

Class 4  
Who is God

1. The Central Mystery of our Faith
  - a. The belief in the Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian Faith
    - i. Everything else depends on this
  - b. Mystery
    - i. While we can know that God exists by natural reason we can only know about the Trinity because God reveals Himself to us
    - ii. We can know for certain that the Trinity exists, but it's a truth that is so great, we cannot comprehend its entirety
2. One God
  - a. Revelation in the Old Testament
    - i. To Adam who knew who He was (Gen 3:8)
    - ii. To Abraham and the Israelites (Ex 20:2-3)
    - iii. To Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3:1-17)
      1. God gives Moses His name
        - a. "I am who I am" (Ex 3:14)
      2. God's name tells us about who He is
        - a. Existence itself
        - b. Eternal and all encompassing
        - c. Totally Faithful
  - b. Speaking about God
    - i. As finite humans beings, there is no way we can ever comprehend or fully speak about God who is infinite
    - ii. While we can't perfectly describe God, we can speak in some ways about Him
      1. Analogy
        - a. Take what we know and experience in our world and apply some of it to God
        - b. Gives us a better idea of who God is, but we must always keep in mind that who He actually is greatly surpasses even our best idea of Him.
3. The Trinity
  - a. Can only be known because Jesus revealed the Trinity
  - b. Foreshadowed in the Old Testament
    - i. In the first line of the body (Gen 1:1)
    - ii. In the creation of mankind (Gen 1:26)
  - c. Revealed in the New Testament
    - i. Christ's Baptism (Mt 3:16-17)
    - ii. The Great Commission (Mt 28:19)
  - d. Speaking about the Trinity
    - i. Nature and Person
      1. Nature
        - a. That which makes something what it is
      2. Person
        - a. That which makes something endowed with intelligence and free will different from others of the same species.
4. Who is the Trinity
  - a. 1 God in three Divine Persons
  - b. Not 3 Gods
    - i. The distinction comes in their relationship
      1. Son proceeds from the Father
      2. The Holy Spirit is the manifestation of love between the Father and the Son
5. Heresies to avoid
  - a. Modalism

- i. The three persons are simply manifestations of the same God
    - ii. Rejects the truth that the three persons of the Trinity are really distinct
  - b. Separationism
    - i. Attributes different actions to the different persons of the Blessed Trinity
    - ii. Rejects the truth that while distinct the Persons act as one
- 6. The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
  - a. The Holy Spirit dwells in our souls
    - i. The beginning of the intimate life with God that will be perfected in heaven.
  - b. When we are in the state of grace we are able to love God in such a way that He comes to dwell inside of us.
- 7. Review
  - a. We believe in 1 God in 3 Persons
    - i. 1 nature, 3 persons
      - 1. Father, Son and Holy Spirit
  - b. We can come to know something about God, but God who is infinite surpasses our understanding and knowledge
  - c. The Trinity is active in every aspect of our lives, most importantly in the Divine Indwelling
- 8. Reflection
  - a. “And that you may understand it to be said as a mystery and not in reference to the bare number that two are better than one, he adds a mystical saying, A threefold cord is not quickly broken. For that which is threefold and uncompounded cannot be broken. Thus, the Trinity, being of an uncompounded nature, cannot be dissolved; for God is, whatever He is, one and simple and uncompounded; and what He is that He continues to be, and is not brought into subjection.” Ambrose of Milan, *The Letters of S. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan* (trans. H. Walford; A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church; London; Oxford; Cambridge: Oxford; James Parker and Co.; Rivingtons, 1881), 464.
- 9. Additional resources
  - a. Fr. Michael Gaitley, *The One Thing is Three: How the Most Holy Trinity Explains Everything*. Marian Press: 2013. **ISBN-13:** 978-1596142602
  - b. Giles Emery (translated by Matthew Levering). *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*. The Catholic University of America Press: 2011. **ISBN-13:** 978-0813218649