

Catechism Course 2021

Clondalkin

If you would like to buy a catechism, here are some options:

1. Catechism (a version for Ireland is also available)
2. Compendium (a short, easy-to-read catechism)
3. 'You-cat' (a youth catechism)
4. You can also read online at <https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015>

If there is any topics that are unclear or you wish to read further on, go first to the catechism.

PART 1. Why Study the catechism?

Two suggested reasons:

1. To know God in Jesus Christ.
2. To know how to follow Christ, and gain eternal happiness.

By our nature we are made to live in communion with God, the source of all our desires.

If you are interested in reading more about desire as a path to God, you could read St Augustine's personal story in *The Confessions*, which is the first autobiography in western history)

The faith is a unified whole.

'Lex Orandi—lex credendi—lex vivendi'

(what is prayed is what is believed is what is lived)

2. How do we know God? (see catechism chapter 1)

We know God through Faith and Reason.

We can know with certainty that God exists through reason alone.

The Greeks, who started philosophy, are an example of how we can arrive at knowledge of God through the use of natural reason. For example:

Plato-> goodness, truth and beauty have a perfection outside of physical things.

(His followers later called this perfection God)

Aristotle->all things are caused/moved by something else. There must exist an unmoved mover to move all other things.

For more arguments from reason for God's existence Peter Kreeft has a more detailed overview on youtube (Arguments for God's Existence - Dr Peter Kreeft), as well as in his *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*. The first chapters of C.S. Lewis' book *Mere Christianity* is also worth reading).

But, on its own, reason is insufficient to know who God is, or his plan for humanity: God had to reveal himself, firstly in the Old Testament and later more fully in his Son. To grasp what God has revealed we need faith.

Faith and Reason work together and do not contradict each other.

Rejected by the Church:

- Fideism: faith without reason
- Rationalism: reason without faith

PART 3. Faith (see catechism chapter 3)

Faith is both (1) believing/trusting in a person, and also (2) believing/trusting what the person says.

We believe in (1) God, and also (2) what God has told us regarding eternal life, the Church, the sacraments etc.

Faith is a supernatural gift of Holy Spirit: a grace from God which helps us to persevere in the Christian life.

The Virgin Mary is the foremost example of a life of faith.

For a short video on Faith as a virtue see: 'Faith. Aquinas 101' (www.youtube.com/watch?v=tl4_eMZoCNk)

PART 4. Divine Revelation (see catechism chapter 2, articles 1 & 2)

God reveals to us who he is and his plan for us.

God's Revelation consists of both his deeds (actions) and his words. The deeds and words have a unity: God's words explain his deeds and his deeds demonstrate the words.

God reveals himself gradually.

Jesus is the fullness of Revelation. In Christ, 'the Father's one, perfect and unsurpassable Word, God has said everything; there will be no other word than this one.'

Jesus established the Church, who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, passed on what Jesus had revealed through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition

The task of authentically interpreting God's word is given to the Magisterium.
(For more on this see www.catholic.com/tract/scripture-and-tradition)

