

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

by Fr. Antony

Faith, Reason and the Existence of God

We are given a definition of faith in Hebrews; *“faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb.11:1).*

Faith is our response to the reality of God. Though God himself remains a mystery to us, the existence of God is not a concept that is beyond our comprehension. He is completely different and OTHER than us. In fact, when we sing “Holy, Holy, Holy” we are acknowledging that. The Hebrew word “*KADDOSH*” which we translate as “Holy” also means APART or OTHER. God is a mystery, but His existence is not.

God is the eternal, unchanging, uncreated personal Being. He is truth, goodness, beauty and love. We can know that He exists even without divine revelation.

How do we know that God exists? We are given reason to believe through divine revelation and direct communication, the Scripture, observation and reason, and human experience - the truths of God are transmitted not only by the written Word. So that our faith may be sure in every generation, the Holy Spirit faithfully preserves the full understanding of the Word of God in Sacred Tradition.

SCIENCE AND FAITH

In fact, since the mid-20th Century, the leadership of the Catholic Church has paid special attention to the development of science, since it has so directly influenced our lives and our world view. Since Pope Pius XII, the Roman Pontiff has engaged in discussion with the scientific community on topics such as the theories on the beginning of the Universe and Darwin’s Theory of Evolution. Consider the quote from Pope Pius XII in his 1951 address to the Pontifical Council on Science:

“What, then, is the importance of modern science for the argument for the existence of God based on the [changing] cosmos? By means of exact and detailed research into the macrocosm and the microcosm, it has considerably broadened and deepened the empirical foundation on which this argument rests, and from which it concludes to the existence of an Absolute Being, [unchanging] by His very nature.”

Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God. (C C C 159). Through the prophet Isaiah, God reminds us that He is the eternal God and He is the one who gives strength to the fainting and the weary (**Isaiah 40:28-31**).

SCRIPTURE, TRADITION AND MAJESTERIUM

If we look into the different religions we find that they are mainly based on three things, which are, Scripture, tradition and the witness of trustworthy people. The scripture is the revelation of God put down in writing by human authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

“All Scripture is inspired by God, and useful for teaching, for correction, for refutation, and for training in righteousness.” II Timothy 3:16

The truths of God are transmitted by more than just the written Word. So that our faith may be sure in every generation, the Holy Spirit faithfully preserves the full understanding of the Word of God in Sacred Tradition.

“Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours.” II Thessalonians 2:15

The Teaching Power of the Church consists of the Pope and the bishops, and through the Holy Spirit guards and passes on the Deposit of Faith. Church Councils, such as the Second Vatican Council, carry on this work