

# **Core Theology**

**Diocesan Lay Institute**  
Session II

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October 13, 2007  
Our Lady of Fatima

## Session II – Core Theology / Apologetics

### **Definition of Apologetics:**

- Apologia - a defense or elaborate explanation of something
- Apologist - one who defends
- Apologetics - the field which involves the rational defense of Christianity.

### **Purpose of this Course:**

*“Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence” ( 1 Peter 3: 15).*

### **Most fundamental necessities for Apologists:**

- 1) Holiness: Base all apologetics on the love of God and His Truth. An apologist who is not concerned with personal holiness will not be very effective.
- 2) Charity: Remember that you are a missionary, not a debater. Christ died for each person you speak with, and indeed they are made for him. Your goal is to explain and evangelize, not to win an argument. You must impart Christ’s charity at all times, even in the most heated discussions.

### **Generally, Three Classes of Interlocutors:**

1. *Atheists*: Deny the existence of a Living, Personal God.
2. *Jews, Muslims, Deists*: Deny the Divine Origin of the Christian Religion.
3. *Non-Catholic Christians*: Deny one or more articles of the Catholic Faith.

We will address each of the interlocutors listed above providing a reasonable explanation for the fundamentals of the Faith. Indeed, your presenter wishes to highlight that the Catholic Faith is easily the most rational and logical world view ever held by man in the history of the world. No other philosophy, ideology, or religion even approaches the depth, balance, and broad grasp of the entire cosmos as our Catholic Faith. We propose that this is the case for one simple reason: It is the Truth, as revealed and maintained by He Who is the Truth, Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

As G. K. Chesterton writes:

*“Ours is ... the most rational of all religions ... Those who talk about it as merely ... emotional simply do not know what they are talking about. It is ... all the modern religions, that are merely emotional ... We alone are left accepting the action of the reason and the will without any necessary assistance from the emotions. A convinced Catholic is easily the most ... logical person walking about the world today” (The Thing, 286).*

### **The Form of our discussion:**

The Apostle’s Creed, a “symbol of faith.”

*Com. 33. What are the symbols of faith?<sup>1</sup> The symbols of faith are composite formulas, also called “professions of faith” or “Creeds”, with which the Church from her very beginning has set forth synthetically and handed on her own faith in a language that is normative and common to all the faithful.*

**Com. 35. What are the most important symbols of the faith?**

*They are the Apostles' Creed which is the ancient baptismal symbol of the Church of Rome and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed which stems from the first two ecumenical Councils, that of Nicea (325 A.D.) and that of Constantinople (381 A.D.) and which even to this day are common to all the great Churches of the East and the West.*

### **The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son,  
our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell; the third day  
He rose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven, and sits at  
the right hand of God the Father  
almighty, from thence He shall come  
to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body  
and life everlasting.  
**Amen.**

### **12 Articles:**

## **I. “I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.”**

*Com. 3. How is it possible to know God with only the light of human reason?*

*Starting from creation, that is from the world and from the human person, through reason alone one can know God with certainty as the origin and end of the universe, as the highest good and as infinite truth and beauty.*

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<sup>1</sup> All such numbered questions in *italics* are taken from the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Prior to addressing the revelation of God as “Father,” we look to respond to the atheist proposition by presenting proofs for God’s Existence. There are two types of such proofs: **1) those derived from observing the visible world**, and **2) those derived from observing the human soul**. In his book “Handbook on Christian Apologetics,” Peter Kreeft provides twenty such proofs for God’s Existence. Perhaps the best known are those provided by St. Thomas Aquinas, his five Proofs for the Existence of God in the *Summa Theologica*. They are drastically abbreviated here:

**Proofs derived from observing the visible world:**

**A. The Argument From Motion:**

- 1) Nothing can move itself.
- 2) If every object in motion had a mover, then the first object in motion needed a mover.
- 3) This first mover is the Unmoved Mover, called God.

**B. Causation Of Existence:**

- 1) There exist things that are caused (created) by other things.
- 2) Nothing can be the cause of itself (nothing can create itself).
- 3) There can not be an endless string of objects causing other objects to exist.
- 4) Therefore, there must be an uncaused first cause called God.

**C. Contingent and Necessary Objects**

- 1) Contingent beings are caused.
- 2) Not every being can be contingent.
- 3) There must exist a being which is necessary to cause contingent beings.
- 4) This necessary being is God.

**D. The Argument From Degrees And Perfection**

For any given quality (e.g. goodness, beauty, knowledge) there must be an perfect standard by which all such qualities are measured. These perfections are contained in God.

**E. The Argument From Intelligent Design**

The final Way that St. Thomas Aquinas speaks of has to do with the observable universe and the order of nature. Aquinas states that common sense tells us that the universe works in such a way, that one can conclude that it was designed by an intelligent designer, God. In other words, all physical laws and the order of nature and life were designed and ordered by God, the intelligent designer.

Potency and Act: God is pure Act.

**Qualities of God’s nature derived from these proofs:**

1. **God is Existence Himself, the Self-existent Being.**
2. **God is Pure Spirit:** For to have a body would mean having parts and limitation.
3. **God is Unique:** Must necessarily stand alone above all other beings.
4. **God is Eternal:** Exists of necessity and therefore always existed.

5. **God is Immutable:** For all change implies imperfection.
6. **God is Omnipresent:** Must be present everywhere anything is or can be.
7. **God is Intelligence and Free Will Himself:** As the Creator of all order and the free will of the human soul, He must be endowed with it supremely.
8. **God is Infinite in all Perfection** (Truth, Beauty, Goodness, Justice, Mercy, Love): God being the cause of all that is good and desirable in creation, all such goodness must be in Him first and without limit.
9. **God is Infinitely Incomprehensible.** The finite can never fully comprehend the infinite.

**Those proofs derived from observing the human soul:**

**First, the Immortality of the Human Soul.**

*“There is within us a power which we call intellect, reason or mind; in other words, a thinking or rational substance which we call soul. A thinking substance must be a simple spiritual substance. A simple spiritual substance is independent of matter. That which is independent of matter can exist apart from matter. That which can exist apart from matter is not involved in the dissolution of the matter to which it may be joined. Therefore the human soul can exist apart from the body to which it is joined. Being a simple substance, the soul cannot be divided into parts. And hence its existence cannot be terminated by decomposition; i.e., it cannot die or perish of itself or through the agency of any creature. God alone, who made it, can destroy it”* (Laux, Fr. John, *Catholic Apologetics*, TAN, [1928], 1990, p. 28).

- A.) Moral argument from God’s presence in man’s conscience.
- B.) Historical Argument or Man’s need for God: Religion belongs to man’s nature just as surely as thought and free will, language, customs and art (Laux, 17).
- C.) Argument from Desire:
  1. Every natural, innate desire in us corresponds to some real object that can satisfy that desire.
  2. But there exists in us a desire which nothing in time, nothing on earth, no creature can satisfy.
  3. Therefore, there must exist something more than time, earth and creatures which can satisfy this desire.
  4. This something is what people call “God” and “life with God forever.”<sup>2</sup>

**C.S. Lewis:**

*“Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for these desires exists. A baby feels hunger; well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim; well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire; well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”<sup>3</sup>*

So, man has within him desires for the infinite: all goodness, truth, and beauty, which must of necessity be placed there by his Creator. If these desires are present in man by

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<sup>2</sup> Kreeft, Peter & Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1994, 78.

<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Bk. III, chap. 10, “Hope.”

the positive will of a Creator of Perfect Goodness, Truth, Love, and Mercy, it would be unreasonable to conclude that such a God has not provided the means to attain and satisfy these desires.

Therefore, the pertinent questions are no longer, *whether* God exists (pardon the redundancy), or even *whether* or not he has revealed himself, for we can most reasonably expect that an all loving God would do so to satisfy the desires he himself constituted in he creatures. The most reasonable question is “*Where* has God most fully revealed himself?” The next article of the Creed answers this question.

## II. “And in Jesus Christ, His Only Son Our Lord”

### *Com. 102. How did God prepare the world for the mystery of Christ?*

*God prepared for the coming of his Son over the centuries. He awakened in the hearts of the pagans a dim expectation of this coming and he prepared for it specifically through the Old Testament, culminating with John the Baptist who was the last and greatest of the prophets.*

In his essay, “The Only Person Ever Pre-announced,” Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, provides an apologetic for why it is most reasonable to believe in Christ apart from any other religious figures in history.

He provides four distinguishing factors that separate Christ from all men:

1. “What separates Christ from all men is that first He was expected; even the Gentiles had a longing for a deliverer, or redeemer. This fact alone distinguishes Him from all other religious leaders.” This witness is contained primarily in the Old Testament but Sheen provides Gentile sources as well.
2. “Once He appeared, He struck history with such impact that He split it in two, dividing it into two periods: one before His coming, the other after it.”
3. “*Every other person who ever came into this world came into it to live. He came into it to die.*”
4. “He does not fit, as the other world teachers do, into the established category of a *good man*. Good men do not lie.”

### A Selection of the Old Testament Witness:

Briefly, these Old Testament prophecies and prefigurements were fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ:

1. Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1).
2. Rejected by His own (Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 21:42; Mark 8:31, 12:10; Luke 9:22, 17:25).
3. Heir to the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7, Matthew 1:1).
4. His messenger before Him in spirit of Elijah (Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 1:17).
5. Preceded by a messenger to prepare His way (Malachi 3:1; Matthew 11:7-11).
6. He would be God in the flesh (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Matthew 1:23, John 1:1, 14).
7. Forsaken by His disciples (Zechariah 13:7; Matthew 26:56).

8. Given vinegar and gall for thirst (Psalm 69:21; Matthew 27:34).
9. The Messiah's pre-existence (Micah 5:2; John 1:1, 14).
10. Called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15).
11. Would be a Nazarene (Judges 13:5; Amos 2:11; Matthew 2:23).
12. Heal blind/deaf/lame/dumb (Isaiah 35:5-6; Isaiah 29:18 Matthew 11:5).
13. He bore the sins of many (Isaiah 53:10-12; Mark 10:45).
14. Crucified with criminals (Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 27:35).
15. Side pierced (Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34).
16. Brought light to Zabulon & Nephthalm, Galilee of the Gentiles (Isaiah 9:1-2; Matthew 4:15).
17. He entered Jerusalem as a king riding on an ass (Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:5).
18. Hated without a cause (Psalm 35:19; Matthew 27:23).
19. No bones broken (Psalm 34:20, Numbers 9:12; John 19:33-36).
20. Buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57, 60).
21. Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18).
22. He is the stone which the builders rejected which became the headstone (Psalm 118:22-23; Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:42; I Peter 2:7).
23. A stone of stumbling to Israel (Isaiah 8:14-15; I Peter 2:8).
24. Wounded for our sins (Isaiah 53:5; John 6:51).
25. Soldiers gambled for his garment (Psalm 22:18; Matthew 27:35).
26. Darkness over the land (Amos 8:9; Matthew 27:45).
27. The Messiah, the blessing of the world, would come of the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; Matthew 1:1-16).
28. Declared to be the Son of God (Psalm 2:7; Matthew 3:17).
29. He bore our sickness (Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 8:16-17).
30. Spat upon, smitten and scourged (Isaiah 50:6, 53:5; Matthew 27:26, 30).
31. Would not strive or cry (Isaiah 42:2-3; Mark 7:36).
32. People sat there looking at Him (Psalm 22:17; Matthew 27:36).
33. Resurrected from the dead (Psalm 16:10-11, 49:15; Mark 16:6).
34. He would be from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10; Matthew 1:1-3).
35. Born of the seed of the woman (Mary) (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:18).
36. Betrayed by a friend (Psalms 41:9 John 13:21).
37. Smitten on the cheek (Micah 5:1; Matthew 27:30).
38. The sacrificial lamb (Isaiah 53:5; John 1:29).
39. People mocked, "He trusted in God, let Him deliver him!" (Psalm 22:7-8; Matthew 27:43).
40. Cried, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46).
41. Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15; Luke 22:5).
42. The 30 pieces of silver given for the potter's field (Zechariah 11:12 Matthew 27:9-10).
43. The 30 pieces of silver thrown in the temple (Zechariah 11:13 Matthew 27:5).
44. Thirsty during execution (Psalm 22:16 John 19:28).
45. Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:5-6; 6:20; 7:15-17).

Types of Christ in the Old Testament (From Msgr. Holmes' presentation, p. 12):

**Excursus: Typology**

Typology is an approach in theology that interprets persons and events in the Old Testament as pointing toward a fulfillment in the New. This approach is present in the New Testament itself (see Hebrews 7, where Christ is compared to the mysterious Melchizedek). Typology was very popular in the early Church, and flowered especially at Alexandria.

To illustrate how developed this became, consider how the Lord Jesus could be understood as:

- the New Adam (in Adam all die; in Christ all come to life again)
- the New Noah (since He built the New Ark [the Church] by which mankind is saved from death)
- the New Abraham (since He is the beginning of the New Covenant)
- the New Isaac (the beloved Son sacrificed by the Father)
- the New Jacob (since His Twelve followers were the foundation of the New Israel)
- the New Joseph (sold for silver)
- the New Moses (since He leads his people out of slavery, gives New Law, and feeds with manna)
- the New Joshua (his namesake, which name means Savior)
- the New David (descended from David, He is King of a universal and eternal Kingdom)
- the New Solomon (since He is the Word made Flesh)

The New Testament *requires* that we include a typological analysis in the reading of the Old Testament.

- 1) Jesus teaches that Jonah's three days in the belly of the great fish foreshadow his own three days in the tomb (Mt. 12:40).
- 2) Jesus says that the bronze serpent of Num. 21:9, is a type of his crucifixion.

Let's take a closer look at two of these:

- 1) Melchizedek, Gen. 14: 17-20
- 2) Abraham and Isaac, Gen. 22: 1-18

Closer look at Old Testament Prophecies

- 1) Isaiah 7: 14; 9:6; 52: 13 – 53:12
- 2) The Temple

***Com. 115. What was the attitude of Jesus toward the temple in Jerusalem?***

*Jesus was accused of hostility to the temple. On the contrary, he venerated it as "the house of his Father" (John 2:16); and it was there that he imparted an important part of his teaching. However, he also foretold its destruction in connection with his own death and he presented himself as the definitive dwelling place of God among men.*

**“(You) Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (Jn. 2:19).**

The Temple authorities (“the Jews”) should have understood Christ’s words, Jeremiah told them their impurity would destroy the value of the Temple in God’s eyes:

*“Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, says the LORD. Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because you have done all these things, says the LORD, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house which is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh” (Jer. 7: 11-14).*

The book of Tobit also stated that with the coming of the Messiah an ideal temple would appear on earth in which all nations would be welcome:

*But God will again have mercy on them, and bring them back into their land; and they will rebuild the house of God, though it will not be like the former one until the times of the age are completed. After this they will return from the places of their captivity, and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendor. And the house of God will be rebuilt there with a glorious building for all generations for ever, just as the prophets said of it. Then all the Gentiles will turn to fear the Lord God in truth, and will bury their idols. All the Gentiles will praise the Lord, and his people will give thanks to God, and the Lord will exalt his people. And all who love the Lord God in truth and righteousness will rejoice, showing mercy to our brethren (Tobit 14:5-7).*

**“But he spoke of the temple of his body” (Jn. 2:21).**

*“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16).*

*“What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people’” (2 Cor. 6:16).*

*“So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22).*

### **III. “Jesus Christ Was Conceived by the Power of the Holy Spirit, and Was Born of the Virgin Mary.”**

**Com. 85. Why did the Son of God become man?**

*For us men and for our salvation, the Son of God became incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. He did so to reconcile us sinners with God, to have us learn of God's infinite love, to be our model of holiness and to make us "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).*

**Com. 87. In what way is Jesus Christ true God and true man?**

*Jesus is inseparably true God and true man in the unity of his divine Person. As the Son of God, who is "begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father," he was made true man, our brother, without ceasing to be God, our Lord.*

**The Divinity of Christ<sup>4</sup>:**

Christ's divinity is shown over and over again in the New Testament. For example, in John 5:18 we are told that Jesus' opponents sought to kill him because he "called God his Father, making himself equal with God."

In John 8:58, when quizzed about how he has special knowledge of Abraham, Jesus replies, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I Am"—invoking and applying to himself the personal name of God—"I Am" (Ex. 3:14). His audience understood exactly what he was claiming about himself. "So they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple" (John 8:59).

In John 20:28, Thomas falls at Jesus' feet, exclaiming, "My Lord and my God!" (Greek: *Ho Kurios mou kai ho Theos mou*—literally, "The Lord of me and the God of me!")

In Philippians 2:6, **Paul** tells us that Christ Jesus "[w]ho, **being in very nature God**, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped" (New International Version). So Jesus chose to be born in humble, human form though he could have simply remained in equal glory with the Father for he was "in very nature God."

Also significant are passages that apply the title "**the First and the Last**" to Jesus. This is one of the Old Testament titles of Yahweh: "Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, Yahweh of armies: 'I am the First and I am the Last; besides me there is no god'" (Is. 44:6; cf. 41:4, 48:12).

This title is directly applied to Jesus three times in the book of Revelation: "When I saw him [Christ], I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the First and the Last'" (Rev. 1:17). "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the First and the Last, who died and came to life'" (Rev. 2:8). "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22:12–13).

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from Catholic Answers, ([http://www.catholic.com/library/Divinity\\_of\\_Christ.asp](http://www.catholic.com/library/Divinity_of_Christ.asp)), (Oct. 10, 2007).

This last quote is especially significant since it applies to Jesus the parallel title "the Alpha and the Omega," which Revelation earlier applied to the Lord God: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8).

As the following quotes show, the early Church Fathers also recognized that Jesus Christ is God and were adamant in maintaining this precious truth.

Ignatius of Antioch: "For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary in accord with God's plan: of the seed of David, it is true, but also of the Holy Spirit" (*Letter to the Ephesians* 1 [A.D. 110], 18:2). Also, "[T]o the Church beloved and enlightened after the love of Jesus Christ, our God, by the will of him that has willed everything which is" (*Letter to the Romans* 1 [A.D. 110]).

Clement of Alexandria: "The Word, then, the Christ, is the cause both of our ancient beginning—for he was in God—and of our well-being. And now this same Word has appeared as man. He alone is both God and man, and the source of all our good things" (*Exhortation to the Greeks* 1:7:1 [A.D. 190]).

***Com. 95. "...Born of the Virgin Mary": Why is Mary truly the Mother of God?***

*Mary is truly the Mother of God because she is the Mother of Jesus (John 2:1, John 19:25). The One who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and became truly her Son is actually the eternal Son of God the Father. He is God himself.*

Apologetic: How does Elizabeth refer to Mary? (Lk. 1: 43)

***Com. 96. What does the "Immaculate Conception" mean?***

*God freely chose Mary from all eternity to be the Mother of his Son. In order to carry out her mission she herself was conceived immaculate. This means that, thanks to the grace of God and in anticipation of the merits of Jesus Christ, Mary was preserved from original sin from the first instant of her conception.*

Apologetic:

1) The *Protoevangelium*, Gen. 3:15.

2) "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" (Lk. 1: 28).

***Com. 99. In what sense is Mary "ever Virgin"?***

*Mary is ever virgin in the sense that she “remained a virgin in conceiving her Son, a virgin in giving birth to him, a virgin in carrying him, a virgin in nursing him at her breast, always a virgin” (Saint Augustine). Therefore, when the Gospels speak of the “brothers and sisters of Jesus”, they are talking about the close relations of Jesus, according to the way of speaking used in Sacred Scripture.*

Apologetic:

- 1) Question: Did Jesus have siblings? “Isn’t that the carpenter’s son? Isn’t Mary known to be his mother and James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas his brothers?” (Mt. 13:55).

A: “So Abram said to Lot, ‘Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers ...’” (Gen. 13: 8, New American translation).

Mt. 27: 56 and Mk. 15:40 identify James and Joseph as sons of *another* Mary, not the Mother of Jesus. John 19:25 identifies this other Mary as the wife of Clopas.

In Mt. 15, Jesus vehemently condemns the Pharisees because they had a procedure, the Korban Rule, that allowed children to avoid taking care of their parents. In the OT, children had a solemn obligation to care for their elderly parents. In John 19:27, Jesus entrusts his mother to the care of John the apostle. If he had younger siblings, this would make no sense.

- 2) Martin Luther: “It is an article of faith that Mary is Mother of the Lord and still a virgin ... Christ, we believe, came forth from a womb left perfectly intact.”<sup>5</sup>

***Com. 100. In what way is the spiritual motherhood of Mary universal?***

*Mary had only one Son, Jesus, but in him her spiritual motherhood extends to all whom he came to save. Obediently standing at the side of the new Adam, Jesus Christ, the Virgin is the new Eve, the true mother of all the living, who with a mother's love cooperates in their birth and their formation in the order of grace. Virgin and Mother, Mary is the figure of the Church, its most perfect realization.*

Apologetic: What is the Mission of Christ? The mission of Christ is “to reconcile us sinners with God ... and to make us ‘partakers of the divine nature’” (Com. 85). In other words, to draw us into the Trinity’s Communion of Love, to give us the “power to become children of God” (John 1: 12). As “Children of God” who cry out “Abba! Father!” (Gal. 4:6), it stands to reason that we have a heavenly Father and a spiritual mother.

- 1) According to Jesus, who is our Father? (John 20: 17)

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<sup>5</sup> Chacon, Fr. Frank, and Jim Burnham, *Beginning Apologetics I*, San Juan Catholic Seminars, Farmington, NM, 1993.

*Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."*

- 2) According to Jesus, who is our Mother? (John 19: 26-27)

*When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!"*

### **Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth**

- 1) Is Jesus a King?

*And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1: 32-33).*

*"King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16).*

- 2) If Jesus is the everlasting King, who is the everlasting Queen? Interestingly, the *wife* of the king of Judah was *not* the queen. The queen was the king's mother. She was known as the Queen Mother and was given great honor and authority.
- a. 1 Kings 2:19-20 *So Bathshe'ba went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adoni'jah. And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother; and she sat on his right. Then she said, "I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me." And the king said to her, "Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you."*
  - b. The queen mother had an official position and had to be deposed in order to be removed: *"And Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as David his father had done. He ... removed Ma'acah his mother from being queen mother because she had an abominable image made for Ashe'rah; and Asa cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kidron. (1 Kings 15:11-13).*
- 3) The Jewish idea of Davidic kings would have naturally included the king on his throne with the queen mother at his right hand. The Holy Spirit in leading the OT people of Judah to establish the office of Queen Mother, was preparing the way for Mary. This is exactly what Revelation 12 describes:
- a. *"And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child ... she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne ...."(Rev. 12: 1-5).*

Any king of the house of David would be expected to have a queen mother. That's precisely what Mary is: the Queen Mother of the Messianic King.

**Your turn!**

1) What greeting did the Roman guards use to ridicule Christ and his Kingship? (John 19:13)

2) How did the archangel Gabriel address Our Lady and her Queenship? (John 1: 28). How are they parallel?

***Com. 198. What kind of devotion is directed to the holy Virgin?***

*It is a singular kind of devotion which differs essentially from the cult of adoration given only to the Most Holy Trinity. This special veneration directed to Mary finds particular expression in the liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and in Marian prayers such as the holy Rosary which is a compendium of the whole Gospel.*

**IV. “Jesus Christ Suffered Under Pontius Pilate, Was Crucified, Died, and Was Buried.”**

***Com. 112. What is the importance of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus?***

*The Paschal Mystery of Jesus, which comprises his passion, death, resurrection, and glorification, stands at the center of the Christian faith because God's saving plan was accomplished once for all by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ.*

Non-Christian sources of our knowledge of Christ and his teaching, two examples from Catholic Apologetics by Fr. John Laux, p.53-55:

- 1) Tactus, the greatest of Roman historians, in describing the Christians stated, “*The author of that denomination was Christus, who had been executed in Tiberius’s time by the Procurator Pontius Pilate ...*”
- 2) The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-100).

**V. “Jesus Christ Descended into Hell; on the Third Day He Rose Again from the Dead.”**

***Com. 125. What is the “hell” into which Jesus descended?***

*This “hell” was different from the hell of the damned. It was the state of all those, righteous and evil, who died before Christ. With his soul united to his divine Person Jesus went down to the just in hell who were awaiting their Redeemer so they could enter at last into the vision of God. When he had conquered by his death both death and the devil “who has the power of death” (Hebrews 2:14), he freed the just who looked forward to the Redeemer and opened for them the gates of heaven.*

**Com. 126. What place does the Resurrection of Christ occupy in our faith?**

The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ and represents along with his cross an essential part of the Paschal Mystery.

**Com. 127. What are the signs that bear witness to the Resurrection of Jesus?**

Along with the essential sign of the empty tomb, the Resurrection of Jesus is witnessed to by the women who first encountered Christ and proclaimed him to the apostles. Jesus then “appeared to Cephas (Peter) and then to the Twelve. Following that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brethren at one time” (1 Corinthians 15:5-6) and to others as well. The apostles could not have invented the story of the resurrection since it seemed impossible to them. As a matter of fact, Jesus himself upbraided them for their unbelief.

**Com. 129. What is the condition of the risen body of Jesus?**

The Resurrection of Christ was not a return to earthly life. His risen body is that which was crucified and bears the marks of his passion. However it also participates in the divine life, with the characteristics of a glorified body. Because of this the risen Jesus was utterly free to appear to his disciples how and where he wished and under various aspects.

**Com. 131. What is the saving meaning of the Resurrection?**

The Resurrection is the climax of the Incarnation. It confirms the divinity of Christ and all the things which he did and taught. It fulfills all the divine promises made for us. Furthermore the risen Christ, the conqueror of sin and death, is the principle of our justification and our Resurrection. It procures for us now the grace of filial adoption which is a real share in the life of the only begotten Son. At the end of time he will raise up our bodies.

## **VI. “Jesus Ascended into Heaven and Is Seated at the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty”**

**Com. 132. What does the Ascension mean?**

After forty days during which Jesus showed himself to the apostles with ordinary human features which veiled his glory as the Risen One, Christ ascended into heaven and was seated at the right hand of the Father. He is the Lord who now in his humanity reigns in the everlasting glory of the Son of God and constantly intercedes for us before the Father. He sends us his Spirit and he gives us the hope of one day reaching the place he has prepared for us.

## **VII. “From Thence He Shall Come to Judge the Living and the Dead.”**

**Com. 133. How does the Lord Jesus now reign?**

As the Lord of the cosmos and of history, the Head of his Church, the glorified Christ mysteriously remains on earth where his kingdom is already present in seed and in its beginning in the Church ...

**Com. 134. How will the coming of the Lord in glory happen?**

*After the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world the glorious coming of Christ will take place. Then will come the definitive triumph of God in the parousia and the Last Judgment. Thus the Kingdom of God will be realized.*

**Com. 135. How will Christ judge the living and the dead?**

*Christ will judge with the power he has gained as the Redeemer of the world who came to bring salvation to all. The secrets of hearts will be brought to light as well as the conduct of each one toward God and toward his neighbor. Everyone, according to how he has lived, will either be filled with life or damned for eternity. In this way, “the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13) will come about in which “God will be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).*

## VIII. “I Believe in the Holy Spirit”

**Com. 136. What does the Church mean when she confesses: “I believe in the Holy Spirit”?**

*To believe in the Holy Spirit is to profess faith in the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity who proceeds from the Father and the Son and “is worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son”. The Spirit is “sent into our hearts” (Galatians 4:6) so that we might receive new life as sons of God.*

**Com. 142. What is the work of the Spirit in Mary?**

*The Holy Spirit brought to fulfillment in Mary all the waiting and the preparation of the Old Testament for the coming of Christ. In a singular way he filled her with grace and made her virginity fruitful so that she could give birth to the Son of God made flesh. He made her the Mother of the “whole Christ”, that is, of Jesus the Head and of the Church his body. Mary was present with the twelve on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit inaugurated the “last days” with the manifestation of the Church.*

**Com. 145. What does the Spirit do in the Church?**

*The Spirit builds, animates and sanctifies the Church. As the Spirit of Love, he restores to the baptized the divine likeness that was lost through sin and causes them to live in Christ the very life of the Holy Trinity. He sends them forth to bear witness to the Truth of Christ and he organizes them in their respective functions so that all might bear “the fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22).*

## IX. “I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints”

**Com. 147. What does the word Church mean?**

*The word Church refers to the people whom God calls and gathers together from every part of the earth. They form the assembly of those who through faith and Baptism have become children of God, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit.*

**Com. 109. In the Kingdom, what authority did Jesus bestow upon his Apostles?** *Jesus chose the twelve, the future witnesses of his Resurrection, and made them sharers of his mission and of his authority to teach, to absolve from sins, and to build up and govern the Church. In this college, Peter received “the keys of the Kingdom” (Matthew 16:19) and assumed the first place with the mission to keep the faith in its integrity and to strengthen his brothers.*

**Com. 149. What is the origin and the fulfillment of the Church?**

*The Church finds her origin and fulfillment in the eternal plan of God. She was prepared for in the Old Covenant with the election of Israel, the sign of the future gathering of all the nations. Founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming death and Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. She will be perfected in the glory of heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth.*

**Com. 150. What is the mission of the Church?**

*The mission of the Church is to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God begun by Jesus Christ among all peoples. The Church constitutes on earth the seed and beginning of this salvific Kingdom.*

**Com. 151. In what way is the Church a mystery?**

*The Church is a mystery in as much as in her visible reality there is present and active a divine spiritual reality which can only be seen with the eyes of faith.*

**Com. 152. What does it mean to say that the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation?**

*This means that she is the sign and instrument both of the reconciliation and communion of all of humanity with God and of the unity of the entire human race.*

**Com. 156. In what way is the Church the body of Christ?**

*The risen Christ unites his faithful people to himself in an intimate way by means of the Holy Spirit. In this way, those who believe in Christ, in as much as they are close to him especially in the Eucharist, are united among themselves in charity. They form one body, the Church, whose unity is experienced in the diversity of its members and its functions.*

**Com. 158. Why is the Church called the “Bride of Christ”?**

*She is called the “Bride of Christ” because the Lord himself called himself her “Spouse” (Mark 2:19). The Lord has loved the Church and has joined her to himself in an everlasting covenant. He has given himself up for her in order to purify her with his blood and “sanctify her” (Ephesians 5:26), making her the fruitful mother of all the children of God. While the term “body” expresses the unity of the “head” with the members, the term “bride” emphasizes the distinction of the two in their personal relationship.*

**Com. 174. Why is the Church apostolic?**

*The Church is apostolic in her origin because she has been built on “the foundation of the Apostles” (Ephesians 2:20). She is apostolic in her teaching which is the same as that of the Apostles. She is apostolic by reason of her structure insofar as she is taught, sanctified, and guided until Christ returns by the Apostles through their successors who are the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter.*

***Com. 175. In what does the mission of the Apostles consist?***

*The Word “Apostle” means “one who is sent”. Jesus, the One sent by the Father, called to himself twelve of his disciples and appointed them as his Apostles, making them the chosen witnesses of his Resurrection and the foundation of his Church. He gave them the command to continue his own mission saying, “As the Father has sent me, so I also send you” (John 20:21); and he promised to remain with them until the end of the world.*

***Com. 176. What is apostolic succession?***

*Apostolic succession is the transmission by means of the sacrament of Holy Orders of the mission and power of the Apostles to their successors, the bishops. Thanks to this transmission the Church remains in communion of faith and life with her origin, while through the centuries she carries on her apostolate for the spread of the Kingdom of Christ on earth.*

***Com. 182. What is the mission of the Pope?***

*The Pope, Bishop of Rome and the Successor of Saint Peter, is the perpetual, visible source and foundation of the unity of the Church. He is the vicar of Christ, the head of the College of bishops and pastor of the universal Church over which he has by divine institution full, supreme, immediate, and universal power.*

***Com. 185. When is the infallibility of the Magisterium exercised?***

*Infallibility is exercised when the Roman Pontiff, in virtue of his office as the Supreme Pastor of the Church, or the College of Bishops, in union with the Pope especially when joined together in an Ecumenical Council, proclaim by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. Infallibility is also exercised when the Pope and Bishops in their ordinary Magisterium are in agreement in proposing a doctrine as definitive. Every one of the faithful must adhere to such teaching with the obedience of faith.*

***Com. 188. What is the vocation of the lay faithful?***

*The lay faithful have as their own vocation to seek the Kingdom of God by illuminating and ordering temporal affairs according to the plan of God. They carry out in this way their call to holiness and to the apostolate, a call given to all the baptized.*

***I Believe in the Communion of Saints***

***Com. 194. What is the meaning of the “communion of saints”?***

*This expression indicates first of all the common sharing of all the members of the Church in holy things (sancta): the faith, the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, the charisms, and the other spiritual gifts. At the root of this communion is love which “does not seek its own interests” (1 Corinthians 13:5) but leads the faithful to “hold everything*

*in common” (Acts 4:32), even to put one’s own material goods at the service of the most poor.*

***Com. 195. What else does “the communion of saints” mean?***

*This expression also refers to the communion between holy persons (sancti); that is, between those who by grace are united to the dead and risen Christ. Some are pilgrims on the earth; others, having passed from this life, are undergoing purification and are helped also by our prayers. Others already enjoy the glory of God and intercede for us. All of these together form in Christ one family, the Church, to the praise and glory of the Trinity.*

Apologetic:

1. What image does Jesus Christ employ to help us understand His mission to draw all humanity into a communion of love with the Trinity? (See, John 5: 1 – 11, especially, verse 5.) If we are members of Christ, are we members of each other?
  - a. What must we do to bear fruit? (See verse 4.)
  - b. What happens if we do not abide in Christ? (v. 6)
  - c. How do we abide in Christ’s love?
    - i. (v. 7)
    - ii. (v. 10)
    - iii. (John 6: 56)
  - d. Do the Saints glorify God? (v. 8)
  - e. Why is Jesus telling us this? (v. 11)

As members of the Christ we share this communion with Christ’s members in purgatory and heaven (Church Militant, Church Suffering, and Church Triumphant).

2. Are we drawn into the family of God? Are we His children? (See John 1: 12;1 John 3:1; Romans 8: 15-16)
3. Is the Church the Mystical Body of Christ? (See, for example, 1 Cor 10:16; Gal 3: 26)
4. Does Christ’s body have a single unity? (1 Cor 12: 12-27, especially v. 25-27; also Rom 12:4-16).
5. Are all Christians members of Christ’s body and one another? (See Rom 12:5)
6. Does Jesus have only one body? (Eph 4:4; Col 3:15)

7. Can death separate Christians from Christ or from one another? (Rom 8:35-39)
8. Are Christians bound in mutual love? (Rom 12:10; 1 Thes 5:11; Gal 6:2)
9. Do angels and saints intercede for us? (Tob 12:12; Rev 5:8; Rev 8:3-4)
10. Are the saints and martyrs in heaven concerned with earthly affairs? (Rev 6:9-11)

## X. “I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins”

### **Com. 200. How are sins remitted?**

*The first and chief sacrament for the forgiveness of sins is Baptism. For those sins committed after Baptism, Christ instituted the sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance through which a baptized person is reconciled with God and with the Church.*

### **Com. 201. Why does the Church have the power to forgive sins?**

*The Church has the mission and the power to forgive sins because Christ himself has conferred it upon her: “Receive the Holy Spirit, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:22-23).*

## XI. “I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body”

### **Com. 110. What is the meaning of the Transfiguration?**

*Above all the Transfiguration shows forth the Trinity: “the Father in the voice, the Son in the man Jesus, the Spirit in the shining cloud” (Saint Thomas Aquinas). Speaking with Moses and Elijah about his “departure” (Luke 9:31), Jesus reveals that his glory comes by way of the cross and he anticipates his resurrection and his glorious coming “which will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21).*

### **Com. 203. What is meant by the “resurrection of the body”?**

*This means that the definitive state of man will not be one in which his spiritual soul is separated from his body. Even our mortal bodies will one day come to life again.*

### **Com. 204. What is the relationship between the Resurrection of Christ and our resurrection?**

*Just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and now lives forever, so he himself will raise everyone on the last day with an incorruptible body: “Those who have done good will rise to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:29).*

### **Com. 206. What does it mean to die in Christ Jesus?**

*Dying in Christ Jesus means to die in the state of God's grace without any mortal sin. A believer in Christ, following his example, is thus able to transform his own death into an*

*act of obedience and love for the Father. "This saying is sure: if we have died with him, we will also live with him" (2 Timothy 2:11).*

## **XII. "I Believe in Life Everlasting."**

### ***Com. 207. What is life everlasting?***

*Eternal life is that life which begins immediately after death. It will have no end. It will be preceded for each person by a particular judgment at the hands of Christ who is the Judge of the living and the dead. This particular judgement will be confirmed in the final judgment.*

### ***Com. 210. What is purgatory?***

*Purgatory is the state of those who die in God's friendship, assured of their eternal salvation, but who still have need of purification to enter into the happiness of heaven.*

### **Apologetic<sup>6</sup>:**

Scripture teaches that purgatory exists, even if it doesn't use that word and even if 1 Peter 3:19 refers to a place other than purgatory.

Christ refers to the sinner who "will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matt. 12:32), suggesting that one can be freed after death of the consequences of one's sins. Similarly, Paul tells us that, when we are judged, each man's work will be tried. And what happens if a righteous man's work fails the test? "He will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor 3:15). Now this loss, this penalty, can't refer to consignment to hell, since no one is saved there; and heaven can't be meant, since there is no suffering ("fire") there. The Catholic doctrine of purgatory alone explains this passage.

Then, of course, there is the Bible's approval of prayers for the dead: "In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the dead to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin" (2 Macc. 12:43–45). Prayers are not needed by those in heaven, and no one can help those in hell. That means some people must be in a third condition, at least temporarily. This verse so clearly illustrates the existence of purgatory that, at the time of the Reformation, Protestants had to cut the books of the Maccabees out of their Bibles in order to avoid accepting the doctrine.

Prayers for the dead and the consequent doctrine of purgatory have been part of the true religion since before the time of Christ. Not only can we show it was practiced by the Jews of the time of the Maccabees, but it has even been retained by Orthodox Jews today, who recite a prayer known as the *Mourner's Kaddish* for eleven months after the death of

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<sup>6</sup> From Catholic Answers, (<http://www.catholic.com/library/Purgatory.asp>), (Oct. 11, 2007).

a loved one so that the loved one may be purified. It was not the Catholic Church that added the doctrine of purgatory. Rather, any change in the original teaching has taken place in the Protestant churches, which rejected a doctrine that had always been believed by Jews and Christians.

***Com. 216. What is the hope of the new heavens and the new earth?***

*After the final judgment the universe itself, freed from its bondage to decay, will share in the glory of Christ with the beginning of “the new heavens” and a “new earth” (2 Peter 3:13). Thus, the fullness of the Kingdom of God will come about, that is to say, the definitive realization of the salvific plan of God to “unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth” (Ephesians 1:10). God will then be “all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28) in eternal life.*

**“Amen!”**