

RCIA at Saint Sylvester

Segments 1, 2 and 3

Human Search for God/Revelation and Faith/Creation

29 August 2023



Prayer

"You are great, O Lord,
and greatly to be praised.
Great is Your power
and Your wisdom is without measure.
You encourage us to delight in Your praise,
for You have made us for Yourself,
and our heart is restless
until it rests in You."

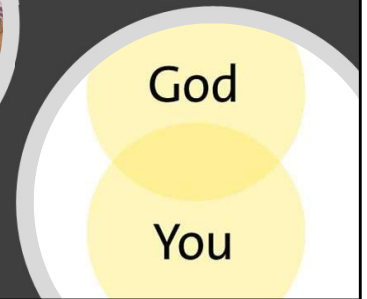
Amen.



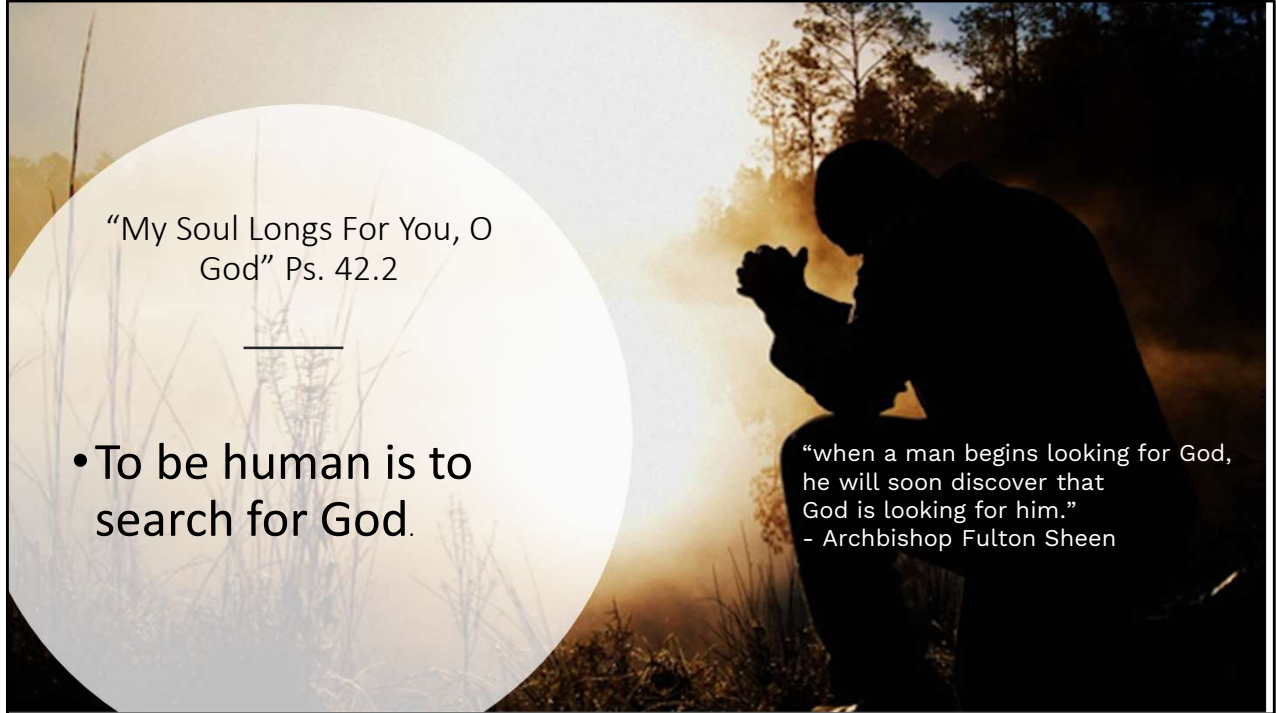
We have combined three different subjects into one RCIA session.
So, this presentation will run by pretty fast.
In order to set the tone for this, I've selected a video on the bible.

For Tonight

- Human Search for God
- Revelation and Faith
- Creation



These are the three subjects that we'll discuss tonight.



“My Soul Longs For You, O
God” Ps. 42.2

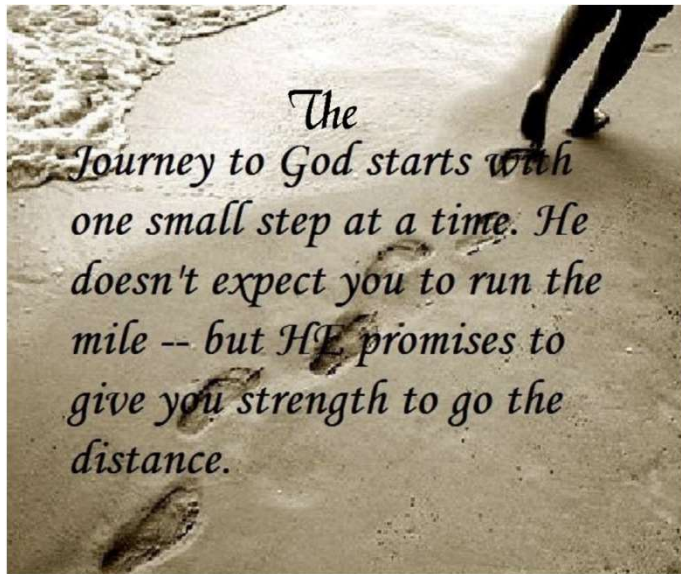
- To be human is to search for God.

“when a man begins looking for God,
he will soon discover that
God is looking for him.”
- Archbishop Fulton Sheen

Throughout history down to the present moment human beings have given expression to their search for God in religious beliefs and practices. God has given us minds to search for the truth and hearts that long for unconditional, forgiving love. These basic human desires are fulfilled in God who is truth and love.

“My Soul
Longs For
You, O God”
Ps. 42.2

Your faith
journey that
brings you to
the RCIA.



It is **your** journey toward God through His Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is also **our** common journey to truth, happiness, and love in the context of the Christian community.

“My Soul Longs For
You, O God” Ps. 42.2

- The dignity of every human being rests on the fact that we not only seek God but we are invited to enter into a personal relationship with God

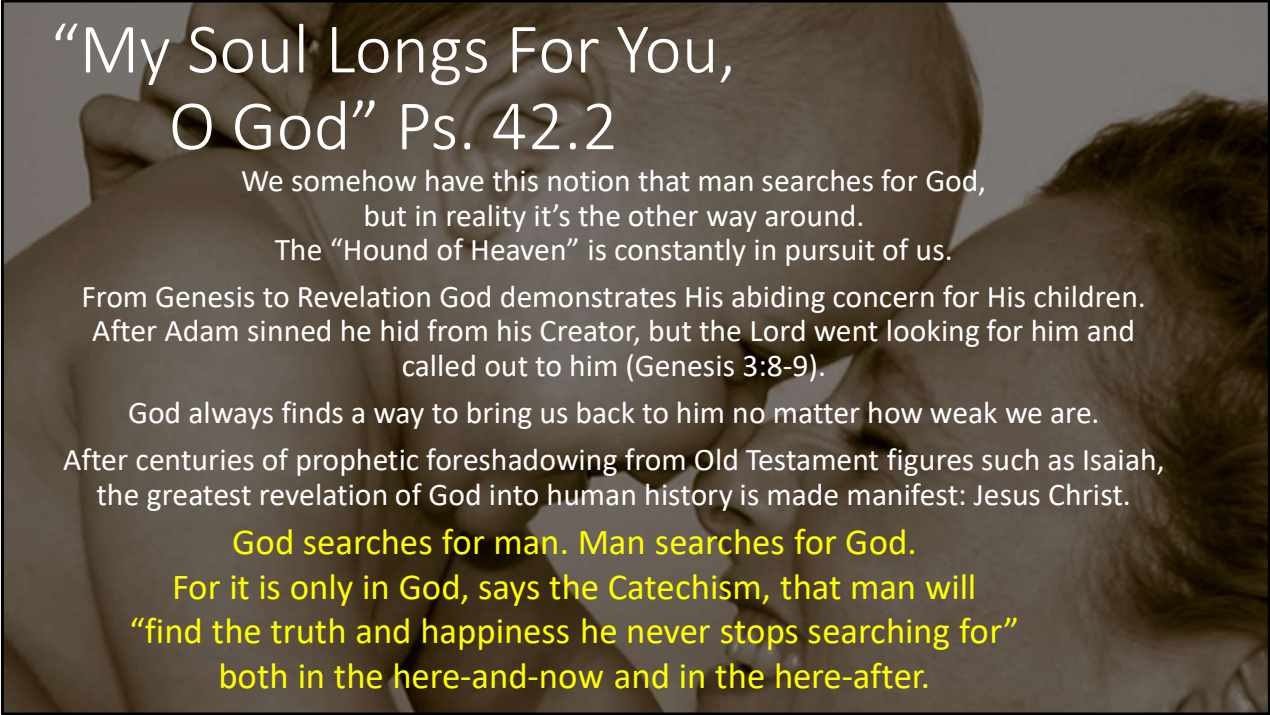


God wants to be intimate with us.

This can be most exemplified by the actions of Jesus Christ.
Jesus spat into the dust to make mud that he used to smear
on the blind man's eyes in order to cure his sight.

Jesus also spat and touched the tongue of the mute man
in order to allow him to speak.

Jesus want us to consume his body, blood, soul and divinity
as the ultimate act of intimacy.



“My Soul Longs For You, O God” Ps. 42.2

We somehow have this notion that man searches for God,
but in reality it's the other way around.

The “Hound of Heaven” is constantly in pursuit of us.

From Genesis to Revelation God demonstrates His abiding concern for His children.
After Adam sinned he hid from his Creator, but the Lord went looking for him and
called out to him (Genesis 3:8-9).

God always finds a way to bring us back to him no matter how weak we are.

After centuries of prophetic foreshadowing from Old Testament figures such as Isaiah,
the greatest revelation of God into human history is made manifest: Jesus Christ.

God searches for man. Man searches for God.

**For it is only in God, says the Catechism, that man will
“find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for”
both in the here-and-now and in the here-after.**

Only in God do we find the truth and happiness
that we never stop searching for.

To find truth and happiness in God is to find
the fulfillment of our human desire for truth, love and happiness.

(CCC 27)

Bishop Hying

Why Does God Matter?



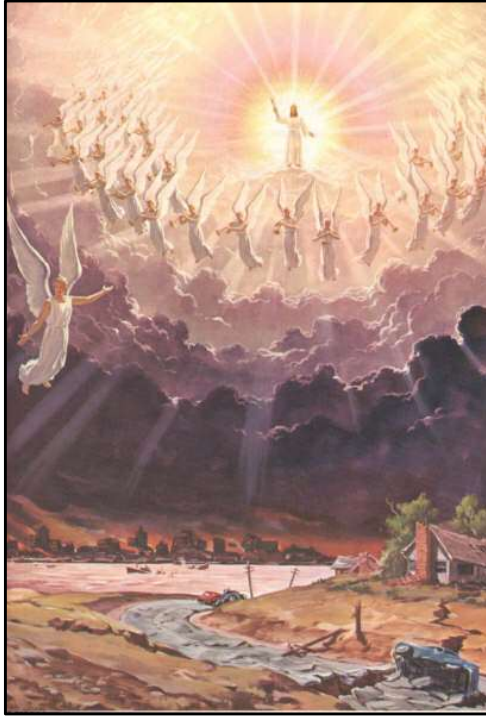
Dig In

Discuss ways in which human beings tend to look for happiness apart from God? (CCC, 29)

How can we know that our search for true human happiness is with God? (CCC, 27 – 30)

Where do we find evidence of God's desire for human happiness? (CCC, 31 – 35)

How has your personal faith journey led you to the Catholic Church?



God Revealed

The second subject – Revelation and Faith

- Humans have an irrepressible search for God
 - Our desire to know something of our Creator seems programmed in us
 - Ways of coming to know God
 - Realize God in the order and beauty of the world; origin of the universe
 - The human person questions himself and discerns the existence of God
 - Our search is in response to God's calling to us
 - Stands to reason that God would want to reveal Himself to us
 - Also, God wants us to be confident in the truth of His revelation
- Revelation**
Faith

God programs into our being – body and soul – a yearning to know Him.

How do we come to know Him?


- Questioning our existence
- An attempt for understanding of all existence

How do we respond to this search?



Revelation

- Let's answer these questions about revelation
 - What is revelation?
 - Why would God reveal Himself to us?
 - How does God reveal Himself to us?
 - When and where has God revealed Himself?



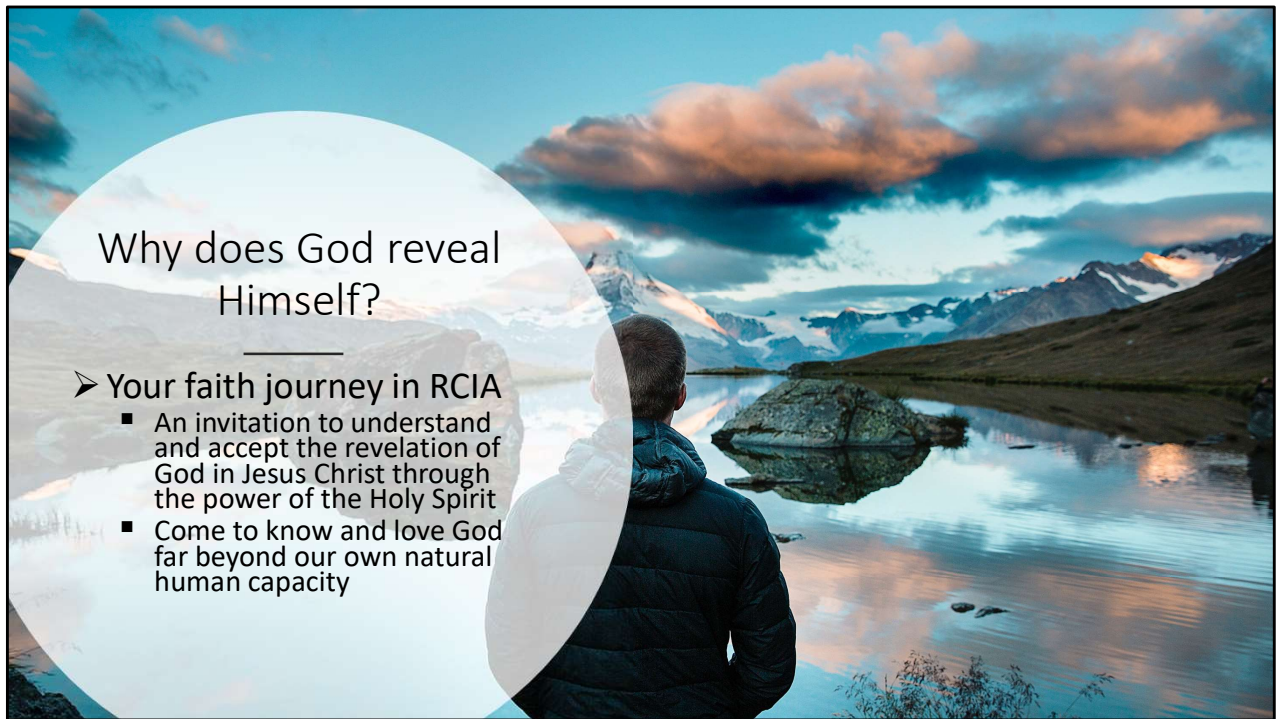
What is Revelation?

- *The love and knowledge of God that we cannot possibly arrive at by our own power (CCC 50)*
- *Two types of revelation*
 - *Universal: Available to all people (the deposit of faith)*
 - *Private: Personal encounter (not part of the deposit of faith) (CCC 67)*
- *Deposit of faith revealed gradually*
 - *Several experiences of God, each new one building on the prior*
 - *Manifested in words and deeds intrinsically bound together*
 - *Handed down generation to generation in writing and tradition*
 - *"I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now." – John 16:12*

Why does God reveal Himself?

- The most important question we can ask
- Answer: Because God loves you
 - We are made in God's image...we are children of God
 - He desires us to be capable of responding to Him (CCC 52)
 - He wants us to share in His divine nature (CCC 51)





Why does God reveal Himself?

- Your faith journey in RCIA
 - An invitation to understand and accept the revelation of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit
 - Come to know and love God far beyond our own natural human capacity

How does God Reveal Himself?

Universally, God has revealed Himself through

- Events
- People/prophets
- Words
- Miracles

Privately, God reveals Himself through

- Prayer - informing our mind and heart of His desires for us
- Through our senses of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste
- Our personal miracles in response to our needs



When and where does God reveal Himself?

- God has revealed Himself from the beginning
 - To Adam & Eve at home in the Garden of Eden
 - Noah who saved humanity from the cleansing flood
 - Abraham called to a new land and a new people
 - Moses who brought God's law to the people
 - Numerous prophets who formed Israel
 - Mary, mother of Jesus
- Jesus Christ, the complete fullness of Revelation
 - There is no further improvement of God's revelation
 - The only further revelation is on a personal level
 - Personal revelation is intended to help us live the Gospel more fully



Magisterium -

- Teaching authority of the Catholic Church
- Pope and Bishops who exercise this authority
- Documents such as *Humanae Vitae*
- Ecumenical councils

Catholics distinguish capital "T" Tradition or Sacred Tradition, which comes from God, either through Christ or the apostles (Luke 10:16) which are perpetual, and lowercase "t" human traditions or customs which can change.

How is Divine Revelation Passed On? (Public Revelation)



the teaching office of the Church made up of the Pope and the bishops in union with him

the teachings and practices of Christ preached by the Apostles and handed down by the Church through history

the written word of God found in the Holy Bible

The inspired written word of God has been produced throughout salvation history since the time of Moses, during the times of the old testament prophets, until the written works of the Apostles which is now compiled into what we call the Bible.

The Church has the authentic authority to interpret the word of God both in its written form and in the form of tradition. Thus, **Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and teaching authority of the Church** are connected that one cannot stand without the other.



Faith

- Let's consider these questions:
 - What is faith?
 - Why is faith important?
 - How do we come by faith?

Living by FAITH

Revelation and Faith

Belief is something you
conclude to be true

Faith is your actions
based upon your belief
without tangible or
irrefutable evidence

Faith involves reliance and trust,
and it endures in the face of doubts,
whereas belief is simply something
that we take to be true.

“I can have faith in things or people
without a corresponding belief,
and I can believe things
that I don’t have faith in.”

“That’s why I can say
that I believe the war in Ukraine is inhumane,
but I wouldn’t say
that I have faith that the war in Ukraine is inhumane.”

Slide 21

WDV1 Walt Del Vecchio, 8/21/2023

What is faith?

- First, it is a personal adherence of man to God (CCC150)
 - Simply, the conviction to live one's beliefs in God
- At the same time, a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed
 - The heritage of scripture and tradition, the "sacred deposit" of faith
- Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen



Why is faith important?

- Believing in Jesus Christ and the One who sent him is necessary for obtaining salvation [\(CCC161\)](#)
- The beginning of eternal life
 - Allows us to taste in advance the beatific vision
- Faith is certainty, for both the individual and the Church
 - Gives us confidence in the truth of God's Revelation
- Necessary to hand on God's revelations to all generations

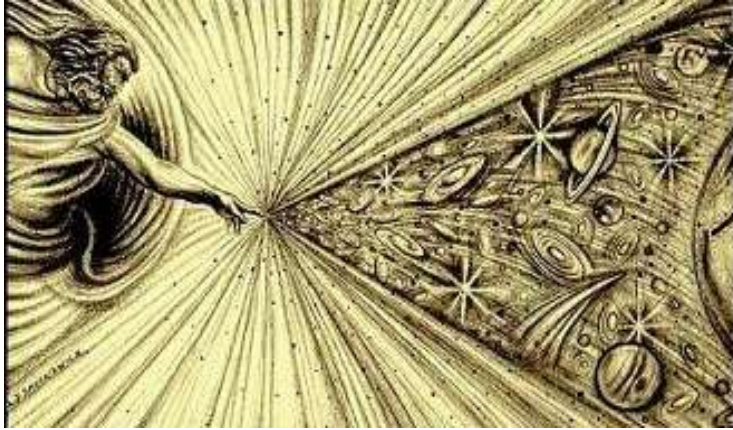


How do we come by faith?

- Full faith is a supernatural gift from God (CCC179)
 - Man needs the interior help of the Holy Spirit
- Faith starts as a personal, human act
 - God will not force himself on us; starts with our desire for God
 - We can lose this priceless gift if we do not guard it
- Faith seeks understanding
 - "I believe in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe." - St. Augustine

Check it out!

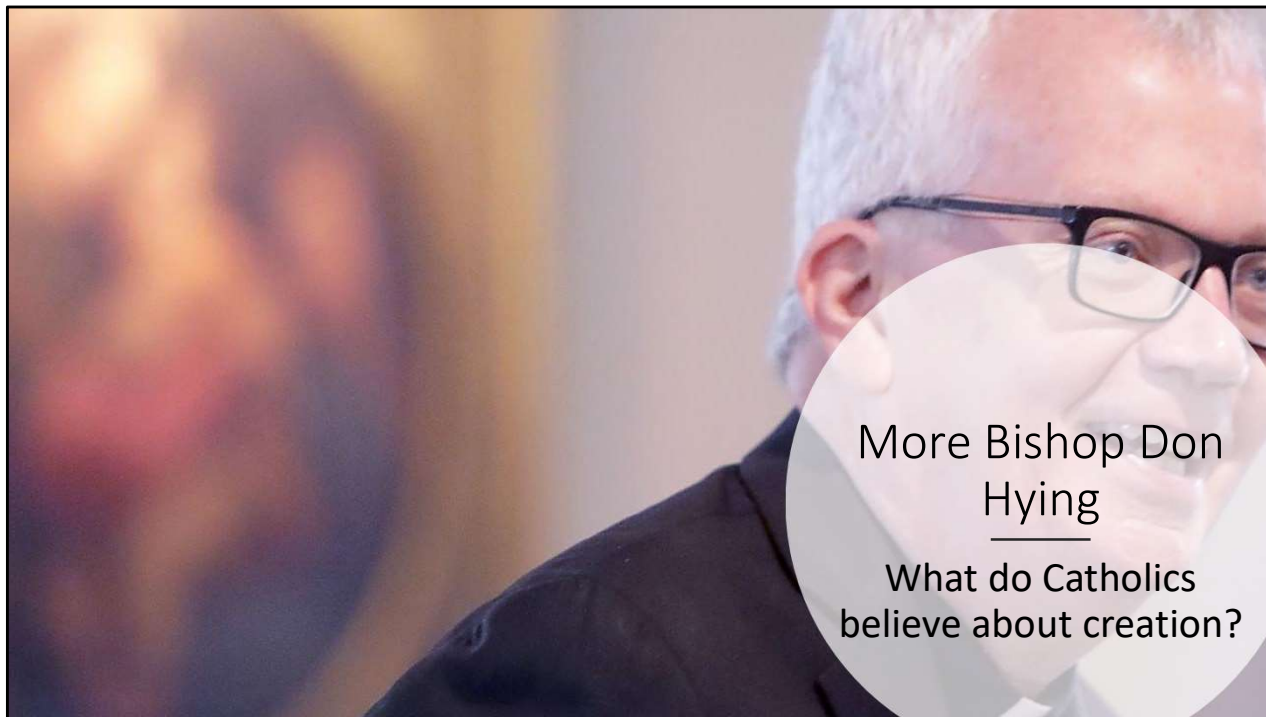




Creation

- At the dawn of creation, God made a covenant with the first human couple and parents of the whole human race. **MARRIAGE**
- Adopted them as his son and daughter who would form His human family and would eternally share in His glory and love.
- God, revealed himself as a loving Father

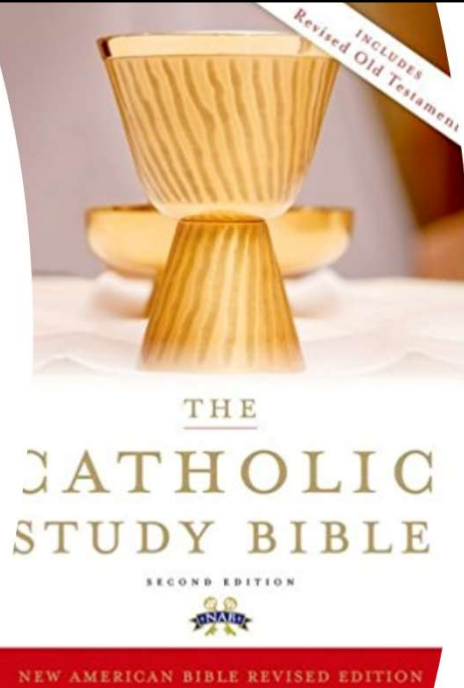
Finally, the third subject



More Bishop Don
Hying

What do Catholics
believe about creation?

Creation



- The path to salvation
 - How do Catholics read and interpret the two creation stories of Genesis 1-3?
 - What is the significance of the differing interpretations?

Two Versions?

- First focuses on creating the world and summarizes the creation of man.
- Second concerned with the creation of man and summarizes the creation of the world.



There is a definite chronological flow to the first account.

Day one- light. Day two - heaven.

Day three - land, seas and vegetation.

Day four – day, night, seasons, sun, moon and stars.

Day five – birds and sea creatures.

Day six – earthly creatures, man and woman.

In the *New American Standard Bible*,

it takes less than 800 words

to explain these six days.

Nevertheless, it is perhaps the most talked about

and controversial part of the Bible.

Especially when compared to the second version of creation.

Composed of about 200 less words than the first creation story,

the second account describes what happened

during the day of creation.

The emphasis on the word, day, is made since it is obviously

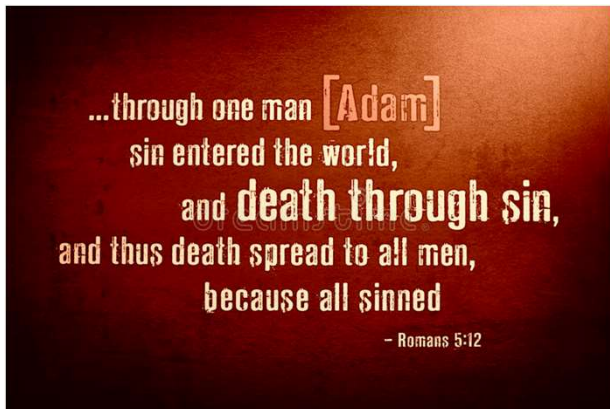
a departure from the first account,

the first inconsistency identified between the two accounts. It describes the lack of vegetation on the earth before man was created (the second inconsistency). The story goes on to describe Eden and then a final creation, that of woman. While not as precisely chronological as the first story that moves from day one to day seven, it is written to logically flow from one thing to the next. In the *New American Standard Bible*, this chronological order is identified by the adverb *then* used to indicate the next event. As indicated, perhaps it is necessary to explore exactly what is meant by a day in the Genesis accounts and how the Catholic Church interprets it.

Can we Interpret?

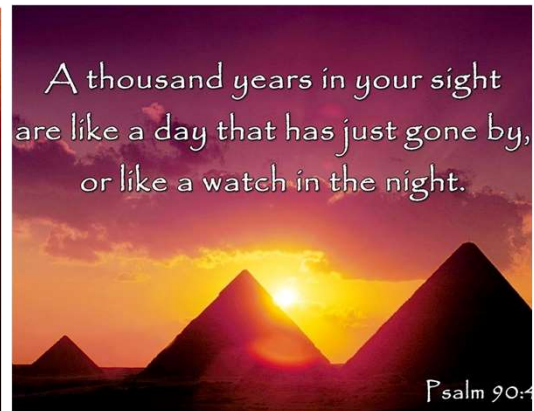
Read Romans 5:12-20

The point here is original sin and our Messianic understanding of it.



Read Psalm 90:4

The point being, Catholics can interpret what a day means in Genesis 1 based on reasoning.



Context of “Why These Stories?”

So, we will see in RCIA how Jesus changed this

Poetic Language

- The *Catholic Study Bible* explains that there is a double emphasis by combining the stories and that is
 - “...the eternal goodness of the creator ...” and “...the moral demand on humans to obey the divine plan and come to know God.”
- Genesis shows a powerful image of one true God with dominion over all.
- God’s relationship with man/woman and how He walks with them.
- And man and woman’s relationship with each other.
- It is stressed that man is **made in His image**.

The Bible does not make a good science or even history book.
But it uses poetic forms of word imagery to reveal our God
to all levels of human understanding;
from a child to a well-educated intellectual.
The inspired word of God, written by man
Can induce so many levels of understanding every time a passage is reread.

What does “man made in the image of God” mean?

- Soul
- Not animal

Then God said: Let **us** make* human beings in **our** image, after our likeness. –
Genesis 1:26

Basic Tenants of Faith in Genesis

- One God, Creator, Good, Man Made in His Image, Man responsible for what was created, Man must be fruitful.
- Institution of marriage is inherent in the story
- He is the one true God- maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.





Why?

- What is important for Catholics is that they recognize that the stories
 - Solidify for us the goodness of the creator
 - For us to participate in the divine plan by knowing God.

Now for the rest of the story

- The Fall

As long as they remained in intimacy with God, they did not have to suffer and die.

They knew the **truth** and purpose of their lives, which was to love God and each other

Under the form of a serpent, Satan tempted Adam and Eve and led them to disobey God's commandment and sin against Him.

Cast out of paradise, Adam and Eve transmitted their wounded human nature deprived of God's life to all mankind, and so we are now all subject to ignorance, suffering and death, and **inclined to sin**.

Concupiscence



In abusing their freedom, they preferred themselves to God, wanting to be “like God,” but “without God.”

As a result, they lost God's supernatural **life** and became subject to suffering and death.

They lost the harmony within themselves and with creation that they had previously enjoyed and, becoming inclined to sin, they lost the **way** in which they were to live.

Finally, they became afraid of God and lost sight of the **truth** by which they should live.

Closing Prayer Ps 119

Your word, Lord, stands forever;
It is firm as the heavens.
Through all generations your truth endures;
Fixed to stand firm like the earth.
Your word is a lamp for my feet,
A light for my path

