

Below is a transcription of the audio file of the Catechism Class given 10-03-10

Having finished our opening prayers, I would like to welcome you to this Catechism Class and to these series of Catechism Classes. As mentioned in the email, a single lady wanted me to explain to her the Catholic faith. However, rather than to teach only one person I decided that we would all learn more if we have this opportunity for all to join in these Catechism Classes who want to use this conference call telephone system.

Let me begin by explaining part of the Introduction of the Catechism of the Council of Trent to remind us of the authority and the excellence and the importance of the Catechism of the Council of Trent.

So as it says here in this Introduction to the book: The Roman Catechism is unlike any other summary of Christian doctrine, not only because it is intended for the use of priests in their preaching, but also because it enjoys a unique authority among manuals. In the first place, as already explained, it was issued by the express command of the Ecumenical Council of Trent, which also ordered that it be translated into the vernacular of different nations to be used as a standard source for preaching.

Moreover, it subsequently received the unqualified approval of many sovereign Pontiffs, not to speak of Pius IV, who did so much to bring the work to completion and of St. Pius V under whom it was finished, published and repeatedly commended, Gregory XIII, as Possevino testifies, so highly esteemed it that he desired even books of Canon Law to be written in accordance with its contents. In his Bull of June 14, 1761, Pope Clement XIII said that the Catechism contains a clear explanation of all that is necessary for salvation and useful for the faithful, that it was composed with great care and industry and has been highly praised by all, that by it in former times, the faith was strengthened, and that no other Catechism can be compared with it. He concluded then, that the Roman Pontiffs offered this work to pastors as a norm of Catholic teaching and discipline that there might be uniformity and harmony in the instructions of all.

Nor have the sovereign Pontiffs in our own days been less laudatory of the Catechism. Pope Leo XIII, in an encyclical letter of September 8, 1899, to the Bishops and clergy of France, recommended two books which all seminarians should possess and constantly read and study, namely the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas, and “that golden book,” the *Catechismus ad Parochos*. Regarding the latter work he wrote: “This work is remarkable at once for the richness and exactness of its doctrine, and for the eloquence of its style; it is a precious summary of all theology, both dogmatic and moral. He who understands it well, will have always at his service those aids by which a priest is enabled to preach with fruit, to acquit himself worthily of the important ministry of the confessional and of the direction of souls, and will be in a position to refute the objections of unbelievers.

Likewise Pius X in his encyclical *Acerbo nimis* of April 15, 1905, declared that adults, no less than children, need religious instructions, especially in these days. Hence, he prescribed that pastors and all who have care of souls should give catechetical instructions to the faithful in simple language, and in a way suited to the capacity of their hearers, and for this purpose, they should use the Catechism of the Council of Trent.

Still more recently on February 14, 1921, speaking in the name of Benedict XV, Cardinal Gasparri, Papal Secretary of State, thus wrote to the Archbishop of New York relative to the latter’s program for *A Parochial Course of Doctrinal Instructions*, based on the Catechism: “It is superfluous to add that the value of the work is enhanced by the fact that it has been planned and executed in perfect harmony with the admirable Catechism of the Council of Trent.”

I will skip a little bit and it says over here in the second paragraph later: “Among other things they have said that not since the days of the Apostles has there been produced in a single volume so complete and practical a summary of Christian doctrine as this Catechism, and that, after the Sacred Scriptures, there is no work that can be read with greater safety and profit.

In particular, Cardinal Valerius, the friend of St. Charles Borromeo, wrote of the Catechism: “This work contains all that is needful for the instruction of the faithful; and it is written with such order, clearness and majesty that through it, we seem to hear holy Mother the Church herself, taught by the Holy Ghost, speaking to us. ... It was composed by order of the Fathers of Trent under the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, and was published by the authority of the Vicar of Christ.”

Salmanticenses, the great Carmelite commentators on St. Thomas, paid the following high tribute to the Catechism: “The authority of this Catechism has always been of the greatest in the Church because it was

composed by the command of the Council of Trent, because its authors were men of highest learning, and because it was approved only after the severest scrutiny by Popes Pius V and Gregory XIII, and has been recommended in nearly all the councils that have been held since the Council of Trent.”

Antonio Possevino, an illustrious Jesuit, and the preceptor of St. Francis de Sales, said: “The Catechism of the Council of Trent was inspired by the Holy Ghost.”

Later on it says in this Catechism: Dr. John Hagan, the present rector of the Irish College in Rome, writes thus: “The Roman Catechism is a work of exceptional authority. At the very least, it has the same authority as a dogmatic Encyclical, – it is an authoritative exposition of Catholic doctrine given forth, and guaranteed to be orthodox by the Catholic Church and her supreme head on earth. The compilation of it was the work of various individuals; but the result of their combined labors was accepted by the Church as a precious abridgement of dogmatic and moral theology. Official documents have occasionally been issued by Popes to explain certain points of Catholic teaching to individuals, or to local Christian communities; whereas the *Roman Catechism* comprises practically the whole body of Christian doctrine, and is addressed to the whole Church...it holds a place between approved catechisms and what is *de fide*.”

So, I just wanted to review that part of the actual introduction to this important Catechism to show that when we read something in this Catechism of the Council of Trent (sometimes called the Roman Catechism), we know that the Church has certainly approved it, and what is written herein is what we believe as Catholics. There are people in the world today, as probably some of you on this line already know, who say that this Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches heresy; but if they do, I just read this Introduction to see who they are contradicting when they say that this book is preaching heresy. If you stay with these Catechism classes, as we go along and get to the Sacraments, you will find out (and we will discuss) those things that people say are heretical in this Catechism.

So we begin with the Creed here. First part of the Creed, of course, says I believe (Credo) and that is the virtue that you must have faith before you can have hope. If you do not believe in anything, you cannot hope in anything. If you do not have faith and hope, then you do not have charity because you cannot love something you do not know or in something you do not believe. So, it is important that the Fathers of the Church and those who wrote the Catechism of the Council of Trent begin explaining the Creed, because the Creed is what all Catholics believe. If someone asks you, “What do you believe as a Catholic?” If you could totally explain the Apostles Creed, you would give him quite a good summary of everything a Catholic believes (or at least the basic part of the doctrines of our Faith).

As this Catechism says: the word “faith” has a variety of meanings in the Sacred Scriptures, but here we only speak of that faith by which we yield our entire assent to whatever has been divinely revealed. That is the difference between Catholics and people who do not have the Faith. They do not give their entire assent to things that have been revealed. Some of them even deny it, of course. There are people who call themselves Catholic today who do not believe things just because God revealed them.

Without faith, it is impossible to please God as we read in St. Paul’s letter to the Hebrews. So, think of that verse of Sacred Scripture for a moment – without faith, it is impossible to please God. Then we consider, what is meant by this faith that we must have? Well, you must believe in God, and not only believe in God, you must believe God. You probably heard that statement before that many people believe in God, but not very many people seem to believe God.

I might elaborate on that somewhat. If you actually believe God, He says: “OK, I will take you at your word. I send you this cross. Do you believe that I am going to grant you the grace to carry it?” They say: “Why Lord is this happening in my life? Or why is it that I have little control over my children? They are all leaving home; they are losing their Faith; I am losing the house; I am losing my job; I am losing my car.” Do I believe that God controls all things, created all things, and knows what is going on?

People do not really believe God or they would all be Catholics, because God said that Jesus Christ was true God and true man, and Jesus as we know came on earth and founded only one Church, the Catholic Church. That Catholic Church teaches us what the Scriptures really mean, and that Catholic Church teaches that outside

the Church there is no salvation. So, if people believe God, then they would believe He founded one Church and that outside that Church there is no salvation.

So people say, well, I am a Christian. But, the only true Christians are those who are Catholics. They might believe that Jesus Christ is the one written about in secular history and lived on earth and worked miracles and did those kinds of things, but they do not really believe Him and follow His teachings, or else they would not remain in their false religion.

Sometimes we ask ourselves (or should ask ourselves) why we fall into sin? We give into temptations because at least temporarily we forgot about the presence of God, and the real beliefs of everything that He told us. One of the spiritual writers says that the presence of God is half sanctity. That is why it is so important to get into the habit of praying many frequent ejaculations every day. If we can only recall the presence of God continually throughout the day, then we will be much less likely to consent to a temptation and to commit sin. If we prayed an Act of Perfect Contrition now, and never committed another sin the rest of our lives, obviously we would be in Heaven for eternity.

So, again, getting back to this necessity of Faith. We must believe what God revealed and the main reason is because it is God Who revealed it. Who is God then? As we know, God is the Supreme Being Who created all things and keeps them in existence. This faith that we have comes because God revealed it to us, and therefore, there is unity.

Everyone believes the same thing because only one Source told us what we should believe and what we should do. Only those who actually believe God and everything that he told us are on the right path. We are not permitted to pick and choose as is common among non-Catholics, and fallen away, and weak and lukewarm Catholics. We cannot just pick and choose whether we want to believe this or that or only practice it to a certain extent. If we believe God, as we say in the first words of the Creed "I believe in God," and if we really mean that, then we are going to believe everything He said about the necessity of keeping His commandments; loving our neighbor; doing good to others as we would have them do unto us; and observe all the commandments, as we hopefully will be able to explain through these Catechism Classes.

The unity of the Faith comes – as we read in these quotes from Scripture - O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt; great is thy faith; increase our faith; faith without works is dead. Why did Jesus Christ tell the Apostles -- O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt (when they were in the storm of the sea)? Do we ever examine our conscience and hear Jesus (so to speak) saying that exact same sentence to us? O thou of little faith; why didst thou doubt?

Maybe we have had contradictions in our lives in the past. I happen to know that some people on this conference call, as an example, might be losing their home, and they could have temptations to think, well God, why are you allowing this to happen? I have not been a perfect Christian, but I have not been that evil. Why are you allowing this in my life? Jesus Christ responds -- O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? I am here; I control all things; I know all things, and on the General Judgment Day, you will understand (and the whole world will understand) why I am permitting evil in the world that I may draw good out of it.

I will just mention something that came to mind with regards to this. We may see an evil (or what we may speak of as an evil thing) in our lives or in the lives of someone we know, but God may be using that very same thing to bring about a tremendous good. I would ask you right now to take a moment and think about what your chances of being created are, as we read in this first Article that we are studying today: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth. God created everything, so what was our chance of being created?

Think about someone in your line of genealogy, an ancestor back maybe three or four or even 50 or 100 or more generations ago; or somebody that normally would not have been in your ancestral line. As an example, maybe many centuries ago, somebody was shot. Because they were shot, they were not necessarily killed, but they were wounded and put in the infirmary or held up from what they normally would have been doing. Because God permitted that person to be injured by being shot; or a horse kicked them; or they stumbled and sprained their ankle; or maybe just a simple thing like some little flea or something flew in their eye; or some chip got in their eye when they were cutting wood or whatever the case may be; maybe it was only a splinter in their hand. Well as soon as that incident happened in their life, their whole life from that moment on changed.

Maybe, as I said, they scratched their finger, or got their finger caught in the well as my father did and lost his finger by pulling the succor rod out of the water well. That certainly changed many things in the lives of thousands or millions of people in future generations. Why do I say that? Because, as I said, my father had his finger smashed and then it was cut off because of that accident. Well, during that time, he had to get that wound tended to and healed up. Because he did that, think of how many people immediately changed what they were doing that day, or that week, or during that month his wound recuperated. The nurses, the doctors, the people he worked with, the people he could not go to work for (for a while) until his wound healed.

You see how that changed their lives. Maybe they were held up from a meeting they were supposed to go to. During that meeting, they obviously would have changed their whole course of life; or else maybe because they did meet someone (because they were in the hospital tending to the wounds of him or someone else), all of those circumstances could have led them to meeting someone else that later became their spouse. Then because they were married, children were produced.

If you think these things through for a moment, do you see how many hundreds, thousands, millions, and billions of things are changed because of every little incident, not just one finger being smashed, but every small thing? Whether it is a bird flying into the side of your house or hitting the window pane – as one just now did at my place. It would distract you, and that then would maybe change your whole course of thinking in the future. Just a few moments ago God permitted that bird to hit the window pane. Consequently, God controls everything and He inspired me, to a certain extent, to tell you about this in this Catechism Class. It may make you think more often of everything's dependence on God. The sparrow does not fall to the ground without your Father knowing it.

This is Who we believe in. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth. He not only knows where every single bird is on this earth right now. He knows how many times every bird has flapped its wings, landed, taken off; every turn and twist and angle they made in their whole lives; how long they existed; how much they weighed; and all of those millions of things.

Earlier today there were probably 50 to 100 barn swallows (if that is what you call them) flying around the house here. One of them hit the window. Well now, see what happened? I told you about that. Now every time you see a bird flying, you may recall something that was said during this Catechism class, and it may give you courage or hope that you would not have otherwise thought about or received. Then because of that, it changes your life, and because it changes your life, it changes everybody you associate with and everybody after that.

The point I am trying to explain now is that; Who controls all of those things? Who knows all of those things? There is a Supreme Being and if every man can think about it even in a small way, they know that they did not come here by themselves. They know that things did not just evolve out of a big bang of gas. Everything is so well organized. Everything is so uniform in the whole universe that some small creature, such as a bird, could be born out of that white and yolk of an egg. What is in that egg? How can that make a bird? How does that bird come out perfectly formed and have his little feet and heart, eyes, beak, and everything in perfect place? It has the knowledge to get out of that shell; it has the knowledge of how to find food right away; has the knowledge of how to protect itself; how to produce more birds.

God controls everything, and that gets us to thinking. Well, wait a minute friend. Who is this Supreme Being Whom we call God Who has such power, majesty, and authority and as the Creed says, "Almighty"? God is Almighty. There is nothing He cannot do, except as this Creed points out: although God is Almighty, and though God can do all things, yet He cannot lie, nor deceive nor be deceived. He cannot sin or cease to exist or be ignorant of anything. These defects are compatible with those things only whose actions are imperfect; but God, whose acts are always most perfect, is said to be incapable of such things simply because the compatibility of doing them implies weakness, not the supreme and infinite power over all things which God possesses.

Thus, we so believe God to be omnipotent that we exclude from Him entirely all that is not intimately connected and consistent with the perfection of His nature. So, that is why God cannot sin – because it is an imperfection; it is not something perfect and God is all perfect. God can never deceive nor be deceived. That is something that we should certainly keep in mind when we are tempted. We can deceive ourselves and we can

deceive other human beings, but God cannot be deceived. He reads the heart and He knows everything that motivates us, everything we do, every time we blink our eye, every word we speak and why we do it. When we think of that, how can we doubt that such a Supreme Being, Who can control zillions of things every moment, cannot control them and keep them all in existence?

Think of how many different kinds of birds there are in the world right now. I saw this book that belongs to my sister. It has pictures and information about hundreds of different kinds of birds and where they are located most of the time on earth; all different beautiful colors, sizes, and everything. Then consider not only the birds but all the little bugs that come into your house if you open the windows and leave the lights on. That is only a small part. If you travel the world, there are all kinds of other little insects, and then the fishes of the sea, and all of these things.

How great is God's creation? Do you really believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth? How can we believe God and have that thought really strong and in our minds and then willfully do what we know is wrong, which is a sin? That is why if we believed in God and had a lively faith... O ye of little faith, why didst thou doubt? We should pray like the Apostles: Lord increase our faith! Because if we really believed and thought about these things (all of God's creation is like a finger pointing up to the Creator).

Every little thing reminds us of the Supreme Being. When we have those thoughts in our mind, then we will have great confidence, and we will not be so anxious and worried when circumstances come into our lives that are passing, obviously. Nevertheless, at the moment, they are sometimes very upsetting and cause tension. For example, the people losing their house (or whatever); that is a serious problem. But, do you really believe that God knows everything? He has a reason why you may lose your house. It may actually mean that it is going to lead circumstances from one to the next to the next and someone will be saved for eternity because you lost your house today (or tomorrow or next week or next month).

So as we reflect on these things, that is why we should continue on with fervently praying the Rosary every day. As we know, we always start the Rosary with the sign of the Cross and then this Apostle's Creed. If we think of these things throughout the day and let every little part of creation remind us of Our Creator, how different our whole life will be!

As this Catechism goes on to explain, the word "believe" does not here mean to think, to suppose, or to be of opinion; but, as the Sacred Scripture teaches, it expresses the deepest conviction to which the mind gives a firm and unhesitating assent to God, revealing his mysterious truths. As far, therefore, as regards the use of the word here, he who firmly and without hesitation is convinced of anything is said to "believe"; He who *firmly and without hesitation is convinced of anything*, and that is the part we should pray for; to firmly believe everything the Church teaches.

That is why we know Jesus is in the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, only because we believe; because God revealed it. That is why we believe in the resurrection on the last day; because we firmly and without hesitation are convinced that God said it; therefore, I believe it. Faith excludes doubt. The knowledge derived through faith must not be considered less certain because its objects are not seen, for the divine light by which we know them, although it does not render them evident, yet suffers us not to doubt them. For God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has Himself shown in our hearts and the gospel be not hidden to us as to those that perish.

Faith excludes curiosity. From what has been said it follows that he who is gifted with this heavenly knowledge of Faith is free from inquisitive curiosity. For when God commands us to believe, He does not propose to us to search into His divine judgments or inquire into their reason and cause, but demands an unchangeable faith by which the mind rests intent on the knowledge of eternal truth. Indeed, since we have the testimony of the Apostle that God is true and every man a liar, and since it would argue arrogance and presumption to disbelieve the word of a great and sensible man affirming anything is true, and to demand that he prove his statements by arguments or witnesses, how rash and foolish are those who hearing the words of God Himself demand reasons for His heavenly and saving doctrines? Faith, therefore, must exclude not only all doubt, but all desire for demonstration.

That is why as Catholics we are given this gift of Faith at the moment we are baptized. That is why it is easy for a little child to learn the Catechism (so to speak) and to believe what the Church teaches; but, once the gift

of Faith is lost, it is very difficult and seldom regained. When it is lost, we use our self-will to put a big impediment to God's grace. Here, we must not ask God to demonstrate how there are three Persons in one God or why Jesus is present in the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. We have that gift of Faith as baptized Catholics. I guess that is one reason why so many non-Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence; because they do not have the real gift of Faith. They have the reason to think about things, but they do not understand it the way we do. Why? Because they desire demonstrations and explanations. It has to agree with their reason. They do not accept it just because God said it is true.

There is a big difference as it says here, God is true and every man is a liar. So, we have a right to ask men to prove their statement, but not with God if He tells me something. How do we know what God told us? Well, basically, you know -- you read the books probably by Father John Kearney (or whoever) -- once we believe God, which can be proved from the Scriptures; we believe the Scriptures because of the testimony of even human history. Then that is where Catholics have a HUGE advantage over any other religion; because we are members of the only Church that is infallible. What the infallible Church teaches is what God said, and then we have proof, 100% proof!

That is why I read in certain books over the years, people in a sense you might say praising the faith of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the greatest faith, of course, a creature has had. When the Blessed Virgin Mary was in prayer and the angel Gabriel came and announced to her that she would become the Mother of God and that that child she would bring forth would be God and man, that indeed took faith.

Think about this for moment (this is always something at least that runs through my mind). Once Jesus Christ was conceived in her womb miraculously, Mary knew how it happened. So once Jesus had His miraculous birth [as we will explain later on when we get to that part of the Creed – *born of the Virgin Mary* (how that happened and she still remained a virgin)] – the ever Blessed Virgin Mary obviously knew how Jesus was conceived and how He was born. Mary had a total different knowledge than St. Joseph. Mary's faith changed from just believing to knowledge.

That is why you people could believe that I am now talking to you from Safford Arizona or just outside Safford in my little house. You believe it because I tell you that, but do you see how my faith is different? I have knowledge. I know I am here. You only have it because I told you, and you believe me because of whatever reason. Well, the Blessed Virgin Mary had knowledge, so my faith that I am now here physically present talking to you through this telephone system is different than your side of the faith. You believe because I say so; I believe because I know. Because I know, then I can be compared like the Blessed Virgin Mary after Jesus was conceived and born. Mary absolutely, positively knew that Jesus was God. For you and I even now believe it only because of the Catholic Church and God telling us that He is God. We did not see that miracle or we only believe it because of the great gift of divine Faith that we receive in Holy Baptism.

So, after the conception and birth of Jesus Christ, Mary had a whole different way of looking and understanding what Jesus Christ was doing on earth. It seems to me anyway that things would have been different the way Mary looked at it than even St. Joseph who was very much closely involved in these mysteries of our Faith. Even St. Joseph had a much closer inside track (so to speak) than St. Peter, St. John, and the rest of the Apostles. They only believed Jesus Christ for basically the same reason that we do because of His miracles and, of course, they had first-hand knowledge. They had a different knowledge than you and me. Our faith comes because of Jesus Christ telling us that He was God, because He created all things and the human intellect can reason and realize that everything has to have a Creator. Nothing just happens by chance.

When we realize that there has to be a God and if there is a God, He has to be true, and that truth has to reveal (or has revealed) these things to us, the truth teaches us He founded an infallible Church. The infallible Church teaches us these doctrines of our Faith that we learn through this Catechism. Therefore, we have the gift of faith.

We did not get so far in the Catechism on this first Article, but hopefully, these thoughts have helped you and we will just continue on the class next week and because about an hour of time has passed, we will say a pray and close.

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