

Ten After Ten - Session 2

“I Believe” – the desire for God

26. We must first ask what “to believe” means. Faith is man’s response to God, who reveals himself and gives himself to man, at the same time bringing man a superabundant light as he searches for the ultimate meaning of his life.
27. Only in God will (mankind) find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for... for if man exists, it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence.
29. But this “intimate and vital bond of man to God” can be forgotten, overlooked, or even explicitly rejected by man. Such attitudes can have different causes: revolt against evil in the world; religious ignorance or indifference; the cares and riches of this world; the scandal of bad example on the part of believers...
30. But this search for God demands of man every effort of intellect, a sound will, “an upright heart,” as well as the witness of others who teach him to seek God.
31. These “ways” of approaching God from creation have a twofold point of departure: the physical world and the human person.
34. The world, and man, attest that they contain within themselves neither their first principle nor their final end, but rather that they participate in Being itself, which alone is without origin or end.
35. Man’s faculties make him capable of coming to a knowledge of the existence of a personal God. But for man to be able to enter into real intimacy with him, God willed both to reveal himself to man and to give him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation in faith.
37. Yet there are many obstacles which prevent reason from the effective and fruitful use of this inborn faculty... by disordered appetites which are the consequences of original sin. So it happens that men in such matters easily persuade themselves that what they would not like to be true is false or at least doubtful.
38. Religious and moral truths which of themselves are not beyond the grasp of human reason, so that even in the present condition of the human race, they can be known by all men with ease, with firm certainty and with no admixture of error.
39. Human reason (allows for) the possibility of speaking about him to all men and with all men, and therefore of dialogue with other religions, with philosophy and science, as well as with unbelievers and atheists.

41. The manifold perfections of creatures—their truth, their goodness, their beauty—all reflect the infinite perfection of God. Consequently we can name God by taking his creatures' perfections as our starting point.

43. We must recall that “between Creator and creature no similitude can be expressed without implying an even greater dissimilitude”; and that “concerning God, we cannot grasp what he is, but only what he is not, and how other beings stand in relation to him.”