and develop into new species by a process known as 'natural selection'. Certain characteristics help animals to survive. As they breed and pass these on it leads to new species developing. This is a process which takes millions of years to come about. The theory of evolution is supported by fossil records which reveal that a large number of species have died out. **DNA** research shows that there are many similarities between species.

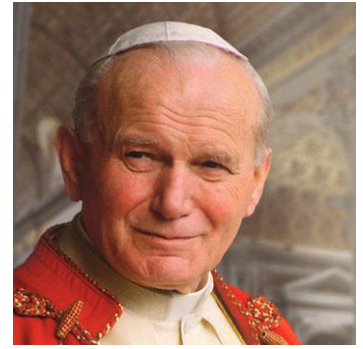


Richard Dawkins

A modern supporter of this view is **Richard Dawkins**. Dawkins is an atheist and believes evolution does away with the need for God and the belief that humans have souls. Dawkins argues that each living organism's body is just a survival machine for its genes and does not serve any other purpose. Humans are just a genetic mutation and are just advanced animals.

The Catholic view of Evolution

Some Christians do not accept the theory of Evolution; they see it as an attack on their faith, especially if they read the Bible literally. Catholics do not interpret the Bible literally. Genesis needs to be understood symbolically. **Pope John Paul II** restated the view of **Pope Pius XII** that there is no conflict between evolution and the teaching of the Christian faith. What is important to Catholics is not whether God chose to create through the process of evolution over many millions of years but that in Genesis, God created with purpose and so everything that exists is part of His loving plan. This is what is important for Catholics to understand; not *how* it happened but *why* it happened.



Source of Authority - Pope John Paul II's Message to the Pontifical Academy Of Sciences: On Evolution

"There is no conflict between evolution and the doctrine of the faith regarding man and his vocation... the doctrine of "evolution" is as a serious hypothesis, worthy of investigation and serious study."

The Pope's message sees no conflict between evolution and Catholic belief.

Pope: Evolution, faith can coexist

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — In his most comprehensive statement yet on evolution, Pope John Paul II insisted that faith and science can coexist, telling scientists that Darwin's theories are sound as long as they take into account that creation was the work of God.

The pope's message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, a lay organization meeting in Rome this week, recalled how Pope Pius XII proclaimed in 1950 that evolutionary doctrine was a "serious hypothesis."

In the statement released Wednesday, the pope said new knowledge has confirmed that Charles Darwin's theory of evolution is "more than a hypothesis."

Darwin's theory — that humankind was the product of a slow, evolutionary process from early forms of life — conflicts with the literal biblical account of creation, that the world, including humans, was created in six days.

Although the pope has in the past made references to the growing scientific consensus behind evolution, his latest comments were the clearest and



"Today ... new knowledge leads to recognition of the theory of evolution as more than a hypothesis."

— Pope John Paul II

Darwin's conclusions.

The fact that he issued the statement to a group of lay scientists added additional resonance to the Vatican's position that evolution and faith in God can coexist.

By not challenging the evidence supporting evolution, the Vatican places the Roman Catholic viewpoint in stark contrast to that of some fundamentalist Christians, who believe the biblical account of creation is literal.

"The pope's words confirm that science and faith are both gifts from God," said Italian nuclear physicist Antonino Zichichi, who often comments on theological issues. "No scientific discovery has ever led man to conclude that God

Vatican Thinking Evolves

The Pope gives his blessing to natural selection—though man's soul remains beyond science's reach

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH and science can be vexing, but one way the Roman Catholic Church and mainstream Protestant denominations reconcile the two is to say they each deal with different spheres of knowledge and so are not in conflict. This is a sort of metaphysical version of Christ's admonition to render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, and it is a position that Pope John Paul II reaffirmed last week when he made a statement on evolution. "Consideration of the method used in diverse orders of knowledge allows for the concordance of two points of view which

Pius on the question of the origin of man's soul: that comes from God, even if "the human body is sought in living material which existed before it."

The statement is unlikely to influence the curriculum of Catholic schools, where evolution has been taught since the 1950s. Indeed, reading the entire Bible literally has not been a dominant practice among Catholics through much of the 20th century. Asked about the Pope's statement, Father Peter Stravinskis, editor of the 1991 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, said, "It's essentially what Augustine was writing. He tells us that we should not interpret Genesis literally, and that it is poetic and theological language."

Creationists do not make the distinction between faith and science that John Paul does, and his statement will not discourage them in their battles against the teaching of evolution in states like Tennessee and Alabama. "The Pope is just an influential person; he's not a scientist," says Henry Morris, president emeritus at the Institute for Creation Research in Santee, California. "There is no scientific ev-

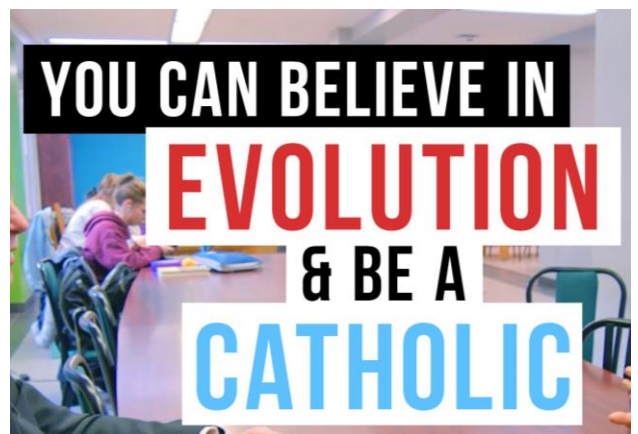


AUGUSTINIAN: John Paul does not interpret the Bible literally



"Pope John Paul has lent his support to the theory of evolution, proclaiming it compatible with Christian faith ..."

—Reuter's News Service, October 24, 1996
December 1996—Vol. 4, No. 12



Catholic views on the Origin and Sanctity of human life

Most people, religious or not, would accept that human life is special and should be cared for. Catholics believe each person is unique because God made them. The creation of humans was unlike the rest of creation because they were made in a unique way and in the Image of God. The Latin term for in the Image of God is **Imago Dei**. The Catholic Church teaches that all human life is sacred and that everyone has a right to life which should be protected and valued at every stage.



Source of Authority - St Catherine of Siena

“Her dignity is that of her creation, seeing that she is the image of God, and this has been given her by grace, and not as her due. In that same mirror of the goodness of God, the soul knows her own indignity, which is the consequence of her own fault. What made you establish man in so great a dignity? Certainly the incalculable love by which you have looked on your creature in yourself! You are taken with love for her; for by love indeed you created her, by love you have given her a being capable of tasting your eternal Good.”

Saint Catherine of Siena - the image of God (Imago Dei)

The above sources contains a conversation between a soul and God. The “her” she refers to is the soul. The soul is made in the image of God. St. Catherine had a deep faith. She spent her life with outcasts and sinners showing them that they were created and loved by God. She has two important messages from her writing:

1. **Humans come from God** – in the same way that children come from their parents or your reflection in the mirror shows you:



“Her dignity is that of her creation, seeing that she is in the image of God.”

2. **Love** – God creates out of love. The fact that humans are made with dignity and in God’s image shows how much he loves them.

“You are taken with love for her, for by love indeed you created her.”

Jewish Beliefs about Sanctity of Life

For Jews, God is creator, he alone gives and takes life. Genesis (the first book of the **Torah**) teaches that humans are created in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26-27) and life is precious. In the **Tanakh** there are references to a relationship with God even before birth:

“You formed my innermost being and knitted me together in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139)

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” Jeremiah (1)

The Ten Commandments, believed to have been given to Moses, also forbids the taking of a life: **“Do not kill”**. Jews also have a teaching called **‘pikuach nefesh’** which means that Jewish people should not stand back while their neighbour’s life is at risk. They have a duty to break the laws of the Sabbath if a person’s life is in danger.

Views on Abortion

Abortion has been widely debated since it was legalised in Britain in 1967. Those against abortion think it is morally unacceptable to kill unborn babies. Others argue if a baby is going to be born with a severe illness or disability it would be kinder to permit an abortion. A key question in the debate is,

“when does a person become a person?” Some argue from the moment of **conception**. Therefore, terminating a pregnancy is the same as murder. Others would argue a person only “begins” when they are first aware of their own existence or when independent life is possible. Therefore, terminating a foetus is not the same as murder.

The debate splits broadly into two camps:

Pro-life	Pro-choice
<p>The idea that abortion is always wrong and every human (including embryos) has a right to life.</p> <p>Catholics adopt a pro-life approach to abortion. This approach is absolutist meaning they do not accept abortion in any situation or circumstance.</p>	<p>The idea that a woman should be able to choose what happens to her own body. This includes choosing to end a pregnancy.</p> <p>Liberal Christians adopt a pro-choice approach to abortion. This approach is relativist meaning they will decide on abortion based on the specific circumstances.</p>



The Catholic Church and Abortion

The Catholic Church is against Abortion in all circumstances. Catholics believe human life is **sacred**. The Catholic Church teaches that life begins at **conception**. It is God who gives life at this moment and it is the start of a human being's relationship with God. Abortion is therefore seen as murder, a great moral evil, which is against one of the **Ten Commandments: 'Do not murder'**. The foetus has a right to life and termination is a great moral evil. Instead of having an abortion the Church would encourage those in this situation to give a child up for adoption. If a mother's life is in danger during the pregnancy (for example ectopic pregnancy) then action to save the life of the mother even if it threatens or destroys the life of the unborn child is acceptable. The intention is to save the mother, the effect on the child is a side effect. This is known as the **Principle of Double Effect**.

Other Christian Views

There is no single view on abortion in Christianity. Some **fundamentalist Christians** think abortion is never acceptable. **Liberal Christians** (in this case the Church of England) agree that it is not a good thing, but sometimes it is **'the lesser of two evils'**. Some situations where abortion might be the best course of action are:

- If the pregnancy is the result of rape, an abortion might be the best option for the quality of life of the woman.
- If continuing the pregnancy might be dangerous to the woman's physical or mental health, then abortion should be allowed.
- If the child is likely to be severely disabled and so effect its quality of life.

Humanist views on Abortion

There is not one single humanist view on abortion. **Humanists** value happiness and personal choice. In making a decision they would look at the evidence, consequences and rights and wishes of everyone involved. Life is not sacred but is worthy of the highest respect. Generally, they would take a pro-choice stance and many humanists campaigned for abortion to be legalised in the 1960s so that unsafe, illegal abortions shouldn't take place. At the heart of the debate is whether the rights of the foetus outweigh the rights of the mother. **Quality of life** would be seen as more important than preserving life at all costs. They believe that abortion is often the most morally acceptable choice to make. Ultimately, it is a personal choice which should be made considering all the facts and consequences.



A Humanist's view about sanctity of Life – Peter Singer

Peter Singer is a humanist and has some controversial ideas in relation to Abortion and the value of life. He argues that even though all human life has value, it is not of equal value. If a person has no ability to think, relate to others or experience then their life has limited value. Embryos, newborn babies, are all examples of biological, but 'non-human persons'. Therefore it is morally acceptable to take the lives of these 'non-human persons' if it will bring about less suffering and greater happiness. This not only applies to abortion, but also euthanasia (allowing someone suffering from a serious illness to die). Brain dead person has no real value and therefore euthanasia is acceptable.

Speciesism

Singer argues a conscious animal such as a dog, has more mental capacity and is more of a 'person' than a baby or an elderly person with dementia. Singer argues that animals have similar responses to humans, in that they feel pleasure and pain and therefore their interests must be taken into account. Therefore arguing that human life is more important than any other type of life is wrong. This is the same as being racist. It is discriminatory and 'speciesist'.

Catholic response to Singer's views

Catholics would argue that humans remain a 'person' whether they are conscious or not, even when they are asleep, in a coma or haven't yet been born. Catholics would agree that animals should be treated with care and looked after. As stewards of creation they have an obligation to do this. However, humans were made in the image and likeness of God, therefore they have a dignity which animals do not have.

Jewish views about abortion

The word 'abortion' is not mentioned in the Tanakh, but the concept of sanctity of life is an important one throughout Jewish teaching. In Exodus, it states that an unborn child has equal right to the mother. They also apply key teachings linked to the sanctity of life such as **"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you"** (Jeremiah) & **"You created my innermost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb"** (Psalm 139).

Abortion breaks God's law in Genesis which states that we are created in the image of God. It also goes against the teaching in Genesis which is to "be fruitful and multiply". Both Orthodox and Reform Jews may apply *pikuach nefesh* to abortion to decide if the action would save a life that was at risk.

Comparison of the first and second creation accounts

The first book of the **Old Testament**, Genesis, Chapters 1–3, gives two accounts of creation. Most Catholics read the stories of creation in a symbolic way, believing that they reveal some important things about the nature of God and humanity.



Genesis Chapter 1

A summary of Genesis 1-2:3

Day 1	God created light and separated it from the darkness. God named the light 'day' and the darkness 'night'.
Day 2	God created the sky. God used the sky to divide the water that covered the earth into two halves.
Day 3	God created the sky. God used the sky to divide the water that covered the earth into two halves. God created dry land. The water he called "seas" and the ground "land".
Day 4	God created the sun, moon and stars to light up the sky, govern night and day and mark the passing of time.
Day 5	God created all the species of animals that live on earth.
Day 6	God created the human beings and put them in charge of everything on the earth that had been created.
Day 7	God rested, blessed the seventh day and made it holy. The universe was complete.

This account emphasises the following beliefs about God:

- **Transcendence** – God exists above and beyond creation which makes Him unlike anything else that exists.
- **Eternal** – that God creates heaven and earth "In the beginning", shows that he already existed, God has no beginning.
- **Omnipotent** – God is all powerful, creation happens just by him commanding it (Gen 1.3). Before he creates nothing exists. He creates from nothing, Creation ex nihilo.



Genesis Chapter 2

A summary of Genesis 2:4-24

God created a man, called Adam, out of dust and breathes life into him.

God provides him everything he needed in the Garden of Eden, but told him not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God creates all the creatures and Adam names them all but none are suitable to be his partner.

God puts Adam to sleep and creates Eve, a woman, from his rib.

Their lives were perfect until they disobeyed him, which led to God banishing them from the Garden of Eden forever.

As well as agreeing with many of the themes of the first account, Genesis 2 shows God is:

- **Omnibenevolent** – God creates the universe out of love and loves His creation.

Catholic beliefs about nature of human beings and their relationship with creation

In both narratives the message is that human life is special and sacred. The main ideas are:

- **Sanctity of life** – Humans are created last in Genesis 1 and are the high point of God's creation. In Genesis 2 God personally creates Adam and Eve, Adam from the dust of the earth and Eve from Adam's rib. As part of his creation, God reflects again that all that he has made is **good** which includes human beings.
- **Image of God** – Humans were created imago Dei-in the image of God, 'So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them.' (Gen 1.27) which makes them sacred and holy and unlike any other animal.
- **Stewards of God's Creation** – God commands that humans have authority over nature and a responsibility to take care of it. In Genesis 1 God creates humans to rule over his creatures. In the second Genesis account Adam is put in the garden to 'work it and take care of it' but his authority is seen when God asks him to name all the animals.



Source of Authority – the book of Genesis

"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness" (Genesis)

"God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and rule it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis)

The importance of caring for the Environment for Catholics

In both stories of creation human beings are the most important part of creation, but they are still creatures and therefore part of **Creation**. They are not the Creator, but God made humans superior to the rest of Creation by giving them reason and free will. This is the reason why God made humans **stewards** of the world.



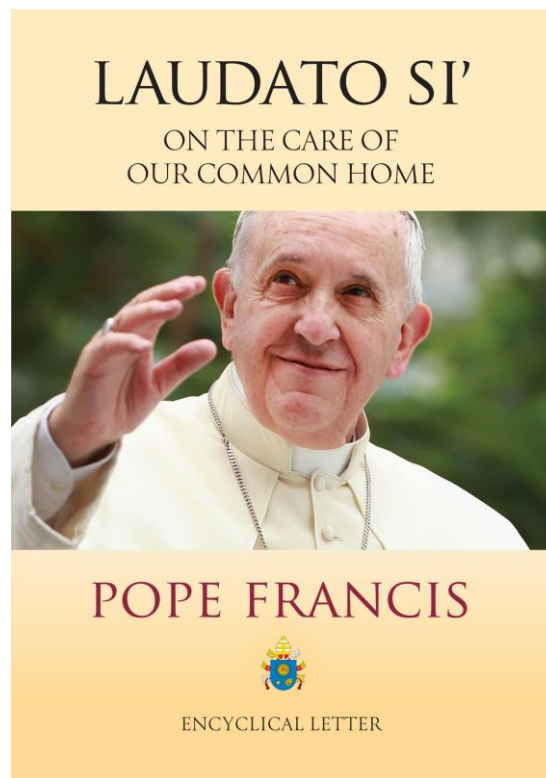
Therefore Catholics should be concerned about looking after the environment and the planet. Catholics need to work to protect the planet, cutting down on pollution, care for animals and make sure that the world is in the best shape to pass on to future generations.

For Christians the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love their neighbour. The idea of neighbour means not just those close to us, but people in different countries. Catholics should be concerned about those who suffer badly from climate change.

The Catholic Church also teaches that every individual has a duty to contribute to the good of society. This is called the common good. Catholics should act justly and seek justice for others, especially the poor. This approach is most likely to lead to good things for everyone would benefit from living in a healthy well cared for environment. This belief was reinforced by Pope Francis and the **Magisterium** in 2015 through the Encyclical letter '**Laudato si'** which means '**Care for our Common Home**'. This letter inspires Catholics to protect the earth and take part in **Catholic Social Teaching**.

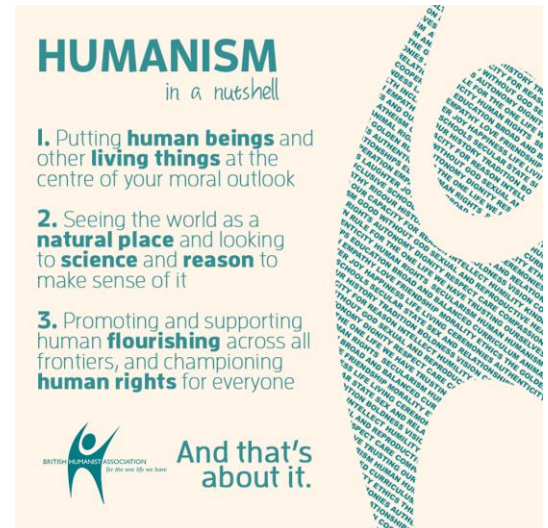
Source of Authority – Laudato si (Care for our Common Home)

"Each community...has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations" (Pope Francis)



Humanist attitudes to Creation and Stewardship

Humanists would agree with Christians that we need to look after the world, but for different reasons. For humanists, human life has come about randomly because of **evolution**. No creator God is needed. Humans can use their reason to make ethical decisions. This is what makes humans superior to other animals. Human beings can act to give their lives meaning by seeking happiness in this life and helping others to do the same. They would say we need to be stewards of the world out of a concern for human beings and other animals, not because we were commanded to do it by a creator God. They would say we should work for a more sustainable world, causing as little harm to the environment as possible. This position is based on reason not because God has commanded it.



Jewish attitudes to Creation and Stewardship

Christians and Jews share many similar beliefs regarding creation and **stewardship**. The book of Genesis (the first book of the Torah) states that God created the universe and everything in it. Jews believe that God is an **omnipotent creator**. Furthermore, God is both a **lawgiver** and a **judge**. In regards to stewardship, Jews believe that God will judge them on how well they protect and preserve the environment.

Jews also accept the teaching of Genesis that says humans have been given the earth from God and they must **"rule over it"**. As part of their covenant with God Jews are expected to keep their side of the promise of the agreement. Jews believe they have to follow the **613 mitzvot**. These are actions that Jews must perform or avoid. They are two particular mitzvot that are concerned with the environment:

1. **Never destroy things on the land that are useful**
2. **Give the land a rest from growing crops every 50 years.**



The Bible



Catholic understanding of Revelation and Inspiration

Catholics believe that the Bible is a direct form of revelation. **Revelation** is the way in which God has made Himself known to the world. They also believe that the Bible is the **inspired word of God**. God made use of specific people who wrote in a human language, and did so at a particular time and place in history. Not everything they wrote might have been historically or literally accurate. Catholics must work carefully to determine exactly what a sacred author is saying to be true. An author might write **metaphorically** to help bring out the truth more clearly.

Catholics believe the **Holy Spirit** gave **inspiration** to believers, who respond by accepting the message and sharing it with other people. As the message comes from God, for believers the Bible has a great **authority**, impacting how they live their lives. Christians should be guided by the teachings in the Bible.

Structure of the Bible

The Christian Bible is divided into two main parts; The **Old Testament and New Testament**. The word **testament** means an agreement or a promise. So, the Old Testament deals with how God looked after the Jewish people and the New Testament deals with how God sent his Son, Jesus, for the whole world. The Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew, the Jewish language, and the New Testament in Ancient Greek.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament is made up of the following types of writing (literary forms):

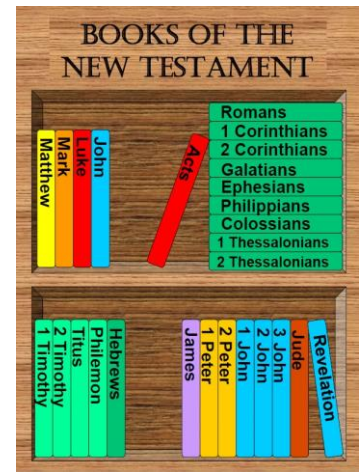
- **The laws (Torah).** The first five books of the Bible deal with how the Jewish people became God's chosen race and how God taught them to live. These books tell of the Creation and the lives of the patriarchs, like Abraham. They also teach about Moses and the laws given to the people of Israel, including the Ten Commandments.
- **History:** There are twelve historical books in the Bible, such as Joshua and Judges. These books show how God guided his people, but they were not always ready to listen.
- **Wisdom:** Psalms is the prayer book of the Jewish people. There are also books of religious and moral teaching, such as the book of Proverbs, which contains sayings about many aspects of life.
- **Prophets:** From time to time God sent inspired figures to challenge the Jews to remain faithful to God.



The New Testament

The New Testament is based on the life and teachings of Jesus and the **Apostles**, to whom Jesus taught God's message. All the New Testament was written in Greek. It can be divided into four types of writing (literary forms):

- **The Gospels** (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). These are the most important books of the Bible for all Christians, as they tell Jesus' story. The word "gospel" means "good news" –the good news about Jesus.
- **The Acts of the Apostles**. This is the sequel to Luke's Gospel. It tells the story of the Early Church, after Jesus' resurrection.
- **The letters (or Epistles)**. These were written mainly by Paul, but also by Peter, James, John and Jude. They were Christian leaders writing to Christians giving them advice on how to put Jesus' teaching into practice and explaining what it means to be a Christian.
- **The Book of Revelation**. This is the last book in the Bible, dealing with John's vision of heaven and the defeat of evil.



Origins of the Bible

It took about 350 years for the books that we now know as the Bible to be accepted as authentic records of Christian beliefs. The **Council** of Hippo in 393CE decided which texts should be included in the Bible. For a book to be accepted into the New Testament it had to fit the following rules:

- It had to be accepted by all Christians.
- The work had to go back to the apostles.
- It had to have an early date.
- It had to agree with other presentations of Christian beliefs.

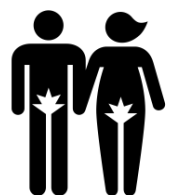
The words of the Bible have been very carefully preserved over the centuries. The first Bibles were hand written and copies were made so other people could read them. We have copies, or parts of copies, which go back almost to the time when the books were first written.

Different Christian views on Genesis

Some Christians believe that the Bible is the literal **word of God**. For example, they believe that God created the world in a single week and that everything was made perfectly at that time. They would reject the **Theory of Evolution**. They believe the **Holy Spirit** *dictated* the Bible and that no one should question anything that the Bible teaches because it comes from God. Where there appear to be contradictions, they think that this just shows that people do not yet have enough understanding.

This approach rejects any kind of compromise with science.

For Catholics **Genesis 1-3** has to be considered as a myth. It is not meant to be read as literally true. It is a story whilst not being "true", contains great "truths". As a result, there is no problem accepting **evolution and the Big Bang** as the Bible is not a science book. The creation story in Genesis is a poetic reflection on the significance of God as creator. This links to **Pope John Paul II's** teaching on the compatibility of science and religion.

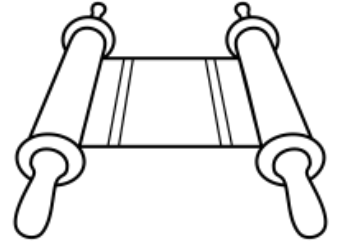


Jewish views The Torah (The Hebrew Bible)

The Torah is the first five books of the **Tanakh** and is believed to be the holiest and most important part of scripture for Jews. **Moses** is believed to have received the Torah from God on **Mount Sinai**.

For Orthodox Jews they believe it was given by God to Moses and must be taken literally and not changed. Many Orthodox Jews will seek to obey the **613 mitzvot** as duties in life. Society may change but Jewish teachings don't. The Torah was given in its entirety to Moses and can never be changed. The Jewish scholar **Moses Maimonides** put forward the **13 principles of the Jewish faith**. One of these was the immutability of the Torah. Immutability means that it cannot be changed.

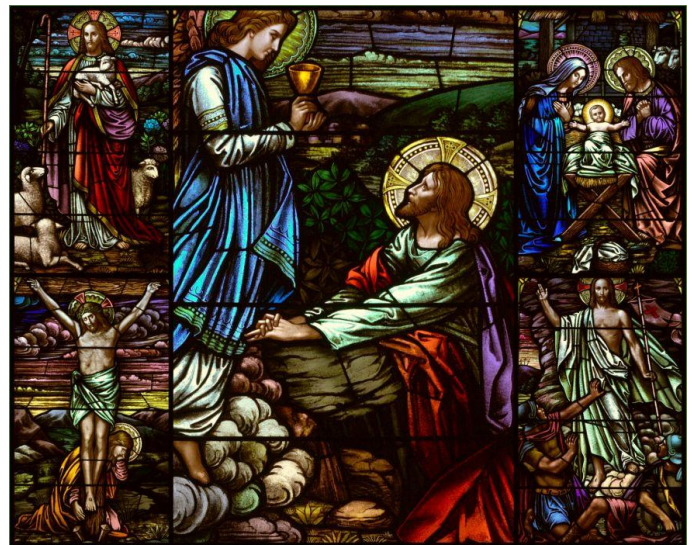
For many Reform and Liberal Jews, it is not necessary to take the scriptures literally and they believe that sometimes they have to be adapted for modern life.



Forms of Expression: Religious Art

Christianity has a long tradition of sacred art using themes and images from Christian belief. The use of art goes back to the time when people could not read or write. Learning about Jesus or the Bible was made easier by looking at pictures, images or statues. The artist would use their artwork to express their views. To add to this the person looking at it could study it and reflect upon it over time.

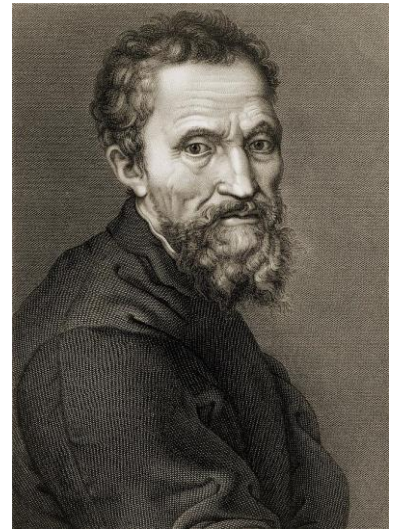
- Catholic art is used to express faith in God and to glorify him.
- Art can be used as a focus for prayer and meditation.
- Artwork demands a personal response, so it helps people to think and reflect on their own beliefs.
- Art can sometimes challenge people; an artist's interpretation of a Biblical theme or belief might make the viewer rethink or reinforce their beliefs.



Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*

The **Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, Rome**, where the cardinals vote for a new pope, was painted by Michelangelo between 1508 and 1512.



Michelangelo was a very religious man. Not only are the paintings very beautiful giving glory to God, they are intended to start reflection and meditation about Catholic beliefs about God.



There are **nine scenes** from Genesis on the ceiling. The most famous is the *Creation of Adam*. God is shown as an old bearded man enveloped in a swirling cloak. Adam is naked and positioned on the lower left. God's right arm is extended as if giving the spark of life into Adam, whose left arm is extended in a mirroring pose of God's. The mirroring pose shows humanity's creation in God's image. The fingers of Adam and God do not touch indicating that God, the giver of life, is reaching out to Adam with life.



The 'Creation of Adam' contains important teachings about humans and God:

ADAM	MEANING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adam is on the left of the painting, lying back on the earth from which he has been formed as described in Genesis. ➤ Adam is a perfect human being; young, handsome and strong. ➤ Adam resembles God, like a son looks like his father. ➤ Adam mirrors the pose of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Humans were created by God ➤ God created a perfect world ➤ Humans are made in the image and likeness of God 
GOD	MEANING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God is presented as a dynamic, active figure as if He is hard at work at His greatest creation. God reaches out to the more passive figure of Adam. ➤ God is shown as older than Adam, yet he is strong and powerful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The viewer is reminded of the belief that God is both eternal and all powerful ➤ The difference in age between Adam and God also signifies the parent-child relationship that exists between God and humanity, God is the Father of all Creation
HAND	MEANING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adam and God are seen reaching out to touch each other with their fingertips. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The touch of fingertips represents the spark of life given to all humans by God ➤ Human life is sacred and a gift from God.
CLOUD	MEANING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God is on a cloud, carried by a group of angels. This is a contrast to Adam on Earth ➤ Some believe the cloud is in the shape of a brain showing God is the source of all knowledge and wisdom ➤ Others believe that the cloud represents a womb because of the red background. Also, the green cloth hanging down could be the umbilical cord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This shows the greatness and transcendence of God ➤ God is omniscient ➤ This signifies the idea that God gives all life, in the same way that the womb gives life to a new child. 

Forms of Expression: Symbols



The Tree of Life Apse mosaic at San Clemente

The Tree of Life Mosaic can be found in the Apse of the Church of San Clemente in Rome. An apse is a semi-circular dome which is positioned above the altar in a church. It dates to the 12th century. The mosaic is filled with symbolism. The central image is a cross which merges with many other important symbols.

Symbol	Meaning
13 lambs, one with a halo	Twelve of the lambs represent the twelve disciples who were given the task of passing on Jesus' message. The lamb in the centre with a halo represents Jesus who is known as the lamb of God. It links back to the Passover story in the book of Exodus. Jesus will be sacrificed to save the world like the lambs were sacrificed to save the Jewish slaves.
The tree and vines	The tree and vines are symbolic of how the message of Christianity will grow and spread throughout the world. The tree is the tree of life and vines/branches will grow as the Jesus' message is passed on.
The hand of God	The hand represents God reaching out to his son Jesus and taking him to heaven. Following Jesus' death on the cross it is believed that Jesus rose again. The hand shows God's power to overcome death.
The dead serpent/snake	This symbol represents the devil and how Jesus' sacrifice overcomes death. The serpent/snake comes from the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis. Eve was tempted by the serpent and they ate from the tree of knowledge. This led to God banishing them from Eden.
The Chi - Rho	This symbol represents the Greek term for Christ. It is one of the earliest Christian symbols and was used by the Roman Emperor Constantine following a dream about the symbol. He attached the symbol to his army's shields and was victorious in battle.
The cross	Jesus on the cross is a symbol of the sacrifice that he made. Christians believe that Jesus' death was a saving act. This means that his death on the cross opened heaven for all people. This is why the cross is linked between heaven and earth.
Alpha and Omega symbol	These are the first and last Greek letters of the alphabet. They symbolise the Christian belief that God is eternal. This means that God has always existed and will always exist. He has no beginning or end.
St Peter, St Paul and the Prophets	These figures represent important people in the history of the Church. The prophets foretold of Jesus as the Messiah. St Peter was the first disciple of Jesus to spread the message of Christianity and was the first Pope. St Paul spread the message of Christianity throughout the Roman empire.

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching is a set of principles about building a just and fair society.



Human Dignity

At the heart of Catholic social teaching is human dignity. Catholics believe that humans were created in the image and likeness of God, and that each **human life is sacred**. This is linked to Jesus' teaching that we must '**love our neighbour, as we love ourselves.**' Catholics take a strong position on issues connected with the beginning and ending of life (abortion and euthanasia), but this belief has a huge impact on how Catholics support people with disabilities, how they address global inequality and their approach to civil-rights issues.

Justice, Peace and Reconciliation

Peace and **reconciliation** are at the heart of the gospel. Catholic social teaching condemns the arms trade and supports those who refuse to take up arms on grounds of conscience. It looks towards the kingdom of God and tries to find ways we can create a lasting peace in the world, a peace that is experienced and learnt about from a relationship with God.



The Common Good

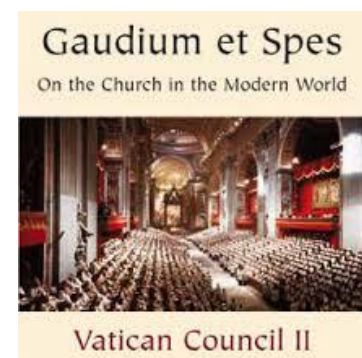
The Church promotes the idea of the **common good**. This means seeking the conditions in society that promote the fulfilment of all people, both as individuals and as groups. In order for people to flourish and reach their potential, society needs to promote respect for human rights and the dignity of each person, space to develop spiritual and material well-being, and peace and security within society.

Source of Authority - Imago dei: Gaudium et Spes 29 & 78:

"All men possess a rational soul and are created in God's likeness"

"Every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent"

"Although rightful differences exist between men, the equal dignity of persons demands that a more humane and just condition of life be brought about"



Interfaith dialogue

Britain: A multi-faith Society

The UK has a strong Christian heritage, but modern Britain is a multi-faith society, including Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. In the UK people have religious freedom which means it is up to the individual to choose which religion they practise or not. Atheism, not believing in God, is much more common now.



What is Inter-faith dialogue?

This means co-operative, constructive and positive engagement between people of different faiths and people of no faith such as humanists and atheists, to;

- promote mutual understanding, respect, tolerance and harmony
- identify common ground
- engage in shared action for the common good of society

Why do we need inter-faith dialogue?

Living in a multi faith society brings many benefits. Different religious cultures and traditions bring with them a variety of food, clothes, music, and literature in to our lives. With this comes new ways of living and enjoying life. By living and working alongside those from other religious backgrounds we can gain greater tolerance, respect and understanding towards those who have a different viewpoint to us. This leads to harmony and a safe, happy society.

The Catholic Church and Inter-faith dialogue

- Catholics believe they have a duty to put across the Gospel message.
- They believe non-Christian religions have some truth, but only Christianity has the whole truth.
- Other religions should be respected.
- All people are created in the image of God.
- The Popes have spoken out about the importance of respect and tolerance between different faiths. For example, Pope Benedict said, **“Together with all people of good will, we aspire to peace. That is why I insist once again: interreligious and intercultural research and dialogue are not an option but a vital need for our time.”** [February 2007]
- The Vatican II Council stressed the importance of dialogue with Jews and Muslims.

Catholic Charity

Being a Catholic isn't limited to prayer, or things they might do on Sundays. It is about putting faith into action, and involves every aspect of life. Catholic Charities try to reflect Catholic beliefs that humans were created in the image and likeness of God, and that each human life is sacred. This is linked to Jesus' teaching that we must 'love our neighbour, as we love ourselves.'

Respect for human life means respecting all of God's creation.



CAFOD

The major Catholic agency working for world development and supported by the Catholics of England and Wales is CAFOD (Catholic Fund for Overseas Development). It was started by the Catholic bishops of England and Wales in 1962.

- CAFOD is an organisation which tries to live out the Church's mission on a global scale. It tries to help those in need. It promotes long-term development so that less-developed countries can support themselves.
- CAFOD also has a disaster fund to help natural disasters and refugees. Emergency aid might mean sending food, medicines and shelters to victims of a disaster, or sending blankets and food to war refugees.
- About 5 per cent of CAFOD's budget is spent on educating the people and churches of England and Wales about the need for development and the ways in which Catholics can help less-developed countries.
- CAFOD works for social justice challenging unfairness and tries to bring an end to poverty.

SVP

The St Vincent de Paul Society is an organisation of Catholics who try to help those in need in the UK. Their activities may be any or all the following:

- Regular visiting and personal care to help families who are finding it difficult to organise their family or home
- Help the lonely or bereaved and the housebound
- Visits to individuals and families, to the sick at home or in hospitals and hospices, to residential homes and to offenders' institutions
- Visiting housebound elderly people to prevent them from feeling isolated. Many appreciate a friendly face and enjoy a chat over a cup of tea
- Shopping, decorating, gardening, filling in official forms and making sure people are receiving their statutory benefits
- Organising children's camps for children from poor or troubled homes, and holiday schemes to provide a break for family carers, to give poor families a holiday or a break
- Organising stores for unwanted furniture, which can be used when housing the homeless
- Providing drop-in centres to give lonely people an opportunity to socialise.



Catholic Christianity: Evil & Suffering

Course Information



Information for Students

This course information booklet covers all areas of GCSE Paper 1 Section 2:

Area of study	Content
Catholic, Christian and Jewish beliefs about Good, Evil and Suffering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Problem of evil and suffering ➤ St Augustine's beliefs about the origin of evil ➤ John Hick's beliefs about evil and suffering ➤ Jewish beliefs about the origin of evil
Non-Religious and Philosophical views on the nature of evil & suffering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ John Mackie's inconsistent triad ➤ John Mackie's challenge to Augustine and John Hick ➤ William Rowe's evidential problem of evil
Catholic beliefs about the meaning of suffering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meaning of suffering for Catholics ➤ Suffering as a mystery ➤ St John Paul II – Salvifici Doloris
Beliefs on the Trinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The trinity and how it is represented in the Nicene Creed ➤ The trinity expressed in the Bible ➤ St Augustine's beliefs about the trinity in <i>De Trinitate</i>
Incarnation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Jesus as the incarnation of God ➤ What the Bible teaches about the incarnation with reference to the John 1:1 and the Kenosis hymn.
Jesus and sources of authority & Jewish Sources of moral authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The teachings of Jesus as a source of moral authority ➤ The moral teachings of Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount ➤ Jewish sources of moral authority ➤ Natural Law, Conscience and Virtues
Sculpture, Statues & Michelangelo's Pieta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The importance of sculpture and statues for Roman Catholics ➤ Jewish and Protestant Christian beliefs about statues ➤ The meaning of human suffering in Michelangelo's Pieta
Pilgrimage & Lourdes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is Lourdes and the importance of pilgrimage for Roman Catholics ➤ Lourdes as a response to human suffering
The Rosary & The Sorrowful Mysteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is the Rosary ➤ How do the sorrowful mysteries show the importance of Jesus as the incarnation?

Catholic perspectives on the origin of evil

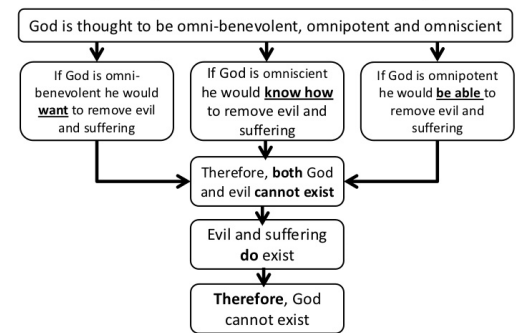
The problem of evil for Catholics

Catholics believe in one God, who is:

- Omnipotent (all-powerful).
- Omnibenevolent (all-loving)
- Omniscient (all-knowing)

The problem caused by evil and suffering is that if God has these different qualities then he should want to end suffering and would have the power to end suffering. As suffering continues to happen then Catholics ask the question: Why does the world contain so much evil and suffering?

The 'problem of evil' recap



Catholic Response to Evil & Suffering

Free Will:

Catholics believe that free will is a gift from God. God created humans with the ability to choose between good and evil. When humans choose the wrong thing it causes suffering.

Humans are to blame for the suffering, not God. They have abused their gift. Poor choices have caused suffering. Humans are not programmed robots.

However, free will only provides an answer to the existence of moral evil. What about suffering not caused by humans (i.e. natural as opposed to moral evil)?

Original Sin:

The story of Genesis tells how the world was created. Adam and Eve decided to eat the forbidden fruit going against God's wishes. This is the first (original) sin, sometimes known as the Fall.

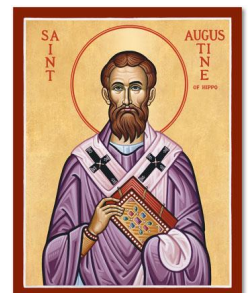
As a result of this moral suffering and natural suffering were introduced into a perfect world. Since that time all humans have original sin, the tendency to go against God.

Original sin is a symbol that we all share some responsibility for the evil and suffering in the world.

St Augustine and Evil

In the Enchiridion, St Augustine gives three answers to the question of suffering:

1. The existence of evil helps people to appreciate the good in the world. For example, being unwell helps us to appreciate when we are healthy.
2. St Augustine says that Evil is just the absence of good things. This is called **privation**. God does not cause or permit evil because evil isn't even a thing.
3. St Augustine says God allows suffering because he is omnipotent and good. He allows evil because in his goodness and power he is always able to bring a greater good out of suffering. Suffering can be beneficial.



Key Concept

Privation – the absence of something. Catholics believe evil is an absence of good.

Source of Authority - (St Augustine, Enchiridion 3,11)

“And in the universe, even that which is called evil, when it is regulated and put in its own place, only enhances our admiration of the good; for we enjoy and value the good more when we compare it with the evil.”

“For what is that which we call evil but the absence of good? Disease and wounds mean nothing but the absence of health; for when a cure is effected, that does not mean that the evils go away from the body and dwell elsewhere: they altogether cease to exist.”

“For the Almighty God, who has supreme power over all things, being Himself supremely good, would never permit the existence of anything evil, if he were not so omnipotent and good that He can bring good even out of evil.”

Other Christian views on the nature and origin of evil

St. Irenaeus and John Hick – The Vale of Soul Making

John Hick developed the ideas of St. Irenaeus. According to Hick humans were made in the image of God, but they and the world itself were not made perfect. They need to grow to become spiritually perfect. Suffering and evil is the best way for humans to develop. Hick argues that God allows evil and suffering to happen so that people can grow and develop in how they respond to it. Natural evil is one part of God’s creation which allows humans to respond and grow spiritually.



Key Concept

Free Will – The God given ability to choose right from wrong freely and without being controlled.

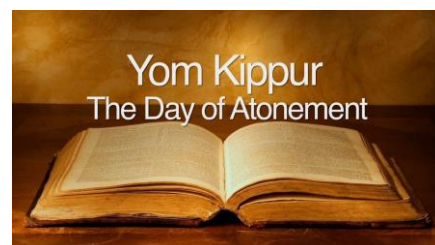
Source of Authority – John Hick

“A world without problems, difficulties, perils and hardships would be morally static” (John Hick: Evil and the God of Love)

The Jewish view

Jews do not believe that people are born evil. They do not share the Christian concept of Original Sin. Jews believe they are born free with the feeling to do good or to do evil. The Torah teaches that God has given human beings choices and that it is important to struggle against the feeling to do evil actions by obeying to God. Jews have been provided with guidance through the Torah and mitzvot which are actions that Jewish people should perform or avoid. By being obedient to the Torah and mitzvot Jews can avoid evil.

Jews believe it is not possible to hide evil actions from God and each year during the festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Jews apologise (make up for or make good) for the times when they have followed their feeling to do evil. For Jews evil and suffering are seen as a consequence of human beings’ wrong choices.



Non-Religious & Philosophical views on the nature and origin of evil

Many atheists (people who don't believe in God) and philosophers argue that the problem of evil and suffering can be used as evidence to challenge the existence of God.

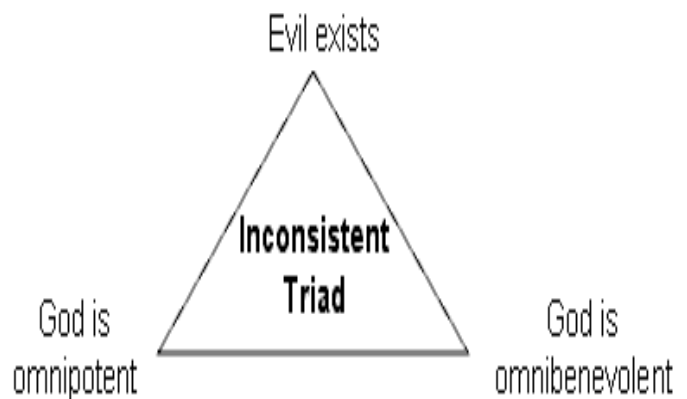
John Mackie – Inconsistent Triad

The Australian philosopher, John Mackie put forward the inconsistent triad. A 'triad' is a group of three things. The following group is 'inconsistent' because it seems that not all of them can be true at the same time:

Mackie concluded that either God is not omnipotent, God is not omnibenevolent or God does not exist.

Key Concept

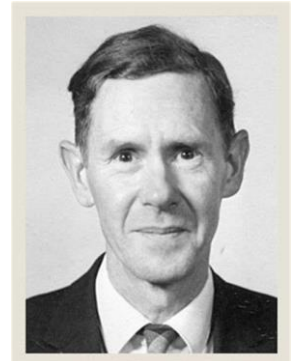
Evil – The absence of good that results in suffering.



Mackie rejected some of the usual answers to the problem of evil that Christians such as St Augustine and John Hick often give:

Evil is necessary as an opposite of good

Mackie rejected this. Even if it is true that we need some evil and suffering to help us to appreciate the good, we only need a little bit. He argues that there is far more suffering than is needed to make a good contrast to the good in the world and some of the suffering is truly horrible, far more and far worse than is really needed.



Evil helps us to become better people

Another traditional Christian argument that Mackie rejects is the idea that suffering helps us to become better people. First, Mackie doesn't understand why God needs to make us better through experiencing suffering. Why can God not just make us perfect to start with? Also, often suffering makes people worse, rather than making them better.

Evil is a consequence of free-will

Both St Augustine and John Hick rely on the existence of free-will to explain why God allows evil to exist. Mackie rejects this as a reason because he does not see why God could not make free human beings who always choose good instead of evil. He also feels that evil and suffering is far too high a price to pay for having free will.

William Rowe – The Evidential Problem of Evil & Suffering

William Rowe argues that the evidence of evil and suffering within the world provides a really strong challenge to God's existence. He says that intense **"human and animal suffering"** makes God's existence unlikely and improbable. Rowe uses two specific examples to highlight his challenge:



1. Fawn in a forest fire – a fawn (baby deer) is caught amidst a forest fire. The fawn suffers terribly and eventually dies.
2. The abuse of a 5 year old child – a child is mistreated and is killed.

Both examples show that there is no purpose or reason for this suffering. This challenges the Catholic belief that there is a purpose or reason for evil and suffering.

Catholic beliefs about the relationship between God's goodness and the goodness of the created world

The Meaning of Suffering for Catholics (why do we suffer?)

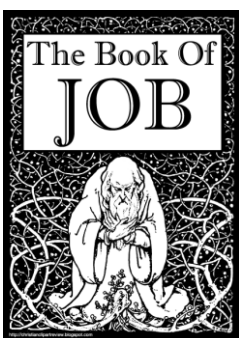
Key Concept

Goodness – The quality of being like God. Putting the needs of others first.

God understands human suffering because God the Son in Jesus died a horrible death. The death and suffering of Jesus is at the heart of the Gospel. Christians use Isaiah 53 to understand Jesus' suffering. It describes how the acceptance of suffering by the 'suffering servant' somehow brought about salvation. When Christians suffer it is a way to bring them closer to an understanding of Jesus and a way to bring about a greater good. So,

although suffering is horrible it can bring about good things.

This shapes how Catholics respond to suffering. Catholics share their suffering with God in prayer. During Mass Catholics pray for the sick, dying and those who are suffering, they ask God to help those in need. Catholics also help those who are suffering by giving to charity. Some Christians feel it is their vocation to be doctors or nurses and fight against suffering.



Suffering is a Mystery

Ultimately, for all Christians suffering is a mystery and God uses suffering to bring about good. In the Book of Job, God tells the suffering Job that he is just not capable of understanding the reasons why God chooses to do, or not do, certain things. Christians must trust that God understands the reasons for suffering.

Key Concept

Suffering – the pain or loss that harms human beings.

St John Paul II – Salvifici Doloris

Salvifici Doloris is a document that was written by St Pope John Paul II. The title is Latin, meaning “The Beauty of Suffering”. He writes that if Christians willingly ‘offer up’ their own suffering in prayer for the sake of others, that they can share in the saving suffering of Jesus. If a Catholic can do this, it is an act of love resembling Jesus’ own act of sacrifice. This is very difficult to understand but St John Paul II believes that if we try and bear our suffering patiently and offer it to God in prayer, that God will somehow be able to use it to bring about good for others. Like Augustine, John Paul II believes that love comes from suffering. It leads people to respond with kindness.

Source of Authority

But in order to understand the ‘why’ of suffering, we must look to the revelation of divine love...This answer has been given by God to human beings in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

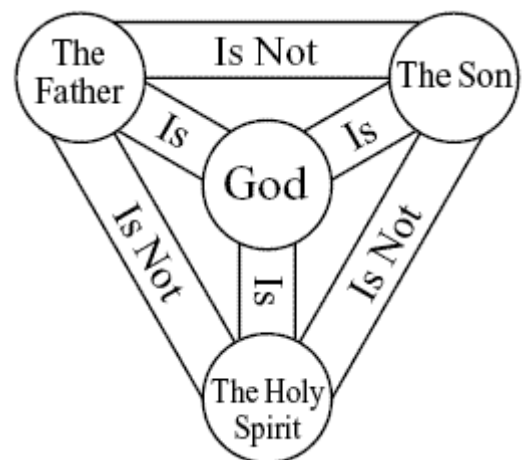
Those who share in Christ’s suffering have before their eyes the Paschal Mystery of the Cross and Resurrection, in which Christ takes on human weakness...But if in this weakness there is accomplished his lifting up, then the weaknesses of human suffering can be filled with the same power of God made visible in Christ’s Cross.

Salvifici Doloris 13 & 23

The Trinity

Catholics believe the following things about God:

- There is only one God
- God exists as three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Each of these three persons is distinct from the other two
- Each of these three persons is fully God
- But there are not three Gods



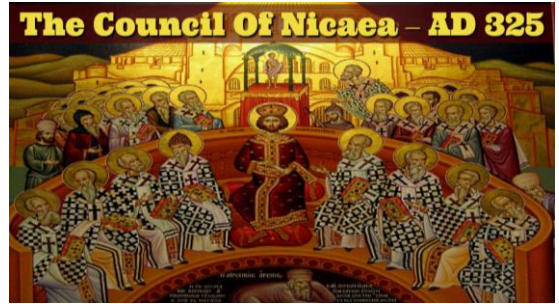
Catholics believe in one single God, who made himself known to the world (revelation) as three separate persons:

1. God the Father
2. God the Son (Jesus)
3. God the Holy Spirit

This is known as the doctrine of the Trinity, and is a fundamental belief for all Catholics. The way the Trinity works is considered to be a mystery. This means that Catholics can never fully understand this idea because it is only fully known by God. The Trinity helps Catholics to understand the different qualities of God.

The Nicene Creed

The doctrine (belief) of the Trinity is set out in the Nicene Creed. The Nicene Creed is a statement of Catholic beliefs that date back to 325AD. Catholics say the creed weekly when they attend Mass. Catholics believe that each person of the Trinity performs a special function:



- God the Father created heaven and earth
- God the Son, Jesus, passed on God's message and died as a sacrifice
- God the Holy Spirit is an invisible spiritual power which guides, helps and inspires human beings.

Source of Authority – The Nicene Creed

"We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty...We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God...We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life."

The importance of the Trinity for Catholics

The concept of the Trinity is very important to Catholics. Without a belief in the Trinity, it would not be possible for Catholics to believe that Jesus is God. The belief that Jesus is God is probably the most important Christian belief.

The importance of the Trinity is demonstrated by its central role within religious practice. For example;

- The simplest of Catholic prayers, the sign of the cross, is trinitarian:

'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.

- Many prayers are said to or in the name of the Trinity. For instance, the Eucharistic prayer finishes with the words:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

The Sign of the Cross



Glory be to the Father
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen

The Trinity in the Bible

The word 'Trinity' does not appear directly in the Bible. The doctrine (belief) of the Trinity developed over several hundred years. When the first Christians began to reflect on their experience of Jesus, they began to see that they experienced the One God in three different ways. They saw this in the scriptures (Bible):

The concept of the One God consisting of three divine persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is found many times in the New Testament, for example:

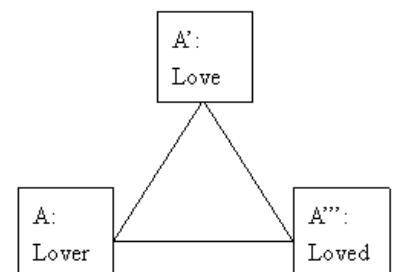
- Jesus teaches his disciples to: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...' (Matthew 28:19)
- John's Gospel states "the word became flesh and dwelt (lived) amongst us"
- We also see the Trinity at Jesus' baptism (Mark ch.1)

St Augustine's analogy of the Trinity – love, lover, beloved

St Augustine used the idea that "God is Love" (1 John 4:8) to explain the Trinity. Love needs three things:

1. The person who is doing the loving
2. The person who is being loved
3. Love itself

These three aspects are present in God. St Augustine says that the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is like this Trinity of love, lover and beloved.



Source of authority – St Augustine 'De Trinitate'

"There are three things in love...love is of someone that loves, and with love something is loved. Behold, then, there are three things: he that loves, and that which is loved, and love."

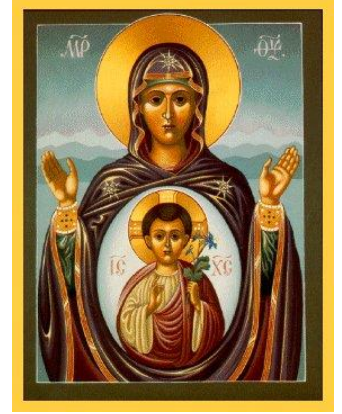
Jewish Views about the Trinity

Jews would agree with Catholics that there is one God as they are monotheist. The belief in only one God is stated in the most important prayer for Jews; the Shema. It is also stated in the Ten Commandments which are found in the Torah which is the Jewish written law. The Jewish patriarch, Abraham taught the early Jews that they were to believe in one God only as part of the covenant (promise/agreement) made with God.

However, Jews do not accept any belief in the Trinity as they do not accept Jesus as the Son of God. There are different qualities of God such as 'lawgiver', 'judge' and creator' but these are only characteristics of the one God. These attributes of God are not separate persons, but are just the different ways in which human beings experience God. Orthodox Jews may argue that the belief in the Trinity challenges the first commandment "You shall have no gods before me". A belief in the Trinity would break the covenant that God made with Abraham and Moses.

The Incarnation

Catholics believe that Jesus is God the Son. God became a human being through the person of Jesus. It is called 'the incarnation' because God became human 'in the flesh' in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The most usual way Christians express this belief is by calling Jesus the 'Son of God'. This connects to the belief of the Trinity, where the term 'Son' is used to name the second person of the Trinity.



When Christians call Jesus the 'Son of God' they mean that he is God who has become a human being; that he is the 'incarnate Son'. Christians also believe that Jesus is 'fully God and fully human'. Christians believe that Jesus is one person, with two natures: one human nature, and one divine (which means 'godly') nature.

In the opening chapter of John's Gospel, John calls Jesus 'the Word'. 'The Word' refers to the way in which God was made known to the world through the Bible. This was how God had revealed himself to the world. However, God has also made himself known to the world through Jesus, the incarnation.

Key Concept

Incarnation – Means 'made flesh'. The belief that God became human in the person of Jesus.

Source of Authority – The Gospel of John

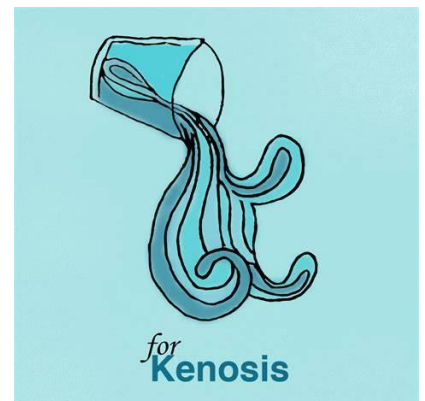
"The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us"

St Paul describes Catholic beliefs about the incarnation in his letter to the Philippians. He writes it down in the form of a hymn known as the 'Kenosis' hymn. Kenosis is a Greek term which means empty. The hymn describes how Jesus 'emptied himself' of his divine nature. This means Jesus took on the form of a human who was both human and divine.

Source of Authority – St Paul Kenosis Hymn

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

The Kenosis Hymn (Philippians 2:5-8)



Jewish views about the Incarnation

Jewish people do not accept that Jesus was God as this challenges their basic belief that God is one. This belief is stated in the Shema, which is a very important prayer for Jews. It is also stated in the Ten Commandments which were given to Moses on Mt Sinai: **“You shall have no other gods before me”**. The Jewish patriarch, Abraham taught the early Jews that they were to believe in one God only as part of the covenant (promise/agreement) made with God.

Orthodox Jews also reject beliefs in the Incarnation due to their beliefs about the Messiah. Jews reject the belief that Jesus is the Messiah because they believe that the Messiah will be a human descendant of King David. This teaching comes from the book of Isaiah which outlines the different qualities of the Messiah.

Incarnation and the Problem of Evil

The mystery of why a good God allows pain and suffering is very hard for Catholics to understand. A belief in the Incarnation is very important to Catholics in helping them to respond to the Problem of Evil. Jesus incarnation and suffering give Catholics a way of being able to continue to believe in the goodness of God, even in the face of human suffering.

The incarnation is important to Catholics for a number of reasons:

- It means that God, as Jesus, can identify with human beings. God shares in the suffering of humans.
- It is a demonstration of God’s immense love for human beings. In Jesus, they see a God who loves them so much that he was willing to take on human form and sacrifice his human life for them.
- We may not understand why God allows the suffering to happen, but they should trust God because he knows what they are going through.
- We should follow Jesus’ example. Jesus spent his life working against suffering. The best example of this is the way he cured the sick. Catholics should do what they can to help those who are suffering.

Catholics believe that Jesus provides clear help and support to help prevent suffering. This help is found through:

1. Jesus’ various teachings that are found in the Gospels (biographies of Jesus’ life)
2. Jesus’ actions towards those who suffer. For instance, the Gospels include many stories of Jesus caring for and healing those who are sick.
3. Jesus’ teachings and actions on forgiveness e.g. Jesus teaches a message of forgiveness through his parables and shows forgiveness when he was crucified.
4. Jesus’ reworking of the law of Moses in the Sermon on the Mount

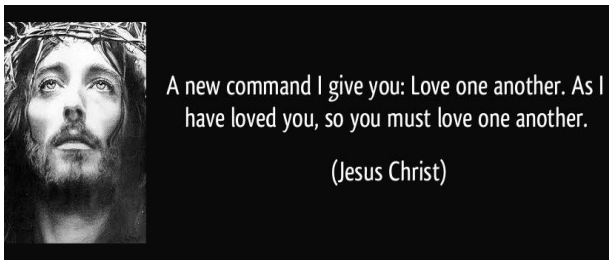
Moral teachings – Jesus' example to all

Catholics try to model themselves on Jesus. There are many examples of how Jesus acted and what he taught to inspire Christians today.

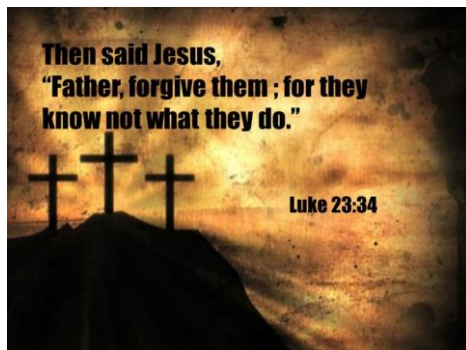
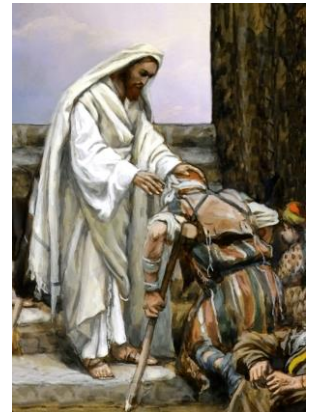
1. Jesus gave us the Golden Rule – **“do to others as you would want them to do to you.”** This is a summary of the Sermon on the Mount. **“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”** (Matthew 7:12)



2. Jesus told his disciples to love. **“A new commandment I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.”** (John 13:34-35)

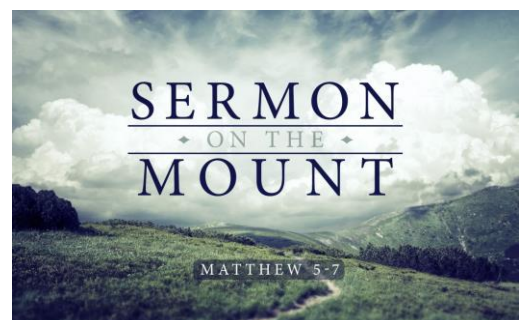


3. Jesus showed love in the way that he healed the sick (Healing a Leper Matt 8) He also made the outcast and sinner welcome. (Zacchaeus Luke 19)



4. Jesus showed forgiveness to those who crucified him. (Luke 23:33-35)

5. Jesus explains how his followers should behave in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).



Jesus and Moral Authority

Teachings of Jesus: The Beatitudes

Jesus gives clear teachings on how people should live their lives. The clearest collection of these teachings is in chapters five to seven of Mathew's Gospel in a section that is called the 'Sermon on the Mount'.

The sermon begins with a list of blessings, which are called The Beatitudes (which is Latin for "blessings"). The key messages of the beatitudes is that those who are closest to God are often those that the world does not recognise or value. The Beatitudes are the qualities that Jesus expects of his followers.

Source of Authority – The Beatitudes

Jesus said:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are the merciful

Blessed are the peacemakers



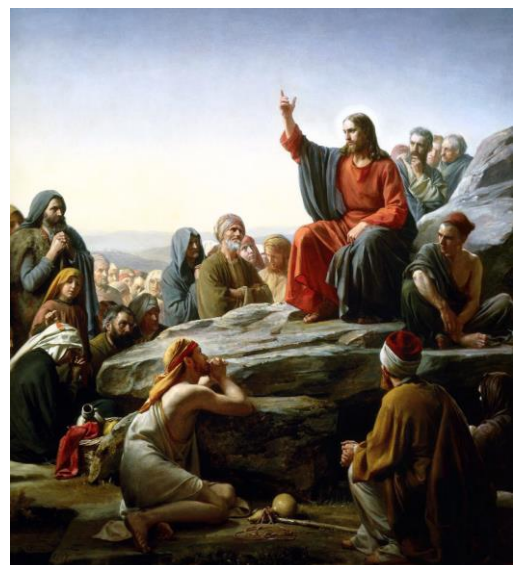
The Sermon on the Mount

Jesus is a source of moral authority as he came to fulfil God's law. Jesus says the requirements of being a follower of Christianity go further and deeper than the Law of Moses. Jesus repeats a phrase which begins "You have heard that it was said..." and ends with "But I say to you...".

The Sermon on the Mount shows the ways in which being a follower of Jesus is more demanding than the religious Law (Torah) which his listeners have been living by. For example, he outlines that murder was wrong, but now Jesus adds that even anger is unacceptable. Furthermore, adultery was wrong but now even looking at someone lustfully is wrong. It isn't just about an action, the intention of the action and the reason behind the action are just as important.

Technical Term

Moral Authority of Jesus – this means Jesus has the power to put forward teachings that will guide Catholics on how they can avoid evil and suffering.



Summary of the Sermon on the Mount

5:17-20 "I have come not to abolish the Law but to fulfil it"
Following Jesus requires a higher standard...

The Old Teaching - You have heard it said....	The New Teaching - But I tell you....
Do not murder	Don't be angry. Settle arguments quickly.
Do not commit adultery	Do not look lustfully at a woman. If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out.
Divorce is allowable	No divorce except for sexual immorality.
Do not break oaths	Do not make an oath. Let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no", "no".
An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth	Turn the other cheek.
Love your neighbour, hate your enemies	Love your enemies pray for those who persecute you.
Giving to the needy	Give in secret. Do not let the left hand know what the right hand is doing.
Prayer & Fasting	Don't pray and fast for show –you've had your reward.

Jewish Sources of Moral Authority

Orthodox Jews will use the Torah as their main source of moral authority. The Torah is the Jewish written law and outlines a variety of actions that Jews should perform or avoid. These actions are known as the mitzvot and there are 613 of these in total. By following the Torah and the mitzvot Jews are fulfilling the covenant that God made with Moses on Mount Sinai.

In addition, Jews will use the Talmud. The Talmud is a commentary on the Jewish written law written by important rabbis throughout history. The Talmud gives guidance on how Jews should best apply the Torah and the mitzvot. For example, the Talmud will give guidance on how Jews can best follow Sabbath laws and laws on Kosher.

Other sources of Moral Authority

Natural Law

A belief in Natural Law is a key part of Catholic Moral teaching. This is the idea that there is a universal moral law of right and wrong that applies to all humans at all times. Natural Law was put forward by the famous Catholic saint, Thomas Aquinas.

St Thomas Aquinas stated that all human beings have five primary principles. These principles are what all people have in common:

Worship God

Orderly Society

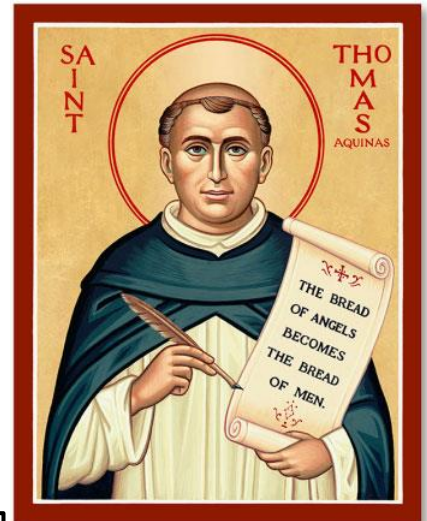
Reproduce

Learn through education

Defend innocent life

Key Concept

Natural Law – A belief that there are universal laws of right and wrong that applies to all humans at all times.



Because of these common principles, there are some universal laws that all human beings have to obey. For example, laws against murder, child abuse, theft, and lying. At a basic level humans should do good and avoid evil. Catholics would say that Natural Law is a God given ability to understand the difference between right and wrong.

Conscience

Conscience is the God given inner feeling of right and wrong. The conscience guides Catholics to make good choices. Catholics have an obligation (duty) to follow their conscience. Catholics must make sure their conscience is informed by the Bible and tradition as interpreted by the Church. Catholics making moral decisions must follow their conscience.

Key Concept

Conscience – A God given feeling of right and wrong.

The existence of the conscience is another proof of the goodness of God who created human beings in his own image. Catholics believe if humans followed their conscience more often there would be far less moral evil in the world, and far less suffering as a result.



Virtues and suffering

Catholics believe that living a good life and obeying their conscience is something that requires practice. Catholics believe that there are moral habits which human beings need to practice in order to become good people. These moral habits are called 'virtues' which comes from the Latin word for 'perfection'. These virtues challenge our instinctive selfishness. Examples of virtues that Catholics are encouraged to practice are: courage, patience, generosity and kindness.



Sculpture and Statues

Sculpture and statues in Catholic tradition and worship

Catholics have statues of Jesus to honour and preserve his memory. The statue is also something to focus on when praying so that the mind can truly connect with Jesus. Catholics **DO NOT** pray to the statue, rather the statue helps to focus the mind and the prayer on Jesus.

Statues of Jesus also remind Catholics of the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus when they pray in Church. It helps Catholics to connect with and appreciate the great sacrifice that Jesus made for the world.

Statues of Jesus can also act as inspiration and strength for Catholics during hard times so that when they pray Catholics can draw strength and comfort knowing that they are in the presence of Jesus.



Statues of the Virgin Mary and the Saints



Statues of the Virgin Mary and the Saints are used to remind people of the lives those people lived. The statues help Catholics to feel close to the Saints or to give strength when they are suffering. Since saints led holy lives and are close to God in heaven, we feel that their prayers are particularly effective. Often we ask particular saints to pray for us if we feel they have a particular interest in our problem.

For example, many people ask Saint Monica (the mother of St Augustine) to pray for them if they have trouble with unanswered prayers, because Monica prayed for twenty years for her son to be converted. Finally her prayers were answered in a way she never dreamed of -- her son, Augustine, became a saint and a Doctor of the Church.

In addition, Catholics may use statues of the Virgin Mary to make them feel less alone if they are suffering. For instance, Mary is the perfect example of a mother who suffered as she had to watch the death of her own son.

Furthermore, Mary is a role model for Catholics. She was a willing and obedient servant of God. She was willing to put the needs of others ahead of her own. Statues of Mary can inspire people to follow her example.

Catholics also use sculpture and statues to express what they believe about God's goodness. They give a glimpse of God reaching out to His creation in order to try and help or save; most particularly this is seen in various sculptures and statues of Jesus. For instance, statues of Jesus on the cross highlight the **incarnation** (where God became man in Jesus) and was willing to sacrifice his life for others.

Jewish beliefs about Statues

Orthodox Jews reject Catholic beliefs regarding statues. The Torah (which is the Jewish written law) makes it clear that Jews should not create or worship idols. Orthodox Jews would class statues as being examples of idols. The second commandment that was given to Moses on Mount Sinai states “Do not worship idols”. Statues challenge their beliefs about monotheism. Monotheism is the belief in one God that was introduced by Abraham, the patriarch or founding father of Judaism. This belief is reinforced in their daily prayer, the Shema. Unlike Catholic churches, synagogues have no statues on show. The only symbols in the synagogue are the Ark of the Covenant (Aron Kodesh) and the eternal light (Ner Tamid).

Protestant Churches

In some Protestant churches they will ensure that their buildings are plain and simple. Unlike Catholic churches, they would only have a simple cross. Some Protestant's would argue that statues break the 2nd commandment and that they are too distracting. They are concerned that people will start to worship and idolise the statue rather than focusing their attention on God.



Protestant Christian Church



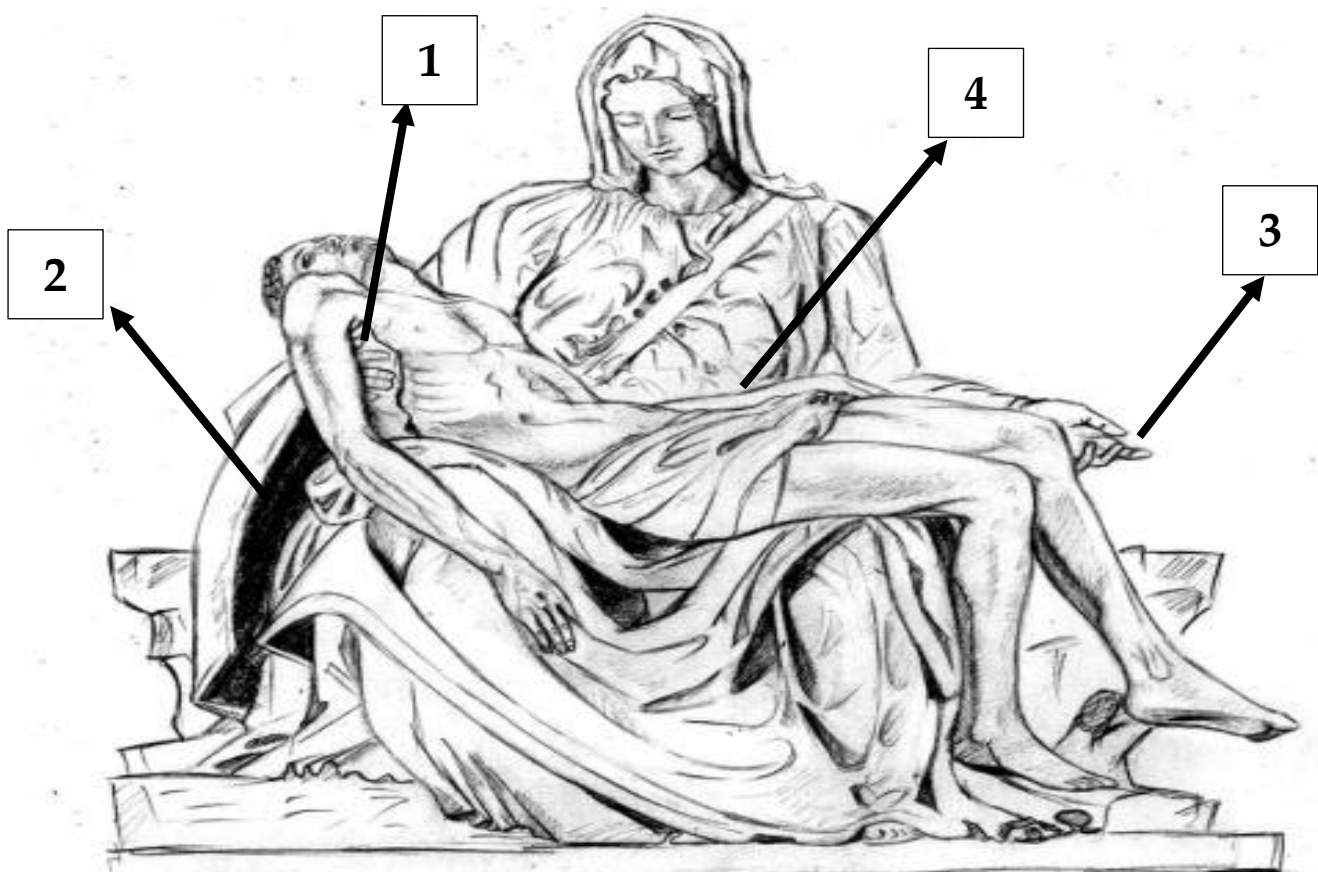
Orthodox Jewish Synagogue

Statues and suffering: Michelangelo's Pietà

Statues can be used to help Catholics reflect on the meaning of suffering. One of the most famous Catholic sculptures to show this is Michelangelo's Pietà. The word 'Pietà' is Latin for holiness and the sculpture represents the suffering of both Jesus and Mary. Catholics use this statue to help focus their prayers on God when they too are suffering.

Michelangelo was 24 years old when he created this sculpture. He carved the Pietà from one large block of marble that he described as "the most perfect block of marble he had ever used". The Pietà represents important Catholic beliefs:

1. Mary does not directly touch the body of her son Jesus. Her right arm gently caresses his flesh through a cloth. This symbolises the sacredness of his suffering and the sacredness of his body.
2. The shadow created by the fold in her garment is said to represent a wound. The wound reveals the pain and suffering that Mary is feeling.
3. Mary's hand is open which symbolises that she accepts the suffering that Jesus has went through. It shows that Mary (although sad) is aware of God's plan for Jesus.
4. Jesus in Mary's arms symbolises a mother holding her child. Mary is much larger than Jesus to emphasise this. Catholics can use this aspect of the pieta to focus their prayers when they are suffering.



Practices: Popular devotion in Catholic communities in Britain and elsewhere

The meaning and significance of pilgrimages for Catholics

A pilgrimage is a journey to a holy place. Many Catholics go on pilgrimages as a way of becoming closer to God. The Catholic Church recognises sites of pilgrimage as among the most appropriate places for prayer. There are many reasons why Catholics go on pilgrimage. These may include:

- To help strengthen their faith
- To share the experience and their faith with other believers
- To pray for something special
- To pray for the sick
- As a way of thanking God
- To seek physical, spiritual or emotional healing
- To do a penitential act as a reflection of sorrow for sin
- To come closer to God by giving him time and attention
- A group pilgrimage may help an individual to feel part of the church community.
- Pilgrims pray together and feel supported by each other



Going on a pilgrimage can help believers to reflect on their life's journey. It is an opportunity to take time out and focus on their journey to God. It is often a journey of self-discovery, most noticeably for those who are sick. Very few sick people come back cured, however, they may come back feeling at peace and able to accept and cope with the problems they face. In this way, many people learn how to value the role of God in their lives in a new way.

Many places of pilgrimage are dedicated to Mary, whom Catholics call Our Lady. The most popular of these shrines in Europe is Lourdes (in France). Most shrines are in places where people have claimed to see visions of Mary. Catholics often pray to Mary at sites of pilgrimage, believing that she can pray to God on their behalf.

• Lourdes

One of the most popular shrines is Lourdes, in south-west France. In 1858 a young girl called Bernadette Soubirous had visions of Mary. Mary told Bernadette to dig for a spring. This spring is believed to have healing qualities and many pilgrims bathe there. Now thousands of pilgrims go to pray at the grotto. Large numbers of young people volunteer as helpers for the sick and disabled pilgrims, which can be a life changing experience. It's a practical way that ordinary people can respond to the mystery of suffering. Catholics will take part in various activities in Lourdes to help them overcome suffering:



- Visiting the stations of the cross to reflect on the suffering of Jesus
- Visit the grotto where Mary is believed to have appeared to Bernadette
- Lourdes baths and holy water – many believe the water has miraculous healing properties
- Statue of the Virgin Mary who acts as a mediator and takes prayers to God
- Torchlight procession where pilgrims pray together asking God to remove their suffering

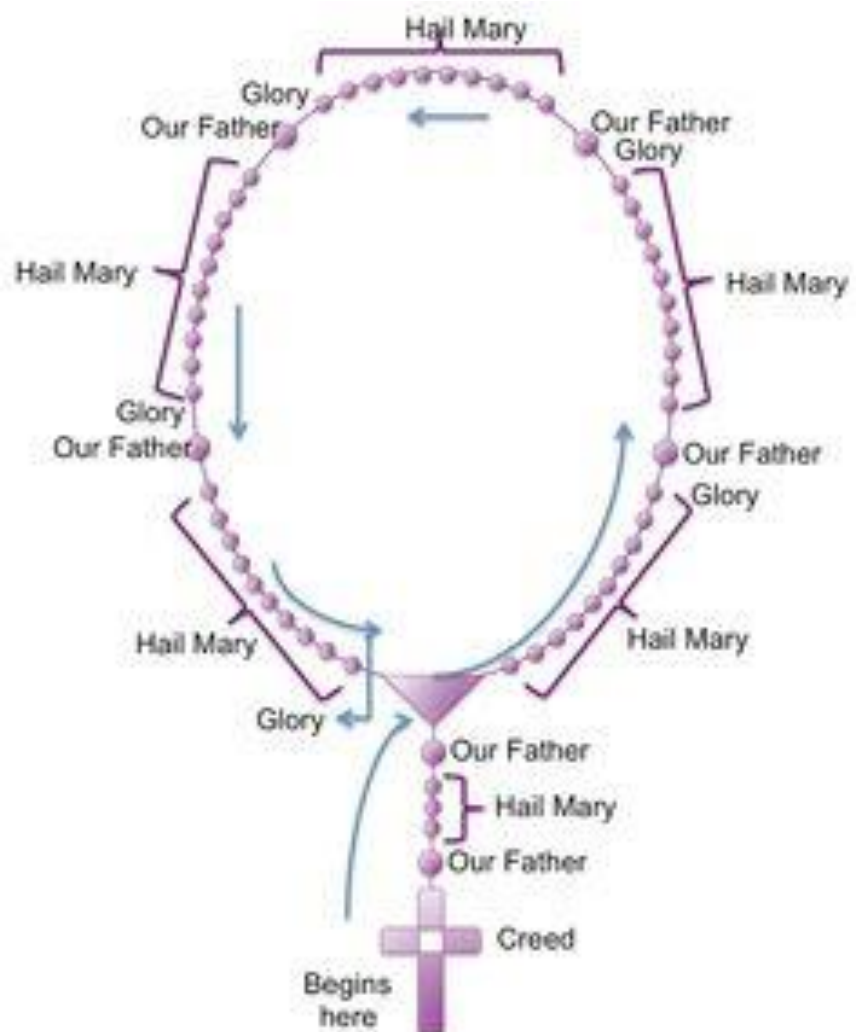
Popular Piety – The Rosary

Popular piety means forms of worship or prayer that are inspired by the tradition of the Church. A good example is the rosary. The rosary is a series of beads used by Catholics to help them concentrate during prayers.

The rosary can be said as an individual or in a group. Each bead represents a prayer and the beads are arranged in a sequence of one 'Our Father', ten 'Hail Marys' and one 'Glory Be'. Most Catholics can recite these prayers from memory. The fact that they do not need to concentrate on what words to say means that they can think more deeply. Each sequence of beads is called a decade, and a set of rosary beads usually has five decades.

As you progress through the decades, Catholics reflect on some of the important events in the life of Jesus and of Mary. It is a form of meditation. These events, called mysteries, are in groups of five. For example, the joyful mysteries are:

1. The Annunciation
2. Mary's visit to Elizabeth
3. The birth of Jesus
4. The presentation of the baby Jesus in the temple
5. The finding of Jesus in the temple



The Sorrowful Mysteries

There are five sorrowful mysteries, each of which focus on events associated with the suffering and death of Jesus. Catholics can reflect on the suffering of Jesus. It helps them to find answers to the Problem of Evil

The Mystery	Description
The agony in the Garden	This is when Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before he died. He prayed to be spared the suffering he knew was to come but in the end accepted God's will out of obedience and love.
The scourging at the pillar	This is when Pilate had Jesus whipped in an attempt to satisfy those who wanted Jesus to be crucified. It didn't do any good and Pilate condemned Jesus to death.
The crowning with thorns	This is when the soldiers mocked Jesus, twisting thorns into a crown because he had been charged with claiming to be the King of the Jews
Jesus is made to carry his cross	This is when Jesus carried his own cross to Golgotha, the place of his crucifixion.
Jesus is crucified and dies on the cross	This is when Jesus is nailed to the cross and, after six hours, dies on the cross.

