

Knowing God

- Faith is a gift from God that allows us to believe in him and all that he has revealed. We can know God from creation.
- In the 13th century, St. Thomas Aquinas, a philosopher, explained how the human mind seeks different kinds of truth.
 - **Scientific truth** (also known as empirical truth) is known by observation and experimentation. So, for example, you know that fire is hot by burning your finger with a lit match.
 - **Philosophical truth** is known by using human reason. You know that two plus two equals four, for example. So if two chairs are in a room and someone says, "I'll get two more," you know by using reason that the total will be four chairs. You don't need to count the chairs after they arrive.
 - **Theological truth**, known only by faith, is the final and highest level of truth. It can't be observed, and it can't be reasoned; it must be believed by faith – taken on God's word, because he revealed it.
- The First Vatican Council (1869-70) taught that by using human reason, certain truths, like the existence of God, are attainable on your own power but that you also need the intervention of supernatural revelation to know all you need to know to be saved.
- Saint Thomas Aquinas' five proofs of knowing the existence of God by reason (from his *Summa Theologica*):

First Mover: (through motion) Anything moved is moved by another. There cannot be an infinite series of movers. So there must be a first mover.
Potential existence -> actual existence.
Before the "Big Bang", when the universe was only potential, what force started the motion for it to become actual and real?

First Cause: (through causality) Anything caused is caused by another. There cannot be an infinite series of causes. So there must be a first cause.
Cause -> Effect.
Uncaused Cause.

Necessary Being: (through necessity) Not everything is contingent. So there is a necessary being upon which other beings depend for their existence.
Hierarchy of Creation (inanimate matter, plants & vegetative life, animals, human life, angels, Supreme Pure Being without beginning and without end)

Greatest Being: (through gradation) Whatever is great to any degree gets its greatness from that which is the greatest. So there is a greatest being, which is the source of all greatness. Nature tends to go from order to chaos.
Great Governor.

Intelligent Designer: (through governance) Whatever acts for an end must be directed by an intelligent being. So the world must have an intelligent designer.

- The existence of God is reasonable.
- Faith does not contradict or oppose reason. Rather, it complements it.
- It is not contrary to the faith to accept the theory of evolution, so long as we understand that God is our Creator, man is the highest level of creation, and man's soul is created only by God.

Man – Made in God's Image

- Man is composed of a body and a soul.
- Man's soul is rational. The intellect is a power of the rational soul.
- Man is created in God's image. All men are created equal in dignity.
- Man is called to relationship and stewardship.

Revelation

- God has revealed himself out of love for man. The two channels of revelation are Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.
- Revelation is safeguarded by the Magisterium (the teaching Church founded by Jesus Christ).
- Man is called to respond to revelation (the Faith) with a response of belief, which is an act of the will also called faith.

The Trinity

- Faith is reasonable.
- Jesus is the perfection and fullness of the revelation of God. In his Divine Person, Jesus revealed who God is in word and deed.
- The Trinity is the central truth of the Faith. It expresses our belief in one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

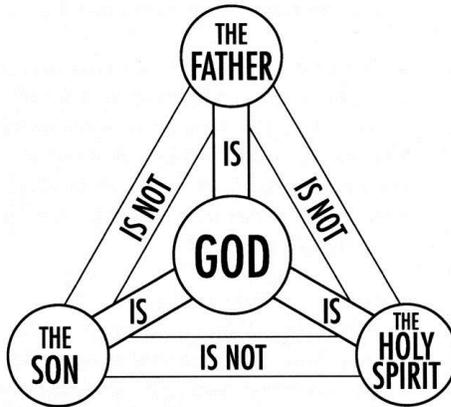
THE HOLY TRINITY

“In the Father
and with the
Father, the Son
is one and the
same God.”

—CCC 262

“With them, the
Spirit is one
and the same
God.”

—CCC 263



“The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit intimate a divine unity of one and the same substance in an indivisible equality; and therefore they are not three Gods, but one God: although the Father hath begotten the Son, and so he who is the Father is not the Son; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and so he who is the Son is not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but only the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, himself also co-equal with the Father and the Son... This is also my faith, since it is the Catholic faith.”

- Saint Augustine, On the Trinity