

Ten After Ten: Session 15--- Heaven and Earth

325 The Apostles' Creed professes that God is "Creator of heaven and earth." The Nicene Creed makes it explicit that this profession includes "all that is, seen and unseen."

326 The Scriptural expression "heaven and earth" means all that exists, creation in its entirety. It also indicates the bond, deep within creation, that both unites heaven and earth and distinguishes the one from the other.

327 The profession of faith of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) affirms that God "from the beginning of time made at once out of nothing both orders of creatures, the spiritual and the corporeal, that is, the angelic and the earthly, and then the human creature, who as it were shares in both orders, being composed of spirit and body."

328 The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls "angels" is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition.

329 'Angel' is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is 'spirit'; if you seek the name of their office, it is 'angel.' With their whole beings the angels are servants and messengers of God.

330 As purely spiritual creatures angels have intelligence and will: they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness.

331 Christ is the center of the angelic world. They are his angels... They belong to him because they were created through and for him... They belong to him still more because he has made them messengers of his saving plan.

332 Angels have been present since creation and throughout the history of salvation, announcing this salvation from afar or near and serving the accomplishment of the divine plan.

333 From the Incarnation to the Ascension, the life of the Word incarnate is surrounded by the adoration and service of angels.

334 In the meantime, the whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of angels.

335 In her liturgy, the Church joins with the angels to adore the thrice-holy God.

336 From its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession. "Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life" (St. Basil). Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God.

337 God himself created the visible world in all its richness, diversity, and order. Scripture presents the work of the Creator symbolically as a succession of six days of divine “work,” concluded by the “rest” of the seventh day.

338 Nothing exists that does not owe its existence to God the Creator. The world began when God’s word drew it out of nothingness; all existent beings, all of nature, and all human history are rooted in this primordial event, the very genesis by which the world was constituted and time begun.

339 Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection. .. Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things which would be in contempt of the Creator and would bring disastrous consequences for human beings and their environment.

340 God wills the interdependence of creatures... the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other.

341 The beauty of creation reflects the infinite beauty of the Creator and ought to inspire the respect and submission of man’s intellect and will.

342 The hierarchy of creatures is expressed by the order of the “six days,” from the less perfect to the more perfect.

343 Man is the summit of the Creator’s work, as the inspired account expresses by clearly distinguishing the creation of man from that of the other creatures.

344 There is a solidarity among all creatures arising from the fact that all have the same Creator and are all ordered to his glory.

346 In creation God laid a foundation and established laws that remain firm, on which the believer can rely with confidence, for they are the sign and pledge of the unshakeable faithfulness of God’s covenant. For his part man must remain faithful to this foundation and respect the laws which the Creator has written into it.

347 Creation was fashioned with a view to the sabbath and therefore for the worship and adoration of God. Worship is inscribed in the order of creation.

349 But for us a new day has dawned: the day of Christ’s Resurrection. The seventh day completes the first creation. The eighth day begins the new creation. Thus, the work of creation culminates in the greater work of redemption. The first creation finds its meaning and its summit in the new creation in Christ, the splendor of which surpasses that of the first creation.