

SEGMENT THREE

THEME: CREATION

OPENING PRAYER / SCRIPTURE READING:

Genesis 1: 1-2, 27-28

“How manifold are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have wrought them all” Psalm 104: 24

“O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth! You have exalted your majesty above the heavens.” Psalm 8:1

INSTRUCTORS’ SUMMARY:

The Bible begins with these words – “In the beginning...God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The first three chapters of the first book of the Bible address questions about creation: its origins and destiny in God, its beauty and order, the creation of human beings, the drama of sin and the hope of salvation.

The origins of the world and human race are one of the most basic riddles of human existence. Science has studied these questions and enriched our knowledge of the universe, and the development of life. Science offers theories on when and how the universe arose and human beings appeared. However there remain questions beyond the scientific ones.

What is the meaning and purpose of our origin? Why do we exist at all? What is our origin and where are we going? If the world was created out of God’s goodness, why is there evil? Questions about our origin and our end are inseparable. They determine the meaning and orientation of human life.

What we believe about the creation of the world and of humanity and of our relationship with God, the Creator is of vital importance. It points us to the foundations of the Christian life.

- ❖ The creation of the world by a loving God is the foundation of “all God’s saving plans” (CCC 280). Creation begins the history of salvation that culminates in Jesus Christ.
- ❖ The first three chapters of Genesis teach the truths of creation: its origin and its end in a loving God, its order and goodness, the vocation of man and woman, and finally the drama of sin and the hope of salvation (CCC 289)
- ❖ We believe that God created the world freely and out of love to make his creatures share in his goodness and happiness. The world is not the product of chance or blind fate (CCC 295)
- ❖ Creation is ordered and it is good; With creation God does not abandon creatures to themselves. God creates out of nothing giving existence to the world and at every moment He sustains and upholds creation in being (CCC 299 – 301, 319 – 320)
- ❖ Man and woman are created as the crown of creation – we are created as material and spiritual beings. We are body and soul, and we are created in the image of God.
- ❖ The existence of physical and moral evil is a mystery that God illuminates by his Son Jesus who died and rose to overcome evil (CCC 324)
- ❖ Original Sin is “a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature is not totally corrupted; it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it” (CCC 405, 396 - 401)
- ❖ Due to Original Sin humanity is subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin – an inclination to evil that is called “concupiscence.” (CCC 405)
- ❖ Sin is humanity’s rejection of God’s love. Sin breaks the bonds of friendship with God and with one another.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

The following questions may be used by the RCIA team to guide large or small group discussions during the weekly RCIA meetings. They may also be given to the participants as a basis for personal reflection during the week.

- 1, What does it mean to be “created in the image and likeness of God?”
2. How is the biblical understanding of the creation of the world and human beings different from other worldviews? (CCC 285)
3. How do scientific theories of evolution relate to the Bible? (CCC 283 – 289)
4. What effect does sin have on us as individuals? On our relationship with others?
5. What is God’s response to human sinfulness?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES/QUOTATIONS:

Genesis 1- 3; Psalm 104 and Psalm 145
Romans 5:12 - 20; 8: 18-23; Colossians 1: 12-20

‘Without the knowledge Revelation gives of God we cannot recognize sin clearly and are tempted to explain it as merely a developmental flaw, a psychological weakness, a mistake, or the necessary consequence of an inadequate social structure, etc. Only in the knowledge of God’s plan for humanity can we grasp that sin is an abuse of freedom that God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving Him and one another” (CCC 387)

“The account of the Fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place *at the beginning of the history of man*. Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents” (CCC 390)

“Original Sin...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.” (CCC 405)

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Universal Catechism, *The Creator* 279 – 324; *The Fall* 385 - 421

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1 - 18

CLOSING PRAYER

Psalm 145