

In the first two RCIA sessions we learned that some things can be known about God from our human reason, but that the most essential things that we can know about God were revealed to us by Jesus Christ, the 2nd person of the Trinity who became man "for us men and for our salvation."

Christ revealed to us the innermost secret of God, that there is one God expressed in three divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who exist in an eternal living communion of love: "God is Love" (1 John 4:16).

Today we'll be focusing our attention about the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Learning Objective: To show the unfolding plan of God's love for His people and the preparations for the coming of Christ.

What we are talking about when we say, "*The Divinity of Jesus Christ?*"

The deity (day-it T) of Jesus is considered an essential doctrine and is a central non-negotiable belief within Christianity. Also known as the "divinity of Christ," this doctrine asserts that **Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God incarnate**. As the apostle Paul stated, "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2:9; ESV).

Summary of the Lecture presented in October

We believe in God

We believe **God has made promises to us.**

We believe Jesus uniquely and completely fulfilled these promises

Many Catholic Doctrines are called "**Mysteries**" because they are essentially incomprehensible to human reason, and can be known only through divine revelations.

Other Catholics teachings can be known by the natural light of human reason, by reflecting on the nature of our world, and by the reasonable demands the world makes of us, if it is to function reasonably.

Rationalists, materialists and secularist **deny** that there can be truths **beyond man's ability to know and understand**. They are all atheists.

The Higher Power

The vast majority of "every day" people know that if God exists, **he would be a higher life form than we are** (and not just "a big man".) Consequentially, we would expect there to be truths about **God that we cannot understand**, and would know about only if he told us.

We see this all the time in our world, where **humans are a higher life form than dogs, cats, crocodiles and fish**. There are simply many truths about us that **these lower life form are incapable of understanding** (like computers; the Works of William Shakespeare and so forth.)

Human reason can know with absolute certainty that our world **requires that there be an uncaused first cause**; an unmoved prime mover; a being whose very essence is existence and whose essentials existence is unique - **a being is whom every conceivable good quality already actually exists completely** - and perfectly and a being so great, so complete and so perfect that no greater, more complete or **more perfect being can be conceived** - and it is this being we call "**God**"

We are not going to argue/talk much about the existence of God tonight...Justine already covered much of that.

Class Example

Suppose you are in a class in which a professor is trying to give the class a better understanding of God. She asks the students to close their eyes, relax and imagine God in their minds. “Think about what he must look like, what his throne would be like, how he would sound and what would be going on around him.”

The students sit in their chairs, eyes shut, for a long time, each dreaming up a picture of God. “How are you doing?” the professor says. “Can you see God? Each of you by now must have some image. But do you know what?” – and then the professor shocks the class by exclaiming, “That’s not God!”

“No!” the professor declares to the class. “That’s not God! You cannot contain God in your mind! No human can have a full grasp of God, because God is God, and human beings are only physical, finite creatures! No image, no picture can do him justice.”

Why is it hard to describe who and what God is? Because, as physical beings, our knowledge comes to us by way of our five senses – and human languages are designed in accordance with this knowledge. Our words, our grammar, our way of thinking, are all based on the physical world. But God is supernatural, eternal. He is infinite. He is invisible. We can still speak meaningfully about God, even though we are limited by our physical senses, but our words can never convey all that God is. We are limited in our languages.

But the philosophical “arguments” for “God,” are very abstract and philosophically technical.

They are not easily understood unless one is trained in Philosophy. (A bit deep for tonight lecture.)

While the “God” of Philosophy, as a concept, is intellectually certain, it does not provoke in our minds and hearts any enthusiasm, nor any response from us of awe, respect and love.

Still, it is certain and evident from human history that humans everywhere, and in every age, find in themselves a **yearning** for something **more than the superficial realities of this life**.

People experience a sense of secured mystery, a sense of the moral (i.e. that there is such a thing as right and wrong good and bad. (that does not derive from arbitrary government decisions); *and a yearning for "salvation"* (i.e. some purpose, some meaning, some light at the end of the tunnel))

This universal yearning **does not "prove" that is a "God,"** or "life after death; but prepares people to say **"Yes, Yes, oh yes"** if they should encounter, in their personal lives, and in history, a **Divine Being who offers "Salvation."**

God has send signs

The Catholic Church believes that God has revealed himself to us through hundreds of encounters with thousands of people over the last 4000 years.

Herein is the mystery:

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and[a] is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. (John 1:18)

From this we must conclude that every appearance of God recorded throughout the Bible has to be either as an Angel or in the person of Jesus Christ. As He Himself said:

If you've seen Me you've seen the Father ' (John 14:9)

The story of the encounters, and the message they have imparted to us is called "The Judeo Christian" narrative.

The **testimony of people** who have encountered God is as credible as the testimony of people who have encountered **Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Caesar or George Washington.**

Many people think "Faith" can not be created and that we can only be certain of what we know. This is because people do not know what the words "Faith", "Knowledge" or certitude (absolute certainty) really means.

- **Knowledge** is the assent of the mind to a proposition because of the objective evidence we perceive with out senses.
- **Faith** (i.e. Natural Faith) is an assent of the mind to a proposition on the authority of someone else telling us it is true.
- **Certitude** (whether of knowledge or Faith) is the assent of the mind to a proposition without fear of error.

The fact of the matter is we are **CERTAIN** of most things we “think” we know, because other people have told us, and not because we have actually experienced these for ourselves. This is true of most information we have learned from historians, newscaster and newspapers, school teachers, parents, relations and friends.

We can be “**certain**” of other people testimony, if we can be reasonably certain, that they are able to know what they are telling us, and have no reason to be.

Salvation History

God choose to be part of the **history of humanity from the very beginning**. Salvation History is God’s saving activity for His people.

This passage in Genesis is called the **Protoevangelium** ("first gospel"): the first announcement of the Messiah and Redeemer, of a battle between the serpent and the Woman, and of the final victory of a descendant of hers. (Genesis 3:15, KJV)

**And I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
while you strike his heel.”**

Many Fathers and Doctors of the Church have seen the woman announced in the first gospel as Mary, the mother of Christ, the "new Eve". Mary benefited first of all and uniquely from Christ's victory over sin: she was preserved from all stain of original sin and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.

God felt closely bound to his people by a **covenant that was not to be broken**. God’s covenant of love can be seen through the bible:

Covenant with Noah

Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.

Covenant with Abraham

God promised to bless his descendants and make them His own special people

Covenant with Moses

Ten Commandments - *We'll be talking more about this in January. It's one of my favorite talks, and you don't want to miss it!*

Covenant with King David

David and his descendants were established as the royal heirs to the throne of the nation of Israel

Everlasting Covenant

This covenant agreement reached its fulfillment when Jesus; a descendant of the line of David, was born in Bethlehem. The gospel of Matthew starts off by showing Christ was "**the Son of David**" (Matt. 1:1), and thus He had the right to rule over God's people. Peter preached that Jesus Christ was a fulfillment of God's promise to David (Acts 2:29-36).

God steadfast love and absolute fidelity saved the Israelites again and again from their sin.

The Old Covenant

As sin became more universal, Israel no longer was able to seek salvation except by invoked the name of the redeeming God. The high priest invoked the name of the saving God once a year on the **Day of Atonement** (Yom Kippur) and sprinkled the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies with the blood of sacrifice.

The prophets announced that the covenant, concluded on the foundation of the Ten Commandments, had to give way to a **new** and **everlasting covenant**, to be written on the heart of every human person. Only God could touch the hearts of His people. Only God could ultimately save His people from their sins.

Fulfillment of the Promise: The Good News

“But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (CC 422)

"God sent forth his Son", but to prepare a body for him, he wanted the free co-operation of a creature. For this, from all eternity God chose for the mother of his Son a daughter of Israel, a young Jewish woman of Nazareth in Galilee, "a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary"

The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined mother, so that just as a woman [i.e. Eve] had a share in the coming of death, so also should a woman contribute to the coming of life.

Mary wasn't the only Women that God need help from

God chose many women in the Old Covenant to accomplish His purposes:

At the very beginning there was **Eve**; despite her disobedience, she receives the promise of a posterity that will be victorious over the evil one, as well as the promise that she will be the mother of all the living. By virtue of this promise, **Sarah** conceives a son in spite of her old age. Against all human expectation God chooses those who were considered powerless and weak to show forth his faithfulness to his promises: **Hannah**, the mother of Samuel; **Deborah**; **Ruth**; **Judith** and **Esther**; and many other women.

Mary "stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from him. After a long period of waiting the times are fulfilled in her, the exalted Daughter of Sion, and the new plan of salvation is established.

We Believe that Jesus is God's Promise

We believe and confess that Jesus of Nazareth, born a Jew of a daughter of Israel at Bethlehem at the time of King Herod the Great and the emperor Caesar Augustus, a carpenter by trade, who died crucified in Jerusalem under the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of the emperor Tiberius, is the eternal Son of God made man.

He 'came from God', 'descended from heaven', and 'came in the flesh'.

For 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. . . And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.'

Thoughts about the Bible

Many people think "the Bible" is the only place where we can find out what God has revealed to us. But they need to ask "*Where did the Bible come from?*" "*How did it get here?*" "*Why should we even think the Bible is important?*"

The Catholic Church teaches that Gods Revelation comes into the world, in the first instance, through historic moment of interpersonal encounters, initiates by God, with specific human persons, as specific times and places. These persons, in turn, have testified, usually by word of mouth, about these encounters and the messages received, to their immediate relatives and friends and descendants. This spoken testimony is passed along for a few generations, (in the very ancient times for several generations and even for several centuries) until finally everything was written down, collected and edited - eventually producing the Bible texts we have today.

The writing of the Old Testament texts began about 1350 BC and were completed about 50 BC. The New Testament texts were written between 45 AD and 125 AD.

The Catholic Church teaches that Gods Revelation first comes to us by word of mouth from these people who personally encountered God. This revelation is passed along by word of mouth and is finally written down, and that there whole process is unitized and guided and preserved from doctrinal error by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently being ancient documents, the Bible books do not present scientific or historical information with modern day professional accuracy.

But they do present, without error, Gods revelation to us about his own reality about our relationship with him, about religious doctrinal and moral truth, and about Gods love for us and his plan for our salvation.

Remember This: We know what writings are “Bible” because when the books were finally written and began to circulate, the Jewish and later the Christian communities already had Gods revealed truths that were handed down by word of mouth.

The communities the simply accepted these writings that faithfully expressed the faith they already had and called these books “Bible.”

The Pre-History Stories

The Theology of the PreHistory Stories

Theology of the Creation Stories: The religion Truth revealed here are:

1. God is the creator and Lord of all things
2. Everything created by God is Good, because God is Good.
3. God has created humans in his own image and Likeness
4. God has invited humans to enter a relationship of love with him
5. God asks humans to share with him in his Lordship and dominion over the rest of creation.

The Adam and Eve Story: The Theology

- Early on, humans failed through pride and arrogance to love and obey God.
- Consequently, sin and death enter the human condition
- But God desires to offer humans a 2nd chance. He has a plan of Salvation.
- God declares there will be an ongoing battle between humans and evil.
- But there is reason to hope - because, in the end, humans will have the upper hand.
(Gen 3:15) This is “the protoevangelium” “The 1st piece of Good News” That salvation is possible and we humans may hope for salvation

The Cain and Abel Story

1. Once men turn against God, it is inevitable that men will turn against one another in violence and hatred.

The Noah’s Ark Story

- a. God reveals that he will save people who try to live good lives
- b. God promises (in a “Covenant” with Noah) never again to destroy all humans (He says the rainbow is a sign of this promise)

The Tower of Babel Story

1. God will not tolerate nor ignore human pride and arrogance

Note: This story was taken from a common, pre literary legend about the origin of language. But it is not theologically about language but about pride and arrogance.

To summarize the theology of the Pre History stories:

1. God is the Creator and Lord of all things
2. We are created in his image; and are called to a relationship of love with him
3. We need to say “Yes” freely; Hence we need to be free to say “no”
4. Early on, Humans said “No” and sin spread throughout the world like cancer.
5. God offers us a 2nd chance and devised a plan of salvation
6. Revealed piecemeal, beginning with Abraham and Culminating in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God found a way to offer us a plan for eternal life in his kingdom.

Council of Nicea in 325 A.D.

What about the Council of Nicea?

One of the most commonly held atheistic myths is that Christianity as we know it today was not invented until the fourth century, after the council of Nicea in 325 A.D. It is said that the early Christian church thought of Jesus Christ as just a good moral teacher, and did not worship Him until the 4th century when the Trinity and deity of Christ were 'invented'.

The book, and recently released movie, *The Da Vinci Code*, make this very claim (among other very bizarre assertions).

No one believed in the Divinity of Jesus Christ in the early Church, Brown says, but that this idea was invented and promulgated by the emperor Constantine who gained control of the Roman Empire in 312 AD.

This claim is absolute nonsense.

History is quite clear on the matter, and it weighs heavily against Brown's view. Our examination of this question, using biblical sources, the writings of the early church fathers, and secular sources, will clearly establish that Jesus was worshipped as God no later than the early second century (113 A.D.).

The Bible was completed in the first century and, as we have seen, it clearly teaches the divinity of Jesus Christ. Let us look at non-biblical proofs for the deity of Jesus Christ.

Early Christian sources

Even though many acknowledge that the Bible says clearly that Jesus is God, **some people have claimed that the Bible was edited long after it was originally penned**. Such claims fly in the face of volumes of documents written by the early church fathers, who cited verses liberally from New Testament gospels and letters in their own writings. Since many of these writings can be definitively dated to the first and second centuries, such claims of rewriting are obviously false.

The following texts from Christian writers who lived between New Testament times and the reign of Constantine make it abundantly clear that belief in Christ's divinity and equality with God the Father is an indisputable part of the Christian tradition from the beginning- long before the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.). These quotes demonstrate that belief in Jesus' divine as well as human nature are by no means exhaustive – they are just a very limited selection.

Clement of Rome (A.D. 95)

Clement of Rome wrote a letter often referred to as Second Letter of Clement. It was written perhaps within a year or so of the apostle John's death and begins with the following:

Brothers, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ, as of God, as "Judge of the living and the dead"

Ignatius (30-107 A.D.), who was born before Christ died, consistently spoke of the deity of Jesus Christ. Consider a few examples: In *To the Ephesians*, and other letters, we find references such as the following: "Jesus Christ our God"; "who is God and man"; "received knowledge of God, that is, Jesus Christ"; "for our God, Jesus the Christ"; "for God was manifest as man"; "Christ, who was from eternity with the Father"; "from God, from Jesus Christ"; "from Jesus Christ, our God"; "Our God, Jesus Christ"; "suffer me to follow the example of the pas-sion of my God"; "Jesus Christ the God" and "Our God Jesus Christ." The fact that Ignatius was not rebuked, nor branded as teaching heresy by any of the churches or Christian leaders he sent letters to proves that the early church, long before 107 A.D., accepted the deity of Christ.

Polycarp (69-155 A.D.) possibly spoke of “Our Lord and God Jesus Christ.”^[5]

Justin Martyr (100-165 A.D.) wrote of Jesus, “who, ... being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God.”^[6] In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, he stated that “God was born from a virgin” and that Jesus was “worthy of worship” and of being “called Lord and God.”

Tatian (110-172 A.D.), the early apologist wrote, “We do not act as fools, O Greeks, nor utter idle tales when we announce that God was born in the form of man.”

Irenaeus (120-202 A.D.), wrote that Jesus was “perfect God and perfect man”; “not a mere man...but was very God”; and that “He is in Himself in His own right...God, and Lord, and King Eternal” and spoke of “Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour and King”

Tertullian (145-220 A.D.), said of Jesus “Christ is also God” because “that which has come forth from God [in the virgin birth] is at once God and the Son of God, and the two are one...in His birth, God and man united.”

Caius (180-217 A.D.), a Roman Presbyter, wrote of the universal Christian attestation to the deity of Christ in his refutation of Artemon, who maintained that Christ was only a man. Note that before 217 A.D., Caius appealed to much earlier writers, all of whom taught Christ’s deity: “Justin and Miltiades, and Tatian and Clement, and many others, — who is ignorant of the books of Irenaeus and Melito, and the rest, which declare Christ to be God and man? All the psalms, too, and hymns of brethren, *which have been written from the beginning by the faithful*, celebrate Christ the Word of God, ascribing divinity to Him.... [This] doctrine of the Church, then, has been proclaimed so many years ago,....”

Gregory Thaumaturgus (205-265 A.D.) declared in *On the Trinity*, that “All [the persons] are one nature, one essence, one will, and are called the Holy Trinity; and these also are names subsistent, one nature in three persons, and one genus [kind].”

Why would it be important for Jesus to fulfill the promises of God?

Well to cut a long story short - God decided to make His Plan known to mankind in advance.

And furthermore – God would do this firstly through ordinary people – but then it would be finally fulfilled in His Son, Jesus Christ.

If God hadn't "drip fed" this Plan, and especially details about whom this special visitor would be – then who would know whether this person, when they eventually arrived, was really the One from God, or not?

Anyone could stand up and claim that they are the Messiah! – and many did!

So in order that His Messenger – or Messiah – would be recognized.

God spoke to various people – Kings, shepherds, prophets, priests, even ordinary men and women, and told them something of what this person – the Special One – the Messiah - would be like. God went so far as to give explicit details of what this Messiah would do.

When all these pieces of information – these prophecies – came together in one Person – then this would be the proof that the real Messiah had arrived.

All that God had said about Him would in due course be fulfilled. So why would Jesus have to fulfil the promises of God.? - simply, in order to authenticate, his identity.

What were some of those Promises which the Messiah would fulfill?

Most of the Promises that God made about this Messiah related both to his personal qualities and to his public ministry.

- He would be eternal,
- he would be born of a Virgin,
- he would be of the Tribe of David, born in Bethlehem,
- he would be a Righteous King who would reign forever,
- He would exercise his ministry in the Power of the Holy Spirit.
- The blind would see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, and the dead be raised to life.
- There would be no sin in him.
- He would enter Jerusalem on a donkey; he would be betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver; betrayed by his friends; silent before his accusers; wounded and bruised; smitten and spat upon.
- He would take the place of a sacrifice for the sins of the world; he would suffer for the sins of others.
- He would be crucified between two thieves, his hands and feet and side would be pierced, but not a bone would be broken.
- He would intercede for his persecutors, would be rejected by his own people; his garments would be gambled over; he would suffer thirst and be forsaken, and be buried in a rich mans tomb.
- He would be raised to life on the third day; he would destroy death ; and through him all would be saved.
- He would be exalted to the heaven to be seated at the Right hand of God, - and on the last Day, all will see Him coming in glory as Victorious King.”

This is but a brief summary of just some of the words of Scripture from the Old Testament which would and did reveal the Messiah – the one sent from God - as none other than Jesus Christ.

According to one authoritative source, there are at **least 332 distinct predictions** – pieces of the jig-saw, which were literally **fulfilled in Jesus Christ**. The chances of those things all happening by accident or chance are just too phenomenal to consider.

The fulfillment of the Promises and Prophecies by Jesus gives us confidence in Him.

The fulfillment of all these prophecies in Jesus Christ means that we can trust Him, and who he is, with confidence. He is not some charlatan. Jesus is not some self-promoted religious leader who has falsified his credentials to make them look impressive. Many of these prophecies which were fulfilled in Jesus, he had no way of engineering. He had no say over how he would be put to death; of whether his bones would be broken or not; whose tomb he would be laid in – to name just a few! The fulfillment in Jesus of all the Promises in the Old Testament mean we can surely trust Him to be who he claims to be. – our

Lord, our Saviour and our King. And because He will one day come again to receive us to Himself, we may look forward to that time, even when all else may look dark and despairing. We will see His face – and our hearts will rejoice.

Proof the Jesus is Define

Miracles- In broad daylight (Raising the Dead, Walking on Water) - Often was done in front of non-believers

Character- Acted like that everyday

- Wasn't an actor

Define Prophecies (Fit the fingerprint) - Place of Birth

- Execution prediction (Before the Romans use Execution as the method)

The Resurrection

Women non-reliable in the 1st Century, that's because that's what happened.

b. 515 Witnesses

Early records (24 Months)