



LESSON TWO

How Can We Know That God Exists?

Opening Prayer

Grant me, O Lord my God, a mind to know you, a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you, faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you.

Amen.

Lesson Objectives:

- ❖ Identify the ways God can be known through reason and understand that faith and reason complement each other.
- ❖ Distinguish between natural faith and supernatural faith as a gift from God.
- ❖ Experience God's presence in the natural world and explore how reason can lead a person to belief in God.

BURNING QUESTIONS

❖ Do the beauty and intricacy of the world point to something greater?

When you look at the world, do you see evidence of a Creator?

❖ Is God real?

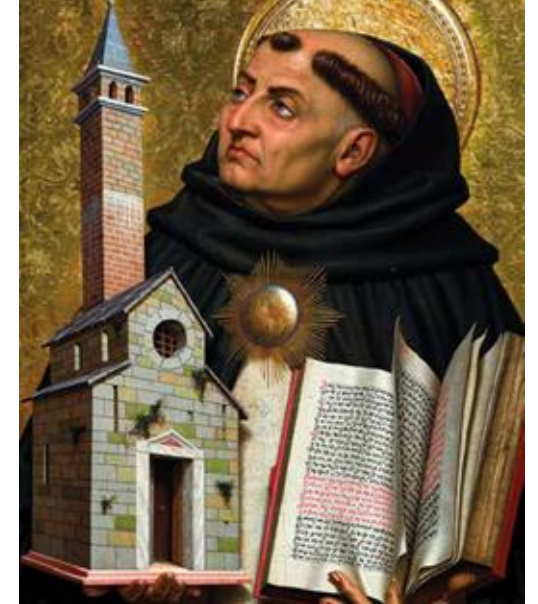
Have you ever questioned God's existence? What in your life leads you to believe God exists?

St. Thomas Aquinas

Feast Day: January 28

1225–1274 · Aquino, Italy · Patron of Students, Teachers, Theologians

Born to a noble Italian family, Thomas gave up status and comfort to join the Dominicans, over his family's fierce objection. Nicknamed "The Dumb Ox" for his quietness, he became the greatest theologian of the Church. His *Summa Theologica* laid out five logical arguments for God's existence. Near the end of his life, after a mystical encounter with God, he stopped writing. He was canonized in 1323 and later named Doctor of the Church.



“All that I have written seems like straw compared to what I have seen.”

St. Thomas Aquinas

God Is Revealed in Our Openness to Truth

Transcendentals: Echoes of God

Moments of beauty, truth, goodness, and unity do more than stir emotion; they echo something eternal. The Church teaches that “God is the fullness of Being and of every perfection” (CCC 213). He is truth itself, love itself, beauty itself. These glimpses are encounters with the One our hearts were made for.

Truth, Beauty, Goodness, Unity

Each of these transcendental realities points beyond itself to God. Encountering truth is encountering the One who is Truth. Encountering beauty lifts the heart toward the God who is infinite Beauty.

“The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.”

Psalm 19:1

God Revealed in Creation

Creation As God's First Cathedral

The natural world is not just a backdrop; it is a revelation. The intricate order and beauty of creation point to a Creator. Through reason alone, we can come to recognize that the universe did not arrange itself out of randomness.

The Five Ways of St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas identified five pathways of reason that lead to knowledge of God's existence: from motion, from causation, from contingency, from degrees of perfection, and from the order of the universe.

“Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.”

Romans 1:20

Faith and Reason

Not at Odds, Made for Each Other

Faith is not the opposite of reason. God created us with both intellect and will, and he designed the world so that we can come to know him through reason. Faith builds on what reason discovers and takes us further.

Supernatural Faith

Natural faith is the trust we place in people and things every day. Supernatural faith is different; it is a gift from God that enables us to believe what he has revealed. It is a response to a Person: saying yes to the God who made you, loves you, and is calling you by name.

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Hebrews 11:1



**Is There a God?
How Can We Know?**

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Discussion Questions

- ❖ How have you seen faith and reason working together (or in tension) in your life?
- ❖ Has intellectual inquiry been important in your spiritual journey so far? How has your faith grown through it?
- ❖ How is coming to know God through faith like coming to know another person? How is it different?
- ❖ What does “faith seeks understanding” mean to you? What can you do to nurture both your faith and your understanding?

Faith and Fun

What famous scientist said, “Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind”?

a. Galileo Galilei

b. Isaac Newton

c. Blaise Pascal

d. Albert Einstein

Faith and Fun

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Einstein was not a traditional believer, but he repeatedly insisted that science and religion address different dimensions of reality and are not mutually exclusive. His words echo the Church’s teaching that faith and reason are complementary, not competing.

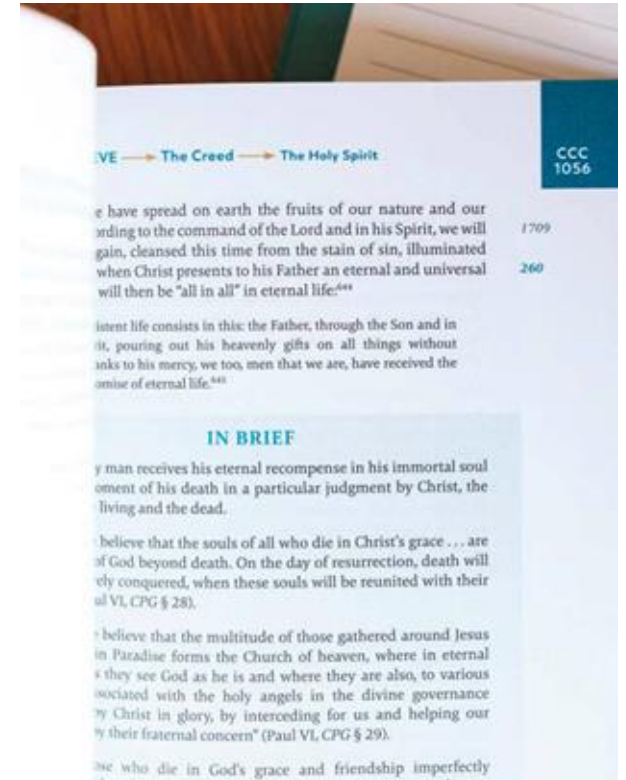
The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

A Guide for the Whole Journey

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a comprehensive and systematic summary of the essential teachings of the Faith. It covers what we believe, how we worship, how we live, and how we pray. It is the first place to turn for answers, not just for catechists and clergy, but for every Catholic.

How to Use the *Catechism*

The *Catechism* is organized by paragraph numbers, not page numbers. When you see “CCC 27,” look up paragraph 27, not page 27. You can find the full text on the Ascension app or at usccb.org.



Living It Out:

Look up CCC 159 this week.
Read it slowly and let it speak to you.

Closing Prayer

*O God, you who are truth itself,
help me to know you, the true knowledge,
and to understand that the more I approach you,
the clearer I will see you.*

*Let my search for you be a prayer,
and make my mind a sanctuary of reflection,
where faith and reason unite,*

*where doubt is not a barrier,
and where questions are steps toward deeper
communion with you.*

*You are the source of all wisdom,
the light that illuminates every seeking soul.*

Amen.

Announcements / Reminders — add notes here