

St. Therese Catholic Church
Beauty of God's Creation

Fr. Andrie
July 22, 2021

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Nicene Creed


- **Article I:** I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.
 - Unpack the meaning of this statement to help us love God more and appreciate His power and wisdom
 - Unpack the beauty of God's creation – both visible (plants, animals, man) and invisible (angels).

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Deeper admiration for God

- **Psalm 19:1-4:** The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.



<http://homeworkresources.wordpress.com/2013/09/14/guided-meditations-on-creation-and-revelation/>

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God's Providence

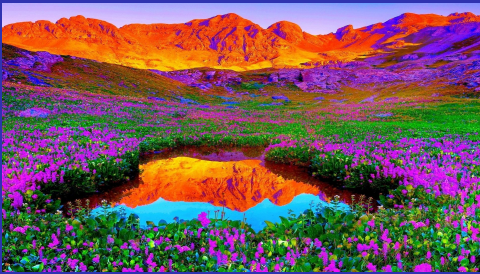
- Creation is the first step of God's covenant with His people.
- Creation is the "beginning of the history of salvation" that culminates in Christ (CCC 280).



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Book of Nature – Fifth Gospel



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Sacramental Vision

- Provide a sacramental vision of reality – reflection of God through the beauty of created things.
- **Key:** Incarnation – God made visible




https://www.boredpanda.com/cute-glasses-wearing-puppies/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=organic

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- Catechesis on creation looks at the following:
 - Where do we come from?
 - How does God relate to creation?
 - What does it mean to be a human being?
 - What is happiness?
 - Why is there evil?
 - Where are we going?
- **Key:** The beginning and end are inseparable.

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- **CCC 284:** The great interest accorded to [scientific] studies is strongly stimulated by a question of another order, which goes beyond the proper domain of the natural sciences.
- It is not only a question of knowing when and how the universe arose physically, or when man appeared, but rather of discovering the meaning of such an origin: is the universe governed by chance, blind fate, anonymous necessity, or by a transcendent, intelligent and good Being called "God"? And if the world does come from God's wisdom and goodness, why is there evil? Where does it come from? Who is responsible for it? Is there any liberation from it?

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- Among all the scriptural texts about creation, the first three chapters of Genesis occupy a unique place (CCC 289).
- Learn fundamental truths of creation
 - Creation's origin and end in God
 - Its order and goodness
 - The vocation of man
 - The drama of sin and the hope of salvation

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Scripture	What we Learn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the beginning (<i>berêšît</i>) • God created (<i>bārā ʕlōhîm</i>) – <i>Ex Nihilo:</i> Based on 2 Mac. 7:28 and Christian theology (Rom. 4:17) (CCC 296) • The heavens and the earth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world had a beginning • God creates without any resistance to His power. • The universe is not created by chance, blind fate, or anonymous necessity. • The totality of creation, including all things visible and invisible (Nicene Creed)

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Creation culminates in Christ

Genesis 1:1	John 1:1
In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth	In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God

Col. 1:16: For in [Christ] were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him.

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Creation – Work of the Holy Trinity

- **CCC 292:** The Old Testament suggests and the New Covenant reveals the creative action of the Son and the Spirit, inseparably one with that of the Father.
- This creative co-operation is clearly affirmed in the Church's rule of faith: "There exists but one God. . . he is the Father, God, the Creator, the author, the giver of order.
- He made all things by *himself*, that is, by his Word and by his Wisdom", "by the Son and the Spirit" who, so to speak, are "his hands". Creation is the common work of the Holy Trinity.


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- Power:** We know well how powerful words can be, whether for good or evil.
- If this is true for our words, think about how much more powerful God's Word is! (cf. Is 55:10-11)



Creation



Eucharist

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Errors Refuted

Heresy	Meaning
Atheism	Denial of a personal God who is totally distinct from the world He created
Pantheism	The world is God; the development of the world is the development of God
Dualism, Manicheism	Two eternal principles, good and evil, light and darkness, locked in permanent conflict
Deism	The world was made by God, but as by a watchmaker who, once he has made a watch, abandons it to itself
Materialism	No transcendence; world is interplay of matter that has always existed

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Tohu wa-bohu

- Without form and void:** The earth is presented as an amorphous mass of material of land submerged in water. God will bring order out of chaos by His Word so that the earth becomes habitable for plants, animals, and human beings.
- Without Form:** Days 1-3 will fix the problem "without form" by creating time and space for habitants.
- Void:** Days 4-6 will "fill" each realm with "rulers" or "governors" (e.g., sun, moon, vegetation, animals, mankind).
- God builds the house (1-3), then fills it with inhabitants (4-6).

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Giving Form

Day 1: Day and Night 

Day 2: Sea and Sky 

Day 3: Land and Vegetation 

←

←

←

Filling Void

Day 4: Sun, Moon, Stars 

Day 5: Fish and Birds 

Day 6: Animals and Man 

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Sabbath Rest

- Seven:** The Hebrew *sheba* can mean "seven" or the "oath" of a covenant. God creates the world in seven days signifying that He is making a covenant with His creation (Gray, 10).
- Ratzinger:** Creation moves toward the Sabbath, to the day on which man and the whole created order participates in God's rest, in his freedom. ...Creation exists to be a place for the covenant that God wants to make with man. The goal of creation is the covenant, the love story of God and man (*Spirit of the Liturgy*, 25-26).
- Creation is the "beginning of the history of salvation" that culminates in Christ (CCC 280) – first step in God's covenant.

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Questions	Answers
Who	God (Uncaused Cause) created everything
What	Heavens and the earth (science investigates)
When	In the beginning (science investigates)
How	By His Word (And God said) (science investigates)
Why	The world was made for the glory of God St. Bonaventure: To communicate God's goodness

- CCC 293:** Creatures came into existence when the key of love opened his hand.
- CCC 294:** The glory of God is man fully alive

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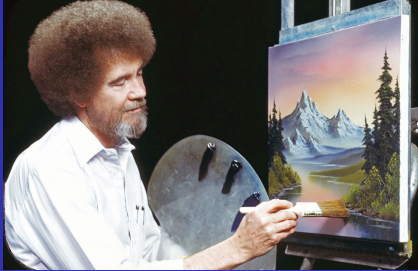
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- **CCC 286:** Human intelligence is surely already capable of finding a response to the question of origins. The existence of God the Creator can be known with certainty through his works, by the light of human reason, even if this knowledge is often obscured and disfigured by error.
- This is why faith comes to confirm and enlighten reason in the correct understanding of this truth: "By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.
- **St. Thomas:** One could reason conclusively to a first cause which causes the existence of everything that is.

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God paints with beautiful brush strokes



https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bob-Ross

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The Scarlet Macaw

- Sometimes God paints with a beautiful brush!
- Sacramental vision – seeing God's creativity, goodness, and wisdom in created things




https://medium.com/@caribbeanfest/yelbelzared-bank-village-in-belize-and-the-scarlet-macaw-tour-19c337a71537

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Grumpy Cat

- Sometimes it is a little more challenging to see God's handiwork
- Prayer: "Jesus, help me to see your love in all creatures."



https://www.tmrz.com/2019/10/09/grumpy-cat-sues-counterfeit-ripoff-merchandise/

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Ecclesiastes 3:11: He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.



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Creation Basics

Basics	Explanation
Free will	God created the world by His free will (not by necessity) (CCC 295)
<i>Ex nihilo</i>	God creates the world "out of nothing." (CCC 296)
Wisdom	God creates an ordered and good world through wisdom (CCC 299)
Presence	God is infinitely greater than all His works, but also present to his creatures' inmost being (CCC 300)
Sustains	God upholds and sustains every creature, enabling them to act and bringing them to their final end (CCC 301)

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Creation in Christ

Basics	Explanation in Christ
Free will	Eph 1:4: God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world (you are unique!)
<i>Ex nihilo</i>	God can give spiritual life to sinners by creating a pure heart in them (CCC 298)
Wisdom	Reason (or Logos) behind the created order Destined for Christ, the eternal world, who is the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15)
Presence	Acts 17:28: In him we live and move and have our being.
Sustains	John 15:5: Without me you can do nothing.

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- Creation has its own goodness and proper perfection, but it did not spring forth complete from the hands of the Creator.
- The universe was created "in a state of journeying" (*in statu viae*) toward ultimate perfection yet to be attained, to which God has destined it.
- We call "divine providence" the dispositions by which God guides his creation toward its perfection (CCC 302).

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Golden Retriever Development

- Puppy goes through developmental stages
- Through the process of perfection (adult dog), there is some messiness along the way.
 - Potty training (go outside)
 - Eating shoes and furniture
 - Tearing up toilet paper
 - Sleeping in the middle of the bed
- God's providence guides the family through the state of development to happy family unity (perfected state).



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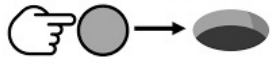
- God does not create the world in a perfect state, but rather in a state of journeying. He invites Adam to till the garden and keep it (Gn 2:15).
- God shows His greatness in that He allows His creatures to co-operate (or participate) in perfecting creation.
- In short, we are fellow co-workers with God and His kingdom. God could have created the world in a perfect state or perfected the world by Himself, but He chooses to allow us to participate in His work!

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- As Creator, God is the first cause who operates in and through secondary causes (CCC 308).

Primary Cause:
I push the **gray ball** into the hole; I've accomplished what I want.



Secondary Cause:
I push the **white ball** into the **gray ball**; the gray ball goes into the hole. I've accomplished what I want.



<https://nelson.nk/excerpts/primary-and-secondary-causes/>


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Primary and Secondary Causality

Concept	Meaning
God's primary causality	Uncaused Cause; God is not simply in the world, but the source of the world itself; everything depends on God for its very being (holds everything in existence); God gives to other causes their very being; He is the source of their very capacity to cause
Creatures' secondary causality	Creatures are caused by God; God gives secondary causality to creatures (the power to be causes) because of His power and goodness; He wills creatures to be real causes

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- **Primary Cause:** My mom made chocolate chip cookies when we were little.



<https://foodanddrink.scotsman.com/food/kids-baking-recipes-5-easy-cake-and-biscuit-recipes-to-try-with-the-family/>


- **Secondary Cause:** I was able to add in the chocolate chips and clean the beaters.
- **Key:** She allowed me to cooperate in making the perfect chocolate chip cookies.

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- Given the world is in a state of journeying (or fallen from grace), certain evils exist as God guides creation to perfect:
 - **Natural evil:** Famines, floods, earthquakes
 - **Physical evil:** Bodily pain, mental anguish (fear, illness, grief, war, etc.)
 - **Moral evil:** Willful acts of human beings (betrayal, stealing, murder, rape, etc.)
- God gives us true freedom to cooperate with perfecting His creation, or acting against it.


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A World Toward Perfection


- **CCC 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. 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.

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- **Mystery:** There will always be a certain mystery to evil. In God's mysterious providence, He allows certain evils to exist (and suffering).
- We often say that He does this to bring about a greater good (which is true), but this still leaves an element of mystery.
- God's plan of salvation is like a big book. Some pages are filled with great joy and victory, while others are full of grief sadness, and sorrow.


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Every good book has the following:

- **A beginning:** Lays out the setting and characters in a captivating way so that the adventure can begin.
- **Middle with a rich plot:** Along with character development, we also see a great drama (between good and evil) that places us in the story and captivates our hearts.
- **End:** After the great drama, there is resolution, e.g., good triumphs over evil. The Book of Revelation says that all tears will be wiped away. No more death. No more mourning. Christ will make all things new (Rev. 21:4-5).

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- **CCC 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. He permits it, however, because he respects the freedom of his creatures and, mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it.

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- **Key:** God is not responsible (directly or indirectly) for moral evil. Instead, fallen human beings (as secondary causes) are responsible for moral evil.
- The original break by Adam and Eve (ruptured relationship with God) brought about brokenness (evil) in the world.
- Thankfully, God does not leave the world (including us!) in our broken state. He interacts in the great drama of salvation throughout history, and in particular, in the fullness of time by giving us His Son.

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- **CCC 314:** We firmly believe that God is master of the world and of its history. But the ways of his providence are often unknown to us.
- Only at the end, when our partial knowledge ceases, when we see God "face to face", will we fully know the ways by which - even through the dramas of evil and sin - God has guided his creation to that definitive sabbath rest for which he created heaven and earth.

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Invisible

1. Angels

- Spiritual, non-corporeal beings
- Each is entirely unique and immortal
- Each has an intelligence and free will
- Nine choirs (three triads)

Visible

2. Human Beings

- Corporal and Spiritual
- *Imago Dei*
- Male and Female
- Fallen, yet redeemed

3. Lower Creation

- Rocks, plants, animals

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15 Minute Break

- Stretch legs
- Restroom
- Something to drink
- Fresh air
- Look at pictures of puppies on your phone

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