FAITH & CULTURE SERIES

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

The Sources of Church Teaching – Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium Dr. Bill Stevenson

1. Man's Capacity for God: Invitation to Human Happiness (CCC ¶27-30)

 a. "The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for." (CCC ¶27)

2. Ways of Coming to Know God (CCC ¶31-38)

- a. The world: "... the world's order and beauty, one can come to a knowledge of God as the origin and end of the universe." (CCC \P 32)
- b. <u>The human person</u>:
 - "With his openness to truth and beauty, his sense of moral goodness, his freedom and the voice of his conscience, with his longings for the infinite and for happiness, man questions himself about God's existence. In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul. (CCC ¶33)
 - "Thus, in different ways, man can come to know that there exists a reality which is the first cause and final end of all things, a reality 'that everyone calls God.'" (CCC ¶34)
- c. <u>Reason</u>:
 - "Man's faculties make him capable of coming to a knowledge of the existence of a personal God. But for man to be able to enter into real intimacy with him, God willed both to reveal himself to man and to give him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation in faith." (CCC ¶35)
 - "In the historical conditions in which he finds himself, however, man experiences many difficulties in coming to know God by the light of reason alone." (CCC ¶37)

3. God Comes to Meet Man: Divine Revelation (CCC ¶50-73)

a. "By natural reason man can know God with certainty on the basis of his works. But there is an order of knowledge, which man cannot possibly arrive at by his own powers: the order of divine Revelation. Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness God has fully revealed this plan by sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit." (CCC ¶50)

- b. God wants to adopt us and make us "capable of responding to Him, and of knowing him, and of loving him far beyond [our] own natural capacity." (CCC ¶52)
- c. "The divine plan of Revelation is realized simultaneously 'by deeds and words which are intrinsically bound up with each other' and shed light on each other." (CCC ¶53)
- d. God reveals himself gradually, in stages of "supernatural Revelation that is to culminate in the person and mission of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ." (CCC ¶53)

4. The Transmission of Divine Revelation (CCC ¶74-100)

- a. "God 'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth': that is, of Christ Jesus." (CCC ¶74)
- b. "In keeping with the Lord's command, the Gospel was handed on in two ways:
- c. "In keep with the Lord's command, the Gospel was handed on in two ways:
 - *orally* 'by the apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves had received'
 - in writing 'by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing.'" (CCC ¶76)
- d. In order to preserve the "Sacred deposit" of the faith" (see CCC ¶84), "the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them their own position of teaching authority. Indeed, 'the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time.'" (CCC ¶77)
- e. "This living transmission, accomplished by the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, 'the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship perpetuates and transmits to very generation all that she herself is, all that she believes.'" (CCC ¶78)
- f. "The Father's self-communication made through his Word in the Holy Spirit, remains present and active in the Church" 'God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the Spouse of his beloved Son.'" (CCC ¶79)

5. The Relationship between Tradition and Sacred Scripture (CCC ¶80-83)

 a. "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other.... Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own 'always, to the close of the age.'" (CCC ¶80)

6. The Magisterium of the Church (CCC ¶85-87)

- a. "'The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ.' This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome." (CCC ¶85)
- b. "Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it." (CCC \P 86)
- c. Our response to the Magisterium is one of obedience. Jesus said to the apostles, "He who hears you, hears me." (Luke 10:16; CCC ¶86)

7. The Dogmas of the Faith (CCC ¶88-90)

- The Church's Magisterium defines dogmas, that is "truths contained in divine Revelation or also when it proposes, in a definitive way, truths having a necessary connection to these." (CCC ¶88)
- b. "Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illuminate it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright, our intellect and heart will be open to welcome the light shed by the dogmas of faith." (CCC ¶89)

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