

HS RCIA Lesson 3: Wed, Nov 29: Free Will, Covenants

Link: <https://bit.ly/47Xx0j0>

Warmup: The “Seven Petitions” in the Lord’s Prayer

Last week’s homework: Seeing God’s revelation

Lesson 1 (Nov 8) to complete:

1. Stages of Revelation & How does God reveal himself to us?
2. Sacred Scripture (Lesson 1 & 2)
3. Catechism (Lesson 1 & 2)

This week’s homework:

1. Reflect and be prepared to discuss how you participate in the sacrifice of Christ at Mass
 2. Optional Symbolon video: [The Bible: God’s Love Letter to Humanity](#) (here for [full version](#))
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I. Existence of Evil

- “The world was created for the Glory of God” ([CCC 293-294](#))
- The Plan of Divine Providence ([CCC 302](#))
- [CCC 309](#) asks: “If God the Father almighty, the Creator of the ordered and good world, cares for all his creatures, why does evil exist?”
 - “But why did God not create a world so perfect that no evil could exist in it? With infinite power God could always create something better. But with infinite wisdom and goodness God freely willed to create a world "in a state of journeying" towards its ultimate perfection.” ([CCC 310](#))
 - *In statu viae*: creation in a “state of journeying”
- God is in control; Jesus explains:
“So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.”* ([Mt 6:31-34](#)) (*from a Hebrew proverb “the suffering of the hour is enough”, i.e., don’t add to today’s troubles by worrying about tomorrow’s)
- God knows the future (ex. [Matthew Ch. 24](#): The Destruction of the Temple Foretold)
 - But it is what will be not what has to be
 - ex.: had the Jews accepted Christ as Messiah, they would not have rebelled against the Romans, and so the Romans would not have destroyed the Temple
- [CCC 324](#) concludes: “The fact that God permits physical and even moral evil is a mystery that God illuminates by his Son Jesus Christ who died and rose to vanquish evil. Faith gives us the certainty that **God would not permit an evil if he did not cause a good to come from that very evil**, by ways that we shall fully know only in eternal life.” [emphasis added]

II. Free Will & Original Sin

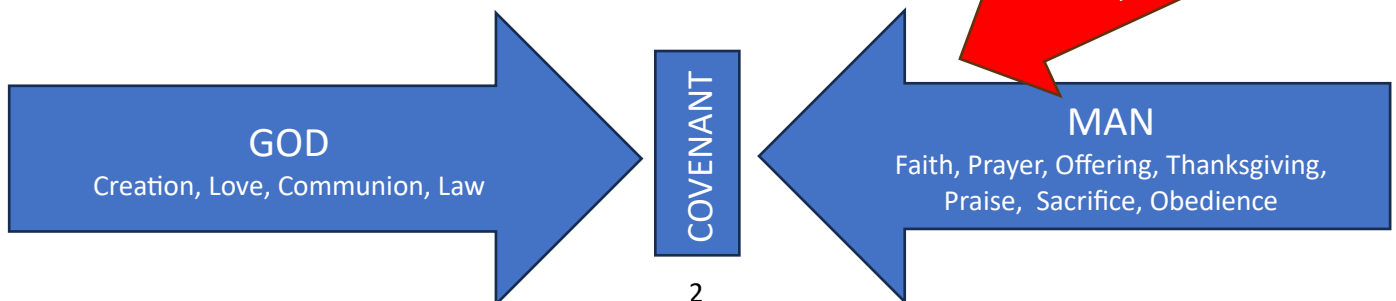
- [CCC 1739](#) explains: “By refusing God’s plan of love, [man who freely sinned] deceived himself and became a slave to sin.”
 - acting “freely” = slavery
 - acting according to God’s will = freedom
- Why?
 - When man himself defines “freedom,” he places himself over God (pride, idolatry)
 - = concupiscence, which limits man’s reason (through lust, desire, pride)
 - = the flesh against the spirit ([CCC 2515](#))

- [CCC 1739](#) continues:

“Man's freedom is limited and fallible. In fact, man failed. He freely sinned. By refusing God's plan of love, he deceived himself and became a slave to sin. This first alienation engendered a multitude of others. From its outset, human history attests the wretchedness and oppression born of the human heart in consequence of the abuse of freedom.”
- **Man's first sin** ([CCC 397-399](#)):
 - “Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command... All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness.
 - “In that sin man preferred himself to God ... He chose himself over and against God ... man was destined to be fully "divinized" by God in glory. [But] Seduced by the devil, he wanted to 'be like God' ...”
 - “Adam and Eve immediately lose the grace of original holiness. **They become afraid of the God of whom they have conceived a distorted image - that of a God jealous of his prerogatives.** [emphasis added]
- [CCC 405](#) explains:
 - “Although it is proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: **it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called "concupiscence"**. *Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.*” [emphasis added]
- See [CCC 413-421](#) for summary

III. Covenant

- Latin: *co + venire* = “come together” and Hebrew: *beriyth* for “to cut”
- **Old/New Testament = Old/New Covenant**
- = agreement, promise, oath, swearing
- “A solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being involving mutual commitments or guarantees.” ([Glossary, p. 873](#))
- = a contract, which is only valid if it has “consideration” – i.e., both sides must benefit
 - God's “consideration” is love granted by Grace (see [CCC 357](#))
 - God keeps his side of the bargain always and forever
 - “God made an everlasting covenant with Noah and with all living beings (cf. Gen 9:16). It will remain in force as long as the world lasts.” ([CCC 71](#))
 - Man breaks the contract
 - Jesus fulfills man's broken contract
- The covenant is “signed” through a sacrifice
- **The Four Covenants:** Noah, Abraham, David, Jesus Christ
 - we can also see Adam and Eve as “covenantal”



IV. Sacrifice

- = Latin *sacra* (sacred) + *facere* (to make or do)
 - See [Conf 3/HSRCIA Lesson 4](#), Section 8
- Sacrifice as
 - Sealing a contract (“cross my heart and hope to die”)
 - Thanksgiving (offerings)
- Sacrificial sealing of a covenant (see [Gen 15:10](#)):
 - Cut the sacrifice in half and walk between it = means the deal cannot be broken ([Gen 15:17](#))
 - God put Abraham to sleep so that he did not walk between it ([Gen 15:12](#))
 - (consequence of a broken covenant = death)
- God’s instructions for sacrifices, see [Leviticus 1](#):
 - Holocaust = “burnt offerings” or “whole offering”
 - In all cases, the blood was drained from the animal (= its life force) and sprinkled on the altar
 - See [Ex 12:3-14](#), [Ex 12:22-23](#) (the “hyssop” – “sprinkling rite”)
- Why Blood?
 - Moses taught that atonement for sins must be made through blood (see [Lev 16:11-19](#))
 - “Blood lines” (“blood” = family, kinship)
 - “Blood oaths”
 - Blood = life
- [Exodus Ch. 29](#) establishes the sacrifice at the Temple
 - “This is the rite you shall perform in consecrating them as my priests” ([Ex 29:1](#))
 - Then slaughter the bull before the LORD, at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ([Ex 29:11](#))

V. Christ’s sacrifice

- “It is right to offer sacrifice to God as a sign of adoration, gratitude, supplication, and communion ... The prophets of the Old Covenant often denounced sacrifices that were not from the heart or not coupled with love of neighbor” ([CCC 2090-2100](#))
- see also [CCC Glossary p. 898](#)
 - Christ’s sacrifice = “the only perfect sacrifice” (see [Heb 9:11-14](#))a
- Terminology of redemption: Atonement / Expiation / Ransom / Redemption / Settlement
 - Expiation:
“They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as an expiation, through faith, by his blood, to prove his righteousness because of the forgiveness of sins previously committed” ([Rom 3:25](#))
note:
 - “expiation” = “reparation for offense”; Latin *ex-* (completely) + *piarie* (as from “pious” and “purify”)
 - “propitiation”, as the latter suggests hostility on the part of God (from Latin *propitiare* for “to appease”)
 - Ransom: see [Ex 13:13](#), [Mat 20:28](#)
 - see also Caiaphas’s prophecy in [Jn 11:49-52](#)
 - Settlement of debt:
 - “all debts are paid” regardless if the debtor pays it
 - we are incapable of paying for our debt, so only Christ could
- Lamb of God = the only pure, perfect sacrifice
- John the Baptist saw Jesus and said,
“Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” ([Jn 1:29](#))

- **“Christ Offered Himself to His Father for Our Sins”** ([CCC 606](#))
 - Christ’s “human heart freely embraces the Father’s love for me” ([CCC 609](#))
 - Institution of the Eucharist:

“In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered in sacrifice among the first fruits of the earth as a sign of grateful acknowledgment to the Creator. But they also received a new significance in the context of the Exodus:

 - the unleavened bread that Israel eats every year at Passover commemorates the haste of the departure that liberated them from Egypt;
 - the remembrance of the manna in the desert will always recall to Israel that it lives by the bread of the Word of God;
 - their daily bread is the fruit of the promised land, the pledge of God's faithfulness to his promises.

“The "cup of blessing" at the end of the Jewish Passover meal adds to the festive joy of wine an eschatological dimension: the messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. When Jesus instituted the Eucharist, he gave a new and definitive meaning to the blessing of the bread and the cup.” ([CCC 1334](#))
- Christ’s sacrifice is meaningless unless we join it
 - Jesus the shepherd doesn’t use the “crook” of his staff to pull us in
 - instead he invites us to his Supper
- Last Supper = Passover = sacrifice > for release from slavery
 - Lamb of God
 - Transforming the Old into the New Covenant
 - “blood of the New Covenant”
 - Remission of our sins (freeing from slavery)
- Some notes:
 - Passover = *paschal* = Easter
 - “Feast days” = sacrifices
 - “broke the bread”
 - = his body
 - = sharing, dispensing his body
 - the disciples on the Road to Emmaus only recognized Christ when he broke the bread at the meal ([Lk 24:12](#))