

Lecture 1: In the Beginning

(Trinity, Creation, Original Sin)

- I. God: One and Three
 1. God as One
 - i. God is the Supreme Being, the Creator, the All-Powerful; everything has its origin in God
 - ii. God is Love (1 Jn 4:8, "...for God is love.")
 1. Love is not a feeling or an emotion: Love is a total *gift* of self to do what is best for the other.
 2. God is Goodness, He is All-Good
 - i. "Good is diffusive" = wants to spread and share itself
 3. God as Three, the TRINITY (CCC 221, 257)
 - i. God the Father
 1. CCC, 239: "By calling God "Father," the language of faith indicates two main things: that God is first the origin of everything; and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all his children."
 2. The Father gives a total gift of Himself infinitely and eternally to the Son. He holds nothing back. This total gift begets the Son.
 - ii. God the Son
 1. The knowledge God has of Himself is so real that it generates another Person, the Son.
 2. The Son receives the Father's gift of love and returns that love by also giving Himself totally to the Father in love.
 - iii. God the Holy Spirit
 1. The Love between the Father and the Son is so real that it generates the Third Person of the Trinity, that is, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Love between the Father and the Son.
 4. God as Three-in-One
 - i. In the Trinity, there are three divine Persons living in a common union, a communion of life and love.
 - ii. Not 3 Gods
 1. One God in Three Persons (the nature, the "what God is," of God is one; the "who God is," of God is three)
 2. Divine Persons don't divide the one divinity amongst themselves, but each of them is God whole and entire
 3. "The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e., by nature one God." "Each of the persons is that supreme reality..."
 - iii. At the same time, the divine persons are really distinct from one another.

- a. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not simply names designating aspects or facets of the one God. Father Son and Spirit are three distinct divine persons.

II. Creation

1. The Act of Creation

- i. Because God is love, He seeks to give Himself away as a gift
 - 1. God chooses not to keep this love to himself (CCC 221)
 - 2. God Himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange
- ii. The Creation of Man
 - 1. Man is created in God's **Image and Likeness** (Gen. 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' ...").
 - 2. Gen 5: 3, and Luke 3:38: "image and likeness" signifies sonship. God created us to be His children by adoption.
- iii. God breathes His breath ("*ruah*"= "Spirit") into our first parents (Gen. 2:7, "...then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.")
 - 1. God breathes His life and love (= Holy Spirit) into man, so that we can participate in His divine life, in His love.
 - 2. Man is meant to be a child of God, to live as God lives, to love as God loves (for God is love).

III. The Fall/Original Sin [Gen 2:15-17 "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'"]

- 1. The prohibition against eating the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that man, being a creature, must freely recognize and respect with trust.
- 2. Man's nature
 - i. Man is dependent on his Creator and subject to the laws of creation, and to the moral norms that govern the use of freedom.
 - ii. We are free, but we do not have absolute freedom
 - 1. God knows what will bring happiness
 - a. "I created you and *I designed you for happiness*. If you live according to the way I have designed you, you will find happiness."
 - b. "If you reject my design and my commands, you will only find emptiness, sorrow, death."

3. Freedom
 - i. God does not give the moral law to take away our freedom.
 1. The moral law gives us the freedom to act for the good, to act according to the truth about ourselves. The truth will set you free. (Jn 8:32, "...and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.")
 2. In opposition to this, there is the tempting thought of determining for ourselves how we are to live.
4. Genesis 3:1-8; CCC 397. This was the fall: Man, tempted by the devil, let his *trust* in his creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command.
 - i. CCC 398: "In that sin man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned Him."
 - ii. He chose himself over and against God, against his own good.
 - iii. Freedom poses a question: do you love me, or do you love yourselves over and against me?
 1. St. Augustine says life is a conflict between these two loves: to love God to the point of disregarding self or to love self to the point of disregarding God
 2. All subsequent sin would be:
 - a. Disobedience toward God and rejection of his love for us
5. Satan and the Fall of the Devils, CCC 391
 - i. Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy.
 - ii. Fall of the Devils (c.f. 2 Peter 2:4, CCC 392)
 - iii. Now the devil has been cast down and wages war on humanity
 1. His tools are Envy (as distinct from Jealousy)
 2. I Peter 5: 6-10
6. Negation of God's Fatherhood (by John Paul II)
 - i. In Original Sin, the devil attempts to seduce man into believing that he cannot trust God and his commands.
 - ii. The lie is that God is not a Father, but a Master (Tyrant), seeking to dominate and enslave man by his laws.
 1. The Lord appears jealous of His power over the world and over man (God is seen as power-hungry)
 2. Consequences of this view:
 - a. Man feels driven to fight against God to achieve freedom
 - b. Man is led into servile fear of God
 3. Need for the Recognition of God's Loving Fatherhood
 - a. Master-slave vs. Father-son
 - b. JP II: the only force capable of effectively counteracting this false view of God is the "Gospel of Christ, in which the paradigm of

master-slave is radically transformed into the paradigm of father-son.”

- c. Servile fear vs. authentic fear of God
- 4. JPII: in order to be set free from this servile fear modern man must cultivate an authentic *fear of God*.
 - a. This fear of God is first of all the love of a son for his father.
 - b. It is a filial concern that seeks to do the will of the Father out of love for him and out of recognition that the Father’s will is that which will bring the fullness of life and happiness
- 7. Consequences of Original Sin
 - i. Spiritual Death
 - 1. Loss of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
 - 2. The Presence of the Life of God in their soul made them children of God and gave them eternal life. The loss of His life brings death, both to body and soul (CCC 403)
 - ii. Intellect and Will, Powers of the Soul, are damaged
 - 1. Intellect = headlights = presents reality; Will= steering wheel = chooses
 - 2. We struggle to know what is right, and even if we know what is right, we have to struggle to actually do what is right (Rm. 7:15-24)
 - a. We are inclined to sin: concupiscence
 - i. We have disordered desires
 - ii. We are dominated by our passions
 - b. Sexual desire becomes inverted and self-seeking
 - 3. Bodily Consequences
 - a. Suffering, sickness and death make their entrance into human history (c.f. Rm 5:12)
 - iii. Universal effects of Original Sin
 - 1. Grace was lost for the entire human race CCC 404
 - 2. From this dark moment onward, all of mankind, save two, would come into this world without the presence of God dwelling in their souls.
- 8. Jesus came to free us from the consequences of the Fall
 - i. Christ came to
 - 1. Restore the life of God to our soul (GRACE);
 - 2. Teach us the way to live (TRUTH);
 - 3. Give us the strength to live as we ought (VIRTUE)

Recommended Readings:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, ##198-421

Theology for Beginners, Frank Sheed, chapters 1-10