



Catechetical Series:

What Catholics Believe & Why

ORIGINAL SIN

Behold The Truth

Discovering the What & Why of the Catholic Faith
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The Reality of Sin

- ❖ Sin is an inescapable reality of human existence.
- ❖ We see the effects of it throughout human history.
- ❖ In its essence, sin amounts to man's rejection or opposition to God.
- ❖ Only through God's self-revelation to mankind do we begin to more fully understand the reality of sin.



Sinners from Conception

- ❖ Meditating on his own sinfulness in the light of God's truth led King David to realize how all human beings are conceived in sin, that is, in a state of separation from God.
- ❖ He wrote, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."
Psalm 51:4-5



The Creation of Man

- ❖ God created Adam and Eve, our first parents, good in every respect.
- ❖ “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Gen. 1:27
- ❖ Men and women are both made in the image and likeness of God, and therefore are equal in dignity.
- ❖ They are not, however, *identical*, but are given fundamentally different vocations: fatherhood and motherhood, respectively.
- ❖ These two callings are designed not to rival each other, but to *complement* each other.



Human Freedom

- ❖ God endowed Adam and Eve with an *intellect*, the ability to know Him, and *free will*, the ability to freely choose to love and obey Him.
- ❖ Different from all other creatures in the Garden of Eden, man was not a slave to his instinct, but could reason and choose for himself.
- ❖ God commanded Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life, but forbid them to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.



The Fall from Grace

- ❖ Adam and Eve were tempted by the devil and fell into sin, eating the forbidden fruit.
- ❖ The devil or Satan is a fallen angel. Scripture tells us that he and a number of other angels rebelled against God, and were thrown out of heaven by Saint Michael the Archangel and his fellow angels.
- ❖ Satan and his minions were cast down to the earth, where they would be free for a time to tempt and torment mankind.
- ❖ At the end of time, the fallen angels will be shut away in hell for all eternity.



The Consequences of Sin

- ❖ In choosing to disobey God's law, Adam and Eve had abused their freedom.
- ❖ As a consequence they were banished from the earthly paradise of Eden.
- ❖ They and their descendants would have to labor for their food, Eve would suffer pain in childbirth, and they would bear a weakness to temptation and sin, and be subject to suffering and death.



The Promise of a Savior

- ❖ God was not without mercy. In the midst of pronouncing judgment on Adam and Eve, He promised to send the human race a Savior, born of a woman.
- ❖ To the serpent He declared: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” Gen. 3:15



The Promise of a Savior

- ❖ The Church sees the promised woman as the Virgin Mary; and her “seed,” as the Lord Jesus Christ, who would defeat the devil by His suffering and death on the Cross on our behalf.
- ❖ Ordinarily, we would speak of the man’s seed. That *Genesis* speaks of the seed of the woman points to the Virgin Birth: that Christ, as the Son of God, would have no earthly father.



Our Fallen Condition

- ❖ Because of what our first parents did, we inherit a tainted or fallen nature.
- ❖ Original sin is not like a genetic disposition or disease passed on through the generations.
- ❖ Rather it is a condition in which we are conceived and born in a state of separation from God, unable to receive the graces He originally intended to give us.



Original Goodness

- ❖ Because of original sin our nature is wounded, but not totally corrupted.
- ❖ The Church teaches, in fact, that along with original sin we retain *original goodness* because we are made in the image and likeness of God, who is Goodness Itself.



Saved by Baptism

- ❖ By the graces Christ earned for us on the Cross, we have been redeemed and if we accept God's offer of salvation can one day enter heaven.
- ❖ Ordinarily, we receive God's saving grace through the sacrament of Baptism, which washes away original sin.
- ❖ "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit," said Jesus, "he cannot enter the kingdom of God." John 3:5



The Gift of Eternal Life

- ❖ While we are still subject to sin and death, the nature of these things has been transformed by Christ's saving death from something permanent to something temporary.
- ❖ Now, for those who die in friendship with Christ, death is merely a doorway through which we will enter into eternal life.



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