

HJFCI #4: God Carries Out His Plan: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth..." CCC 268-354

- **268-274 The LORD "I AM" is almighty**
 - To say "almighty" = God is in-finite, pure act => action, refulgence, goodness
 - God is in-finite knowing => meaning, purpose
 - God is in-finite loving => self-gift, union
- 272-274 His almightiness transcends and allows us to enter into even apparent powerlessness & diminishment of our existence (just as He so entered). *In Him is our peace.*

The Plan unfolds...

I. On the impact of "creation" in the Plan

279-289

- 280, 282 The trajectory of the Plan is set "in the beginning"
The beginning illuminates the end.
The beginning and the end are both fully seen in light of the "fullness of time"

[● Aside 283-285: on empirically observed explanations of the beginning (scientific method), on questions beyond the realm of scientific method, on rival explanations & truth claims about origins

- on evolutionary theory (theories)
 - Empirical evolutionary theories (biological evolutionary theories & cosmic evolutionary theories): treat of matter and therefore of **material & efficient causes**, i.e. of material **what** and material **how**. Based on that which *already is* in the observable cosmos, from the microscopic to the cosmic.
 - These scientific evolutionary theories do not treat of **formal** or **final causes**, the philosophical (metaphysical) concerns about the *formal concept* (idea) of any given thing that is and *purpose* (why, to what purpose) of that which is. And wherefrom and why does *is-ness (being)* itself exist? Nor do they treat of **primary cause or secondary causes** by rational and willing (intentional) beings: man, angel, God.
 - Distinguish therefore between:
 1. **Empirical scientific evolutionary theory**: explanation of **what** material things are insofar as they are **as matter** and **how** they came from other **material** things. Based on observable phenomena and known or reasonably concluded relationships between material entities. *This can be good science and is not necessarily incompatible with philosophical reason, with revelation, and with the Faith.*
 2. **"Evolutionism"**: attempting to answer philosophical questions about metaphysics and purpose or meaning based on empirical scientific method but which is by definition incapable of addressing metaphysical and purposeful concerns, i.e., trying to explain where "what" came from before "what" existed, or trying to explain "is-ness," or trying to explain *why* anything is that is. Often: claiming that "what cannot be seen doesn't exist"—but based on a method that is incapable of seeing the unseen to begin with. "Evolutionism" is often allied with "materialism," the claim that there is no spiritual or unseen reality. Even your thinking about these things is simply the product of randomly firing neurons; "mind" itself is an artificial if perhaps useful concept. *This is bad philosophy under the guise of science; it is therefore bad science, too.* It is incompatible with revelation (and with sound reason).
- n.b. Sometimes folks doing good evolutionary science then move on to do bad philosophy and still think they're doing science; however, the two (empirical evolutionary theory and "evolutionism") are *not* intrinsically connected. In practice, however, the two often overlap or get mixed together.

- 285 on alternative explanations for the origins and existence that which is: of matter and / or of spirit; also, explanations for the existence of the evident imperfection in the world (the Barnes & Nobel syndrome).

Note: many moderns—even Christians & Catholics—think more as dualistic Gnostics or materialists than we do as Christians. This is why we're so confused about sex, beginning and end of life issues, addictive behaviours, and the like.]

- The Christian approach to the question of origins: *Fides et Ratio!* (286)
- The Christian approach is more than one of curiosity: it is a matter of relationship with Love Himself, the Lord, through the unfolding of the Plan: creation, fall, forging of the Covenant and the promise of salvation in the "fullness of time."

WE KNOW WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW IN ORDER TO ENTER THE BLESSING. 287-289

II. The Almighty GOD WHO IS creates: 290-292

- All that is apart from God has a beginning...
- God ALONE creates all reality, time, space, be-ing...
- All that is is only because God is source and on-going refulgence of be-ing...
(It is impossible to imagine "nothing"—this is a logical concept that takes us to the limit of mind. But apart from God, nothing. No be-ing (let alone "time" or "space" or "limit")).
- God the Father creates through the Word (the Son) and in the power of the Holy Spirit: All three persons are involved in common work of creation (and redemption and sanctification).
- St. Irenaeus: The Son and the Holy Spirit are the "two hands of God"

III-IV. The Mystery of Creation: Because God Is Truth & Love, all that God creates has purpose, meaning, intentionality, order, goodness; all that is in some way reflects I AM; all that is in some way seeks union with I AM. **All that is, is for the Glory of God.** 293-301

- Creation is the Inner Life of God moving outward in Truth & Love = creation, new creation (redemption), *eschaton*. "The ultimate purpose of creation is that God, 'who is the creator of all things may at last become "all in all," thus simultaneously assuring his own glory and our beatitude.'" = We are blessed when in union with the Blessed, face to Face, gazing on Him.
- All that is, is made from nothing. Where do we come from? No where. What are we made of, relative to God? Nothing. What are we worth? Nothing.
- Insofar as anything exists, it is good. Goodness of all that is fundamentally resides in God; goodness is diffusive of itself.
- All that is and that is good, is Gift—and there is a Someone (a giver) behind the given. Existence is *free* Gift; God was not and is not bound by necessity or lack or loneliness (295). "Creatures came into existence when the key of love opened his hand" (cf. Thomas Aquinas in 293).
- All that is, is contingent, sustained, enabled, and drawn toward Him, always and at all time.
- God is utterly and incomparably distinct from His creation; God is always and everywhere intimately involved in His creation.
- St. Irenaeus: "**Glory of God is man fully alive; man's life is the vision of God**" = divinization (294)
- The first lesson for the first step = humble conversion of seeing all (me) *in conspectu Dei*:
God is I AM; I am not God.

V. God Carries Out His Plan: Providence and the Mystery of Evil

302-324

- The universe (and we) exist *in statu viae*—a state of becoming what we are in time.
 - "Divine Providence" = **wisdom & love** of God at work to guide His creation toward completion.
 - God is **Primary** (First) Cause—both at beginning (beyond time) AND as on-going source...
 - ...and God involves His creation in the care of His creation: angels and men as rational & willing and who therefore can act freely and participate in God's intentionality (knowing & willing) = intentional **secondary** causes.
- **The Scandal of Evil: The Mystery of Contingency, The Mystery of Freedom** 309-314
(cf. 385-412)

CCC 309 KEY The Divine Plan in its entirety is the Christian answer to "Whence evil?"

309 If God the Father almighty, the Creator of the ordered and good world, cares for all his creatures, why does evil exist? To this question, as pressing as it is unavoidable and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice. Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question: the goodness of creation, the drama of sin and the patient love of God who comes to meet man by his covenants, the redemptive Incarnation of his Son, his gift of the Spirit, his gathering of the Church, the power of the sacraments and his call to a blessed life to which free creatures are invited to consent in advance, but from which, by a terrible mystery, they can also turn away in advance. *There is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil.*

310 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.¹⁷⁴ But with infinite wisdom and goodness God freely willed to create a world "in a state of journeying" towards its ultimate perfection. In God's plan this process of becoming involves the appearance of certain beings and the disappearance of others, the existence of the more perfect alongside the less perfect, both constructive and destructive forces of nature. With physical good there exists also *physical evil* as long as creation has not reached perfection.¹⁷⁵

311 Angels and men, as intelligent and free creatures, have to journey toward their ultimate destinies by their free choice and preferential love. They can therefore go astray. Indeed, they have sinned. Thus has *moral evil*, incommensurably more harmful than physical evil, entered the world. God is in no way, directly or indirectly, the cause of moral evil.¹⁷⁶ He permits it, however, because he respects the freedom of his creatures and, mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it:

For almighty God. . ., because he is supremely good, would never allow any evil whatsoever to exist in his works if he were not so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil itself.¹⁷⁷

JPll *Salvifici Doloris* "On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering" (11 Feb 1984)

- God is NOT the source of evil; evil is the anti-thesis of "what is" (other than God) in light of "is" = a deprivation of a just good.
- Physical evil vs • Moral evil
- Evil is not the last word, nor the primary word
- The Mystery of God's Transcendence & Might: He brings Good from the nothing of Evil—but never alters reality (evil does not become "good," can never do an evil for sake of the good)

"O *felix culpa!* O happy fault, O blessed sin of Adam that merited for us so great a Redeemer!"
314 ...and we shall see face to Face!

God Creates "heaven and earth," "all that is, visible & invisible"...

● On the range of what is created:

Spirit = that being that 1) has permanent hold on its own nature: possesses self, AND 2) knows & loves

Matter = that being that 1) does not possess self; can be changed into something else entirely AND 2) cannot know or love (even animate matter is not rationally free: it only has simplest cognition and conditioned "willing" at best)

THE RANGE OF REALITY

Uncreated Spirit (in-finite) = Divine Nature

Created spirit (immortal) = angelic nature

Created spirit-matter = human nature (both immortal and in some ways bound by time & space)

Created matter (bound by time & space; transient; subject to change of own nature)

- Animate = animal & plant (& fungi...) nature

- Inanimate = stuff (rock nature, gunk, molecules—but still dynamic)

n.b. The higher the nature, the more "is" it is; it has more "is-ness" (glory)

Evil = diminishment, disintegration, deprivation of the good, nothing; the absence of "is"

I. Angels (invisible)

328-336

- "Angel" names office, function = what they *do*: messenger (news bearer), servant
"Spirit" names nature = what they *are*: intellect + will (un-embodied); therefore: persons.
- Angels first attend to God: in heavenly court, therefore in every liturgy (CCC 1138)
- Angels then attend to God's creation (as secondary causes)
- Angels then attend to the unfolding of the Divine Plan

II. The Visible World (seen)

337-354

- All that is, is because of God; God turns His Face, what is ceases to be.
- All that is in its own way possesses its own perfection & goodness (glory); insofar as it is, it is good; insofar as it is, it gives a glimpse into be-ing. The multiplicity of "things that are" stretches the capacity of finite minds (ours) to grasp the in-finite = aid to "seeing" the in-finite.
- The sum total of all that is (seen & unseen) does *not* measure up to God.
- All that is, is together related, ordered, interdependent: a facet of the whole = beauty
- The perceived ordering & intentionality of all that is is in part a foundation of moral law (354).
- There is a hierarchy of creatures based on the "is-ness" of things.

Things that are "made" = matter informed by God's design (formal cause) & thus reflect some dimension of the Divine; bears the "mark" of the maker.

Things that are "made in His image" = matter + spirit purposefully invested by God to be a representation of His Be-ing; is the "icon" of the maker. Spirit-matter *is* more, shares in God's *is*-ness.

- Man is the summit of the seen world, for Man as spirit-matter possesses more "is" than simple matter, animate or inanimate. All other things are made to the benefit of Man...
- ...but as spirit-matter, Man shares in be-ing with both animate and inanimate matter...
- And Man's role is to order all that is seen toward Man's own ultimate end: the Glory of God. (Man is priest of creation and is to lead creation in worship of the ONE GOD, LORD, FATHER, SON, SPIRIT). (Man is also to lead the unseen world—angelic realm—in worship).

The culmination of Creation (a glimpse at the End)

314, 345-349

- **Sabbath** = Rest, repose = attainment of the End / Goal: *Seeing and possessing the Divine, gazing on Him face to Face. Divinization.*
Sabbath rest = worship / contemplation = Heaven: "**Hodie!**" "**Today!**" (cf. Hebrews 3-4)
cf. CCC 1042-1050, 1163-1167

CCC 1165 When the Church celebrates the mystery of Christ, there is a word that marks her prayer: "Today!" - a word echoing the prayer her Lord taught her and the call of the Holy Spirit.³⁴ This "today" of the living God which man is called to enter is "the hour" of Jesus' Passover, which reaches across and underlies all history: "Life extends over all beings and fills them with unlimited light; the Orient of orients pervades the universe, and he who was "before the daystar" and before the heavenly bodies, immortal and vast, the great Christ, shines over all beings more brightly than the sun. Therefore a day of long, eternal light is ushered in for us who believe in him, a day which is never blotted out: the mystical Passover."³⁵

Josef Pieper: Only the Lover Sings Leisure the Basis of Culture

The Eighth Day = First day of New Creation (resurrection) = the "supra-perfect" day = **day that transcends the seen and enters the unseen where we shall see truly & clearly:**

"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known" (Paul, I Cor 13:12).

"Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven" (Paul, Romans 8:29).

"And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit...who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (Paul, 2 Cor 3:18; 4:6b).

"What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is" (John, I Jn 3:2b).

Deo gratias!