**FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY**

Class notes2

**PART I**

**REVELATION AND FAITH**

***I. INTRODUCTION***

[class 1]

1. *Nature, object and purpose of fundamental theology.* (O&B, pp xxi-xxv)
2. Background: The faith of the Church and the demands of human reason.
* Christian, Catholic faith gives a person knowledge revealed by God; this knowledge comes through the Church
* Human reason also gives a person knowledge from natural sources through the workings of the human intellect
* How are these two bodies of knowledge related, and is it reasonable to accept with faith the knowledge received through the Church?
* Can human reason work with the truths of faith?
* These and related questions, together with objections raised by non-believers, have been considered by Christians since the beginnings of Christianity and have given rise to Christian Apologetics (CA) and, more recently, Fundamental Theology (FT)
1. Nature and object of fundamental theology: it is the study of Revelation (Rev), faith (F) and credibility (cred).
* The object of a science is three-fold, expressed in terms developed in middle ages:
* material object, i.e. the “subject matter”
* formal object *quod,* i.e. the “which”, the specific aspect of the material object
* formal object *quo*, i.e. the “by which”, the way or method the intellect uses to study the formal object *quod*)
* e.g. medicine, philosophical anthropology (phil anthrop) and theological anthropology (theol anthrop) all study man and thus have the same material object, but their formal objects *quod* differ: medicine studies man as the subject of bodily health, phil anthrop studies man as a natural being of a certain kind, and theol anthrop studies man as a recipient of God’s life, i.e. grace; their formal objects *quo* also differ: medicine uses an empirical method (observation experiment, measurement, etc.), phil anthrop uses reflection to reach insights and do reasoning, and theol anthrop uses reason to develp revealed truths accepted by faith
* These objects for theology in general can be expressed as follows:
* The material object of theology is God, along with created things in relation to God; this is true for both *natural* theology, a philosophical subject, and *supernatural* or Christian theology (usually what is meant by “theology”)
* the formal object *quod* is God (and created things as related to God) as he has revealed himself to us, i.e. God *sub ratione deitatis*, in his divinity, as he is in himself, rather than as he is known naturally by us; this distinguishes supernatural from natural theology
* the formal object *quo* is the light of reason raised to a supernatural level by grace, i.e. reason intimately bound up with Faith
* All the branches of theology develop the content of what Rev tells us about God and created things, using faith-filled reason. But what about Rev itself, and the F with which Rev is accepted? These are the special concern of FT, its formal object *quod.*
* FT is the theology of the fundamentals of theology, or the theology of the foundations of theology. It is the theological science that studies the principles and sources of theology in Rev, the assent to Rev by F, and the factors that make it reasonable to believe, i.e. the cred of Rev (an expanded statement of its formal object *quod*). Since Rev comes us through the Church, FT also considers the transmission of Rev in the Church.
* FT is a fundamental science because it provides a foundation for all the other fields of theology, such as dogmatic, moral, pastoral and spiritual theology.
* Can a science study itself? Only if its content and method are sufficiently deep to consider that very content and method, i.e. to reflect on its own knowledge.
* This is not possible in the empirical sciences, whose contents and methods give knowledge of realities accessible to the senses, aided by instruments; but knowledge itself is not an empirical reality (although its expression in language has an empirical dimension); thus empirical science cannot study itself (the phil of science does this)
* Philosophy and theology *can* study their own knowledge, because their contents and methods are not tied to empirical phenomena but to realities accessible only to reason.
* CA has become a part of FT as the study and defense of the reasonableness of believing in Rev, i.e. of the act of faith. FT also deals with objections to the act of faith (*fides qua*, faith as an act “by which” we believe) and to the content of faith (*fides quae*, faith as “that which” we believe), and so it studies atheism (denial of faith), other religions, etc.
* While theology helps us to understand divine Rev better, it can never explain God fully, since he is beyond all created things, i.e. he is mysterious: we can know something about him, but there is always much more we don’t know.
1. Theological and anthropological elements of FT.
* Since FT deals with the human interaction with Rev, it must make use both of supernatural elements, such as the nature of God and the workings of his grace, and of human elements, such as the human faculties of intellect and will.
* Similarly, FT considers different approaches to theology, e.g. Catholic and Protestant, as well as different approaches to anthropology, e.g. classical and contemporary, in order to arrive at a sound foundation for the rest of theology.
* FT also has an essential historical dimension, since Revelation has taken place in history, and the salvific relation between God and man develops in history.
1. Dogmatic and apologetic methods in FT
* these are two-fold: descending (from God to man) and ascending (from man to God), thus depending on one’s starting point
* If one starts with Rev itself accepted by F, then the study acquires a dogmatic character, i.e. it flows from what God has revealed about himself, man, etc. This is the descending (“top down”) path, from God to man. It uses the language and methods of theology to study theology’s own inner structure
* If one begins from truths accessible to human reason, without necessarily using F, one can discover in the world, in man and in history reasons for believing in the Rev of God in Christ; this is the apologetic dimension of FT, the ascending (“bottom up”) path, from man to God. It seeks to lead people to the threshold of faith, showing that it is reasonable to believe in Christ: F is not against reason, but it takes reason beyond its “natural” limits

[class 2]

1. *Development of fundamental theology as a discipline: brief historical background.*
2. Fathers of the Church. (O&B pp 184-195)
* This period is the pre-history of FT, which was wholly in the form of Apologetics, i.e. the intellectual effort to defend the Christian F. The etymology of *apologetics* comes from the Greek *apologia* meaning defense, justification or clarification.
* The first ones to study the foundations of the faith were the so-called Apologists of the 2nd century, who sought to defend the Christian F against attacks from pagans and Jews. They followed the Apostles and their immediate disciples, and included St Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Aristides of Pella, Tatian the Assyrian, Apollinaris of Hierapolis, Meliton of Sardes, Tertullian, Milciades and some others whose writings have not reached us.
* Their writings were not merely defensive but included a positive effort to show that the Christian F was credible, using elements of Greek philosophy for pagans and texts from the Old Testament (OT) prophets for Jews. Most of them sought common ground and dialogue with pagans or Jews. St Justin, one of the best- known writers in this period, developed his concept of “seeds of the truth” spread throughout mankind, especially in wise men who in some way accorded with the (revealed) Word without knowing it. Tertullian, a brilliant Roman lawyer, however, rejected Greek philosophy.
* The Apologists also had to fight against heresies, in order to guide and edify the Christian faithful. Many errors in matters of F, such as Gnosticism (which reduced F to a system of ideas), were being circulated during those times, and so Christian writers, especially Irenaeus, felt the need to refute heresies while also exposing the inconsistencies of pagan practices and myths. Irenaeus drew on what had been handed down by the Apostles.
* In the 3rd century, Alexandrian writers such as Clement confronted the F with non-Christian thought and culture. They recognized some truth and wisdom in philosophy, but wisdom reached its fullness in Christ, the *Logos*, *the* Word of God. For these authors, Christianity was the only completely true philosophy, although it was more than just philosophy. Greek philosophy could be a path to Christ among the Greeks, as the Mosaic law was for the Hebrews.
* The witness of martyrs and the conversion experience of St. Augustine contributed an existential dimension to Apologetics.
* The dialogues between martyrs and their judges and executioners provided excellent materials for the defense of the F. They express an aspect of the F that is beyond verbal explanations, reflected in radical and profound gestures where life itself is at stake. This was the only way to convince the pagan world that religion cannot be identified with society nor with the State. The truth of God is above any human reasoning and human association.
* St. Augustine drew on arguments of earlier writers, but added his personal experience and a historical world view drawn from the F. He sought to save what was good in pagan and Jewish culture, producing a synthesis of philosophy and theology grounded in SS and reinforced by his personal experience, wide culture and holiness of life. For several centuries his teachings remained the most exalted intellectual speculation on human life and history.
1. The Middle Ages. (O&B pp 195-202)
* During this period Apologetics was part of the Scholastic presentation of theological works, which became more methodical and systematised. From the theological point of view, Apologetics reached its scientific maturity under the guidance of St. Anselm and the other doctors of Scholasticism. Explanations about God were scientifically developed, but not all of the Scholastics considered theology as a science. Duns Scotus held that theology is not a science because it lacks the evidence of its principles. St. Thomas held that theology is a science subordinated to the science of God and of the saints for whom the principles are evident from F.
* The doctors of Scholasticism coincided on two basic ideas
* first, the act of faith is possible only with supernatural grace, although there are *preambulae fidei*, pre-ambles of the faith, knowledge obtained by contemplation of the world, history, society and by introspection
* second, historical Rev is believable thanks to some signs (miracles and prophecies) given by God upon revealing Himself. St Thomas Aquinas distinguished between truths accessible to reason (including the existence of God) and truths known only by Rev and accepted with F (mysteries of Trinity, Incarnation, Church, etc.)
* The concern of the Scholastics was mainly with prophetic Rev, but they did not get to arrive at the notion of Rev as God manifesting *himself*; they saw Rev only as some truths *about* himself that God revealed to man.
1. Protestant reformation and Council of Trent (O&B pp 202-204)
* Calvin and Luther did not reject Apologetics directly but did indirectly when they lost confidence in reason and took faith to mean trust in God (fiducial faith) based on an interior experience of grace; for them, the content of F was secondary.
* The Reformers departed from the Scholastics because they did not take into consideration the preambles of the F nor did they give any value to the demonstrations of Cred.
* Calvin believed that God manifests Himself in Creation, but human reason was so damaged by original sin that God’s manifestation in the world is useless for F. Creatures are mute teachers that say nothing to man about God.
* For Luther, F is one’s confidence in one’s salvation. F as an intellectual assent to divine truths is only accidental, secondary. What is important is to believe that God will forgive one’s sins for the love of Christ.
* Theologians after the Council of Trent centered their attention on the transmission of Rev. Catholics emphasized objective elements in cred of Rev, esp. miracles and prophecy; the rule (i.e. source and standard) of faith was Rev, found in SS and Tradition. Protestants emphasized subjective elements, esp. the action of the Holy Spirit giving one the certitude that Rev comes from God, and for them the rule of faith was SS alone.
* In the 16th century, Apologetics separated from dogmatic and moral treatises. It became a discipline in itself, developing arguments of reasonableness without consideration of arguments from Rev. Its aim was to prove the cred of the Christian religion.
1. Rationalism and the Enlightenment (O&B pp 204-206)
* The Enlightenment (18th cent) radically separated F and reason, and thus the intimate relation between God and man became even more incomprehensible. Philosophy became concerned more with the knowing subject than with things known (from Descartes to Kant), man’s natural knowledge of God was put in doubt and Religion lost much of its supernatural character.
* The Catholic theologians of the time tried to show the reasonableness of believing in Christ, using rational arguments, with the act of faith being the work of grace in an extrinsic way, without an inner connection with the content of faith.
* Rationalists held that reason was sufficient for man’s complete progress toward God, and that faith in supernatural, revealed religion was unreasonable. Deists believed in a God who was completely accessible to reason, but somewhat remote from human life. Some rationalists also doubted the historicity of Rev (e.g. Hermann Samuel Reimarus 1694-1768), which led to the first attempts by Catholics to demonstrate the possibility and fact of divine Rev.
1. “Classical”apologetics. *Demonstratio religiosa, demonstratio christiana, demonstratio catholica.* (O&B pp 204-206)
* This 3-fold approach to apologetics was developed in the late 16th century (by Pierre Charon, 1596) and became classic for over two centuries
* It was meant to lead to faith or at least to remove intellectual obstacles to making the act of faith, which also needs grace
* *Demonstratio religiosa* (proof of religion): against atheists, establishes the existence of God using natural theology (cfr St Thomas’ 5 proofs) to show the necessity of religion
* *Demonstratio christiana* (proof of Christianity): against non-Christians, e.g. Jews, Muslims, Deists, establishes that Christianity is the one true religion and that Jesus Christ really spoke in the name of God
* *Demonstratio catholica* (proof of Catholicism): against Protestants, establishes that the Catholic Church is the only one and true church founded by Jesus Christ
1. Apologetics in the 19th century.
* The term “apologetics” became current around 1830s. CA faced not only Protestant and Enlightenment challenges, but deep philosophical ones in skepticism (Hume), agnosticism (Kant) and idealism (Hegel).
* CA became a distinct theological science with a practical aim: defending the reasonableness of the F and thus leading people to the act of F. This lasted up to the 20th cent, when other approaches became popular
* “Good” apologists. Defended the F using reason. France: Francois Rene de Chateaubriand (*The Genius of Christianity*). Rome: Giovanni Perrone, S.J. (*Praelectiones dogmaticae*). England: John Henry Newman (*Grammar of Assent*, *Apologia pro vita sua*). USA: Orestes Brownson, Isaac Hecker, Cardinal James Gibbons (*The Faith of our Fathers*). Belgium: Victor Dechamps
* “Bad” apologists. Wanted to defend Christianity, but used wrong methods. “Liberal” side (excessive emphasis on natural aspects of man): Friedrich Schleiermacher (*On Religion* [1799]). He did not defend dogmas of traditional orthodoxy but a religious instinct that gives rise to faith (not particularly orthodox). “Conservative” side (excessive emphasis on supernatural aspects): Fideists like Felicite de Lamennais and Louis Bautain stressed faith, but downplayed any role of reason.
1. From CA to FT. (O&B pp 206-211)
* From the 1830s onwards there was a move away from the classical, heavily philosophical approach to CA; this began with the work of Johann Sebastian von Drey (1777-1853) and others at Tubingen. The new approach was more historical and Christocentric.
* This new approach laid the foundations of FT by studying Rev as a process and not just its content, with Christ as the fulness of Rev. Works began to be published with FT as their title.
1. Protestant Period.
* In first half of 20th cent, some Protestants came to dominate the scene in apologetics, e.g. Karl Barth, with a more fideist approach.
1. Current forms of FT
* First half of 20th cent saw a vigorous flourishing of CA, with authors such as G.K. Chesterton, A. Lunn, R. Knox, C.S. Lewis, Frank Sheed, Archbishop F.J. Sheen.
* Other authors contributed to theology in general and the theology of Rev in particular: R. Guardini, J. Mouroux, R Garrigou-Lagrange, J. Danielou, H. de Lubac, K. Barth, H.U. von Balthasar (all representing rather different approaches). Beginning in 40s, many treatises were produced on Rev by both Catholics and Protestants.
* St Josemaria also contributed to FT, but more by forming people and by writing pastoral works rather than treatises; this brought about a “lived” theology, esp spiritual theology (theology of the spiritual life), which others developed into a more systematic pattern after his death
* Following Vatican II FT was temporarily developed as part of other disciplines, e.g. dogmatic theology, but with St John Paul II it was once again re-constituted as a subject and taught in seminaries
* Apologetics also went into a slight decline in mid-20th cent, but in 80s it went ahead again, esp with new converts (Patrick Madrid, Scott Hahn, etc,), facilitating dialogue with non-Catholics and non-believers; it is now being re-integrated into FT as the theology of cred and the process of coming to faith

***THE REVELATION OF GOD IN CHRIST***

***II. DIVINE REVELATION: THE REVEALING ACTION OF GOD AND ITS CONTENTS***

[class 3]

1. *Introduction to the notion of Revelation.*
2. Biblical concept of Revelation in the Old and New Testaments (NT). (O&B ch 1, pp13-16; Lat pp21-81)
* Religion flowing from the Bible (Judaism, Christianity) claims that God intervenes in history in a way superior to his creative action (this differs from other religions)
* Rev includes both the act of revealing and its content (what is revealed); it also includes both God’s manifestation of himself and man’s response (acceptance or rejection)
* Features of Rev in OT:
* Recipients: Rev is made to one people (the Jews), not to all, and to some persons (e.g. prophets), not to all; thus God works through intermediaries.
* Manner: (1) dreams, e.g. Jacob in Gen 28:12-15; (2) appearances of God (called “theophanies”), e.g. 3 men meet Abraham in Gen 18; (3) spoken words (“auditions”), e.g. to Samuel in 1 Sam 3); (4) speeches, extended statements (“oracles”); (5) visions, e.g. Ezek 1; (6) ecstasies and raptures; these signs often accompany Rev as miracles and prophecies, they are called “wonderful works of God”, they show that God is at work, that what he says is true, and they move people to believe in him
* Content: Rev tells (1) how God is: personal, living, all-powerful, Lord of the universe, just, loving, jealous, transcendent, but always near; (2) how God saves man: by a covenant with Israel but through it all peoples, fulfilling his promise to Abraham that he would bless all nations through him and through his anointed one (Messiah); (3) that salvation is to give man the greatest good, i.e. God himself; (4) that sin is not to listen to and obey God’s word, e.g. Jer 7:13
* Primacy of “word of God” or “word of Yahweh”, *dabhar yhvh*: in OT this means mainly telling something to someone rather than showing oneself to them, e.g. to Abraham in Gen 15:1, or to Moses, who does not see the face of God, but speaks to him face-to-face (Ex 33:21-23), even to prophets, who see visions but the essential communication is what they hear, i.e. the content.
* In later OT books “word of God” becomes almost an independent entity, endowed with the dynamism and power of God, (cfr Jer 5:14, Is 55:10-11, esp Wis chh 7-9), a kind of foreshadowing of what will happen in the NT
* Novelty of NT:
* The features of OT (see above) are preserved, but a fundamental event has occurred, Heb 1:1-2
* Jesus Christ is the summit and fullness of Rev in himself; he is *the* Word of God by whom God expresses himself totally, not through some intermediary
* The way of salvation (called “economy” of salvation, i.e. all the means of accomplishing it) becomes Incarnational; Christ takes on human flesh so that his entire being and action reveal God (eventually Bl Trinity) to us: preaching, teaching, working, actions, etc.; he reveals what he has seen and heard in the bosom of the Father (cfr 1 Jn 1:1,3); he *is* Rev, God revealing *himself*.
* The Apostles are witnesses to Jesus, having had a 3-year-long direct experience of him; they proclaim the same message as he did, a dynamic and even explosive message which they cannot but proclaim (cfr Acts 4:20)
* Man’s response is now faith in Jesus Christ himself (cfr Mk 16:15-16), with the inner action of the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus
* 3 stages distinguished in time: (1) Jesus hands his Rev to the Apostles; (2) they pass it on to all men through the Church over time, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; (3) the final Rev of Jesus at end of the world, when the direct vision of the divine mystery will replace knowledge by faith
1. Difference between this concept of Rev and the concept present in non-biblical traditions.
* Biblical Rev is due entirely to the initiative of God: human beings do not discover God, Rev does not come from contemplation of nature, of man or of some divine being, but through God’s word; God reveals himself when he wills, to whom he wills, because he wills; Rev is a complete gift
* Other religions and approaches use techniques to “see” or “experience” god(s), discover divine secrets, etc.: divination, dreams, casting of lots, omens (e.g. a flight of birds), etc.
* Biblical Rev is interpersonal: it is a self-manifestation to someone, establishing a personal bond; it is not anonymous, impersonal, general, etc.; the response is also personal
* Although God reveals his innermost reality, he remains unfathomable, mysterious
* Aim of biblical Rev is life and salvation for us, leading to communion with God; belief in Rev was not at the center of ancient Greek religion, despite the importance of oracles, divine messages (cfr at Delphi); the word *apocalypsis* (=unveiling, revealing) is not found in ancient Greek
1. The concept of Revelation in theology: Council of Trent. (Lat pp 145-150 and 159-170)
* Fathers of the Church
* Fathers saw Rev as a self-evident fact, no need to prove its possibility; they were more concerned with inculturation of the F in the pagan world of Greece and Rome; they had to develop a broad perspective which would show points of contact with other cultures and religions while simultaneously showing the uniqueness of Christian Rev, hence they focused on certain themes of Rev (person of Christ, afterlife, morality)
* They saw the unity of OT and NT: one and same God, revealing himself through his Word, *logos*, in stages: creation, theophanies, Law, prophets, Incarnation; a continuous manifestation of God in history, with progress from imperfect and incomplete Rev to perfect and complete, from partial to full (Justin Martyr), from preparation for and promise of Incarnation in OT to accomplishment and gift in NT (Irenaeus), from puzzle and mystery in OT to explanation in NT (Clement of Alexandria)
* The economy (plan and means) of salvation progressed in the stages of Rev, reflecting a wonderful pedagogy: the historicity of Rev was developed in stages, with preparation for Christ through law and prophets, then the fullness in his coming and its communication to the world (Apostles, Church, see quote of St Gregory of Nazianzen in CCC no. 684); each stage explains and makes more coherent the previous stages; Rev is given according to a plan, infinitely wise, worked out from all eternity, with the Incarnation fitting in perfectly; why did God wait so long for Christ’s coming? So man could get accustomed to God’s presence, realize the impotence of man’s own fallen state; God educated humanity and prepared it for divine gifts
* Medieval authors: mainly St Thomas Aquinas, with a systematic development of the Fathers; Rev as the action of God’s gratuitous love, working for our salvation; the body of revealed truths is the fruit of this action, *sacra doctrina*; God himself is our salvation in the Beatific Vision; God revealed himself to tell us of this end (goal) and the way to reach it (cfr S.Th. I, q. 1, a. 1c); *revelabilia* are natural truths pertaining to our salvation that God can reveal (and has revealed) for ease of knowing, without uncertainty or error (e.g. existence of God, human soul); *revelatum* is truth completely beyond us, only known through Rev (e.g. Trinity)

[class 4]

1. Problems brought about by the Protestant Reformation, Council of Trent
* early Reformation theology undermined true understanding of Rev by asserting the sovereign authority of Sacred Scripture (SS): the rule of faith is found through SS alone (*sola Scriptura*), accompanied by help that individuals receive through inner testimony of Holy Spirit, who enables them to understand what is revealed and hence what to believe.
* Trent tried to mitigate the exclusive focus on SS to detriment of Church and its living tradition. Still, it does not use word “Revelation,” but “Gospel” instead (as had Magisterium in past). In Session IV (April 8,1546) the Decree on the Sacred Books and Received Traditions of Apostles states that the list of sacred books was determined by Tradition, not by SS itself. This included 3 statements (1) the Gospel, as the source of all saving truth and rule of conduct, has been given to humanity in stages; (2) this saving truth and rule of moral conduct is contained in both the inspired books of SS and unwritten traditions; (3) Trent accepts with equal loyalty and reverence *both* SS *and* Tradition “coming from the mouth of Christ or … inspired by the Holy Spirit and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church” (Dz 783-4 / DS 1501-2).
* Other developments: with Protestantism and the humanism of the Enlightenment, for first time the “sources” of Rev come to be studied in theology with greater attention and for their own sake. We begin to see use of word “Rev” in theological works. Catholic theology in 16th to 18th centuries is one great effort to define terms. In reaction to Protestant notion of immediate Rev by Holy Spirit, a demonstration of the sufficiency of mediate Rev, on which our F is based, i.e. via intermediaries rather than direct intervention of God in each soul. God’s testimony in His own behalf is communicated to us by the Church and thus solidly guaranteed of having a divine origin (Suarez). As we will see later, what God does give each soul is grace to accept the F that has been revealed through the intermediaries.
1. Concept of Revelation in the Const. *Dei Filius* of Vatican I (Lat pp 259-266)
* *Historical context of Vat I*. Influence of European Enlightenment led people to doubt possibility of a divine and transcendental intervention of God in history. The very ideas of supernatural, Rev, mystery, miracle, etc. were called into question in educated circles. (1) Deists: no Rev or transcendent action of God in human history is possible. (2) Liberal Protestants: Rev is nothing more than an intense form of religious sentiment, not a teaching. (3) Hegel, Marx, atheists: there is no God, or no transcendent God at least; so Rev as traditionally understood is not possible. (4) There was also a need to address the fideists, for whom Rev was self-standing and did not need to be shown to be credible.
* *Vatican I* (cf. Dz 1785-1794). In response to Deists and pantheists, it asserts the fact of supernatural Rev, its possibility, its necessity, its suitability, its purpose, its recognisability, and its object (and less its nature – that would be Vat II). Rev as a word was used for first time by Magisterium as technical term to mean not just the action of revealing but the cognitive (intellectual) end result, its objective sense, as a set of truths, a teaching to be held on to. Chap 2 on Rev, chap 3 on faith.
* [Read ch. 2, no. 1] a natural knowledge of God can be had through created realities using reason unaided by grace
* [ch. 2, no. 2] this natural knowledge of God is distinct from supernatural Rev. Supernatural Rev did happen. It was a free initiative of God, who was not under any constraint or necessity to do so (pleasing to his...).
* [ch. 2, nos. 3-4] It was freely made, but there’s a reason for it: (1) it is in keeping with God’s wisdom. It makes known all truths we need, even of natural order, so that we can know them with facility, certainty, and w/o error; in particular, it gives knowledge of our supernatural end. (2) it is in keeping with God’s goodness, for through it He invites us to be sharers in the secrets of his inner life. (3) Finally, supernatural Rev is absolutely necessary for us, in order to reach our supernatural end.
1. Const. *Dei Verbum* of Vatican II (Lat pp 457-463)
* *Dei Verbum* passed on 27 Oct 1965, in its 6th draft, a heavily debated and modified text, one of last to be approved. But it is a very significant document as well. It was the first time that a council had systematically studied the nature and specific characteristics of Rev. It contained the doctrine of Vat I, but used different terminology and considerably developed the understanding of Rev.
1. Const. *Dei Verbum*, no. 2 (reading and commentary).
* [Read DV nos. 1 & 2] (1) (1st Sentence) Fact and object of Rev: gratuitous, based on God’s free will, not on constraint or any request of man. In keeping with God’s wisdom and goodness (same words as Vat I). Object of Rev: God himself (as stated in Vat I) and his plan of salvation (in that order, i.e. God first: Rev is personalized). The mystery (*sacramentum*) is the divine plan of God for our salvation, hidden but now revealed in Christ, who is the centre of a new economy. What is this plan? access to Trinity and sharing in divine nature.
* (2) Nature of Rev: Rev is conversation (*alloquitur*) of friendship by which God lives (*conversatur*) among men. God breaks the silence of his mystery, so to speak, out of love (God’s motivation) to establish a conversation, a dialogue of friendship with man. Why? in order to invite him into the communion of Divine Persons. DV retains analogy of “word”, present also in OT and NT when describing Rev. Present economy is one of word and faith, a Rev that proceeds from divine love and draws us into it.
* (3) Nature of Rev (cont’d): The economy adopted by God in order to speak to humanity. DV describes this “plan” (*oeconomia*) of Rev in terms of its concrete realization (history and the Incarnation): *gesta* (deeds, works) and *verba* (words).
* What constitutes “deeds and words”? By deeds is meant all those works accomplished by God throughout salvation history which form part of historical Rev. These include but are not limited to signs. Examples of deeds: events of Exodus, establishment of royal line, judgments manifested by defeats of armies, exile, captivity, restoration, etc.; actions of Jesus Christ’s life, esp miracles, death and Resurrection. Examples of words, those of Moses and prophets interpreting these events, parables of Jesus, preaching of apostles.
* Intimate connection between words and deeds: DV says that (1) the deeds manifest and confirm the teaching [i.e. plan and salvific action of God] signified by the words. “Manifest” = make plain, known, perceptible. Deeds help make known what is essentially mysterious. “Confirm” in sense of give support, make credible, e.g. miracles. (2) the words proclaim the deeds and clarify [elucidate] the mystery which they contain. The words make known the meaning of the deed, e.g. cure of paralytic. Jesus cures so that they know he has power to forgive (visible cure is a sign of invisible cure, i.e. healing of soul). His words explain the purpose of the cure. In sum: both words and deeds are integral parts of Rev.
* Centrality of Jesus Christ in the economy of Rev: (we'll see more of this). He is the deepest truth about both God and the salvation of man, for our sake, in Christ, because he is *perfectus Deus, perfectus homo*. Jesus Christ is the “mediator and fullness of all Revelation.” The most perfect means chosen by God to reveal who He is (as Trinity) (Jn 14:6; Mt 11:27; Jn 1:18). Therefore He not only brings Rev to its fullness, but *is* the fullness of Rev in his person.

[class 5]

1. *Revelation in Israel.*
2. Revelation in Creation and in the beginning of time; pre-conditions or antecedents of historical revelation. (O&B ch 2, pp 16-21)
* There is a definite (though limited) self-manifestation of God through creation. St JP II goes as far as calling it the "first stage of divine Rev" (*Fides et Ratio* no.19). It is a necessary prerequisite of supernatural, historical Rev.
* The book of nature provides a knowledge of God that is natural to man, even if it is imperfect and subject to error because of man’s fallen nature
* It reveals God’s goodness, power, unity, providence, and man’s need for happiness, truth, fullness of meaning. Created things are an expression of the will and mind of God, since they come from him.
* If man were not naturally capable of knowing God, then he would not be capable of recognizing supernatural Rev as the Word of God. “Without this capacity, man would not be able to welcome God's revelation” (CCC no. 36). We can speak about God in a meaningful way only because there is a relation of analogy between creation and its Creator.
* This is very important, because it means that faith “rests” on a natural basis, i.e. man’s natural capacity to know God by contemplating the world around him, and himself included; without this, Rev would “float” in a world of its own, disconnected from anything natural and therefore it could easily be rejected by a person without faith
* Natural Rev is similar to supernatural Rev, because it is a gift of God and a manifestation of Him, which calls for religious homage on the part of man (e.g. it is natural for man to worship God). But profound differences remain: natural Rev is not direct contact with God but only mediate (through things); it is a knowledge that stays at the threshold of mystery but does not enter into it; it is incomplete and (because of sin) often erroneous (e.g. confusing creation with its Creator, worshipping things in nature such as the sun, seeking to bend God’s will to ours, etc.).
* Primitive Rev: this term covers what is contained in Gen chh 1-11, an early supernatural Rev by God of himself to various people (Adam and Eve, Noah, others), going beyond natural Rev; God shows his creative power and his love, promising divine beatitude if people keep his precepts (basically the natural moral law); the Church affirms this Rev, based on the OT; if offers the hope of salvation to all peoples through a redeemer (cfr Gen 3:15); there is some evidence that human religions were originally monotheistic, and polytheism was a later corruption (e.g. in Egypt), but this topic is debated and controversial among scholars, esp secular ones
1. The election-promise to Abraham and the Patriarchs. (O&B pp 21-23)
* 1st stage of supernatural and historical Rev is to Abraham and the other Patriarchs (Isaac, Jacob, Joseph) (starts around 1800 BC); God acts in their lives, speaks with them (cfr Abraham’s “bargaining” with God in Gen 18:22-33), makes things happen (e.g. son born to Abraham and Sarah)
* Takes the form of an *election* (choice, vocation) and a *covenant* (agreement, almost a contract) in which God makes *promises* (countless posterity, despite apparent sterility; a new land, Canaan, although already inhabited; blessing for all nations) and asks *conditions* of Abraham and his descendants (to keep monotheism and a trusting, obedient faith)
* As a *sign* of this covenant, circumcision was established; also, Abraham’s name was changed (from Abram to Abraham), his faith was tested (Gen 22:1-18); the covenant was renewed with Isaac (Gen 26:2-5) and Jacob (Gen 28:12ff; 35:9-12)
1. The economy of the Mosaic Covenant and its renewals. (O&B pp 23-24)
* 2nd stage of supernatural Rev: Exodus; this stage takes God’s people from a loose, wandering, growing clan to a true nation, Israel, with a structure, institutions and a territory
* The Exodus is all of the following:
* An *historical event* (liberation and escape from slavery in Egypt)
* A *sign* of God’s salvation and a *proof* his worthiness to be believed
* A *call* to a new life that requires a faithful *response* from Israel
* It is preceded by God’s Rev of himself and his name, *Yahweh,* which expresses his very nature or essence, Ex 3:14: Yahweh = I am who am = pure being itself (on a philosophical level, someone who cannot cease to exist) = always present, active and ready to save (on an existential level)
* It involves a new *covenant* at Sinai in which God promises to save Israel, fight for them, preserve them from their enemies, send them blessings, etc. and asks them for the *conditions* of monotheism and keeping the Law he has revealed, 10 commandments (decalogue = 10 words), mainly moral, but also ceremonial (for worship) and social (for community, people, nation); this enriches the *economy* of salvation (features and means for working out salvation)
* This covenant is renewed many times (Joshua, David, prophets and kings) to keep alive the hope of salvation (eventually Messiah) and the fidelity of the people (often unfaithful, however, even at level of kings)
1. Relation between creation and Covenant. (Lat pp 30-3, 329-341)
* Creation is like the first stage of the Covenant: God gives Adam and Eve a task (care for creation), help and conditions (not eat fruit of tree of knowledge of good and evil), made in the context of primitive Rev
* Successive renewals (e.g. Noah, Abraham, Moses) of the original Covenant make more precise the promises (e.g. from general help to territory, nation) and conditions (from general behavior to keeping Law); new signs accompany them (e.g. rainbow for Noah, circumcision for Abraham, theophany for Moses)
* People through whom salvation will come is also made more precise: Noah = those left after flood, Abraham = father of many nations, Moses = a definite people from whom will come the Messiah; but salvation is really for all people
1. God’s promise to the prophets and the progressive understanding of the promise of the Messiah. (O&B pp 24-26)
* 3rd stage of Rev: prophets are *chosen* by God as mediators of his word, defenders and guardians of the Covenant and the Law
* They *know* that God has *spoken* to them, entrusted them with his word, often established special intimacy, communicating his secrets and plans (Am 3:7)
* They have not brought this word into being, but have received it to pass it on; they serve as *mouthpiece* of Yahweh (Jer 15:19), as authorized interpreters of events in world (storms, famines, prosperity), among people (sins, deaths, hardening of hearts) and in history (wars, victories and defeats, succession of empires, etc.); they often announce future events (Jer 31:31-34), including punishments for infidelity
* Important moment in prophecy of Nathan (2 Sam 7:1-17, esp 11b-16) which connects covenant with monarchy, promise of a royal Messiah; Davidic dynasty becomes permanent partner in Covenant, so that Israel’s hope of a Messiah rests on a future king, although many kings in line of David become unfaithful; Jesus, centuries later, had to correct the distorted concept (political conqueror) of the Messiah that developed
* Jeremiah and later prophets herald a *new covenant* that God will make with his people, in which salvation takes on *universal* dimensions (cfr Jonah, Isaiah), and becomes increasingly Messianic (about the Messiah) and eschatological (end of the world, cfr Daniel), in preparation for the final stage that will come with Jesus Christ
1. Const. Dei Verbum, no. 3 (reading and commentary).

[class 6]

1. *Christ, fullness of Revelation.*
2. The Incarnation of the Word as Revelation. (Lat pp 465-469)
* Jesus Christ is the pre-eminent Revealer through his full presence and self-manifestation, his signs and wonders, words and deeds (esp death and Resurrection), and finally through sending of Holy Spirit. Jesus reveals through His whole behaviour (actions, deeds, attitudes, etc.), and especially by his words, so that all this forms part of Rev.
* While God’s plan to redeem us was foreshadowed in the OT (Gen 3:14), the *way* God would do it was barely hinted at (cfr Ezek 34:11-16 ); the Incarnation thus reveals the lengths God would go to in order to carry out his promises
* The Incarnation of the Wordis especially apt for the economy of Rev:
* Within the Trinity, the Word is the one in whom (by generation) God the Father “speaks” Himself, and through whom (by creation) the Father “speaks” all creatures; thus it is the same person (the Word) who speaks (in Rev) as a man to men. God expresses Himself in His Word, so it is fitting that His Word expresses that Word to men.
* He who is Son has come to make known our condition as sons of God and to teach us to adore the Father.
* We, being of flesh and spirit, cannot communicate except by means of bodily realities. Through the Incarnation, God took upon Himself the most apt means to make this communication happen, and even make His presence accessible to us. What God wants to say about Himself, Christ says in a human way.
* Through his gestures, and above all his words, we grasp the Person of the Word (we grasp the Truth); and through Him, the Father and the Spirit (cf. Lat pp. 360-361). We cannot grasp the divine nature of God, but we can “grasp” the divine person who comes in a human nature. This is what is meant by incarnational economy of Rev.
1. Christ, fullness of the word of creation, of the word of the Covenant and of the word of the prophets.
* CCC n.65: “In him [Christ] he [the Father] has said everything; there will be no other word than this one.” Jesus Christ is at the centre of the economy of Rev and salvation (Heb 1,1-2). He is the *peak* or culmination of Rev that brings a plenitude of salvation as well and therefore plenitude of history (history after him is *the last days*).
* The Incarnation brings both continuity and novelty into the economy of Rev. The continuity leads to fulfillment of God’s word:
* Word of creation: Christ is the fullness, most perfect element (his humanity) of creation, hence of natural Rev. Complex relation between Jesus Christ and creation. Pre-eminence of Jesus Christ: he (as man) is the *first-born of all creation*, its crown or head (Col 1:15-18). He is heir of all creation (Heb 1:2). As man he is part of creation, but as Word all things were created “through him” and “for him” (cf. also Jn 1:3). This is essential: creation was carried out in preparation for the coming of Christ. He is also the perfect man, and as such the supreme expression of the word of creation. Human nature, meant to be the image and likeness of God in Adam, is restored to an even greater dignity and likeness in Jesus Christ. He is the new creation that we will be when glorified. All creation is “recapitulated” (brought to a new head, climax) in Christ (cf. Eph 1:10).
* covenant: In Christ we see a definitive and perfect Covenant carried out. This works at many levels:
* a covenant is meant to establish some kind of union between persons. In the Incarnation we have the most perfect union of the human and the divine possible
* Images of covenant in OT: adoption and marriage. Through Jesus Christ we have acquired that plenitude of divine sonship, we are (adopted) sons in the Son); also, Jesus Christ is the perfect spouse of the Church
* In Jesus Christ, the fullness of meaning of the old covenant is reached, e.g. in the perfection of the Law given by each Covenant: in the New Law that Christ promulgates, its meaning explained more completely (e.g. Sermon on the Mount), and we obtain the grace we need to actually fulfil it. “The new law is the law of perfect freedom, not just because it commands us to love, but because it gives us the strength (*charity*) to love” (O&B*,* p.40).
* In Jesus Christ all of the promises of the OT reach their fulfilment. The promises (of universal salvation) made to Abraham and the Patriarchs (Gen 22:18); of the Messiah made to David; of judgment made by many OT prophets.
* Jesus Christ is the only man who perfectly fulfils the Law of the old covenant (Mt 5:17-19). He *is* the covenant (cf. Is 42:6 *I have set you as a covenant of the people*).
* Prophets: all OT prophecies find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ (e.g. Dt 18:18), esp Messianic ones. Like the prophets before him, he spoke with divine authority, conveying divine Word to humanity.
* But he is more than a prophet, for He is the perfect Prophet. Only He has the perfect knowledge of God the Father (Mt 11:27).
* He not only speaks the truth, He *is* the Truth (cf. Jn 14:6). He teaches divine truth with his own authority.
* In the OT prophets, God spoke to Israel through men, using the language of man. This mode of communication was most perfectly fulfilled in the Son of God made man who speaks to us. Jesus Christ’s words are the human words of God.

[class 7]

1. The words and actions of Jesus Christ and what they reveal.
* through Jesus Christ’s words, actions, etc., he confirmed Rev, that is, they have an apologetic value. His whole behaviour as Incarnate Word radiates a “light” which is his glory, as Son of the Father. The sublimity of his teaching, his wisdom and the holiness of his life, the power manifested in his miracles and Resurrection, the abundance of charity demonstrated by his death: this whole radiance of Christ’s being and activity constitutes in itself a “divine testimony” (cf. Jn 5:36; 10:37-38) which confirms the message of Rev and clearly shows its credibility
* when Moses or other prophets spoke, the credibility of their statements had to be provided by other means: miracles, fulfilment of prophecies, etc. Moses personally had very little in his favour (he was meek, not a good speaker...). In Jesus, it is completely different. His whole bearing lent credibility to his words (Jn 7:46:*The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!"*). Jesus Christ

himself is best reason to believe in Him.

1. The Paschal Mystery, fullness and fulfillment of the acquiescence-revelation of God and of his salvific plan.
* Among all of our Lord’s actions and words, those surrounding the Paschal mystery (PM = passion, death and resurrection all together) stand out in importance. The concentration of meaning and salvific power in PM is so great that St Paul says *I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified* (1 Cor 2:2). Put another way: Jesus Christ would not be the fullness of Rev without his PM.
* PM is the full manifestation of the condescension of God begun in the Incarnation (Phil 2:6-11). In Greek condescension is *kenosis*: ignominious death on Cross (and continues with the Eucharist!).
* Cross reveals once and for all just how much God loves us; after the death and Resurrection of Jesus, we know what it really means to say *God is love* (cf. 1 Jn 4:8).
* PM presents us with the fulfilment and complete revelation of God’s salvific plan for us. Jesus’ death is the price for our sins, the sacrifice by which we are healed; his Resurrection however, is a necessary part of the same revelatory and salvific action of PM, for *if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins* (1 Cor 15:17). Through his Resurrection we glimpse what ours will be like, what is in store for us.
* Resurrection is the definitive sign that Jesus proposes for understanding him, his mission, his actions in world: Mt 12:38-42. Cf. also Jn 2:18-22, in which Jesus proposes the same sign (Resurrection) as the justification of his way of acting in the Temple with authority.
* Death of Jesus Christ gives an answer to the questions of death, evil and suffering: as such, it addresses the deepest questions about existence we can ask. St JP II: in Jesus Christ’s Paschal mystery, the Church received the ultimate truth about human life (cf. *Fides et Ratio* no.12).
* In short, PM represents a fullness of meaning (noetic value) as well as completeness of interpretation (hermeneutic value) to God’s entire plan of Rev and salvation.
1. The Christian economy as definitive covenant until the *parousía*. (O&B pp 45-47)
* The Christian economy is the new and definitive covenant until the *Parousia*, the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ at the end of time.
* This economy of Incarnation is not transitory: it will not pass away nor ever be supplanted by a more perfect one. Jesus Christ is man forever, and since God has given us His Son, his Word, what more could he say to us? The Covenant is perfectly fulfilled in him; there is no need for another, hence the Rev brought by Christ is definitive and no further public Rev is to be expected until the end of time, although private revelations continue, e.g. Fatima. Their role is to clarify details of what has already been revealed, e.g. Sacred Heart to St Margaret Mary Alacoque, or prepare people to serve God better, e.g. Lourdes
1. Const. *Dei Verbum*, no. 4 (reading and commentary).

***III. TRANSMISSION OF REVELATION IN THE CHURCH***

[class 8]

1. *Revelation and the Church.* (Lat 472-475)
2. The Apostles and the transmission of Revelation.
* Jesus Christ gave to the apostles (with respect to Rev) the mission of:
* “preaching the Gospel” (*kèrussein to euangelion*) throughout entire world (cf. Mk 16:15). Preaching (the living expression of spoken words to others who hear what is spoken, a fundamental form of human communication) is necessary and irreplaceable in present economy of salvation (cf. Rom 10:17). It is the principal task of the Apostles (1 Cor 1:17, “I was not sent to baptize but to preach the Gospel”; 1 Cor 9:16, “Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!”)
* “making disciples” (cf. Mt 28:19), hearers who follow, i.e. accept and live by, the Gospel; and
* “teaching” (*didaskein*), i.e. explaining, making clear and helping to practice, what has been preached, all that He commanded (cf. Mt 28:19). They will be witnesses (*martyres*) to the very ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The title “witness” is reserved to the apostles in Acts.
* Jesus Christ forged the apostles after manner of a *college*, i.e. a stable group, over which he placed Peter chosen from among them (cf. Jn 21:15-17). It was the apostles (and no one else) whom Christ commissioned to teach all nations. He promised to the Apostles the Holy Spirit so that they would clearly understand all the truths of salvation (cf. Jn 16:13). He sent them first to the children of Israel and then to all nations (Acts 1:8). Hence Rev has come down to us through the testimony of the Apostles and the apostolic succession.
* This divine mission entrusted by Christ to the apostles will last until the end of the world. In order that this mission assigned to them might continue after their death, the apostles took care to appoint bishops as their successors. These successors were enjoined to, in their turn, appoint approved men to continue their ministry of the word (cf. 2 Tim 2:2). These successors enjoyed the same authority as did Apostles in their preaching (as well as ruling and sanctifying), and hence infallibility as authentic interpreters of Tradition and Scripture. Thus, as St. Irenaeus testifies (cf. *Adversus Haereses*, III,3,2-4), through those who were appointed bishops by the apostles, and through their successors down to our own time, the apostolic tradition is manifested and preserved.
1. Normative value of the testimony of the Apostles concerning the person, actions and words of Jesus Christ. (Lat pp 369-372)
* The Apostles occupy a position of privileged importance within the economy of Rev. Three characteristics of the Apostles:
* They were first of all chosen by our Lord (Jn 15:16: *You did not choose me but I chose you*; cf. also Acts 10:41; especially in vocation of Matthias Acts 1:26).
* They were associates of Christ during His life and saw Him after His Resurrection. This latter aspect is crucial (cf. vocation of Matthias Acts 1:22), because Jesus’ Resurrection is the essential fact that authenticates everything that he and the Apostles said and did. They are witnesses in a supreme manner, for they have seen and heard Christ, lived in intimacy with Him and, as a result, possess a direct and living experience of His person, His doctrine, and His work. They are witnesses to his whole career, from baptism to Resurrection (cf. Acts 10:39; Jn 15:27).
* As witnesses, they are given a mandate or mission to be such to the entire world (cf. Acts 1:8). Paul was included by special election of Jesus Christ (Acts 22:14-15).
* Their role as witnesses of our Lord is crucial, since it gives their testimony a normative value for the Church of all times. Our Lord did not write any book: he entrusted his living word directly to his apostles. Their special experience of Him was a necessary one: only those who have seen and heard Jesus Christ, during the time of His earthly ministry, only those whom Christ long and patiently prepared, can be the authoritative witnesses of who He is and what he taught (cf. 1 Jn 1:3). Revelation is formed by the exercise of this apostolic witness (cf. Lat, p. 53); this apostolic witness is the ultimate rule of faith for the Church of all ages, the “standard” or canon against which all Christian belief must agree.
1. The action of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles in the interpretation and transmission of the Gospel. (O&B p 46, Lat pp 369-372)
* The action of Holy Spirit within the Church is essential for the authentic interpretation and full transmission of Rev in every age. But his assistance was uniquely important during time of Apostles:
* The continuation of public Rev during time of Apostles: they had not received the plenitude of Jesus Christ’s teaching before the Ascension of our Lord (Jn 16:12-14**:** *I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now...*). Hence our Lord promised the special assistance of the Holy Spirit to *guide [them] into all the truth* (Jn 16:13) during their lifetime, i.e. the Holy Spirit continued to communicate historical Rev to them, e.g. the abrogation (non-application) of the Mosaic Law for Gentiles, etc. A special prerogative that ceases with death of last apostle.
* The Holy Spirit also reminded them of words and actions of Jesus they might have overlooked or forgotten (Jn 14:26**:** *He [Holy Spirit] will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you*). This gave them a knowledge beyond what one might expect of men ‘without education or culture’ (Acts 4,13). They had the deepest, most intuitive, complete knowledge of the mystery of Christ than anyone has ever had or will ever have (cf. Mt 13:11) (cfr the very deep insights of St Paul in his letters, esp, Eph, Phil and Col)
* The Apostles enjoyed specific apostolic *charisms* (gifts of the Holy Spirit), in addition to the supreme sacred power present in every bishop by virtue of episcopal ordination. This is a difference between them and their successors, since these charisms were not transmitted to the latter.
* Each apostle had personal infallibility while alive. Infallibility continues in the Church as a special aid of the Holy Spirit, but only the Pope now enjoys personal infallibility.
* The charism of inspiration enjoyed by sacred writers (Apostles and “apostolic men”) and the writings produced under such inspiration.
* Heroic constancy and courage to be witnesses in spite of hostility and incredible odds against them.
* Their proclamation was accompanied and sustained by signs of power and miracles (Acts 2:43; 3:16; 5:12.14; 8:6; 9:35.42; 13:12). The Apostles are not afraid to perform or request these signs (Acts 4:30). [Cf. Lat, pp. 369-372].
1. The formation of the *depositum fidei* and the conclusion of Revelation.
* Deposit of faith: cfr. Jude 3 *the faith once for all entrusted to the saints*. This is the single sacred deposit of the word of God, or deposit of faith, entrusted to the entire Church (cf. DV n.10, first sentence). Jesus Christ ‘deposited’ this faith with Apostles, and they passed it on in their apostolic witness. The deposit of faith is found in SS and Tradition. As St. Paul says, this deposit (*paratheke*) is to be maintained intact and guarded against falsification (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:12,14). St. Peter also expresses this in a general way cf. 2 Pet 3:2.
1. Hence the closure of public Rev with the death of the last apostle (cf. Pius X, Lamentabili, no.21 [Dz 2021]; cf. also CCC n.66). Writings, Continuity and differences between Apostolic and post-Apostolic times.
* Continuity: the same Rev is transmitted from the Apostles to their successors, and from the latter to their successors, and so on until the end of time. This continuity is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. The post-apostolic period is the period of continuity.
* Since public Rev closes with the death of the last Apostle (St John, around 100AD), the writings of post-apostolic times, no matter how much they were venerated, never reached the level of SS (for their lack of inspiration), e.g. *Didache* (subtitled *Teaching of the 12 Apostles*, one of oldest writings of post-apostolic times) Letters of St. Clement (3rd successor of St Peter, died early 2nd cent), St. Ignatius of Antioch (died around 120), etc. Post-apostolic Fathers of the Church emphasize the agreement of their teaching with apostolic witness; there developed the concept of “rule of faith” in writings of Apostles. The Church does not have the power to “innovate” like the Apostles did.
1. Const. *Dei Verbum*, no. 7 (reading and commentary).

[class 9]

1. *The Church, depository and transmitter of Revelation.*
2. The Church’s living Tradition. (O&B pp 49-53)
* Apostolic preaching will continue uninterrupted until the second coming of Christ. For this reason, the Apostles admonish faithful (not just bishops) to preserve what they have received from the Apostles, written or otherwise.
* So Tradition (capital T) in the Church is this reception and handing on of something living: words and actions, which make up the content of Rev
* Thus the content of this Tradition of the Church is all that she herself is (truths, Sacraments, etc.).
1. Theological understanding of the notion of Tradition.
* Tradition comes from *tradere*, to hand on, pass on. Tradition broadly speaking means the "transmission" or passing on of Rev, that is, the entire Word of God. Tradition is a reality that comprises both activity and content:
* As an *activity* of whole Church, Tradition takes the entire revealed Word of God entrusted by Jesus Christ to the Apostles and guided by the Holy Spirit and hands it on *orally* (i.e. through preaching, teaching, instructing, etc.) to succeeding generations. This is its broadest meaning.
* In the sense of the *content* of belief, Tradition is the apostolic preaching preserved throughout time, that is, all that was received from the lips of Christ and from his actions and works, including what was received from the Holy Spirit. This is the narrower sense of the word.
* Some features of Sacred Tradition:
* The term “oral” is used to distinguish it from SS, which is the revealed Word of God committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In DV “Sacred Tradition” is always distinguished from “Sacred Scripture”. Under “oral” tradition is also includes the non-inspired writings which witness to that tradition (e.g. Church Fathers). Those writing were often, but not always, originally oral preaching, e.g. sermons.
* Sacred Tradition has an apostolic origin: the apostles warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word or by letter (cf. 2 Thess 2:15), and to fight in defence of the faith. Since that Tradition is apostolic in origin, it is the rule of faith to which all teaching has to be compared for its validity. Examples: resolving differences in determining the date for Easter, preserving liturgical rites.
* What distinguishes Tradition from SS is not so much its content as its manner of reaching us. When we talk about Scripture and Tradition, forming one deposit, Tradition does not mean what Scripture left out. Both Scripture and Tradition have only one source, that is, the Gospel (=Rev) which is the source of all saving truth and moral conduct. That is why Christianity is not a “religion of the Book”, which is how Islam sees itself.
* *Content of Tradition*: “[…] everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the people of God (i.e. faith and morals) … all that she [the Church] is, all that she believes.” (DV no. 9) Tradition is more than just a verbal message, more than teaching: it is the whole life of the Church. The entire Word of God, all of Rev (“all that she believes”), can be found within this Sacred Tradition (very important!).
* *Living Tradition* (DV no .8.) The Church has received the word, preserves it as a living entity whose principle of assimilation is the Holy Spirit. Not a lifeless treasure (to be buried like the talent of the unprofitable servant) but a living word. A Tradition which is not static, but develops, which we grow to understand more and better with time. A living Tradition because the Word of God is living.
* *How Tradition develops*: (1) contemplation and study by believers, (2) understanding their own spiritual experience, esp in those who have lived it best, the lived “theology of the saints”; (3) preaching of bishops, whose ordination identifies them with Christ the Head of the Church. This Tradition grows and develops under guidance of the Holy Spirit, leading to a genuine development of dogmas (deepening in understanding while preserving consistency).
* *Witnesses of Tradition* (DV no. 8) Church Fathers and doctors are privileged witnesses to this life-giving Tradition that has come to us from apostles (cf. Vat I, *Dei Filius* ch 2, Dz 1788). Other witnesses: declarations of the Magisterium (this will be considered separately); practical ways in which the faith of the Church is manifested: liturgical practices, canonical laws with a dogmatic foundation, Christian art and archaeology; theology developed in keeping with the Faith.
1. Sacred Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium: interrelationship and interdependence. (O&B ch 5, pp 95-97 and 111-115)
* *Pre-eminence of Scripture*: the apostolic preaching was expressed in a special way (*speciali modo* DV no. 8) in the inspired books and so within the Church's tradition, Sacred Scripture has a certain pre-eminence. Scripture, by itself, is the inspired Word of God expressed in human words. Tradition is also human words that remind and explain the divine teaching. Tradition would be "empty-handed" without Scripture, for it contains the Word of God that saves.
* *Necessity of Tradition*: (cf. DV no. 8) For a faithful and integral transmission of the entire Word of God, Tradition is needed. Why?
* By divine decree, Scripture is not the only rule of faith (defined first by Trent Dz 783, re-affirmed in DV n.9).
* Scripture itself needs to be interpreted authentically by Tradition in order to be a rule of faith. Cf. 2 Pet 1:20and 2 Pet 3:16. St Peter says that Scripture is not a matter of individual interpretation. He means primarily the OT, but he also calls the letters of Paul “Scripture.” Hence the same principle applies to NT writings as well. Authoritative interpretation of Scripture is needed because Scripture contains aspects that are difficult to understand. In this way, he says (implicitly at least) that the interpretation of Scripture must be done in accord with apostolic Tradition, in order that the apostolic preaching be handed on faithfully and integrally to all future generations. Such was the constant assertion of the Church Fathers.
* Does Scripture contain the entire Word of God? This is a debated topic. DV seems to assert that the objective content of Tradition surpasses that of Scripture on at least one topic: the full canon, i.e. list of which books are inspired, of Scripture (cf. DV no. 8); this is almost certain on other aspects of Christian life, e.g. administration of sacraments, liturgy, etc.
* There is a closely connected and mutual relationship between SS and Tradition.
* *Unity*: Both have a common origin in Christ. They also have a common finality, i.e. faithful transmission of the Word of God. It is wrong to think of them as two independent sources of Rev, for both have one source, who is Christ Himself. They are like two streams flowing from the same source, expressing the same unique mystery although in different ways. The two are inseparable, need each other, and together constitute one sacred deposit (cf. DV n.10). Both are to be venerated with equal reverence.
* *Distinction*: manner of transmission (oral vs. written). Scripture is fixed, whereas Tradition is a living reality that grows and develops around Scripture.
* *Interdependence:* through Tradition, Scripture is more profoundly understood and expounded and therefore made active in the Church. Without Scripture, there is nothing for Tradition to interpret. Without Tradition, Scripture becomes a dead letter.
* Magisterium: see next point

[class 10]

1. The Church as infallible transmitter of Revelation: role of the Magisterium. (O&B pp 53-56)
* The sacreddeposit is the responsibility of the entire Church(DV no. 10). The “entire holy people” has the responsibility of remaining steadfast to the teaching of the apostles (cf. Acts 2:42). This is an effort carried out in common between bishops and the other faithful of Church.
* *Definition of Magisterium* (DV no. 10. “Magisterium” means the teaching office (role, function) of the Church. To the Magisterium of the Church has been given by Christ the exclusive role of *authentically* interpreting the deposit of faith. Who exercises this teaching office: each bishop of Church (including the Pope), individually and collectively, in virtue of being the successors of the apostles (cf. LG 25, first few sentences).
* The Magisterium exercises their office in the name of Jesus Christ; hence the authenticity that is exclusive and proper to Magisterium lies in her authoritative interpretation: to teach with the authority of Christ. The Magisterium is the servant of God’s word, teaching nothing more than what has been handed down to her. The Church does not replace sources of Rev, nor provide any new Rev (Vat I *Dei Filius*, Dz 1836). The Church is quite clear in defining herself as *guardian* and *interpreter* of the divine Word (cf. Pius X *Oath against Modernism*, Dz 2145 and Pius XII *Humani generis*, Dz 2307).
* *Tasks of Magisterium* (DV no. 10). (1) *Listen* devoutly to the living voice of the gospel resounding in her ear. (2) *preserve* wholly, faithfully, as a deposit, the doctrine received from Christ and the apostles. Let nothing fall into oblivion, nor add any new truths or novelties. (3) *protect and defend* it against error, answering difficulties and objections raised against it; point out errors (heresies), condemn them, call attention to deviations. (4) faithfully *expound and explain* revealed doctrine, interpret it authentically
* *Scope of Magisterium*. The authority of the Magisterium in the exposition and interpretation of the contents of the word of God extends to
* all truths explicitly (“formally”) revealed, i.e. found in Scripture or defined by Magisterium as pertaining to revealed truth.
* other truths which, although they have not been explicitly revealed, are necessary in order to teach and defend revealed truth (cf. O&B, Chap 3, p.55). This could include philosophical or theological opinions concerning God, man, freedom, etc., since these topics touch upon fundamental truths, even scientific theories, e.g. evolution of man insofar as they touch on revealed truth, and particularly moral matters: e.g. in *Humanae vitae* (on immorality of artificial birth control), *Donum vitae* (on immorality of IVF).
* *Summary* (DV n. 10). In this way, Scripture, Tradition and Church Magisterium are inseparable (*so linked and joined together*) in God’s plan to bring Rev in its entirety to us. Each one *individually* contributes and *all together* contribute effectively to the carrying out of His salvation.
1. Theological concepts of Church *indefectibility* and *infallibility*.
* *Indefectibility* is a property (something essentially belonging to) of the Church by which the Church will not perish, and as a whole is rendered immune from the danger of falling away from the faith or promoting a teaching that leads away from salvation. It is a charism or gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church
* *Infallibility* is a property of the Church (another charism of the Holy Spirit given to Church) as a whole in order to preserve and authentically declare Rev. The Church is infallible both when believing (*in credendo*), through all her faithful, and when professing faith or teaching (*in docendo*), through her Magisterium. Infallibility extends to entire deposit of Rev (LG no. 25).
* Infallibility *in docendo*: in light of Jesus Christ’s promise to assist the apostles until the end of the world (Mt 28:20), and in virtue of the promise of the Paraclete, who will remain with the apostles forever (Jn 14:16-17), we understand that the charism of infallibility that the apostles as a whole enjoyed also extends to their successors as a whole. Two aspects
* Negative aspect: prevents Church from falling into dogmatic error in matters of faith and morals.
* Positive aspect: guides Church into the fullness of truth. Church does not cease to be taught by the Holy Spirit, who will guide her towards the whole truth (Jn 16:12-13) and render testimony with regard to Jesus Christ (Jn 15:26).
* Modes by which Magisterium exercises its role: (i) ordinary (teachings of individual bishops, including the Pope), and (ii) solemn or extraordinary. There are three manifestations of magisterial infallibility in these modes:
* definitions of ecumenical councils,
* definitions of the Roman pontiff ex cathedra; and
* the teachings of the universal ordinary Mag, when the Pope and/or Bishops are teaching in harmony a truth which they say must be held definitively by all faithful. These cases are hard to determine, but the Assumption and Immaculate Conception of our Lady (before being declared ex cathedra by Pope) might apply; also moral teaching, e.g. abortion is always immoral (cf. St JP II, *Evangelium vitae)*.
* The infallible teaching of the Magisterium must be adhered to with the submission of faith, as it forms part of Rev
1. Dogmas and their interpretation (O&B pp 66-77)
* *Notion of dogma*. Though the word “dogma” was used for a long time in the Church to mean the teaching of the Church in general, it acquired a more restricted meaning within theology during the Counter-Reformation, i.e. *a truth revealed by God and defined as such by the Church*. This restricted sense was taken up in Vatican I in *Dei Filius* (cf. DS 3011 and 3020).
* *Infallibility and immutability of dogmas*. By definition, a dogma is a revealed truth infallibly taught by the Church. In practice, dogmas are revealed truths and infallible dogmatic definitions of popes or ecumenical councils. Hence dogmas have a divine character; while they come from the Church, they are derived from Rev and hence directly from God. By pertaining directly to Rev and because they fall within the infallible teaching of the Church, dogmas are immutable, their meaning cannot change. Dogmas can undergo development, and admit of a more profound understanding, but the original sense of dogma (the one it had when defined) cannot be abandoned in favour of a new, different one.
* *Development of dogmas*. The existence of dogmatic development is a fact of Church history and has been the study of prominent theologians such as St John Henry Newman. The Church defines “new” (as having the status of dogma, not as new truth) dogmas with the passing of time. The word “development” here is the key to a correct understanding: the Church does not have the power or capacity to invent new dogmas. Hence new dogmas can only be truths already contained in Rev that the Church has not yet (up to that point) infallibly proposed as revealed. We do not have the addition of new truths to the reality of Rev, but rather the Church with time becomes more aware of the contents of Rev and expresses these contents more fully. This growth in understanding is precisely the result of a living Tradition of the Church (cf. DV no 8).
1. Infallibility *in credendo* and the *sensus fidei* of the People of God. (O&B pp 61-64)
* Note that the sacred deposit has been entrusted to entire Church, not just to the Magisterium. Hence we can properly speak of the infallibility *in credendo* of the entire people of God.
* “The universal body of the faithful who have an anointing from the Spirit cannot err in believing, and the universal body of the faithful manifests this particular property it possesses when, ‘from the bishops to the last members of the laity’ it exhibits its universal consent about faith and morals by means of a supernatural sense of the faith which belongs to the whole people. Indeed, by this sense of the faith which is stirred up and sustained by the Spirit of truth, the People of God, under the leadership of the sacred Magisterium to which it faithfully submits, truly receives not the word of men but rather the word of God (cf. 1 Thess 2:13), clings without error to the faith once handed on to the saints (cf. Jude 3), penetrates it more profoundly by correct judgments and applies it more fully to life.” (LG 12).
* The *sensus fidei* is the ability, almost like an instinct, of ordinary faithful to discern what pertains to one's faith and what does not. The infallibility of the *sensus fidei* is manifested when there is moral unanimity among the faithful *(consensus fidelium*).
* Unlike the active Magisterium of Pope and Bishops, the importance of this infallible witness of the Church lies in its passivity. In other words, the *sensus fidei* resides in the (already) believing faithful, *Ecclesia credens*, always in faithful submission to the Magisterium, *Ecclesia docens*. It is the latter which can assess the *sensus fidei* of the faithful on particular points of faith.

***IV. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE NATURE OF REVELATION***

[class 11]

1. *Revelation: God communicating Himself.*
2. Principal theological concepts in the theology of Revelation: word, encounter, dialogue, proclamation, testimony, experience.
* Theology reflects upon the “data” of Rev, especially as expressed in SS in order to discover ways of deepening our understanding that data, analogous to the process in philosophy of reflecting on natural realities in order to arrive at deeper insights into and to express a deeper understanding of that reality
* In the process of doing this, certain concepts or “categories” emerge that can be used to express this deeper understanding, both in philosophy and in theology; in philosophy, examples are the notions of substance and accident, essence and *esse*, act and potency, etc.; in the theology of Rev, these concepts or categories are the following:
* *word*: Rev is God giving his word to man. A word is more than a simple unveiling of thought and sharing of knowledge. It has a dynamic (able to produce change) and inter-personal character (able to unite persons). In divine speech, God addresses man with a view towards communication and dialogue in an interpersonal and living relationship. God does this, not for simply utilitarian reasons (just to get something done) but for love and friendship, for sharing life. God’s word does more than just inform (i.e. transmit information): it effects what it signifies, it produces changes, it gives life. (cfr the words of consecration at Mass). Eventually God’s word is *the* Word, i.e. God’s Son.
* *encounter and dialogue*: every word presents an opportunity for an encounter between the one speaking and the one listening, between a me and a you. The innate objective of the word is to evoke a response which becomes an authentic dialogue (except in impersonal situations, of course, e.g. a lecture).
* For a true encounter and dialogue with God, man’s response of faith is absolutely necessary. Only then does the word of the living God find acceptance and recognition in man and begin to bear fruit in the life of the human person (cf. parable of the sower). Faith is the first step toward God, opening of one’s heart to God who speaks, so that one can share in his thinking and loving, one can let himself be filled and directed by it. In this way God and man can truly meet each other and start a communion of life.
* A particular trait of this divine encounter and dialogue is the depth of the communion it can establish between God and man. One can share the knowledge and love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit so much that one forms part of that same communion of love within the Blessed Trinity (1 Jn 1:3,6); we are “in God” (1 Jn 2:5; 5:20), we “abide in God” (1 Jn 2:6,24; 3:24; 4:13-16). This goes way beyond anything that takes place in human encounter and dialogue (cfr St Josemaria’s emphasis on encounter with our Lord during everyday things, and that prayer be true dialogue).
* *testimony*: theology often defines Rev as *locutio Dei attestans* (God’s speech as testimony). Rev is communicated through an economy (collection of persons, means, situations) of testimony. God chooses privileged persons as witnesses to the truth, who speak authoritatively (i.e. in His name), and invite through their testimony belief in what they say, i.e. faith.
* Testimony differs from instruction: in the latter, a hearer acquiesces to a teacher’s explanation because of the intrinsic logical value (based on evidence, good reasoning, makes sense, etc.) of the message communicated. In the former, a hearer gives his/her assent because of the authority (trustworthiness, superior knowledge, etc.) of the one who speaks.
* Testimony (rather than instruction) is the way God communicates in Rev because human logic cannot assess God’s messages about his inner life, his designs for man, etc. We have no other way of knowing such truths, and so we cannot tell whether they “make sense” or not. Unlike human witness, when God testifies to something, He testifies at the same time to His own infallibility: He is his own guarantee of truth (cf. Heb 6:13).
* *proclamation*: Rev is deeds and words of God: the words are necessary to proclaim, i.e. announce, the deeds (or events or actions) of God. As witnesses, Apostles were sent by Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel (good news) of the kingdom of God (Acts 15:35, 18:25, 28:31) and make known the mysteries of the kingdom long held secret (1 Cor 2:7; Col 1:25-27).
* Two-fold purpose of proclamation: (i) to uncover the mystery contained in God’s salvific actions. To proclaim here means to manifest something openly and plainly (as distinct from the *interior* testimony of Holy Spirit – see below). (ii) to make it known to all people. Rev not a private affair, for one’s own enlightenment. This word is dynamic and “explosive,” destined for all men, thus Rev is inherently apostolic. (cfr St Josemaria: the Christian has the duty to be an active witness in the world).
* *experience*: this is understood as the immediate knowledge we obtain in a direct encounter with reality
* Cfr definition of experience in O&B Chap 14, p.357: *existential knowledge of specific, singular, and historical realities and events.* This definition applies to both ordinary human experience (of natural realities) and the experience of God. Later we will consider how experience is involved in Rev.

[class 12]

1. Relation between the intelligible-truth and the personal-unitive aspects of Revelation.
* *intelligible-truth aspect*: All revelation, whether between human persons or between God and man, communicates truth, some intelligible, i.e. knowable, content of reality (as long as the revealer’s intention is sincere and not deceitful, and God cannot deceive or be deceived); divine Rev is primarily about God himself, but also it reveals truths about man and the world in reference to God
* *personal-unitive aspect*: All revelation also unites the one revealing and the one receiving what is revealed; when the latter trusts the revealer, both are united in their trusting relationship (cfr *Fides et Ratio*); in divine Rev received with faith, man is united with God, and this union, (often called “communion” to emphasise its relational strength and depth) puts man on the path to salvation, which is the fullness of communion
* These two aspects are thus closely related: Rev is ultimately about the three persons in God, and the main effect of Rev is to unite human persons with the divine ones; the condition for this relation to “work” is faith (more on this later)
1. Revelation and experience: insufficiency of the Modernist approach and positive value of the personal dimension of the knowledge of God.
* Experience, as seen above, is pre-conceptual, subjective (i.e. it exists as an “impression” made by reality on the knower, predominantly through the senses, but also being received in the higher faculties) and concrete (refers to something individual, not universal); because it is an encounter with reality, there is some knowable content available to the human intellect, since everything that is, can be known, but in experience it is only known in an implicit, somewhat confused way
* the knowledge of individuals obtained in experience can be then processed by the “light” of the human intellect to produce abstract knowledge, which is conceptual, objective (our mind forms a mental object out of the impressions on the senses) and universal (refers to many); in this way the intellect can grasp the intelligible content of reality in a more explicit, clear and ordered way (and do things with it, such as form new concepts, make statements, do reasoning; this is studied in Logic); later on we will see how something analogous occurs when the light of faith, a grace, enables a person to assent to the intelligible content of the truths of Rev, e.g. when one hears these truths expressed in catechesis, but here we are concerned with a direct, personal experience of God in some way
* We can distinguish two kinds of experience within the economy of Rev, i.e. how human persons experience God in regard to Rev:
* (1) The original and foundational experience of God within public Rev. We might call this “foundational” experience of God. Three examples: (i) Jesus Christ’s awareness of Himself as the Son of the Father, an experience which he communicates to the Apostles. The depth and extent of this self-consciousness are beyond our grasp. We get glimpses of it through his humanity, his prayer to His Father as *Abba,* in the parables describing Father-Son relationship, etc.; (ii) The unique and privileged experience of Jesus, which the Apostles had. The Apostles did not transmit the whole of this bountiful experience (cfr Jn 21:25). (iii) prophets: also a privileged experience, thanks to the prophetic charism which elevates their minds and illuminates them with divine truths. In this comprehension they also grasp that God is the source of the light and the truth they have received and also of their mission to transmit this truth to God’s people.
* (2) The experience of God obtained by accepting and living this foundational Rev by faith. We might call this “common” experience of God, such as can ordinarily happen in a person’s prayer and spiritual life, although it could include even “extraordinary” spiritual experiences such as visions, locutions, prophecies, etc. and subordinate “foundations”, such as forms of religious life, and apostolic undertakings. cfr DV no. 8: “This [tradition develops within the Church]… *ex intima spiritualium rerum quam experiuntur intelligentia* (through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience).” The experience of Christian life itself gives the individual Christian and also the Church a deeper understanding of the divine mystery of Jesus Christ, hence it is useful for the faithful transmission of Rev; this is especially evident in those who live a saintly life. However, this form of experience does not add to or modify foundational Rev.
* Both are experiences of God but in essentially different ways. Graces received from God for the carrying on of the Christian life, even extraordinary ones, are not the same as the grace of public Rev itself. This is why private revelations do not add to or take away from public Rev.
* The modernist (end of 19th – early 20th cent) explanation of all Rev, including public, as religious experience confused these two kinds of experience. Christian public Rev does not involve simply a passage from a common experience to a foundational one; it involves a qualitative leap, something utterly new that comes about through the special presence and action of God. The modernists held that common experience of God could be a source of Rev.
1. External revelation and interior revelation: the human heart needs the grace of the Holy Spirit in order to be open to the divine message.
* Rev (public) is “external” to the one receiving it in the sense that it reaches the latter through proclamation by the prophets (OT), Jesus Christ and the Apostles (NT) Through this proclamation (generally mediated by others down through the centuries) God makes known his plan of salvation and invites to faith. This is the word of God “exteriorized”. Rev is also “interiorized” by the action of grace in the soul of each believer who responds with faith
* This is the most profound dimension of Rev, since it is persons who are saved, not collectivities or things. God acts directly in the human soul to confirm the external Rev and draw one towards it by the gift of faith. SS describes it various ways (the language of SS is not technical, but descriptive; sometimes the same word is used with different but related meanings):
* “revelation” (Mt 11:25; 16:17). In both these cases, Jesus does not mean public Rev (which, after all, is directed towards all men, even the wise and prudent), but the acceptance of Rev, i.e. faith, which is itself a gift of the Father
* “illumination” or “enlightenment” (2 Cor 4:4,6; Acts 16:14) and an “attraction” (Jn 6:44,65).
* an inner “testimony” (Jn 5:37).
* In every case, it is presented as a gift of God which invites one to believe.
* Aquinas speaks of an “interior instinct” (S.Th. II-II, q.2, a.9, ad 3).
* Magisterium: an “inspiration” or “illumination” of Holy Spirit (cf. Vat I, Dz 1791/3010) which infuses light into the human mind to understand the divine realities testified to, in order to accept them as true as and as revealed by God (cf. Lat p. 324).
* Interiorized Rev is not public Rev, nor is it an interior mode of public Rev (e.g. when Samuel hears God calling him from his sleep) yet it is important for accepting public Rev. We know about it from Rev itself, (see above) rather than from our personal reflection on the lived experience of faith, although we experience its “end result”, i.e. that we do assent to what God has revealed. This interior grace is real and decisive for the assent of faith; it shows the cooperation that exists between exterior proclamation and interior attraction, which are likened to joint mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit. These are two aspects, interior and exterior, of the efficacy of same divine Word.

[class 13]

1. *Historical nature of Revelation.*
2. Revelation in and by means of history. (O&B pp 86-89, Lat pp 343-358)
* It is a fact that Rev has occurred in human history; SS records the early period (primitive Rev or “pre-history”) over an unspecified time (cfr Anglican Bishop Ussher who placed Adam and Eve at around 4000BC!) and the “historical” period over almost two millenia (Abraham around 1800BC, death of St John around 100AD); many items in SS can be connected to the records of secular history, e.g. kings, wars, movements of people, etc.
* Rev is both mystery and event. The relation between history and Rev is essential, “organic,” and not merely accidental. Christian Rev not only takes place within history (the same might be said for other religions) but has its own history (it is *the* history, that of God who acts in human history). Rev develops through historical events, whose meaning is explained to us through authoritative witnesses (Moses, prophets, Jesus Christ, Apostles)
* History is the framework through which God manifests and communicates himself. Rev is woven into the warp and woof of history, forms an integral part of it. This historical character of Rev is manifested in its progressivecharacter, occurring over long periods of time, and in its being finalized(ordered to Christ) in the historical event of Incarnation.
* Moreover, God manifests his sovereign freedom precisely where that freedom can best be shown, within the contingency (things can happen in one way and time or another) of human history. Everything depends on his free decision; nothing demands that God intervene in one moment more than another. He intervenes at the opportune moments, chosen by Him alone. He thus shows himself to be the Lord of history, too: he is not impeded by Sarah’s old age and barren womb; he can stop the course of time (during Joshua’s battle); he inspires prophesies of future events. God’s interventions, consequently, give all history a meaning, a sense of direction it did not have before.
* *Historical events as Rev*: The Bible is mainly history, not a text-book or a philosophical treatise. The Apostolic preaching in NT is always a brief history of salvation interpreted through the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Historical events become pregnant with meaning, bearing God’s intentions. However, events do not explain themselves: they need a word, often many words, which expresses and interprets that divine activity. SS is event and interpretation. The Exodus would be just another migration, without Moses’ interpretation (e.g. belief in Moses, and thus God, after the destruction of Pharaoh’s army cf.Ex 14,30-31). The event of the Cross is not fully Rev without its explanation, including the OT type which it fulfils (Passover). However, not all of history is Rev, since that would be to deny the supernatural, transcendent character of Rev (this is what Hegel did within the perspective of history as the development of an Idea, and later Marx within a materialistic perspective).
1. Actions and words complement each other in the process of revelation.
* God manifests His plan for salvation in the very act by which He accomplishes it. Thus, the deliverance from the yoke of Egypt is a clear sign of the intervention of God the Saviour and of salvation itself; the cure of the paralytic is a clear sign of the power of Christ to liberate from sin and of the very liberation from sin which he works in the soul. His actions are themselves signs (like pointers) of himself and his saving will, but they are not always self-explanatory, so words are needed to explain their meaning. But deeds also back up words. So deeds and words complement each other in presenting the mysteries of salvation history.
* Deeds confirm the teaching of the words: Exodus confirms the promise Yahweh made to Moses that he would save his people; the cure of the paralytic is both a sign and a proof of the validity of the word of Jesus who claims to forgive sins.
* Words proclaim and clarify the deeds: Events by themselves can remain opaque, which is why the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. Through Moses’ words to Pharaoh and to the Hebrews, the actions on their behalf are viewed as God acting on behalf of his people. Jesus says *your sins are forgiven* so that people would know that such forgiveness actually took place.
1. Fullness of Revelation and fullness of time. (O&B pp 41-44)
* Jesus Christ is the fullness of Rev, all that God has revealed is made manifest in him, although man needs to encounter this fullness bit by bit. Since Rev is historical, a certain “fullness” of time is also implied by the fullness of Rev (cfr when Jesus began his public ministry: Mk 1:15, also St JPII, TMA no. 10) The uniqueness of the Incarnation as an event has changed all history and time: it is the central point of history.
* Time has acquired a positive theological value (as an element in salvation) through the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Greek culture, time was devalued as a category of being; what was real was what does not change, is immobile, permanent whereas time was the measurement of movement, change, an evident sign of finitude and limitation. In that view, in some way time destroys, e.g. through aging, it is associated with suffering and evil. How different time appears within Christianity! Because within time the world was created (something *very good*) and salvation unfolds (even better).
* Time has become a “dimension” of God (without reducing God’s transcendence) through the Incarnation, because *all things are united in him* (Eph 1:10), including temporality. Jesus is the Lord of time.
* The fullness of time is identified with the coming of Jesus Christ into human history (Gal 4:4-5). Fullness in what sense?
* *in duration*: we are in the last “hour” of history, the last “hour” or age. Not that time has stopped, but because every historical moment after the Incarnation sees Christ as the present, not past (cf. Heb 13:8). The mysteries of his life, death, and glorification are truly present in the mysterious (sacramental) life of the Church, especially the Eucharist. In this sense we are always in the times of Jesus.
* *in meaning*: all of human history points to, leads up to, derives its purpose and place within God’s plan from the event of the Incarnation.
* N.B. time reaches its fullness in the Incarnation, but its goal is the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ. This eschatological (end of time) reality will not be an essentially new “fullness” of time, although it means a definitive change from time and history to eternity, which is “outside” time
1. Sacramental-salvific economy of time and of the representation-reactualization of the word of God proclaimed by the Church.
* Jesus Christ left to the Apostles and these to the Church, the means (“economy”) by which the saving action of God can reach men over time: preaching the word, administering the sacraments and guiding the faithful in their Christian life; we could call this the “economy of time” as a feature of the economy of salvation, which is carried out in time; in particular the sacraments as sacred signs, signs which make effective the grace they signify, make present the action of the Son and the Holy Spirit over time, including the dimension of word: the sacraments always include words from SS and/or words handed down in Tradition which make up the “form” of the sacrament and give it its salvific value (e.g. the words of absolution in Confession or the words of Consecration in the Mass)
* The sacraments make present the words and action of the Son and the Holy Spirit that occurred in the moment when each sacrament was instituted by Jesus Christ, as well as making present the word(s) preached by our Lord that revealed all the elements of the economy of salvation; this brings about a re-presentation (making present) and re-actualization (making active the saving word of God); this is not a repetition of God’s saving action (culminated in the Jesus’ Sacrifice on Calvary), but a mysterious making present of an event of history, as if it were happening now, something that only God can do
1. The use of signs in the language of Revelation.
* Every language is a system of signs endowed with meaning: words, pictures, natural signs like smoke, actions and gestures, etc.; as long as the receivers of messages know the meaning of the signs, the language can be used to communicate messages
* Both deeds and words serve as signs in the revealing action of God; among the deeds are both ordinary actions, e.g. the way Moses was saved by his mother, and extraordinary ones, e.g. miracles like the Israelites’ crossing of the Red Sea, cures or Jesus’ multiplication of the loaves and fishes; the words are often spoken to one or few persons, e.g. Abraham, prophets, but also words spoken to many, e.g. Jesus’ preaching to crowds, or even words directly spoken by God, e.g. theophany on Mt Sinai, the Father’s voice at Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration
* As we have seen, sometimes the deeds need to be explained by words, other times they speak for themselves, e.g. cures.
* God used signs to communicate with human beings in public Rev, but he can also communicate directly to the minds and hearts of people; sometimes he does so for those through whom he gives public Rev, e.g. prophets, but he generally does this in the “interiorized” Rev, enlightening people’s faith, especially in prayer
1. Possibility of expressing the revelation contained in the divine Word (Uncreated Word) by means of human, historical words. (Lat pp 365-368)
* Posing *the question*. If Rev comes to us through the vehicle of human notions and human propositions, how can these notions and propositions give us access to the divine mystery and inner life of God? How can human words describe supernatural realities? Some theologians have said it is impossible, e.g. Karl Barth, who held that our human concepts and our human terms, in so far as they are ours and human (i.e. w/o faith or grace) are totally incapable of expressing God and His mysteries, because he is so totally “Other.” Thus no natural knowledge of God possible, and the only knowledge of God properly so called comes through grace (what he called the *analogy of faith*). For Barth, Faith gives us an experience of God that is the only kind of knowledge of God we can hope for on this earth.
* *Importance of the analogy of being.* Analogy: similarity of concepts in which something remains the same and something else is different, e.g. I am a son of my father and Jesus Christ is the Son of God. “Sonship” is predicated analogously, since in both cases there is a relation of generation, but there is also a (huge!) difference between human generation and divine generation. If Rev is to be truly possible, then its categories, vocabulary, concepts, must be analogical. To deny the possibility of analogical knowledge of God is to deny the possibility of Rev, and any possible dialogue between God and man (cf. *Fides et Ratio* no. 84).
* Can we justify use of human concepts w/i Rev to express word of God? Yes, for two reasons:
* *Analogy of being found in nature*: a philosophical justification. Analogical knowledge of God is possible because God is the Creator. If God created all these realities, they cannot be completely unrelated to Him, because every cause leaves some imprint of itself in its effects. *Natural* knowledge of God can then be obtained by contemplating creation and reasoning (using human words) from it to God; since being (existence), truth and goodness are analogical, they “link” creatures and God. This natural knowledge of God will of course be quite limited, since by itself it cannot open up for us the inner life of God. But God can speak to us about his own being, using human concepts and words (derived from the language of *his* creation within our limited human experience) to give us supernatural knowledge of himself, e.g. the inner life of the Trinity. Rev understood as the word of God expressed in human words presupposes in fact God’s language of creation. But faith is needed for human words to give knowledge of supernatural realities via the assent of the human believer.
* *Incarnation*: Rev by the Incarnation is a special case, because the Incarnation “closes the gap” between God and man. Jesus Christ can truly speak about God the Father because his knowledge proceeds from His very Divine Person (he is perfect God) (cf. Jn 10:30); *and* He can also speak to us about these divine realities in human words because He is perfect man. The concepts that Jesus chooses to talk about Himself, he who is Truth, (e.g. analogy of his Sonship) have particular significance. The Incarnation sanctions the use of analogy in talking about God: if the whole range of created realities he uses to describe his person and the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (e.g. parables) were without any relation to the mystery of his Person, He would have had to remain silent. The Rev of Christ presupposes the truth of analogy and analogical knowledge. Cfr Lat p 367: “If Christ can utilize all the resources of the created universe to make us know God and the ways of God, it is because the word of creation has preceded and left a foundation for the word of Rev; it is because both one and the other have their principle in the same interior Word of God”
* *Caution concerning the* inadequacies *of human concepts*. The human concepts employed (and by definition divinely sanctioned) in SS are not always to be understood univocally (i.e. with same meaning as on the human level) when speaking about God, e.g. God’s anger, God in the tent of the covenant, or even God’s love. These revealed analogies stimulate our reflection, and the Church sets about the task of purifying their meaning so that we can glimpse something of the depths of divine life without confusion or inconsistency. Thus God’s anger is not like human anger; it is compatible with his mercy.

[class 14]

1. *Revelation and Salvation.*
2. The end of Rev is the salvation of man for the glory of God.
* “The glory of God is man fully alive; the life of man is the vision of God” (*Gloria enim Dei vivens homo, vita autem hominis visio Dei*) St. Irenaeus; the glory of God is the perfection of God’s being “reflected” in creatures because they express in a limited, imperfect, way the perfection of God; man does this more than other creatures do (aside from angels), because he can know and love God, and also perfect himself and other creatures so that the greatness of God is more clearly shown forth
* Rev has a two-fold finality or purpose: (i) from man’s point of view, his salvation, and (ii) from God’s point of view, the glory of God. These two are intimately related: in glorifying God, man works out his salvation, and by being saved, man glorifies God.
* *Progressive refinement of notion of salvation in OT*. At first, salvation is presented in a mostly material way (deliverance from enemies, peace, prosperity). Under the influence of prophets and national disaster, Israel comes to see that true salvation is first of all deliverance from sin and from all forms of evil (cf. Is 44:22; 45:8; 53: 8,12). This progresses to a more interior dimension of a new covenant with purified hearts (Jer 24:7, Ezek 36:23-28). Salvation will be universal (Is 2:1-5).
* *Salvation in NT*. The fullness of meaning of salvation is revealed to us in Jesus Christ: eternal life (1 Jn 5:11), the vision of God (Mt 5:8; 1 Jn 3:2; Rev 22:4), the beatific vision, which means participation in the divine life. The finality of Rev is thus made clear (Jn 3:16). The Gospel is clearly preached with a view to faith, and faith is with a view to salvation (Mk 16:15-16). Rev is an essentially *salvific* operation: God reveals himself not merely to increase our knowledge (much to less satisfy our curiosity), but to snatch us from sin and give us the gift of eternal life. To accept the word of God with faith is already the beginning of salvation.
* *Rev necessary for salvation*. In what way was Rev *necessary* for our salvation? This is affirmed by Vat I, Dz 1786, as an “absolute necessity” with respect to us, not to God, since even creation was his free act, let alone salvation. The reasoning given is same as St. Thomas (athough he gave Rev a relative moral necessity, not absolute; given our supernatural end, we need Rev to reach it). In summary, God has willed to make man an adoptive son, called to share in the life of the Trinity; but because man is a being of intelligence and will, God has made known His plan of love so that man, conscious of his freedom, can himself choose his condition of son and freely approach the gift of vision.
* In this life, we can say that salvation is progressive from man’s point of view, i.e. the deepening of the life of grace; but from God’s point of view all men have been saved by Jesus Christ, although not all have or will have entered freely into salvation, unfortunately
* Regarding those who never have had the opportunity to receive Rev, we will see this later on in Part II.
1. Revelation is salvific and not merely didactic: God saves as He reveals. (O&B pp 89-90)
* Revelation is however not only a *means* of salvation but is, in and of itself, *the essence of salvation.* It is not something extrinsic to salvation. In OT and NT, salvation is always associated with God’s revealing actions, and these are revelations of God himself: God reveals his name *Yahweh* (= I am, God’s essence as subsistent being) to Moses in the context of salvation from Egypt (Ex 3:15), and in the NT: the name of Jesus, the Word made flesh, in Hebrew means *Yahweh saves*. Jesus Christ is the Saviour (Mt 1:21) and our salvation; *no other name under heaven by which we may be saved* (Acts 4:12). There is a strong relationship (almost of identity) between *light* and *life* (Jn1:4; 9:5; 12:35–36), *truth* and *life* (Jn 14:6); *light* and *salvation* (Mt4:16; Lk1:79); *truth* and *salvation* (1 Tim 4:3; 6,5; 2 Tim 3:8; 4:4; Tit1:14). *Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it* (Lk 11:18). *You have the words of everlasting life* (Jn 6:68). Summary: the revealed Word, preached and received with faith, begets new life is souls through faith. It brings salvation with it.
1. Trinitarian dimension of salvific Revelation.
* All the works of God *ad extra*, i.e. directed “outside God”, to his creation, are common to the three Divine Persons, even though each person acts in a way proper to that Person; their unity is so great that they act as one principle of action
* Thus in Rev all three Persons act: the Father as Source, the Son as Image, and the Holy Spirit as Loving Modeler
* in natural Rev (and also in primitive Rev) the Unity in God is what comes through; although the plural appears in the account of creation (Gen 1:26), it is generally interpreted as a “royal” plural rather than a hint of the Trinity;
* in the OT generally, God still reveals himself in a unitary way, but with hints of the Trinity (e.g. 3 men who visit Abraham, although this is often interpreted as 3 angels; in the book of Wisdom, divine Wisdom is presented almost as if it were a distinct person)
* in the NT we have the fullness of Rev by and in Jesus Christ, and so the Trinity comes out explicitly
1. Missions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, revelation of the salvific plan of the Trinity and its fulfillment in history.
* divine mission = the “prolongation” of the procession of one divine Person from within the Bl Trinity to bring about a particular effect in a creature, in which the Person becomes present in a certain new manner. The Person from whom the Other proceeds *sends*, (on the mission), and the Person who proceeds is the one sent (carries out the mission). The processions within the Bl Trinity are that of the Son from the Father and that of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. Thus the missions (in terms of the processions) of the divine Persons can be summarised as follows:
* The Father sends (the Son and, together with the Son, the Holy Spirit) but is not sent (the Father does not proceed from any other Person)
* The Son is sent (by the Father, from whom he proceeds) and sends (together with the Father, the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from both Father and Son)
* The Holy Spirit is sent (proceeds from the Father and the Son) but does not send (no Person proceeds from the Holy Spirit)
* This is not just a nice neat scheme, it has a clear basis in SS and Tradition, as the way that God communicates his inner life to creatures, especially human ones. It is mysterious, as is everything to do with God, so we only grasp the “tip of the iceberg”
* Each mission has two essential characteristics:
* (1) the Person sent proceeds from the Person(s) sending Him;
* (2) a new effect is produced in creature(s). The mission does not change God, who is immutable.
* There are visible missions, e.g. the Incarnation of the Son (while only the Son takes on human nature, the Holy Spirit fills that nature to overflowing with grace); the coming of the Holy Spirit (visible in the form of tongues of fire in the Cenacle on Pentecost, and in the form of a dove in the baptism of Jesus). Also invisible missions: the infusion of sanctifying grace in the human soul, which becomes a living temple of the Holy Spirit and of the whole Trinity) (cf. Jn 14:23). Through these missions (both visible, invisible) our salvation has been carried out, and at the same time the Trinity has been revealed in a new way.
* The missions of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as Rev. The 3-foldness of persons as revealed to us in this economy of salvation (via divine missions) is often called the economic (i.e. offering us the means of salvation) Trinity, and through it we learn something about the divine life of the immanent (i.e. within God) Trinity.
* (1) Those persons who are “sent” proceed from the Person who sends. Hence Jesus Christ proceeds from the Father (not the Holy Spirit), and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both: Jesus affirms that the Holy Spirit is sent both by Him and the Father. Thus the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is revealed to us.
* (2) Something about each divine Person, what is “proper” to Him, is shown in the divine missions. Thus Jesus’s total obedience, praise of His Father, and self-sacrifice on the Cross for love, shows us what it means to be the Son of God. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is the gift of divine love and the sanctifier, the gift from the Father and the Son to His Church, to remain with us forever. Hence He is the personified love between the Father and the Son. In this way we see an even greater unity of Rev and salvation: that unity consists in God’s self-communication, i.e. self-communication is both Rev and salvation.
* The missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit are not “independent” but work together to reveal and carry out God’s plan of salvation; as the divine Persons are revealed, so is the plan of salvation, which ultimately consists in man’s immersion in the very life of the divine Persons.

[class 15]

***V. CHRISTIAN FAITH***

1. *Faith, man’s response to the living God who reveals Himself.*
2. Faith, the beginning and foundation of Christian life.
* Faith is “the beginning of salvation, the foundation and root of all justification” (Trent, Dz 801). Faith is the *beginning* of divine life in the soul, of Christian life, because:
* God takes the initiative in beginning a divine dialogue through Rev, and faith is man’s response;
* through it we are prepared to receive sanctifying grace, which is the stage of salvation in this life; faith by itself is not yet justification (the passage from a state of sin to a state of grace), which comes through Baptism, but it is a pre-requisite for Baptism and justification;
* faith is a kind of prelude to and anticipation of the beatific vision (cf. CCC n.163). Faith is defined as a preliminary kind of vision, it is the power which tends to and prepares us for that ultimate vision of God. Faith has the same object as the beatific vision, i.e. God as He is in himself. Here, we believe; in next life, we will see him as he is (1 Cor 13:12; 1 Jn 3:2**)**. Faith sets up a “light” in the soul, enabling it to “see” supernatural realities, albeit dimly. It lifts up the light of reason, which enables us to “see” natural realities, so that we can then see them in their relation to God and his will for us; the light of faith is a prelude to the light of glory, which comes with the beatific vision.
* *Faith is the foundation of Christian life*. Divine faith is *necessary* for justification in this life (i.e. it is a pre-requisite for forgiveness of sins and receiving sanctifying grace). Persevering in that faith is a *necessary* condition for eternal life hereafter (cf. also Dz 1794):
* Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining salvation (Mk 16:16; Jn 3:36; 6:40). Since “without faith it is impossible to please [God]” (Heb 11:6) and to attain to the fellowship of his sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life ‘except he who endures to the end’ (cf. Mt 10:22; 24:13) (CCC no. 161).
1. Faith according to Sacred Scripture. (O&B pp 116-129)
* OT: not as highly developed as in NT, but substantially the same. Cfr examples of OT faith listed in Heb 11. To believe in God in OT means: to rely on Him, to put one’s complete trust in God, and to accept his word and promises as true (Gen 15:6; Ex 14:31; Nm 14:11). God shows himself to be faithful to his covenant, to His people, to his promises (cfr. Deut 7:9), because of his enduring love, and his people should respond faithfully, as well.
* The prototype of faith in OT is Abraham, father of all believers. He is our model of faith, even in NT times (cf. Heb 11:8-12, Gal 3:29; CCC nos. 145-146). This faith can be summarized in three fundamental, connected features:
* *obedience*: in everything God asked of him; putting the word of God above everything he knew as a man.
* *trust*: Abraham trusted unreservedly in the promises of God, he trusted that God would be faithful and fulfil his promises (Gen 15:6).
* *fidelity*: Abraham kept his “word” of faith even when put to the test, e.g. in being asked to sacrifice his own son. (N.B. Human sacrifice was practiced in many ancient cultures, so it might not have seemed so strange to Abraham that God would ask it, but it was not what God wanted in Jewish culture, nor in general)
* Abraham’s readiness to sacrifice Isaac unites all three features in one act. However, all his behaviour is also based on a true knowledge of God. Abraham remained faithful because (i) he knew that God is almighty and merciful; and (ii) he knew that God would be true to his Covenant. Thus, we can say that Abraham overcame all tests and was faithful because he relied on his supernatural knowledge of God (which is what faith is). The intellectual dimension of faith (i.e. faith as knowledge) is not absent in OT, but it becomes more developed in NT, i.e. the link between faith and truth.
* For the people of Israel, the obedience of faith is concretized in obedience to the law of the covenant, i.e., to be faithful for a Hebrew was to fulfil the law of Moses, the law of the covenant. It also meant, for Davidic kings (cf. Isaiah to Ahaz Is 7:9), putting one’s sole trust in the might of Yahweh, and not in human resources (armies, alliances, etc.).
* Eventually, the experience of Israel in which God manifested himself as their one and only saviour (Is 43:10-13) reinforced the doctrine of monotheism; i.e. to be faithful to God gradually comes to mean belief in the one true God (recall that ancient peoples were mostly polytheistic). The calls to faith in Him and obedience to his covenant (e.g. by the prophets) become clearer and more developed, almost like “creeds” (cf. Neh 9:5-25).
* NT: As in OT, faith implicates the entire person, requiring the “obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5; 16:26) and trust in God. But it also tends more towards conviction about some message. Highlights:
* Faith is an unswerving assent to a message: Mk 1:15, the good news of the kingdom of God and the Father’s merciful love obtained through repentance (cf. also Jn 18:37). Not believing this good news brings condemnation (Jn 3:18; Mk 16:16).
* Jesus Christ is at the centre of Christian faith: he himself is to be believed as God (cf. Jn 14:1). Jesus requires faith in Him before performing miracles. He is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2). He who believes in Jesus will not perish but will obtain eternal life (Jn 3:36). Through faith we come to understand the radiant mystery of Jesus Christ (Eph 3:8). Who is saved? He who confesses with his lips that Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that God raised him from the dead (cf. Rom 10:9).
* The Blessed Virgin Mary is the preeminent NT model of the obedience of faith as seen in Abraham. The fullness of Rev deserved a fullness of faithful response. The comparison of Mary with Abraham in the sacrifice of Isaac has many parallels between Isaac and Jesus (wood, on a hill, accompanying the one to be sacrificed). Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord (Lk 1,45). Faith not just at the Annunciation, but throughout her life.
1. Basic teachings of Tradition and Magisterium on the nature of faith. (Lat pp 469-470)
* Fathers of the Church:
* Irenaeus, writing against Gnostics, defends the faith in an objective sense, as a heritage of truth received from the Apostles and to be safeguarded (*Adv. haer.*, I.10.1). “The faith” is one and the same throughout the Church, which believes as if it had but one mind and one heart (*Adv. haer.*, I.10.2).
* Augustine: to believe is “to ponder with assent” (*cum assensione cogitare*, *De praedest. sanctorum*, 2:5), i.e. faith necessarily involves thought or reason. “No one indeed believes anything unless he has first thought that it ought to be believed”, hence the importance of reasons for believing. Of particular importance to him are the miracles of Jesus Christ and the wonderful expansion of the Church (*De fide rerum q. non vid.*, 7:10). However, no one believes without wanting to believe. The will must be directed by love; faith is also loving submission to Christ. Against the Pelagians, Augustine insists that faith is a pure gift bestowed freely by God. Necessity of the interior attraction of the Holy Spirit in order to accept the words of Christ.
* Later theologians
* Thomas Aquinas (13th cent): faith is “an act of the intellect assenting to divine truth, under the command of the will, itself moved by grace” (S. Th. II-II, q.2, a.9, resp).
* John Henry Newman (19th cent): “By faith then is meant the mind’s perception or apprehension of heavenly things, arising from an instinctive trust in the divinity or truth of the external word, informing it concerning them”. Yet it has to be an assent involving personal commitment.
* Henri De Lubac (20th cent): personalist, based on extensive study of Church Fathers, he saw Christian faith as completely exceptional compared to other religions. Christian faith is a total self-gift in response to God’s gift of himself in Christ. Faith is that movement by which we adhere to God as our total good, both in mind and will.
* Magisterium:
* Vat I *Dei Filius* no. 3 (Dz 1789-1794). [Review Dz 1789-92] faith implies full submission of intellect and will, i.e. the entire person. However, the emphasis was on the intellectual dimension of the act of faith, possibly in response to the objections to faith then current, which were more of an intellectual character. A traditional definition of the act of faith is: an assent of the mind, impelled by the will, inspired by divine grace, to truths revealed by God, on the authority of God revealing. Features of this definition:
* *Assent of the mind*: an act with an intellectual dimension, by which we possess true knowledge; not mere sentiment or feeling (cf. Dz 1791).
* *impelled by the will*: some truths are evident or at least demonstrable. That is, we can see their truth immediately or through reasoning, e.g. 2+2=4, the principle of non-contradiction, facts of our own experience, scientific knowledge, etc. The mind grasps their truth without being moved by the will, because the evidence is sufficient, and acceptance by the mind is fairly spontaneous.
* However, other things are not so evident or demonstrable. To assert their truth requires that the will move the intellect to assent, because of insufficient evidence. This happens in forming an opinion, when the will moves the intellect to accept something as true because we want to achieve some goal. It also happens in accepting religious truths, where evidence is lacking or insufficient, and so the intellect does not give automatic assent, but accepts truth moved by the will. Since the free will is involved, the act of faith is by nature free and meritorious.
* *inspired by divine grace*: supernatural assistance elevating our natural powers, enabling us to subject our intellects and wills to Infinite Truth and goodness. Vat I says that an act of faith is made with “the grace of God inspiring and assisting us” (Dz 1789); moreover, the “inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit” (Dz 1791) is prior to and present in every act of faith. Hence faith is a free act, because it also requires the subject to be open to grace, and God’s grace does not override the freedom of the human will
* *to truths revealed by God*: the object of divine faith can only be God’s word (nobody else’s, not even the Church by itself, but only as the one speaking on behalf of God).
* *on the authority of God revealing*: this is the formal and ultimate motive of an act of faith which makes faith reasonable and at the same time gives honour to God. Not the authority of the Church as such or some respected person, even a saint.
* Other aspects of *Dei Filius* doctrine:
* faith is a supernatural virtue (Dz 1789). The assent of faith is not a purely human act; it can take place only with the assistance of divine grace.
* it is a gratuitous gift from God, whose operation belongs to order of salvation (Dz 1791). God is not obliged to give us this grace, but does so because he wants to save us.
* Faith is absolutely necessary for salvation (Dz 1793).
* Faith is in accord with reason because of the external signs that accompany Rev, among them miracles and prophesies [more on this later in Part II].
* Faith in doctrine of Vatican II:
* *Dei Verbum*. DV no. 5: the approach is more Biblical and personalist, but substantially takes up the doctrine of *Dei Filius.*
* DV no. 5[1]: Faith is presented under 3 aspects: (i) an “obedience” of mind and will to God; (ii) a free and trusting self-commitment (whole person) to God. (iii) (*freely assenting to the truth revealed by him*) assent to revealed truth. This definition rounds out the triple dimension of faith: trust, obedience, assent all together at the same time (and not just assent alone). Divine faith establishes a *personal* relationship between God and man, in a complete and total *adherence* which involves not just the intellect (assent) but the will (obedience) and all one’s faculties. Hence faith is understood as a *full personal adhesion to God* in all aspects of personhood.
* DV no. 5[2]: Re-affirms the supernatural dimension of faith (cf. also DV no. 6). Faith is not a simple result of human activity alone, even though it is a human act; nor does Rev produce faith “automatically”, like sacraments *ex opere operato*. But above all it is a gift of God, to which man must respond freely through “grace of God and interior help of the Holy Spirit.” Moreover, grace “must *precede* the act of faith as well as *assist* it.” Every act of faith, in other words, is not only prepared by grace but made actual by it. It is not possible to make an act of faith without actual grace. What does the Holy Spirit do? He gently moves the heart, turns it toward God, open the eyes of the mind and make assent easier and more joyful.
* DV no. 5[3]: Faith is not a one-time response, but constant, so that the believer can deepen his understanding of what he believes. Moreover, the gifts of the Holy Spirit (e.g. gift of understanding, which helps one penetrate more into revealed truth) are essential for this deepening (a theme close to St. Thomas’ heart).
* DV no. 6: seems to repeat Vat I on necessity of Rev for our supernatural end, and reaffirms the appropriateness of supernatural Rev for knowing natural truths with ease, certitude and without admixture of error.

[class 16]

1. *Human faith and divine faith.*
2. Importance of faith in man’s existence, in intellectual progress and in social life. (O&B pp 181-183, 137-138)
* Preliminary *consideration*: given what we have said about supernatural faith, we can ask if such a thing is even possible for man? Can he really assent to something for which he has no innate connaturality (i.e. natural likeness) such as supernatural mystery? We try an apologetic approach: starting with examples of human faith and its reasonableness, we seek to lay a foundation for the possibility and appropriateness of divine faith. The analogy between human faith and divine faith enables us to understand what divine faith is, but also its transcendence (i.e. differences) with respect to human faith.
* *Notion of human faith*: (recall what was said above in sections 8 c) and 9 f) about faith, assent to truth, use of human language, etc.) in some statements, their truth is evident or at least demonstrable. That is, we can see their truth “for ourselves” without relying on the judgments of others, e.g. things we see, mathematical proofs, even metaphysical principles. In asserting such truths, the mind need not be moved by the will. It assents to truth almost automatically because it “sees” the truth on the basis of sufficient evidence.
* Yet most things in life are not like that. When one looks up a time on a schedule, one trusts the person or organization who made it. When one attends a lecture on astronomy, one probably believes the professor who says that the universe is 18 billion years old. etc. When one reads the newspaper, one might read it critically, but will often accept a news report as true. These are examples of human faith.
* Human faith can be defined as assent to the truth of some affirmation on the testimony of a witness, based on their credibility as a witness. The certitude that results depends on the trust that one places in the witness. Usually we call such human faith “belief” to distinguish it better from divine faith. Credibility means to be worthy of belief, i.e. it is reasonable to believe the testimony.
* A separate judgment concerning the credibility of a person in relation to what they are affirming (=judgment of cred) is involved in human faith. This judgment might be a hasty opinion or a well-reasoned conclusion about the reliability of the witness, based on separate evidence, or something in between. In any case it is not the same as the judgment of truth concerning what has been affirmed by the witness. The former solely concerns the prudence and reasonableness of believing a witness, while the latter concerns what the witness has affirmed. However, the two judgments are related, because the one about the credibility of the witness might require more rigour if what they have affirmed is more difficult to accept.
* We can now understand certain aspects of divine faith using the analogy of human faith:
* Both are ways to arrive at certain knowledge about non-evident realities. We need such knowledge because we are not able to subject every question in life to rigorous tests, even in the experimental sciences, where growth in human knowledge depends on trust in the patrimony of preceding generations. This need is not a defect of human condition, although it does represent a human limitation. And so faith based on trust is not only highly efficacious but even essential for personal and social development, hence it is not surprising that it would also be necessary for growth in the religious sphere.
* Collaboration of will and intellect. Because of the lack of sufficient evidence for the intellect to assent by itself, in both human and divine faith the will must command the assent of the mind. The mind yields its assent because of a reason which is distinct from the truth of the proposition itself, namely the reasonableness of someone’s testimony about that truth. The will desires a good (it could simply be knowing the truth affirmed by the witness or it could be some other good which will follow on knowing that truth) so it moves the intellect to assent. This is what is meant by saying that faith is an assent given because of the authority, i.e. credibility, of a witness. In human faith, the “authority” can vary greatly, but in divine faith it is God himself.
* Difference between faith and opinion. In opinion, the will also moves the intellect, not on the credibility of a witness, but on the basis of some good desired by the will. There might be more or less evidence for the intellect to act on, but the will moves the intellect in any case. The good desired by the will might simply be to “get on with it” in some complicated matter, or it might be some good that would follow on from the assent of the intellect, e.g. agreeing with an attractive opinion of another person through personal preference rather than faith. Opinion is very common in practical matters and in social questions, where truth is difficult to determine at a given moment. The main difference between faith and opinion is the credibility of a witness, i.e. the involvement of another person; this is an integral part of faith, but it is not involved in opinion, where the person forms their mental judgment “by themselves”, not in regard to what someone else has affirmed. In human faith, opinion and faith often do go together, since the judgment of credibility is itself often an opinion, e.g. friends discussing a possible joint business plan, where one friend forms the opinion (perhaps on not very sound reasons) that the other friend’s plan is credible. However, in divine (i.e. supernatural) faith the judgment of credibility is (or ought to be) based on sound reasons, since the other person is God.
* Faith establishes an interpersonal relation between the believer and the witness, based on trust. In human faith the nature of this relation will vary greatly depending on the relevant truth(s) involved, e.g. a commercial relation, a mutual commitment as in a marriage, or a meeting between friends. In divine faith, the relation transcends human relations, leading to sharing in divine life.
* The mediation of persons and institutions, e.g. religious communities or churches, introduces another “layer” of faith into the transmission and reception of Rev; this is partly human faith, i.e. trusting that the person expressing Rev is a credible witness of the truths received from the Apostles, but it is often backed up by institutional assurance and pastoral measures.
1. Faith in God as an essential element of human religiosity.
* As seen in the preceding section, faith (by a human) in God has important differences compared to faith in another human, and so the term “faith” is used analogically, not univocally in comparing them.
* In particular, natural human knowledge about God is very limited, and the effects, both personal and social, of sin further limit, and even tend to distort, this knowledge. Hence human religiosity, the natural tendency of human beings to seek a transcendent Being and to incorporate some kind of relation to that Being in personal and social life, must depend on faith, the acceptance of non-evident truths, to develop to any extent.
* The credibility of this faith will depend on the character of the witnesses to it, human and/or divine, and so there will be great differences between Christian Rev and other forms of human religiosity. This will be dealt with in Part II, but for the present, it remains true that some act of faith is necessary for any form of religiosity. Even atheism involves an act of faith, as will also be considered in Part II.

[class 17]

1. Psychological and epistemological structure of faith: intellectual and volitional factors.
* Preliminary analysis of the act of divine faith (to be discussed in more detail in last classes of Part II): the act of faith is elicited by the intellect, at the command of the will, and under the help of divine grace. Thus three principles, or subjective causes, must concur in producing the supernatural act of faith:
* The intellect is the immediate faculty (i.e. with no other faculty intervening) which elicits the assent of faith. As a first step, it “grasps”, i.e. forms the connection of concepts, e.g. Christ rose from the dead, in divine truth helped by grace, the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The intellect perceives both what is proposed and the fact that it has been revealed by God, and that God is truthful. But it does not yet give the assent to a truth because that truth is not evident to the intellect, so the will must ultimately intervene.
* the will, also under the influence of grace, commands the intellect to assent. When it does, an act of faith has been *elicited*, i.e. drawn out,from the mind by an act of the will. The will has the power to elicit natural acts of most other human faculties, spiritual, emotional and physical, although this power is often limited by indisposition of faculties, e.g sore throat for speech, or weakness of the will itself, e.g. lack of moral virtue. (There are some natural processes, e.g. beating of the heart or digestion, which the will does not have strict control over, for good natural reasons!) The will responds to the good which could be achieved in trusting someone else to obtain knowledge that would otherwise not be possible, and thus moves the intellect to assent to that truth. However, because the truth of Rev is supernatural, i.e. “too high” even for the power of the will to be drawn to the good of knowing it, the will needs the help of grace, an “injection” of divine life in order to move itself and move the intellect.
* Grace is the principle which elevates or supernaturalises the entire act of belief. By grace here we mean actual grace (as opposed to habitual grace, which will be addressed later). Actual grace is required so that the act of faith may be of such a kind that it is “the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all holiness” (Council of Trent), i.e. supernatural and therefore effective for salvation. This is a dogma of faith (Vat I, Dz 1791).
* Every act of faith needs the help of grace, but when a person first comes to have faith, this “first grace”, as it is called, is completely gratuitous (freely given by God, as all grace is), but it cannot be merited (as most graces can), i.e. received as a reward for freely responding to other graces. It is a mystery of God’s plan of salvation as to who receives this grace and when, but this does not reduce the universality of God’s will for all men to be saved.
1. Cognitive dimension of faith. (O&B pp 121-126)
* Although faith involves both intellect and will, what faith leaves in the intellect is a definite content of truth, which constitutes the cognitive, i.e. knowledge, dimension of faith; through faith the Christian *knows* many things about God, man and the world, which he would not have known without faith
* Furthermore, what is known through faith is certain, since it has God for its author, and he can neither deceive nor be deceived; this certainty is an integral part of faith, since one knows that this truth comes from God who can neither deceive nor be deceived
* Although the content of faith is expressed in human words, the object of faith, i.e. what is known through faith is not merely the words themselves but the realities they signify, just as in human knowledge what is known is not merely words or concepts but real things through the words and concepts (except, of course when the words express concepts made by man, e.g. fictional literature, fantasies and other constructs)
* The cognitive dimension of faith is not considered much in the Protestant tradition, especially among Lutherans; Luther’s concept of faith was *fiducial*, i.e. reduced to the trust which we have in God as having saved us and forgiven all our sins, as he promised
* The cognitive dimension of faith forms the basis of theology, which seeks to develop what is known through faith by drawing out conclusions from it, using human reasoning; while theology extends what is known through faith, the cognitive content of theology does not have the same certitude as faith, since it depends on human reasoning, which can err; hence the content of faith as defined by the supreme authority of the Church is the rule of theology, not vice-versa
1. Distinction between *fides quae* and *fides qua.*
* The word “faith” can thus refer to two distinct aspects of faith:
* The act or virtue of faith with which one responds to Rev. This has been called since medieval times *fides qua creditur*, i.e. faith *by which* one believes and thus knows supernatural truths; this act is both human (with freedom) and divine (with grace)
* The cognitive content known by the person who does the act or has the virtue of faith; this is *fides quae creditur*, i.e. the faith content *which* is believed; this is often called “the Faith” when referred to in its totality, e.g. in the expression “keep the Faith”; it also implies the living out of the Faith
1. Radical novelty of Christian faith vis-à-vis other religious “faiths” and other kinds of human faith. O&B pp 146-153, 140-141
* Several factors involved in Christian Rev and faith bring about significant differences compared to other religions and human faith; the characteristic Christian features:
* *Degree of commitment*: The “absoluteness” of one’s adherence by faith to Christian Rev and the divine authority behind it are affirmed by both Vat I and II, i.e. “full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals” (Dz 1789, DV n.5). The degree of one’s commitment to both revealed truth and God’s authority is total, unconditional, radical, complete: “absolute.” In every moment, in every circumstance, at any personal cost. As with Abraham, this means the total submission of any personal plan (including religious) to the divine plan. We know that the adherence to the object of faith must be absolute (not relative to anything else) because its object is absolute, i.e. God.
* *Certainty*: Moreover, based on the certainty that God is the authority in question, the content of divine faith has a very high degree of certitude, in fact an “absolute” one. However, doubt is still possible for a believer, or even a loss of faith, because of the weakness of the human will.
* *Need for grace*: The object of Christian faith is transcendent, supernatural, i.e. God as he is in himself; God completely surpasses our human capacity for assent, so even the will needs grace. Accepting God’s revealed word is more than simply accepting the truth of a body of truths, it is accepting a Person who is the Word of God incarnate, the fullness of Rev and equal to God (1 Cor 2:2), and human mind and will fall short of being able to “yes, I accept that and commit my life to that”.
* *Radical transformation of the believer*. Christian faith makes the believer a new creature, a son/daughter of God in Christ through the grace of adoption (Gal 3:26, 6:15). This brings about not only a new relation to God, but also an actual sharing in the life of the Bl Trinity, as well as a new vital principle in the soul (sanctifying grace), new capacities for supernatural acts in the powers (mind and will) of the soul (infused theological and moral virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit), and the assurance of divine help in putting all this into action (actual graces).
* Human faith has much less of an effect on the person exercising it:
* It involves varying degrees of commitment, depending on the matter involved. Some expressions of human faith, e.g. in marriage and in loyalty to one’s country, do demand a complete commitment, but even these are not absolute, e.g. the Pauline privilege allows for dissolving a natural marriage between non-believers in favour of the faith if one spouse becomes a Christian and the other is not willing to live in peace with them, and loyalty to one’s country cannot justify denying one’s Christin faith
* The certainty of the truth of what one believes through human faith is always relative to the credibility of the witness, which is never absolute; in fact human witnesses often fail in this regard, e.g. media reports, where facts are often mixed with interpretations
* Human faith works within the natural order, and grace is not involved
* Human faith does not alter the powers of the person believing a witness; it only affects their relationship. Human faith alone does not transform man from inside, either.
* Faith among Jewish people varies greatly, but if a Jew did accept the Rev of the OT on the authority of God, this would constitute a true act of faith, but a deficient one, since it lacked the knowledge of and assent to the fulness of Rev in Christ. If it were sincere, it could dispose the Jewish believer to respond to the grace of Christian faith.
* Religious faith or “belief” as observed in other (non-Christian or non-Jewish) religions are exercises of merely human faith. The witness is either not regarded as divine, or if divine, the understanding of divine nature is much weaker than in Christianity.
* For this reason, the distinction between true “theological” faith, i.e. with God as he is in himself for its object, and belief in the other religions must be firmly held. If faith is the acceptance in grace of revealed truth, which “makes it possible to penetrate the mystery in a way that allows us to understand it coherently [i.e. without contradictions]” (JP II, *Fides et ratio*, no. 13) then belief in the other religions, as the sum of experience and thought in their own tradition, can contribute to the human treasury of wisdom and religious aspiration, which man in his search for truth has conceived and acted upon in his relationship to God and the Absolute (ibid, nos. 31-32), but it cannot be put on a par with Christian faith, even allowing for full respect for those who follow other religions as persons and for their own religious traditions as sincere human beliefs.
* This distinction is not always borne in mind in some theological reflection or the practice of inter-religious dialogue, with the danger of ending up in religious relativism, where *no* religion is seen as objectively revealed and true. The assertion that Christianity is *the* revealed religion is compatible with religious freedom and mutual respect and tolerance. In fact, Rev itself requires respect for others as persons created and loved by God, and for their freely held beliefs as some form of remote preparation for Christian faith permitted by God, however deformed it might be, even as one seeks for them (by prayer, sacrifice and friendship) the grace of Christian faith (cfr 1 Pet 3:15; Col 4:5-6).

[class 18]

1. *Theological and ecclesial character of faith.*
2. Faith as assent to the Word of God based on the authority of God Himself.
* Christian Faith is authentic in the measure that it rests on the authority of God himself, through Jesus Christ. Other persons and institutions can mediate in this process, and usually do, since virtually no one receives Rev directly from Christ or the Apostles. But ultimately a Christian believes Rev because he/she knows it comes from God; grace gives the believer the assurance of God as the source of Rev, even if other factors help make Rev credible (to be seen in part II).
1. Faith: the whole human person turning towards God.
* Because the act of faith is a free, personal response to the Word of God it produces a strong interpersonal encounter between God and man. God’s self-giving to man in Rev finds its proper response in an act of personal self-giving of the believer to God, often described as a “turning” to God, i.e. conversion, since it is a turning away from a life of following one’s own (often disordered) inclinations to following the Will of God, now made known in Rev.
* This self-giving in faith involves the whole person: mind, will, feelings, body, actions, possessions, culture, relations with others, etc.. Such a complete self-giving is reasonable, since it is self-giving to the One who has created, redeemed and seeks to sanctify the believer. Nevertheless, it is difficult, because of the disordered tendencies in fallen human nature, made stronger by personal sins. However, since God wants the salvation of the believer (cfr 1 Tim 2:4), the latter can always count on the help of grace, proportionate to one’s personal need for it.
* Ordinarily, the self-giving of the believer to God is a life-long process involving the use of means to grow in grace (prayer and Sacraments) and personal struggle to overcome the effects of sin and co-operate with grace (ascetical struggle).
1. Triple theological dimension of the act of faith: *credere Deum, credere Deo, credere in Deum*. (O&B pp 141-142)
* The theological, i.e. theocentric, God-centered, character of Christian of faith are neatly summarized in St Thomas Aquinas’ (taken from St Augustine) maxim: *credere Deum*, *credere Deo,* *credere in Deum* (cf. S. Th. II-II, q.2, a.2)
* *Credere Deum*: means “to believe God” in the sense of having God as the object of one’s faith, i.e. God is “what” we believe, what we have faith about. (In English we usually express this as to believe “in” God; Latin uses the accusative without a preposition to express this). Not only is this to affirm the reality of God, which is already a truth naturally accessible to man, but it is mainly to affirm God as he has revealed himself, i.e. the Blessed Trinity. To achieve salvation, we must, at a minimum, believe that God exists and rewards those who seek him (Heb 11:6).
* *Credere Deo*: means “I believe because of God” (Latin uses the ablative case to express a relation of cause). This express both that God is the witness by whom we receive the truth and that he is an absolutely reliable witness (his “authority” expresses both that he is the “author” of the content of faith and that he is absolutely believable, credible). Implicit in this affirmation is a Trinitarian causality of faith: God the Father as source of what we believe, God the Son as the expression of what we believe, and God the Holy Spirit as the giver of the grace which enables us to believe. “I put faith in God as witness to Himself; I recognize his word as truth because of His divine authority” would be another way of expressing *credere Deo*.
* *Credere in Deum*: means “to believe into God”, i.e. that God is the purpose of one’s faith, in fact the purpose of one’s whole life. (Latin uses *in* + accusative to express motion toward a goal.) Rev makes God known not only as First Truth but also as Supreme Good and Last End, the sum and goal of all human desires. We believe not only that God is what he has revealed about himself, not only the absolutely credible witness to what he has revealed, but also the ultimate purpose of his Rev and of our assent to it by faith, i.e. salvation through union with him.
1. Ecclesial character of faith. (O&B pp 154-260)
* A complete response of faith always has *theological*, *Christological*, and *ecclesiological* dimensions at the same time. We have seen the theological dimension above. The Christological and ecclesiological dimensions are what makes Christian faith “Christian”. Christ is the Revealer, and he has committed Rev to the Church, as his Mystical Body. The individual believer can only be fully such within the Church, which believes Rev indefectibly. The highest expression of the Church’s faith is Mary, the Mother of Christ and of the Church.
* *Christian faith is Christological* (this is sometimes expressed as *Christocentric*). Not only does the Christian believe what Christ has revealed, but he/she also believes Christ himself, i.e. what he has said about himself: that he is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14:6). He *is* the Way, the path, the one whose witness we must accept in order to access the Truth (i.e. Rev) and the Life (i.e. divine Life); he *is* that Truth because he is God incarnate, God revealed to us in human flesh, deeds and words; and he *is* the Life that Rev makes known to us, both in this world, i.e. our life as children of God, and in the next world, i.e. our Life in the Blessed Trinity through Christ.
* *Christian faith is ecclesiological*. This means that no one can accomplish a total and perfect act of faith that is not in communion with the Church (cf. LG no. 17). How to understand this? Cf. CCC nos. 166-167: one’s faith is simultaneously personal and communal. Faith is personal, but not individualistic; it is lived within the context of a believing Church. Because we are incorporated into Christ’s Mystical Body by Baptism, we are in communion with God (we share in his Life) and also with every other believer (we all share in that same Life). Each believer is a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith. The Body cannot be separated from its Head or its members, and so the faith of each individual is a kind of participation in the faith of the entire believing Church.
* *The Church itself believes*. The Church itself is a unity which acts as a subject of faith (i.e. one who has faith), not in the physical order but in a spiritual and mystical order. The Church is a community of believers united in a common faith through the action of the Holy Spirit. “We are one, because we believe” says St. Augustine(*In Ioannis Evang. Tract.,* 110, 2: PL 35, 1920). She is a unique subject because she makes a unique response of faith. The Church professes her faith with one voice throughout the centuries (cf. St. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. I,10), with plenitude and perfection. A completely faithful and obedient response to God, unlike Israel. This perfection of faith is manifested in her infallibility and indefectibility (cf. Mt 16:18-19). Despite persecutions and individual defections, she has never been unfaithful in her history.
* *Note*: the Church is not formed by a coming together of Christians who have faith directly from God, (this is a Protestant idea of the Church) but by an action of God which simultaneously gives her existence, faith, unity and every other of her characteristics, and gives faith to each individual in her and through her. The mediation of the Church is not *extrinsic*, i.e. apart from each individual, but *intrinsic*, i.e. within each individual.
* *Symbols and creeds*. The faith of each Christian finds its fullness within a communal profession of belief. Every Christian must give testimony to his own faith (cf. Mt 10:32-33), but using an expression of that faith common to all in the Church. Personal faith has a public character which means that it should be manifested in a public manner as the occasion requires (e.g. in catechesis or worship). Our public manifestation of faith is required for giving glory to God (e.g. in Sunday Mass). It is also expressed in an inter-personal way, e.g. in giving formation and in personal apostolate The Church is the proximate norm of our belief: we believe what the Church teaches. To be united to Christ means being united to his Mystical Body and hence to profess the same faith. The Church has always used *symbols* (summaries of the faith) or creeds, e.g. Apostles Creed, Athanasian Creed, the Credo of the People of God (Pope St Paul VI). Moreover, it is the Church that believes first, and so bears, nourishes and sustains each individual’s faith. The Church is our mother in our life of faith (though not the author of our faith, which comes from God alone).
* The greatest personal witness to and expression of Christian faith in the Church is the Blessed Virgin Mary.

[class 19]

1. *Faith as truth and as gift.*
2. Faith, participation in divine knowledge.
* Through supernatural faith one not only knows God, but also participates in the same knowledge that God has of himself and of all things in himself. With supernatural faith, man knows what God and only God knows, and he knows it in the same way that God knows it: with his Word. As God knows through his Word, so we now know God through his Word which has been given to us in human words through Jesus Christ.
* This knowledge of God that we have is a participation in divine knowledge, and not identical to divine knowledge, which would be impossible for any created person; it is analogous to the way that our finite being is a participation in the unlimited Being of God. St. Thomas describes it as an imprint or seal of the First Truth in the soul.
* Faith is a gift, a grace freely given by God to his Church and to each of his children in the Church. This gift comprises the knowledge or content of Rev, the grace of assenting to Rev with our intellect and will, and also the assurance that it is God himself who vouches for the truth of that Rev, so that we can assent to it on his authority.
1. Faith as gift and as fruit of grace: divine attraction and elevation. [some of this material has been outlined briefly above, e.g. in section 11 c); here it will be dealt with in a little more detail]
* Some texts of the Magisterium on faith as a gift
* Second Council of Orange: “not only the increase but the very beginning of faith (*initium fidei*) and the will to believe (*credulitatis affectum*)” comes not from our natural powers but “the gift of grace, that is, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit” (canon 5, DS 375; cf. canon 7, DS 377).
* Trent: the prevenient grace of the Holy Spirit is needed for anyone to believe “as is required so that the grace of justification may be bestowed upon one” (Session 6, canon 3, DS 1553). An essential disposition for justification is a free assent “aroused and assisted by divine grace” whereby a person “believes as true that which has been divinely promised and revealed” (DS 1526).
* Vat I and II we have seen already. Recall that in Vat II says that “we have need of the prevenient and concomitant grace of God and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and turns it toward God, and gives ‘joy and ease (*suavitatem*) to all in consenting to the truth and believing it” (DV no. 5, quoting DS 377). Since Orange II, the help of the HS has been characterized as “enlightenment and inspiration.”
* This is the stage of God’s actual graces making possible acts of faith. First, these graces make the truths of Rev attractive to someone either coming to faith for the first time or growing in faith. This attraction involves a certain “connaturality” between the truths of Rev and the intellect of the person involved. This is necessary because those truths are “above” the natural capacity of man for truth; this is unlike human faith, where the truth to be believed lies within man’s natural capacity, although there is not enough evidence for one’s intellect to assent to it spontaneously (which is true in all forms of faith, human and supernatural). This grace makes Rev “attractive” so that the person would like to believe but does not yet feel able to assent to Rev. Vat II speaks of grace as “prevenient and concomitant”; attraction is the prevenient phase.
* Grace acts further to elevate the person’s mind and will so that they *can* give the assent of faith to Rev. The person now feels able to assent to faith freely; grace does not replace their freedom, but mysteriously works with it and through it. This is the “concomitant” phase.
* Finally, grace actually brings about the act of faith, which extends the assent of mind and will to the whole person, again with the person acting freely, i.e. they believe because they want to; without grace, however, they would not be able to want to believe.
1. Faith as infused virtue
* The grace of faith is not confined to actual graces for making acts of faith, but becomes an habitual grace, establishing a stable capacity for making acts of faith whenever the person wants to. This is the infused virtue of faith, a supernatural power infused into our souls by God in Baptism, by which we are able and willing to believe all the truths revealed by God
* This power remains in the soul as a permanent acquisition, unless lost through the deliberate rejection of faith, i.e. a sin against faith itself. It does not grow stronger by repeated acts of faith, but by new infusions of grace by God through the Sacraments and in prayer (one can ask for more faith). But it can grow weaker if acts of faith are not made, especially in situations where they are needed, e.g. in temptations against faith. What gets weaker is the co-operation of the mind and/or will with grace; if this continues, these faculties can become indisposed to freely cooperate with grace, making it easier for the person to reject faith, especially in terms of guiding their actions by the light of faith.
* Although faith resides in both the intellect and will, St Thomas places it “formally” in the intellect, because it has intelligible content, i.e. knowledge, which is proper to the intellect. However, the intellect and will are spiritual powers immediately present to each other in the soul, so the knowledge of something as a good in the intellect can serve to motivate the will to act in some way, and thus faith also exists in the will, with God acting in both powers to enable the person to perform supernatural acts.
1. Faith as beginning of deification: Trinitarian dimension of faith.
* Faith is the beginning of salvation (*initium humanae salutis* Dz/DS 801/1532 [Trent], 1789/3008 [Vat I]), which brings about an interior transformation of the person from sinner to one who is justified, and who therefore enters into the intimacy of divine life, i.e. lives as a child of God. This intimacy with God is also called deification and brings about a personal relationship with each person of the Bl Trinity. The response to Rev through faith and the beginning of deification are really two aspects of the one same reality.
* The Trinitarian dimensions of faith is the very goal of Christian faith, for it is God’s plan of Salvation. Faith in God who reveals himself begins as faith in Christ. But it doesn’t end there, for faith in Christ leads us to faith in and a personal relation to each Divine Person. As DV no. 2[1] reminds us, through Christ we “have access in the Holy Spirit to the Father and come to share in the divine nature (see Eph. 2:18; 2 Peter 1:4).” This same faith is also the gift of the Holy Spirit, for only in the Holy Spirit can we confess that Jesus is Lord, i.e. God (cf. 1 Cor 12:3). Through the same grace of deification, the entire Trinity, hence each Divine Person, is mysteriously present in the soul of the believer. In all these ways, we see how the believer is raised through faith to a new divine way of being: family life within the Blessed Trinity: ***our heart now needs to distinguish and adore each one of the divine Persons***. (St. Josemaría, *Friends of God***,** no. 306.)
* The Trinitarian life of the Christian reaches it full development in the Beatific Vision, when the soul (and after the resurrection of the body, the whole person, body and soul) experiences God without any kind of mediation by created things: concepts, words, images, etc. Then faith is replaced by direct vision in a wholly new kind of existence which fully satisfies the desires of the human person, but without satiating them, i.e. extinguishing desire. Human language is inadequate to describe this new kind of life (1 Cor 2:9).
1. Christian life as a life of faith: contemplative life, works of faith, faith that works through charity.
* Christian life consists in growing in and exercising all the virtues, i.e. it is meant to be a continual growth in holiness. In particular, faith must become operative in daily life if a Christian is to reach this fullness. Some aspects of a life of faith:
* *Contemplative life.* Faith manifests itself in prayer and a prayerful life, since a child of God wants to communicate with the God he/she believes in and entrusts his/her life to. A prayerful life not only includes specific times dedicated exclusively to prayer, but also seeks to maintain communication with God in all areas of life: personal, family and social life, work and rest, joys and sorrows, important moments and small, everyday, even trivial situations. As seen above, faith is like a foretaste of the Beatific Vision in heaven, and contemplation is the prayerful dimension of this foretaste.
* Strengthening faith by making many acts of explicit faith; although supernatural in origin, the facility for making acts of faith can increase due to repetition of human acts, just like all the virtues.
* *Works of faith.* Faith also manifests itself in deeds, becoming a life of faith, a life inspired and guided by faith. Besides making explicit acts of faith, e.g. when facing temptations against faith or considering the mysteries in Rev, a child of God seeks to guide all their actions by the truths of Rev. This will lead him/her to discern the will of God in all situations and to act in keeping with it. Faith will also lead the child of God to act boldly in carrying out God’s will, not held back by considerations which leave God out of the picture. Faith seeks to spread itself to others, since salvation is meant for everyone, and so a Christian will be eager to share their faith with others (cfr 1 Pet 3:15)
* *Faith that works through charity.* Faith is the foundation of a Christian life, and on it are “built” hope and charity. While hope fosters good desires in a child of God, as steps to the great hope of heaven, which is God’s “desire” for his children, charity drives him/her to carry out those good desires with the very Love that God has. And so faith leads to “good works”; just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without good works is dead (James 2:26). Good works are those whose motive is the love of God, which is inseparable from love of others. Thus “good works” include actions which have a naturally good content, such as one’s daily work and rest, care for family and friends, activity in society, etc., when good human motives are crowned by the love of God. Of course, actions which have supernatural content, such as the worship of God, works of mercy, sharing one’s faith, etc., are inherently good works. Charity, then is the expression of a (supernaturally) living faith: “show me your faith apart from works, and I by my works will show you my faith” (James 2:18).
* *Faith without charity*. The most basic work of faith is to avoid losing sanctifying grace through mortal sin. Lifeless or formless faith is the habit of faith that remains in those who have lost sanctifying grace, even if they have not lost faith entirely by sinning against it directly; it is still faith, i.e. knowledge of God and Rev but without charity. Lifeless faith is no longer a virtue, although it remains a habit in the soul (cf. S.Th. II-II, q.4, a.5, ad 3m). No act made with lifeless faith is supernaturally meritorious, although it can dispose one to respond to the grace of repentance. Faith is made actual and salutary when formed by charity. The habit of faith is lost through sins directly against faith, the most serious of which is formal heresy, i.e. the denial of some truth of Rev (CCC 2089).

[class 20]

*Review*

**PART II**

**CREDIBILITY**

***VI. GENERAL NOTIONS***

[class 21]

1. *Properties of the act of faith.*
2. The act of faith: supernatural, free and certain. (O&B pp140-141)
* In part II of FT we consider the credibility of Rev. A judgment of credibility accompanies the act of faith, and this judgment involves human reason. Up until now we have concentrated more on the supernatural dimension of faith. Now we will examine how human reason enters into faith.
* We can summarise the properties of the act of faith as follows:
* *Supernatural*: for several reasons: (i) because the act of faith as such exceeds the natural capabilities of intellect and will; (ii) divine truth is of the highest order, both in its content and in its truthfulness (it can never be false); (iii) Revealed truth enables us to do the works of God, to act in a supernatural manner. Because divine truth is above our human capacity for knowledge and it is not evident to us, the truths of faith retain a certain obscurity, analogous to the brightness of the sun exceeding our capacity to have direct vision of it.
* *Free*: the assent of faith is a free human act (dogma, cf. Vat I, Dz 1791). The assent of faith is not produced in a necessary fashion by evidence apparent to the intellect. It proceeds instead from a free command of the will. God’s grace does not force one to consent; the possibility always remains of resisting such grace and falling back into doubt or error. Because the will must intervene, and the will is free, the act of faith is also free. This is confirmed by the unfortunate fact that some people do fall away from faith.
* *Certain:* the assent of faith is the most certain of all assents. It is certain in two senses:
* *exclusion of doubt*: doubt arises in the human intellect when a truth contrary to the one being assented to is considered equally possible. Faith assents to truth on God’s authority, and God could never contradict himself. So with the help of grace, the believer excludes doubt from his/her assent to Rev. However, the will is still free, so can fall into doubt that is self-inflicted (more on this later). The certainty of faith is comprehensive: it embraces *all* that God has revealed. If one doubts even one truth, then it the same as doubting all of them, because one’s faith is still not yet supernatural.
* *firmness:* with the help of grace, the mind clings to revealed truth firmly. This admits of varying degrees: the more the motive (i.e. God) is seen “behind” a truth of faith, the more firmly will the believer cling to it. The testimony of God is surer than any human reasoning or testimony, surer than any other possible motive (cf. Acts 2:36; 1 Jn 5:9-10; 2 Pet 1:16-19).
1. Perseverance in faith.
* *Do not* destroy *our faith*. Faith is a priceless gift which we can lose: *Wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith* (1 Tim 1:18-19). The Christian has a duty to safeguard this treasure and help it grow, taking whatever steps are necessary: e.g. avoiding dangers like bad company or reading material which goes against faith; using means to support and foster faith (Sacraments, prayer, sacrifices, formative material and events), being concerned for the faith of others, etc.
* To persevere in faith also implies keeping our faith alive, i.e. avoid having an unformed faith (i.e. without charity), putting faith into practice in daily life, etc.
* “To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith (Cf. Mk 9,24; Lk 17,5; 22,32), it must be ‘working through charity,’ abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church (Gal 5,6; Rom 15,13; cf. Jas 2,14-26)” [CCC 162].
* If one uses the means, God will not deny his grace in order to persevere in faith.
1. Relation between faith and reason in the inception and development of faith.
* Reason cooperates with grace within the exercise of divine faith, and in fact it is not possible to make an act of faith without the use of reason. There are different levels at which this cooperation occurs.
* *Rationality of faith*. The act of faith itself must be reasonable. Faith is not a blind or irrational impulse. At no moment before or during act of faith does the intellect embrace anything which is contradictory to it or nonsensical. An act of faith is properly speaking reasonable, because it involves the intellect; and even though the intellect in this case has been elevated supernaturally, that elevation does not alter the faculty of reason. Furthermore, what Christians believe through faith is found to be intellectually satisfying, e.g. St. Justin Martyr called Christian doctrine “Christian philosophy,” because it answered the deepest questions about God and man just as philosophy tries to do. What is intellectually satisfying cannot be “nonsensical” or irrational.
* *The preambles of faith.* There exist certain intellectual conditions or truths conducive to making an initial act of faith: the truth concerning God's existence, his attributes (goodness, transcendence, benevolence, omnipotence and omniscience, trustworthiness, etc.); philosophical truths concerning man (freedom of will, capacity to know of truth, immaterial soul, etc.); and creation (as gift, intelligently designed, etc.). All these truths resonate with our faith and provide a kind of intellectual “platform” on which faith can rest.
* Other ways that reason plays a role in preparing for and in making an initial act of faith:
* *establishing certainty* about the fact of Rev: reason can ascertain whether God really speaks to man through the Church
* *acquaintance* with Rev: reason can become familiar with the content of Rev taught by the Church
* *judgment of credibility* of Rev: reason can judge that it is prudent and reasonable to accept truths solely on God’s authority, without other evidence. This judgment is important, for it is the coherent rational motive which shapes and specifies the assent of mind, and without which the assent would in fact be irrational.
* *judgment of credentity*: the intellect can then judge that one *ought* to believe; this judgment is the one immediately preceding the act of faith, and it does require grace, because in it the person comes to the very threshold of faith with the conviction that they should take the next step
* N.B. In all these steps, grace can and does help the intellect and will, but grace might not be *necessary* in all of them. [We will revisit these stages of act of faith later].
* The intellect also plays a role of after the act of faith.
* This role is mainly to help faith to grow. Faith seeks understanding, i.e. faith leads the believer to want to know better the One in whom he/she has put their faith.
* The desire to understand Rev better finds its best expression in theology, i.e. the use of reason to investigate the content of Rev more thoroughly. This was especially emphasised in *Fides et Ratio*; in the words of St. Augustine, “I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe” (*Sermo* 43, 7, 9: PL 38, 257-258).
* In summary, faith and reason, properly understood and exercised, always cooperate, and are never at odds. Any opposition will always be only apparent, because the working of one and/or the other has not been properly carried out.
1. Credibility and reasonableness as properties of Revelation and faith, respectively. (O&B pp 181-183)
* As defined by Vat I, Cred and reasonableness are properties of Rev. “That the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit” (Vat I, Dz 1790).
* The miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church's growth and holiness, and her fruitfulness and stability “are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all” (ibid); they are “motives of credibility” (Dz 1794).
* The credibility of Rev could be defined as follows: credibility is a property of Rev, that is, its aptitude or worthiness to be believed with supernatural faith. This credibility is established by the motives (or signs) of credibility which accompany Rev and form part of Rev itself: miracles, prophecies, the history of the Church, the sublimity of Christian truth, the holiness of saints, etc.).
* These motives of credibility help establish the following:
* *The fact of Rev*, i.e. that God has intervened in history in a singular manner in order to bear witness to Himself and show us the path to salvation,
* *Rev is relevant to us*, i.e. God’s Rev not only speaks to us but has the fullness of meaning that man longs for.
* The defense of the credibility of Christian faith was the traditional concern of Christian Apologetics (CA), stemming from NT times (cfr 1 Pet 3:15) It dealt with the elements that support the reasonableness of the assent to Rev by faith. Since Rev has been entrusted to the Church, CA also dealt with the credibility of the Church. These topics have been taken up into the broader framework of FT.
1. Possible approaches to the study and explanation of credibility. (O&B pp 184-217)
* Basically two approaches have been used in the Church’s history, depending on the answer given to the following questions:
* Is a reasonable and prudent justification of the Christian’s faith legitimate or even necessary?
* Is it possible to find in Revelation elements that show its credibility?
* Is it possible to know the credibility of Rev with certainty?
* Is it possible to understand the faith-reason relationship in a way that sees them united and harmoniously fused in faith?
* The answers fall into two camps:
* Faith and reason are intimately connected; this is the answer of most medieval scholastics, most Church theologians and the Magisterium of the Church.
* They have nothing to do with each other: this is the view of 16th cent reformers (Luther, Calvin; they believe that original sin corrupted human nature, including reason) and fideists from 2nd cent (Tatian) to 19th cent (mainly France); Vat I condemned fideism, which denied that human intellect can defend Rev and delve into it, so that faith is the only way to know God’s existence and perfections; some late 19th cent theologians who opposed the Jesus of history with the Christ of faith (more on this later)
* There is also the objection against Rev raised by those who do not accept the fact of Rev and/or or the reasonableness of faith, starting from an atheistic viewpoint. This has been dealt with in the perspective of CA and will be covered in the next sections.

***VII. RELIGION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY***

[class 22]

1. *Man as a religious being; religions.*
2. Religion and revelation. (O&B pp 225-229)
* Man is by nature religious and this constitutes an essential and universal aspect of his way of being (cf. CCC 28).
* Historical Rev does not give rise to this religious instinct but presupposes it. We could say that religion constitutes a response to God’s Word as it is found in natural Rev; it is “reminded” and stimulated by primitive Rev.
* Religion can be considered both in objective terms as a collection of beliefs and practices pertaining to a transcendent Being, and in subjective terms as a moral virtue. Some features of religion:
* Religion establishes a personal relationship between God and his creatures.
* *Objectively*, it consists of certain internal and external acts (cf. CCC 2095-2103): (i) internal: beliefs, prayer; (ii) external: adoration, sacrifice, rituals and material support, codes of belief and conduct, customs, institutions.
* *Religion as a moral virtue*. Religion is the moral virtue whereby we offer to God the honour and worship that is rightfully His because of His supreme excellence. This definition follows from the natural moral law.
* The virtue of religion is obligatory for all men, according to the natural law. Cf. CCC no. 2105, which situates this duty in the context of the right to religious freedom, i.e. the right to follow one’s conscience in religious belief and practice, free from coercion by civil authorities. This right follows from regard for human dignity (as the image of God), not from relativism (which holds that all religions are equally valid). It is compatible with what Rev tells us, and the response of Christian faith, which is a free act.
* By virtue of the same natural law, man is obliged to render both external and internal worship to God,including public worship (in common with other men, cf. DH nn.4-7). This last point means that society as such is obliged to worship God (cf. CCC no. 2105).
* *Fact of man’s natural religious condition*. As an historical and sociological fact, mankind has always practiced religion in the above sense. People are not naturally atheistic or religiously indifferent. Certitude that a god or gods exist who must be honoured and worshipped has been a constant and universal conviction, and it is marked with such characteristics that it must be considered the result of sound reason. Similar characteristics are found between religions, in spite of a very wide range of beliefs and practices. The absence of religion is the exception, not the rule in human history; even where atheistic regimes have dominated, religion can still be found among the people.
* *The difference Rev makes*. Before historical Rev, all religions could be considered valid ways of fulfilling personal and social religious obligations, to the extent that they were compatible with the natural law (some were not very compatible, e.g. those practicing human sacrifice, “sacred” prostitution, etc.). However, once God began to reveal himself, that situation was replaced by one in which the only “true” religion is the one that God has founded through his Rev. The value of all other world religions now becomes a theological question. Do other religions retain any significance for men whatsoever? Can they have some intrinsic relation to Christian Rev? Can they in some ways also be means of salvation? Is there a hierarchy among the different religions? These are questions that FT must address.
1. Relation between religions and Christian Revelation. (O&B pp 224-235)
* The relation between Christianity and other religions must be answered within the light of Rev itself. There are several questions, each somewhat complex, to be answered:
* Is there only *one* true religion? Are other religions true in some way? Is it arrogant to affirm that Christianity is the only true religion?
* Is there salvation outside the Church? Can any religion other than Christianity be by itself a way of salvation? Do other religions contain useful elements for salvation, even if they are not the one true religion?
* Is Jesus Christ the only mediator of salvation between God and man, or are there other mediators of salvation besides Him? What might be the relation of any possible mediator to Him?
* Magisterium and theology up to 20th century.
* Various texts of SS have been employed over time in dealing with these questions. Among them are on one hand texts expressing God’s universal will of salvation, e.g. 1 Tim 2:4 and on the other hand texts expressing the uniqueness of Jesus Christ for salvation, e.g. Jn 14:6 and Acts 4:12. From Rev (Deut 5:6-7) there is God’s affirmation of his uniqueness.
* The Fathers of the Church emphasized the need for Christ in order to be saved, but some also saw a value of preparation for Christ in pagan cultures, e.g. St Justin’s “seeds of the Word” in Greek philosophy. However, they all preached against most of the doctrines and practices of paganism (polytheism, immorality in various forms, persecution of Christians, etc.).
* The Magisterium over this time had to address heretical and schismatic errors, as well as attacks from pagans, Jews and, from the 7th cent, Islam. So the situation did not lend itself to positive evaluations of other religions. Furthermore, the missionary efforts in Europe and elsewhere favoured an emphasis on the need for Rev and Christ in order to be saved.
* The traditional solution of theology (esp. of St. Thomas Aquinas) held that a certain remnant of primitive Rev could be found in other religions, which would guarantee the minimum of faith needed for salvation: that God exists, and that he rewards the good (cf. Heb 11:6).
* Two main lines of thought developed among Catholic theologians in the 20th cent concerning the above questions:
* As articulated by Jean Danielou, Henri de Lubac and others, one side considered that other religions are based on the covenant with Noah, one that involves God's revelation in nature (natural Rev) and within man’s conscience. This is not yet the covenant with Abraham, which involved historical Rev, i.e. God’s plan of salvation. However, insofar as the other religions uphold the contents of the Noahic covenant, they have positive value, but, as such, they do not have salvific value. They are “stepping-stones to hope” but could also be “stumbling blocks” because of sin. Only in Christ and in his Church do they reach their final and definitive fulfilment.
* The other line, represented by Karl Rahner (and also R. Panikkar and G. Thils) affirms that the offer of grace in the present (natural) order of things reaches all men. Every person has a vague, even if not necessarily conscious awareness of its action and its light. Given that man is by nature a social being, religions, insofar as they are social expressions of the relation of man with God, help their followers to receive the grace of Christ by *implicit faith*, which satisfies the requirement for salvation, and to be open in this way to love of neighbour which Jesus identified with the love of God. In this sense they can have salvific value even though they contain elements of ignorance, sin and corruption.
* The teachings of the Magisterium and theological positions from Vatican II onwards are considered below in section d)
1. Protestant theology.
* Protestant theology spans a wider range of views than Catholic theology, since they have no Magisterium to determine whether some teaching does not accord with Rev. Regarding other religions, Protestant theologians range from fideist positions, such as Barth, who hold that Christianity is the only true religion to relativist positions, which accept virtually any kind of belief as valid.
* The common thread in Protestant positions is the Bible itself, but without an authoritative body to interpret SS, theological positions claiming to derive from it can vary widely, even be contradictory. Fortunately, some Protestant theologians hold positions close to Catholic ones, and some of these have in fact become Catholics, e.g. Richard Neuhaus, a Lutheran pastor in the USA who became a Catholic in the 1980s.
1. Vatican II and later theology (O&B pp 229-235)
* The more recent Magisterium includes: (i) several documents of Vatican II (1962-65); (ii) Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus* (2000).
* Main features of Vatican II doctrine on other religions.
* *Nostrae aetatae* begins with explicit recognition and positive evaluation of fundamental religious experiences shared by all men: inclination towards God, role of conscience, seeking answers to fundamental questions (What is man? What is the purpose of our life? What is sin? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is our final destiny? (cf. NA 1). Man has a capacity for religion and its common expression in spite of very different socio-cultural contexts and influences. These facts of religious experience shared by all humanity are the foundation of all religion; for the Christian theologian, they show that all human beings are creatures who are destined toward Christ (universal call to holiness), in whom all things have been created, in whom everything subsists, and toward whom everything tends.
* The possibility of salvation outside the Church is affirmed in *Lumen gentium* in a qualified way as follows: “Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel. She knows that it is given by Him who enlightens all men so that they may finally have life.” (LG n.16). [“Grace” above might be actual graces, but God can also give habitual grace to anyone he wants.]
* The Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every person the possibility of being associated with the paschal mystery (GS 22).
* In ways known to Himself [alone], He leads them even to that faith necessary for salvation (AG 7).
* God’s salvific action reaches non-Christians (i) through the study of created realities and involvement in earthly affairs (GS 36); (ii) the inner law and “sanctuary” of the conscience (GS 16).
* *Extra Ecclesia nulla salus* (no salvation outside the Church) must be understood in the context provided by the above statements. [Example: Fr. Peter De Smet and testimony of Indians who tell him they never committed a mortal sin].
* Elements of “truth and grace” in other religions are found already among the nations as a secret presence of God (AG 9). The council rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions (NA 2) and recognizes the ascetic and contemplative traditions whose seeds were sometimes already planted by God in ancient cultures prior to the preaching of the Gospel (AG 18). Those who have not received the Gospel nevertheless are related in various ways to the people of God (LG 16): Jews, Muslims, and others who seek the unknown God.
* *In summary*. The Catholic Church recognizes the value of non-Christian religions, not for the fact of being religions, but for the validity of some of the elements they contain. Not all religions are equally valid: their validity varies from one to another because the value of a religion depends on its closeness to who Christ is, what he did and said.
* CDF, *Dominus Iesus*: This was a corrective to wayward theologies since Vat II. Mainly a compilation of previous Magisterium. Accepting all that the Council said, it reiterates and strongly underscored the traditional teaching of the uniqueness of Christian salvation and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ’s mediation as saviour. Selected highlights:
* Rev has a definitive and complete character in Jesus Christ (DI n.5); hence other religions cannot complement or complete that Rev (DI n.6).
* Other forms of salvific mediation (religions, gurus, etc.) almost certainly exist, since Jesus Christ’s unique mediation does not exclude such manifold cooperation (cf. LG 62). However, these participated forms of mediation acquire meaning and value only from Christ’s own mediation: they are neither complementary nor parallel [i.e. not independent] to His (DI no. 14).
* Uniqueness and unity of the Church: many elements of sanctification and truth can be found outside the structure of the Catholic Church, but the Church founded by Jesus Christ as a community and salvific mystery subsists in (*subsistit in* cf. LG 8) the Catholic Church (DI nos. 16-17). Whatever efficacy these other Churches (i.e. as opposed to religions) have, is derived from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to Catholic Church (UR 3). There is no economy of the Divine Word which operates independently of the economy of Incarnate Word (DI no. 9), nor is there an economy of the Holy Spirit which is more universal that that of crucified Incarnate Word (DI no. 12).
* *Theology after Vatican II*. Below is a brief summary of various theological positions on these questions. Some obvious non-orthodox opinions are represented here:
* *exclusive model*: all other religions are erroneous and idolatrous. Christianity is the only true religion. Jesus Christ is the exclusive mediator of salvation. Membership in the Church by explicit faith is the only assurance of salvation. Examples: Karl Barth (Protestant). Fr. Feeney (Catholic, Boston late 1940’s, was censured but later reconciled), Archbishop Lefebvre (rejected ecumenism).
* *Inclusive model*: This view accepts the partial truth of non-Christian religions (LG 16, GS 22) but does not accept that they are equivalent paths to salvation. Whatever elements of grace, faith and salvation might be found in these religions find their source in Jesus Christ, who is the only source of salvation. The Christian view of the universe and salvation is Christocentric. Examples: Rahner (in his good moments), Danielou, von Balthasar, Church’s Magisterium (Vat II).
* *Normative model*: This rejects view of uniqueness of salvation in Christ and asserts instead that all religions have an intrinsic salvific value independent of the founder of Christianity. However, among the various mediators of salvation among different religions, Jesus Christ is the most important one. He is the normative mediator, who by the supreme quality of the example he left us, and by the fullness of the Christ as an event in history, corrects and fulfils the other paths of salvation, which remain intrinsically salvific but enriched through Jesus Christ. Example: Hans Küng (Rahner can tend toward this also).
* *pluralistic model*: plurality of mediators and salvific paths, all of equal validity. Jesus Christ is just one of many, but not unique. Example:J. Hick
* *religion without Christ*: value of religions lies in “values of the kingdom”, mainly human liberation. Example: P. Knitter.
* Another important document is by the International Theological Commission, *Christianity and World Religions* (1997)
1. Revelation as purification and elevation of religion.
* “Whatever all men have uttered aright is the property of us Christians” (St. Justin, *Apologia* 2,13). Clearly Rev does not fundamentally oppose or contradict the claims of other religions to the extent that they are true reflections of the light *that enlightens all men* (cf. Jn 1,9), and its action within the hearts of men. Rev is not meant to destroy what is good and useful for salvation in other religions. But since other religions are essentially expressions of human creatureliness, and because humans are wounded by sin, we must regard them inevitably as marked by what is negative within human nature, as is the case for all expressions of human cultures. They contain elements which are obstacles to God’s grace. Once Rev it is brought into contact with cultures of other religions, it purifies them from these elements and at the same time elevates them by bringing them into direct contact with the saving mystery of Christ (cf. AG 9). The good elements of their heritage become part of the heritage of Christianity. In other words, Christian Rev manifests its credibility by being the source from which all other religions draw whatever truth and value for union with God they might have*.* The Catholic Church is truly inclusive. This is the basis of the inculturation of Christianity.

[class 23]

1. *Unbelief.*
2. Objections to the revealed character of Christianity: philosophical and historiographical origins.
* We can distinguish *unbelief* from *nonbelief,* in that the former indicates a deliberately willed decision to not believe, while the latter includes those who are objectively ignorant of God or his Rev. All forms of deliberate unbelief are to be considered a “serious problem” (cf. GS 19) for FT, because to believe in the God that reveals himself in history, it is necessary to believe beforehand that God is the absolute Being, the beginning and end of all reality.
* The root reason for human dignity lies in man’s call to communion with God. Man cannot live fully according to the truth, including the truth about himself, unless he freely acknowledges and devotes himself to His Creator. Still, many of our contemporaries have never recognized this intimate and vital link with God or have explicitly rejected it. Thus, atheism must be accounted among the most serious problems of this age and is deserving of closer examination (GS 19).
* There are four distinct postures of unbelief with regard to Rev. Atheism, Deism, religious indifference, agnosticism.
* *Atheism* is the denial that a transcendent, personal God exists (pantheism, the affirmation of an immanent, impersonal god, falls into this category). Atheism is to close oneself off to Rev: it is the anti-response to Rev, i.e. anti-faith. Atheism is the exact opposite of theism (to believe that God exists). It is defined more by what it doesn’t believe than what it does believe. No one can reasonably prove that God does not exist. Consequently, any form of atheism is really a belief system (a kind of faith, perhaps more a kind of opinion) in its own right; it is an interpretation of the world and of man in contradistinction to “religious” interpretations. Contradistinction because atheism specifically rejects any explanation of the world, humanity, and history that demands the presence and intervention of a transcendent Being. Atheism is a fact of life acknowledged in Scripture, e.g. Ps 14:1: “the fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’.”
* Related to atheism is *pantheism*, which holds that everything is divine in some way; this ends up being equivalent to atheism, since there is no Being that transcends the rest of beings
* *Historical origins*. There have been a few atheists among ancient thinkers and throughout history, but relatively few; the fideism of the 16th cent Reformers widened a split between faith and reason which is part of the “Modern” intellectual heritage, although it has roots in the nominalism (i.e. no essences of things, only names) of late Scholasticism; atheism began to spread among European thinkers (e.g. Diderot, d’Holbach) after mid-18th cent, and was followed by a widespread rejection of Christian faith, especially in intellectual circles; philosophical currents in 19th cent were quite varied, but tended toward materialism, justified sometimes by the remarkable progress of science (as if everything could be explained by matter and energy), with the consequent denial of any kind of transcendent or spiritual being. Philosophical currents of atheism have included pantheism (Spinoza, Hegel), 19th cent anthropology (Feuerbach), naturalistic atheism (Engels), dialectical materialism (Marx), socio-political atheism (Lenin), Anglo-American empiricism (Whitehead, Dewey), death of God and vitalistic irrationalism (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche), 20th cent philosophies: existentialism (Sartre, Heidegger), a “theology” of atheism (Bonhoeffer), today: post-modernism, nihilism, “weak-thought.” All this has led to a progressive secularization of society and culture (see below).
* *Deism*. Deists also call themselves “free-thinkers” or “libertines.” Deism was a natural religion without mysteries, i.e. Christianity made “reasonable.” Historically (17th cent onwards) it assumed a polemical attitude toward Christianity, informed by Enlightenment and rationalist principles. Only those religious and moral principles were admitted which could be reached through use of human reason alone, and it rejected the possibility of or need for Rev. To great extent modern atheism had its roots in it.
* *Religious indifference* is indifference (weak) towards one’s own religion or indifference (strong) toward all religion and everything having to do with religion. It is a very recent phenomenon. The question as to whether God exists or not is not deemed of value. Not a rejection of God but a lack of interest, insensibility to all religious matters, including the fundamental questions about the meaning of the human person and its destiny, the meaning of the world, etc. The search for such answers is the fundamental locus not only for Christian faith but also of deliberate unbelief that implies a decision of conscience. By nature, the human being is open to the transcendent, but an indifferent person does not seem interested in this radical questioning because they are absorbed in pragmatic interaction with the world, often consumerism. It involves a spiritual numbness, no courage to even question and scrutinize. This is the most radical form of unbelief. In a real way, the absence of God is nowhere as complete as in indifference.
* *Agnosticism*. In principle, this is different from religious indifference and atheism, yet it is similar to them. Its origins are in philosophical agnosticism, which holds that transcendental truths (e.g. about God) are not knowable to us. The term “agnostic” was first used by Thomas Henry Huxley ca. 1869. It is like practical atheism and religious indifference in its resistance to address questions about God, but it is more principled in doing so.
1. Theological response to naturalism: critique of anti-spiritualist determinism.
* Ultimately there are two ways to look at the world and man.
* neither man nor the world have in themselves the ultimate reason of their being and are, consequently, relative to the absolute Other who transcends the world and is their sufficient cause; or
* the world and man are the only things that exist, or that we can know about, and therefore there is no need or possibility of further explanation.
* The latter is also termed *naturalism*: the denial of the need for a transcendent God by asserting the sufficient explanation of everything through “natural” causes, be they scientific or philosophical.
* There is also a related belief called *determinism:* (it is a belief, for it cannot be proven) that every occurrence in universe is so determined by antecedent and concurrent phenomena that it could not be otherwise than it is. The knowledge of all circumstances in a given situation assures the satisfactory explanation and accurate prediction of every consequence derivable from them. This would exclude human freedom, a transcendent God and Rev. This is an older belief that has lost ground because of late 20th cent developments in physical sciences (disorder, uncertainty, probability, chaos theory, etc.)
* C.S. Lewis had a simple and effective argument against naturalism in his book *Miracles*. Gist of argument: naturalism is full of self-contradictions, e.g. if naturalism is true, then human knowledge is not possible, because one cannot derive rationality from a system that is inherently irrational. Hence we must admit the insufficiency of naturalism as a true explanation of the world and man.
1. The phenomenon of atheism and secularization.
* *Rise of secularism.* Modern atheism arises especially in the context of the secularization process in Western industrial societies, while to some extent it also causes secularization. Secularization could be defined as the process which terminates any dominant influence exerted by a religious vision of life on thought and culture, and by any religious body on the development of political, economic and academic institutions. This process begins in the Renaissance, continues with the Reformation and especially the Enlightenment. It has a positive aspect, i.e. the recognition of a just autonomy of the temporal order, with civic institutions not being directed by religious and ecclesiastical ones. However, when that autonomy is taken to an extreme, secularism results, i.e. a temporal order based on the exclusion of God. As an ideology, radical secularism has become anti-religious and atheistic, (cf. GS 36).
* Secularism originally developed from applying to many areas of social life the principle of methodological atheism. This principle was intended to provide the basis for a natural law that is independent of all religious quarrels (cf. Hugo Grotius: *etsi Deus non daretur*, “as if there were no God”). After long European wars between nations composed mainly of Christians (as a consequence of the breakdown in Christian unity), the understandable desire for peaceful living was a key moral impetus for adopting the strong secularizing influence of democratic political theory. However, such a principle leads toward practical atheism in everyday life, which becomes the cultural basis for theoretical unbelief (cf. GS n.19 above).
* *How secularization process was accomplished*. (i) in culture by doing away with cultural elements or symbols that are explicitly religious, also by the acceptance of philosophical and moral positions which contradicted traditional religious values; this was effectively spread through education (e.g. in Germany and France). (ii) in public life by the gradual removal of Church, God and religion from civic life, e.g. celebrations (iii) in politics by handing over property, activities and powers previously held by Church, e.g. in education, health care, social service, etc. (iv) in theology by adopting secular interpretations of all religious phenomena. A contemporary (late 1960s) example is Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*: death of religion proclaimed, secularization as such is a characteristic of Judeo-Christianity, and should be used as our starting point for talking about God and interpreting the Bible. (He has since revised his theory, given the growth of religion in recent decades).
1. Intellectual, volitional and cultural factors that lead to unbelief.
* *GS 19 on reasons for atheism.* Given the strong conviction about God’s existence found in all peoples, how is atheism (and other forms of unbelief) possible? (1) Difficulty in reaching certainty concerning God’s existence, e.g. the claims of science to explain the world (2) Exaggerated humanism: excessive confidence of man in himself, bewitched by advances in science and technology, in pursuit of salvation that can be found within the world; (3) practical materialism of our social, political and economic structures: consumerism, utilitarianism, moral relativism, legal positivism (the law establishes what is good and bad)… (4) the problem of evil, seen by some as contradicting the existence of a good God; (5) practical atheism, i.e. living as if God does not really matter, sadly a feature of the lives of many contemporary Christians; (6) contemporary distrust of all theoretical philosophical reflection, especially metaphysics, which is considered untenable by many. See GS 19 for more reasons.
* Common to all forms of unbelief is a deliberate exclusion of God from one's heart and silence about one's need for God. This exclusion is culpable: “those who wilfully shut out God from their hearts and try to dodge religious questions are not following the dictates of their consciences, and hence are not free of blame” (GS n.19). The evil of atheism not merely a “philosophical sin,” i.e. error of intellect; the will is involved.
* But concerning blame, GS 19 also lays some on the shoulders of Christians:
* “For taken as a whole, atheism is not a spontaneous development but stems from a variety of causes, including a critical reaction against religious beliefs and in some places against the Christian religion in particular. Hence believers can have more than a little to do with the birth of atheism. To the extent that they neglect their own training in the faith, or teach erroneous doctrine, or are deficient in their religious, moral or social life, they must be said to conceal rather than reveal the authentic face of God and religion.”
* Some authors also maintain that the process of secularization and its tendency to atheism stems at least in part from quarrels and wars between Christians, especially when religion was given as a reason for the quarrels; however, genuine religion (i.e. where God is truly revered) does not divide people, rather it is people who divide religion; besides, people quarrel about many good things (culture, wealth, activity, romantic love, etc.), and this does make those things bad in themselves
1. Paths toward the knowledge of God and theological and anthropological bases of the possibility of Revelation.
* Atheism appears to be fading (according to some recent surveys), but so too is religious fervour. Proof of God’s existence is an essential, if perhaps difficult, task of apologetics. What is the best apologetic approach toward contemporary unbelief, including atheism? What would convince a non-believer and sceptic that God is real and personal? Some points:
* Before convincing people about the existence of God, we have to re-instil a religious inclination for God that is often missing. Present the “big” questions of man's existence, and ask them what they think (cf. NA 1). Help them see beyond the fallacies of materialism and to appreciate the presence of immaterial human goods and desires, such as happiness, immortality, truth, beauty, love.
* Avoiding “God of the gaps” reasoning in apologetics, i.e. “proofs” based on “gaps” in the scientific explanation of phenomena. Example from Newton: he could not understand how a planetary system could be stable over a long period of time. The individual planets and their gravitational pull would “nudge” the other planets out of their orbits over time. Hence, God had to intervene directly to “nudge” planets back into their proper orbits. This appeared to be a “proof” of God acting directly in the universe through physically observable phenomenon, hence a “proof” of God’s existence. However, Laplace later showed that Newton’s own laws of gravitation actually explained how a planetary system is not unstable. The “proof” was disproved by science.
* Such an apologetic is called a “God of the gaps” approach. One looks for physical or biological phenomena which seem to be unexplainable by today’s science. The only explanation left is claimed to be some direct intervention by a non-natural or supernatural power. However, such an apologetic leaves itself open to attack when advances in science come up with a viable explanation. Moreover, it assumes that we know all of nature’s “tricks”, which is certainly not true. Also, the image of God that emerges from this picture is not a God who is involved with everything, but rather fills up the “gaps” in his creation, as though his making of it was somehow deficient.
* Scientific apologetic of order and finality: instead of looking for “gaps” in our scientific explanation, look at how inorganic and living matter arranges itself (according to specific behaviour) in an orderly fashion. Examples: formation of planetary system from chaos of interstellar matter, evolution of more complex living systems from simpler ones. In such cases we note that the order and intelligibility imposed on nature comes from the physical laws which govern such systems. Moreover, the order is structured into various levels, all dependent upon each other in critical ways. This great harmony of order and intelligibility of universe is itself a great motive for asking: what is the source of this order? It is truly a pathway for the scientist to encounter God. Example: anthropic principle, extraordinary fine-tuning of physical laws and constants of physical theories that make it possible so that our universe supports human life. This approach led Antony Flew, “the world’s most prominent atheist” to belief in a transcnent (if not personal) God in the 90s
* What matters is what convinces people of today, i.e. what is most credible to them. The classical proofs of God’s existence (e.g. Aquinas’ Five Ways) do not convince the average person today (who probably doesn’t understand the terms used), although they remain always valid and important in themselves. Traditional proofs of God’s existence must be supplemented with others having more anthropological antecedents, that is, ones which try to reach God through universal values in human experience, e.g. Newman’s proof from human conscience. Of greatest importance are those which address the questions of evil, pain, suffering and death, since these constitute a stumbling block for many people, who think that they show that either God does not exist, or he is not omnipotent
* Traditional CA often dealt with the question of the possibility of Rev. One could ask, why show the possibility of something that we know has already happened? An answer could be that in considering how Rev is possible, and even very fitting, one can appreciate Rev more in all its fullness and the goodness of God in revealing himself. Moreover, one can critique better those philosophies which *a priori* exclude such a possibility (e.g. pantheism).
* *The* *possibility* of Rev can be considered from 2 angles: (1) Can God reveal himself to man? (2) If God did reveal himself, i.e. the mysteries of his inner existence, would we be capable of understanding his revelation?
* (1) The Self-revelation of God is possible if God is personal and free. Only persons can reveal themselves to other persons; our knowledge of living and inanimate things comes from our investigation of them, not their self-revelation. Also, one reveals oneself to others because one wants to; a forced revelation is not self-revelation but a form of torture. But natural theology tells us that a transcendent God is personal and supremely free, so he can reveal himself to us.
* (2) Could we understand the mysteries of God’s self-revelation?
* Some (rationalists) would deny that any such mysteries (i.e. truths beyond our grasp) can exist for us, because all being is intelligible. This is true, but not necessarily to us. Just as we cannot see things in a blinding light which exceeds the capacity of our eyes to handle, so our minds cannot grasp things which are too far above them, such as the mysteries of God’s inner life. So such mysteries can exist for us.
* But can such mysteries be grasped by us in any way whatsoever? Can they mean anything to us? Yes, according to St. Thomas (cf. S. Th. III, q.11, a.1; I, q.13, a.4, ad 3; I, q.12, a.1). (i) Man’s intellect, as a spiritual faculty, has an obediential potency to be enabled by grace, a spiritual reality, to grasp divine mysteries in some way; (ii) the human intellect has a radical power to know being as such, and so it is open to God who is subsistent Being (cfr Ex 3:15); (iii) man has an innate, natural and spontaneous desire for knowing the inner reality (essences) and causes of beings (cfr human insatiable curiosity), including of God in himself, although this desire is inefficacious by the working of human nature alone in regard to God. Such a desire could not be simply in vain. Another affirmative answer can be given by the logical structure of human statements (including analogy) as a conveyor of truth; as long as God revealed himself in human (analogical) language and helped man with grace, man could understand the meaning of revealed mysteries.

***VIII. SIGNS AND THE CREDIBILITY OF REVELATION***

[class 24]

1. *The credibility of Revelation.*
2. The testimony of Sacred Scripture. (O&B pp236-252)
* OT: these are factors that made Rev credible to the people of Israel; they are motives of credibility, or signs that tell people that God is revealing himself and that his Rev is credible
* God’s saving actions: especially the Exodus and all the events around it over many years (Deut 3:24, Ps 136:4, Job 37:14–16, Is 7:11, Is 29,14, Joel 3,3); these were aimed at the people having faith in God, including in the future (Deut 4:34-35, Ex 10:1-2); also, many victories in battle, often against superior forces (Jg ch7, 1 Mac 4:6-27); these actions are always spectacular, wonderful, surprising, often miraculous, showing God’s power over nature, e.g. parting of Red Sea at Moses’ command, or over the enemies of Israel.
* God as Creator: God’s handiwork in creation manifests his power and goodness, e.g. Ps 93; the permanence and stability of creation reflects God’s fidelity to his people; in Job cch 38-42 the display of the beauty, wonder and wisdom of God’s creation moves Job to continue to keep faith in God even though he is innocent and yet suffering.
* God keeps his promises: the promise of a son to Abraham; the promise of liberation to Moses and the people; the promise of a continuing dynasty to David; also, God answers prayers (Ps 118:21), sometimes dramatically as with Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18:20-40), Daniel in the lions’ den (Dan 6:17-29), the prayer of Esther for deliverance of Israel ((Esth 4:17a-z)
* Words and conduct of the prophets: God sent them to help the people turn away from idols, follow his Law, practice justice and keep faith in him, including his promise of a Messiah; some of them (Elijah and Elisha) worked miracles, other foretold future events, even those that depended on human freedom (Jer 44:29ff, Is 7:1-25).
* NT: similar signs as in the OT, but now centered on Jesus Christ; Jesus himself points to his miracles as signs of his credibility (Jn 10:37-38) Also, Jesus fulfils many of the prophecies of the OT (Acts 2:14-36); Jesus as a motive of credibility will be dealt with more extensively below
1. The praxis of the apologetic works of the Fathers of the Church.
* This was seen briefly in sec 2 a). The Fathers generally sought to defend the Faith by finding points of contact with Greek philosophy; in this way they developed a motive of credibility in how Christian faith answered many questions about man and his life which often lacked a satisfactory answer in Greek philosophy
1. Intrinsic motives of credibility present in Rev. (O&B pp 333-334)
* God’s invitation for man to come to union with him extends throughout SS; it is a motive of credibility because it answers man’s deepest yearnings for fulfillment and happiness
* God’s announcements of his being and his plans for man develop progressively throughout SS, culminating in Christ; these are backed up by miracles which give credibility to God’s promises
* God makes his Rev through human intermediaries (Patriarchs, prophets, eventually Jesus); their credibility is shown by their lives, by prophecies they made and their fulfillment.
1. Principal declarations of the Magisterium concerning the possibility of understanding Revelation. (These are summarized below)
* The truth of Rev cannot be demonstrated by logical arguments, either intrinsic, i.e. from within Rev itself, or extrinsic, i.e. from external sources; the formal motive of faith is always the authority of God who reveals (Dz 1789). However, Christian Rev, and the Catholic Church as the bearer of that Rev, have “evident credibility;” i.e. such credibility *can* be demonstrated (Dz 1790 and 1794), even if the truth of Rev itself cannot.
* The terminology used prior to Vatican II includes both “arguments” (or equivalent terms) and “signs”; Vatican II prefers “signs”, which is a more Biblical term and conveys a reference to God’s action, rather than the logic of demonstration., e.g. Vatican I, in *Dei Filius* uses both terms: “External indications (argumenta externa) of his revelation,” “most certain signs of revelation (divinae revelationis signa sunt certissima),” which are divine acts (facta divina), i.e. actions of God which accompany Rev and whose effects indicate that they could only have God as their author.
* These signs of Rev are included to guarantee that our submission of faith is in accord with reason, that is, so that one can know even with certainty and through reason alone (cf. Dz 2305 / DS 3876) that God indeed has revealed himself. As such they have as their main purpose to prove the divine origin of Christianity and Christian Rev.
* Among the various signs, pride of place goes to miracles and fulfilled prophecies, since they most clearly demonstrate God’s omnipotence and infinite knowledge, and by association with God’s teaching, the divine origin of Rev. With respect to the recipient of Rev, they are especially suited to everyone’s understanding. They are a constant part of the economy of Rev, worked by Moses, prophets, Jesus Christ, the Apostles.
* Special consideration is paid to the Church as a “great and perpetual motive of credibility” in herself. That is: (i) her astonishing propagation; (ii) her outstanding holiness and her inexhaustible fertility in every kind of goodness; (iii) her unity; (iv) her unconquerable stability. Taken altogether, they constitute a formidable moral miracle which proves her divine mission. The Church is a sign of Rev we need here and now during this stage of faithful transmission of the Word of God in order to more readily believe in it.
* Vat I does not demand that every believer must rely on these particular signs for his or her faith to be reasonable. They are providential helps given by God to reassure believers in general.

[class 25]

1. *Credibility and the signs of Revelation.*
2. Epistemological value of knowledge through signs.
* A *sign* (Greek *sémeion*) can be natural, e.g. smoke, or man-made, e.g. a road sign, a text made up of words
* In any case, they have two meanings:
* their own meaning, e.g. smoke as a cloud of tiny particles; a road sign as a piece of material with letters, characters or graphics on it; the text has a literal meaning
* a meaning of some reality beyond themselves, e.g. for smoke, a fire; for a road sign, the way to a place; for a text, some meaning intended by the author, e.g. a greeting, a warning, etc.
* a man-made sign also makes known its author in some way; at least the sign indicates that it had an author, e.g. human footprints, and in many cases it tells something about the author, e.g. footprints made by walking or running; this might not be properly the meaning of the sign, but it is knowledge that the sign conveys
* Signs thus transmit knowledge, depending on the meaning of the signs, either natural or by human agency or both; thus the meaning that can be conveyed can vary according to the way the sign is caused, especially in the case of signs having an intelligent author
* Finally, signs need to be interpreted by those who receive them, in order to extract their meanings; this can also vary, depending on the skill and dispositions of the receivers.
1. Specific characteristics of the signs of Rev. (O&B pp 236-240)
* These are signs having God as their author, making use of created things, actions, etc., hence their meaning can be very rich, and the sign can convey knowledge about God
* Furthermore, Biblical signs have a reference to those receiving the sign, usually God’s people; these signs imply a reception and interpretation by the people with faith, since the reason God gives the signs is to help the people accept his Rev with faith
* The signs used by God throughout the history of Rev are many; these are usually grouped in several categories: events (including visions, locutions, etc.), miracles and prophecies (including their fulfillment); these are not mutually exclusive, as some events include miracles, and the fulfillment of many prophecies is miraculous, since the prophecy was about something that depended on human freedom, the outcome of which no human can predict
1. Systematic theological study of the signs of Revelation.
* Classical apologetics has traditionally distinguished the following three sets of motives for the credibility of Rev:
* Negative criteria: they are called negative because they say what Rev should not be, rather than what it should be, e.g. that it is not erroneous, not morally evil. They are meant to exclude the obvious cases of non-revealed truths, rather than point to truths of divine origin.
* Subjective criteria: the cred that these motives/criteria establish arises from the unique manner in which Rev fulfils man's greatest aspirations and desires. They are grounded in the subject of Rev (the one who has received and thus “has” Rev, i.e. man. “Subjective” here does not mean “arbitrary,” but rather the subject to whom Rev was addressed and has received it.
* Objective criteria: the cred that these motives/criteria establish are independent of the subject of Rev, hence they are “objective,” and apply to all persons equally. Here we are talking about miracles, prophecies, and the Church (cf. Dz 1790 and 1794). In the framework of classical apologetics, these are the objective criteria are the only full-strength, incontestable ones. That is because only miracles demonstrably show us that God has truly intervened. To the extent that other motives of cred assimilate themselves to miracles, they have some value for establishing the fact and the credibility of Rev.
1. The value of the different signs; description of various theological trends.
* (skip this for now)

[class 26]

1. *Miracles and prophecy.*
2. Miracles as divine actions and as signs (O&B pp 342-354)
* Miracle (from Latin *miraculum*, from *mirari*, to wonder). One definition: “An effect perceptible by the senses and beyond the powers of all created nature to bring about”. There are two important elements:
* beyond the powers of nature: In the miracles we are considering the cause is supernatural, transcendent; the effects might also be such, e.g. raising from dead, or they might not be, e.g. restoring health in the cure of a paralytic. Moreover, a miracle should have an effect that is “perceptible by the senses.”
* all created nature: hence truly an effect of action of God, not able to be caused by any of his creatures. In order for an event to be miraculous in this strict sense, the direct intervention of God is necessary. Some secondary causes could be involved, e.g. Jesus curing blind man using spittle and mud. The extraordinary effects of devils or angels are not miracles because they are done by created beings.
* Miracles as divine facts and signs have a special role in the economy of Rev, for two reasons:
* Their divine origin is most evident. A miracle is a *factum divinum*, a divine fact or action. In miracles we come closest to experiencing the creative power of God with our senses.
* Miracles are a special kind of *factum divinum*. After all, we see God's creative power all the time around us, for he sustains everything in being and even gives new being to creatures. “A dead person is brought back to life, and men are astonished. Many people are born every day and no one is amazed. Nevertheless, if we consider things wisely, we will reckon that the beginning of a life that did not exist is certainly a greater miracle than reviving a life that had already existed” (St. Augustine, from O&B, p.346).
* Since the order of creation is familiar to us, we do not give importance to what happens with regularity. (Children do; they love doing and seeing ordinary things over and over again, because they are new to them). So another purpose behind miracles is for God to do something rather ordinary (e.g. healing) but in an extraordinary way, so that we come to understand that things do not have to be the way they are out of necessity but because God made them that way, and he could have made them differently if he so willed; a miracle is a situation in which he does so will.
* So a miracle is a *factum divinum* in two senses: (i) as an exercise of power that only God can accomplish; and (ii) in a manner chosen by him so that the newness and originality of God's creative power is more effectively revealed to us, even though it surrounds us all the time.
* As a sign of Rev, miracles also have a special purpose; they comprise a special sort of divine testimony. God does not operate beyond the order of all nature unless it is with a very special purpose [this is worth emphasizing]. That special purpose cannot be found within the order of nature, nor does God ever use miracles as a quick fix to the natural order. Miracles belong to a higher order of divine Providence (the “economy of signs” attached to Rev, to be described later). In this sense they constitute a very special type of divine testimony which have multiple significations: divine omnipotence, His will to save us (crossing of Red Sea, curing of paralytic), divinity of our Lord, etc. This “charged meaning” of miracles, especially those of Jesus Christ, is a trademark of the divine actions we call miracles.
1. Naturalist denial of miracles: critical analysis.
* Some deny that the miracles in SS really occurred, claiming that they were either frauds or had some natural explanation. However, it would be impossible to prove or disprove such claims, since the events are not accessible to us. The real question is whether miracles *can* occur.
* The usual objections concerning miracles arise from predispositions of a philosophical nature (rationalism, determinism, naturalism). Some examples:
* “A miracle would have to destroy or replace or suspend the laws of nature, and this would amount to a ‘destruction’ of creation by God, which is repugnant.” Reply: physical laws represent the tendencies of beings within nature to act in a determined manner. That manner is always limited in the effects produced in space-time, e.g. a particular medical procedure (medicine, treatment, manipulation of limb, etc.) could heal an illness taking a certain amount of time. If a cure were instantaneous, it could not be attributed to the natural workings of medical procedures, but it would not affect the efficacy of those procedures. It would simply produce the effect beyond the space-time conditions God established for that situation. No law of nature is affected.
* “Those who say that God can make exceptions to the physical order should also maintain that he could make exceptions to the moral order.” Reply: The two orders are not of the same kind. God can make exceptions to the physical (space-time) order, not simply because He is its author, but because he could have fashioned it in another way, since it governs the action of merely material beings. The moral order, however, governs the actions of free creatures in their relation to their final goal, God Himself. Exceptions to that relation to God as final end would interfere with the freedom of those creatures and their final happiness.
* “Miracles are an affront to the glory of God. He designed nature, but if he performs miracles, it is because something is missing or defective in the original design. It like an author who has to insert words here and there in the finished text because he forgot to include them in the first place. Hence God is deemed incompetent.” Reply: the exceptions that miracles represent were foreseen and preordained by his eternal will and are made for reasons very worthy of his wisdom and goodness. Hence they are neither an affront to his glory nor a corrective to defects in his designs. The argument would be true only if God designed a system in which nothing ever went wrong and/or he should never intervene, and no one is in a position to claim that God should have designed the universe that way.
1. Principal stages of development of the theology of miracles.
* Rather than do a historical survey of the theology of miracles, we will simply see what contemporary theology has to say about the miracles of our Lord, in particular their density of meaning and significance.
* *What do miracles signify*. (i) Vat I: the divine origin of Rev (cf. Dz 1790, 1793). (ii) Vat II: miracles reveal and accredit or confirm Rev (cf. DV no. 4). Miracles form part of Rev, but also attest to the truthfulness of Rev and make it credible ibid.). But Vat II did not mean to exhaust the wealth of meaning in miracles. Some other meanings of the miracles of NT:
* signs of Christ’s omnipotence, e.g. calming the lake, raising the dead. There is no limit to his action, i.e. Jesus acts as God does, therefore, he is God.
* manifestation of his mercy and love on behalf of mankind, e.g. multiplication of loaves and fishes, widow of Naim, man with crippled hand. Jesus’ merciful love for everyone is itself a reason to believe, a reason that acts in a singular, unique manner, because it is precisely directed to the heart and will. One might call this a reason “of the heart.” [...] In this way, not everything is left to the strictly analytical and rational element when examining the various “reasons” for credibility. There are also motivations and “arguments”, at times more decisive, that proceed based on the heart and the freedom of love without hampering the functioning of reason (O&B, p.274).
* the arrival of the Messianic kingdom. Healing infirmities, delivering from sin, expelling demons, just as Isaiah and others predicted. When Jesus argues with the Jewish authorities about his activity, he clearly associates his action of expelling demons to the coming of the kingdom (Mt 12:22-32 = Mk 3:22-30 = Lk 11:14-26). He attributes these actions to the finger of God and the spirit of God.
* signs of divine mission of Jesus: Jesus is accredited as the one sent by His Father through the wonders which God works through him in the sight of all the people, cf. Jn 11:41-42 (raising Lazarus). Miracles give a “seal of approval” by God to his teaching.
* signs of Jesus Christ’s glory as the Son of God: miracles are signs to us but more properly works of the Son, that is, carried out in his self-awareness as Son. As such they point to his glory as the only Son: (Jn 1:14) we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. Jesus constantly says to his listeners that miracles are the testimony of the Father on his behalf (Jn 5,36-37). What is the content of this testimony? that Jesus is true Son of God, because he does miracles and signs in his Father's name (Jn 10,25).
* Rev of Trinitarian mystery: “The miracles show that the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father and that the two are united by a single Spirit” (Lat p.704, Jn 10:32-33,36-38; cf. also Jn 14:10-11). Believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father (Jn 10:38). Hence these miracles open up the mystery of the Trinity for us, they show us what it means that Jesus is the Son of God.
* Symbols of sacramental economy of grace. Miracles are like glimpses of the transformation that has occurred as a result of the sacraments instituted by Christ: healing of paralytic (freedom from paralysis of sin), lepers (freedom from corruption of sin), man born blind (baptism = illumination by Christ who is the light of the world), multiplication of loaves and fishes (Eucharist). Ultimately this sacramental economy is an expression of the mystery of Christ's person: he is light, life, water, bread...
* Signs of the transformation of the passing world: they foretell and inaugurate our eschatological future: liberation and glorification of the body (Resurrection, healing, etc.), destruction of all death and sin.
* The presence of many different layers of meaning forms a motive of credibility in itself. It goes beyond the usual “it was a miracle, only God can do miracles” kind of explanation. Miracles also show, sometimes more than his words do, who Jesus is, what his mission is, and at the same time they confirm these great truths.
1. Possibility of miracles.
* God’s power over his creation allows him to perform miracles directly or through others
* See b) above for the naturalistic denial of the possibility of miracles
* A related and useful topic is the discernment of miracles. Three elements need to be established in every bona fide miracle:
* *historical truth*: what kind of event occurred, and did it really happen? This will be discussed in detail in sections 9 and 10 in regard to Jesus’ miracles, especially the Resurrection
* *philosophical truth*: can it be explained using natural causes? This is usually the hardest to prove. We cannot know positively and universally what the powers of created nature can do in any circumstance whatever, but we can know what nature cannot do in particular circumstances. Examine different classes of miracles:
* miracles that require a change in being: something happens that could never occur in nature by natural causes, e.g. Transfiguration (Mt 17:1-3); reviving dead bodies, especially Lazarus, dead four days (Jn 11), calming of the storm on the lake (Mt 8:23-27); walking upon the sea (Mt 14:22-23).
* miracle as to manner only: which is most of remaining ones (cures of hearing and speech, dropsy, paralysis): their supernatural character is known with certainty not from their mere fact, since conceivably they could be produced by a known created cause, but from circumstances (both physical and moral) surrounding them, e.g.: woman cured of haemorrhage instantaneously (Mt 9:20-22), man paralysed for 38 years (Jn 5), woman crippled for 18 years (Lk 13:10-17).
* The historical truth of miracles in Scriptures is often contested by nonbelievers. But the philosophical truth is even more difficult to establish, since it is hard to rule out all possible natural causes of the miraculous event. This has led FT to not rely so heavily on miracles as proofs of divine origin of Rev, emphasizing instead their purpose as signs that surprise us; this leads to the third element
* *relative truth*: what is the intention behind the miracle? Does it lead to faith in Rev? This is not hard to demonstrate in the case of Jesus’ miracles, as he explicitly declares that he performs them in order to prove his divinity (Jn 5:36; 15:24; 10:25,37,38; 14:12), cure of man born blind (Jn 9:3; cf. Jn 9:36)
1. Prophecy.
* Prophecy in general means speaking on behalf of someone, being a spokesperson. In SS prophecy means speaking on behalf of God, and this can involve many kinds of messages. Prophecy involves a supernatural illumination of the prophet by God, giving them knowledge they could not obtain by natural means, hence it is a miracle of the intellectual order. In particular, it is often a certain prediction of a future event when that event could not be naturally known.
* *Prophecy as sign*. Two things are necessary for prophecy (of future events) to be taken apologetically as a sign of Rev:
* The manifestation of the future event to others before it happens.
* The historical and visible fulfilment of the prophecy.
* Prophecies are possible, just as supernatural Rev is possible. Unlike Rev, however, prophecies are generally supernatural knowledge about something natural (there may be exceptions); in the case of future events, the event can be known naturally. Still, prophetic knowledge is often obscure; and prophecies are not often recognizable until they are fulfilled, and even then they have to be explained. Can the devil foretell the future? Yes, but not for a good cause.
* *Prophecies in SS:*  The OT is full of them. Many events of the history of the people of God were foretold by prophets and were eventually fulfilled: growth of Hebrew people, defeats of armies, the exile, rebuilding of the Temple. In particular, Messianic prophecies: Messianic times, universal salvation, etc. Much of the Gospels are an exegesis of these OT prophecies concerning events of Jesus’ life: his birthplace, manner of his birth, exile in Egypt, speaking in parables, working miracles, sent by God, suffering and death, Resurrection, etc. Not only did Jesus fulfil prophecies of the OT, but he made and fulfilled them about himself: his Passion: multiple times (e.g. Mt 9:15; 17:12; 20:22,28); his Resurrection, multiple times (e.g. Jn 10:17; 11:25; 12:24; 14:19; 16:16); also the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Mt 24:1-2), fulfilled in the year 70 AD.
* Just like miracles, the historical and philosophical truth of prophecies can be difficult to pin down. Did the prophecy really take place before the event predicted? And even if the prophecy predated the event, was it a genuine prophecy or just a lucky guess? However, the number of prophecies made and fulfilled is so great (dozens, if not hundreds) that their chance fulfillment would be a greater miracle than their actual fulfillment by divine power!

***IX. CHRIST AND THE CHURCH, SIGNS OF REVELATION***

[class 27]

1. *Christ, consummator of Revelation and of its credibility.*
2. Sources of historical knowledge about Jesus; non-biblical and New Testament testimonies.
* *Flavius Josephus*, historian, The Antiquities of the Jews, a work compiled in Rome between the years 93 and 94 *(Antiquities of the Jews,* XVIII,3,3). Because of its favourable description of Jesus Christ as a ‘wise man’ and ‘miracle-worker, most authorities interpret this passage as interpolated by later Christians, hence unreliable as external testimony. Some try to salvage some parts of the passage (e.g. Filion).
* *Annals of Tacitus* (cf. Annales, XV, 44), written between the years 115 and 120, where, reporting the burning of Rome in the year 64, falsely attributed by Nero to the Christians, the historian makes an explicit reference to Christ “executed by order of the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of Tiberius.”
* *Suetonius*, historian, in his biography of the Emperor Claudius (cf. Claudius, c.25), written around 121, informs us that the Jews were expelled from Rome by Claudius because “under the instigation of a certain Chrestus they stirred up frequent riots”. This passage is generally interpreted as referring to Jesus Christ, who had become a source of contention within Jewish circles in Rome.
* *Pliny the Younger*, the Governor of Bithynia, who reported to the Emperor Trajan on the rapid growth of Christians, between the years 111 and 113, that a large number of people were accustomed to gather “on a designated day, before dawn, to sing in alternating choirs a hymn to Christ as to a God”.
* *Negative witness*: Talmud (Jewish commentary on OT) doesn’t deny existence of Jesus Christ, but expends a lot of energy trying to make him look impious: deceiver, magician (from tricks he learned in Egypt!). St. Justin Martyr refers to Roman records describing Jesus’ works. Tertullian claims that Pilate reported all these matters concerning Christ to the Roman Emperor (cf. Apologetica, 21, 86-87). Even those pagan polemicists who argued against Christianity never doubted the existence of Jesus Christ.
* *Conclusion:* “Passing but significant references to [Jesus]” (St JP II, *Tertio millenio adveniente*, no. 5) in non-Christian sources make it impossible to really claim that Jesus Christ never existed.
1. Knowledge of Jesus through the Gospels
* *The Gospels.* “The great event which non-Christian historians merely mention in passing takes on its full significance in the writings of the NT” (St JP II, TMA n.5). The four Gospels are unique in relation to any and every other literature, both previous Jewish literature and posterior Christian literature. They (and to a lesser extent, other books of NT) represent the only detailed and reliable source about the life and teachings of our Lord.
* *What makes NT a historically reliable source:*
* textual criticism (“criticism” in these matters means judgments about texts, sources, meanings, etc. rather than judgment about quality, value, etc.): because of the abundance and antiquity of manuscripts of the NT, we can reconstruct fairly accurately the “primary text” of the Gospels with some confidence.
* The authors were eyewitnesses of Jesus or apostolic men close to them; we have good reason to think that all four Gospels were fixed by 100 AD, and most likely earlier in the case of the Synoptics.
* The authenticity and historical reliability of information contained in Gospels was never in dispute until modern history. The only issue (discussed even among the Fathers) was obvious differences between the Gospels, in content, style, and in some cases, specific texts.
* The strength of the tradition concerning these last points deserves to be emphasized. The unquestioned tradition of the Church for many centuries was that there are only four Gospels, that they were written by apostolic men, and that they related true historical facts about our Lord. There was never any dispute about this, even with Protestants. In contrast, disagreements over the canonicity of other books of the Bible are well documented among the Church Fathers (e.g. epistles of John, Hebrews, etc.). In other words, the absence of any controversy concerning the Gospel tradition reflects the certainty of the Church on the origin and nature of the Gospels, and not a lack of investigation.
* *Biblical criticism*. As we will see in the next section, this degree of confidence in the Gospels has been tempered during the last few centuries. A more systematic and historical approach to the texts of the Gospels reveals, for example, a number of questions concerning authorship. Much of Matthew and Luke seems to come from Mark and an unknown source of Jesus’ sayings (called “Q” source). Even within Mark, who was a close disciple of Peter, we find indications of “non-Petrine” sources in his brief account. The real identity of the author of the fourth Gospel is a debated question today even within orthodox Catholic circles, although the evidence for St John the Apostle and Evangelist is strong.
* It is the task of biblical exegesis to investigate the historical reliability of the Gospels, but it is certainly a question of interest to FT as well. As part of this investigation, one must:
* Determine the textual history of Gospels: how they were composed, over what time scale, by whom, in what order, their dependence on each other, literary genres, etc.;
* establish (as well as possible) traditions present within the Gospels: oral preaching of the Apostles, literary genres, etc.; and
* determine possible previous sources of the Gospels that were used in its redaction.
* These steps have been the task of historical criticism of Bible for several centuries. For criteria for establishing authenticity of related facts in the Gospels: see d) below.
1. Historical background of the issue of “the historical Christ”
* *Beginnings:* the first “critical” Bible scholar in modern sense of word was a Catholic priest Richard Simon (d. 1712), the “father of Biblical criticism.” He published *Histoires critiques* (1678) on OT and NT. Unfortunately he ran afoul with Cardinal Bossuet. Honourable mention also due to Pietist (Protestant) biblical scholar Johann Albrecht Bengel (d. 1752), who invented the modern science of identifying authoritative (clear authorship) biblical texts.
* *The Deists* (17th-18th cents) saw Jesus as a preacher of a natural religion, mostly ethical. Miracles did not happen. They published many works but not of any serious scholarship, mostly just ridicule and anti-Christian rhetoric. But they set the stage for what followed.
* *Reimarus*: G.E. Lessing published ca. 1774-1778 a work of Hermann Samuel Reimarus (d. 1768), entitled *Fragments of an unknown*. He wrote that Jesus Christ was merely a man, working to establish a (purely political) Messianic kingdom to free Jews from Roman rule. His activities ended in failure, he was frustrated in his efforts and died on Cross. The Apostles stole his body, fabricated a spiritual meaning of his passion, and invented the Church. Reimarus was often cited as the beginner of modern criticism of Gospels, which is not entirely true.
* *Theory of myth*: David Strauss (d. 1874), Professor at Tubingen, principal representative of mythological interpretation of Gospels from his *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (1835). He was the first one to postulate explicitly a distinction between the historical Christ and the Christ of faith. For him, the historical Christ really lived, but not the person described in the Gospels. The latter portray the Christ of Faith, a creation of early Christians, mixing Messianic expectations with elements of Greek mythology, idea of a saviour, etc. Hence the Gospels are a Christian myth, a representation in historical terms of the religious (mythical) ideal of those first Christians. But that’s ok, he says, because religion is based on faith and ideas, and not facts.

[class 28]

1. The issue of the distinction between the “historical Jesus” and the “Christ of faith” in 20th cent.
* *Bultmann*: By the 20th century there was among the leading (mostly German Protestant) SS scholars no hope of recovering the historical Jesus from a critical examination of the Gospels. What basis was there then to legitimize, to give value to the Gospels? Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976), Professor of NT studies at Marburg, was the most influential exegete of 1st half of 20th cent. That is partly because he applied form criticism (FC) for the first time to the NT in order to show how the Gospels were formed, going back to the “sources” of the Gospels. He began his own school of FC in 1920’s. In general terms, the Church has acknowledged the value of FC for studies of the Bible, but cautioned that this method should not be exaggerated as a judge of the authenticity of the sacred books.
* Bultmann went further, however; he said that the accounts of Jesus were primarily shaped by the faith consciousness of the primitive Christian community. Events and teachings were selected and emphasized according to their existential meaning for Christian life at the time of writing. The following represent the conclusions of his study of the Gospels, but many scholars now see them as his *a priori* assumptions or derived from these:
* It is impossible to reach the Jesus of history, to know his life or his personal work.
* All we know is the kerygma (message preached) of the primitive community about Jesus, and this is all that matters to us today, anyhow.
* There is no need for or value to an historical foundation of Christianity.
* The Christian community was endowed with singular creativity in fabricating stories about Jesus, especially his Resurrection.
* Since most of Gospel stays within the literary genre of myth, one must “demythologize” it for a true exegesis, i.e. to make it comprehensible to modern man.
* *Problems with Bultmann’s analysis.* The distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith depends upon the *a priori* conviction that the Gospels and the other New Testament writings cannot be trustworthy historical sources simply becausethey are the fruit of faith. In reality, the opposite is true. Faith does not harm the historical authenticity of the facts of the New Testament but serves as its best guarantee. The identity of the earthly Jesus with the resurrected Christ is fundamental for the community’s faith; it forbids any dissociation between the historical Jesus and the *kerygmatic* Jesus. Faith cannot lack historical references (in other words, faith has to have Cred!).
* *After Bultmann.* The reaction to Bultmann moved back into a positive direction in terms of recovering the historical Jesus in the Gospels. His own students led the counter attack:
* Ernst Käsemann, ca. 1953, and Bornkamm (students of Bultmann) made the counter-claim that FC itself shows the continuity between the preaching of Jesus in the Gospels and the post-Easter *kerygma* of the Apostles, not discontinuity.
* A new literary-critical method was introduced, redaction criticism (RC), by H. Conzelmann (ca. 1954), W. Marxsen, (still all Germans!). Unlike FC, where intentions and methods of redactors were irrelevant, now they are studied directly in the particular organization and character of each of the Gospels, including the author’s theological approach, structuring of the material he has chosen, his stylistic impress on the material. RC is a natural follow-up to FC. Conzelmann concluded that the faith of the primitive Christian community was not based solely on the Easter event but also on the pre-Easter “historical Jesus.”
* This takes us into the 50’s and 60’s with the influence of Catholic exegetes, especially after Vat II, and not just Protestants: Wolfgang Trilling (RC expert), Ignace de la Potterie.
* *Protestants today.* The majority of Protestant theologians today (e.g. Pannenberg, Moltmann) come down solidly in favour of the primacy of history in the Gospels. One must recognize the philosophical prejudices which influenced many of the earlier critics: Strauss (Hegelian dialectic), Bultmann (Heidegger), Reimarus (deism). [Read comment of Cardinal Ratzinger (prior to becoming Pope) in the footnote].[[1]](#footnote-1) i.e. the critical methods that these people propose are useful for exegesis (determining meanings of passages), but the philosophical postulates that governed their work are actually harmful not only for understanding the Gospels as a whole, but even for a correct understanding of particular texts (i.e. exegesis itself). No one concludes that miracles don’t happen in the NT on the basis of a study; it has to be pre-supposed. A key text of Magisterium on this is DV19.
1. Principles of interpretation and criteria for determining the historicity of the Gospels. (O&B pp 253-256)
* Exegetes of NT today apply primary or basic criteria to Gospel texts in order to determine which passages support a sure judgment of historical authenticity. (N.B. This does not mean that the passages that do not pass these criteria are invalid or historically uncertain). These criteria are meant to establish that the writings correspond to the reality they depict. This is a part of the historical-critical method as applied to Gospels. These most commonly used criteria are:
* criterion of *multiple attestation*: “we may regard as authentic a gospel datum that is solidly attested in all or most of gospel sources (that includes rest of NT),” e.g. the theme of the compassion and mercy of Jesus for sinners appears in all the gospel sources and in the most varied literary forms: parables (prodigal son Lk 15:11-32), controversies (parable of father sending sons into vineyard in context of dispute with chief priests Mt 21:28-32), miracle stories (cure of paralytic Mk 2,1-12), vocation stories (Matthew's vocation and party Mk 2:13-17). The more forms or sources involved, the higher degree of authenticity is assured.
* criterion of *discontinuity*: “a datum of the Gospels can be regarded as authentic if it is not reducible either to concepts current in Judaism or to concepts current in the primitive church.” Examples: baptism of Jesus (how could the primitive Church place him among sinners, when this so violently contradicts their faith?); the order given to the Apostles not to preach to Samaritans and Gentiles (contrasts with order to preach to all nations after Ascension); all passages that emphasize the apostles' lack of understanding, their defects, and even abandoning our Lord, for this stands in stark contrast to post-Easter situation.
* criterion of *conformity*: (less agreement on how to use this criterion) a saying or action of Jesus can be regarded as authentic if it is not only in close conformity with the times and setting of Jesus (linguistic, geographic, social, political, religious, etc.), but also and above all fully consistent with the essential teaching of Jesus, i.e. the coming and establishment of the messianic reign, e.g. parables, beatitudes (proclamation of the good news of the coming of the Messianic kingdom, the Our Father). Perhaps easiest to understand from point of view of conformity of the rich picture of Palestine in the Gospels with reality at the time of Jesus.
* criterion of *necessary explanation*: “If a sizable collection of facts or information requiring a coherent and sufficient explanation are in fact given an explanation that clarifies and harmoniously combines all these elements (which would otherwise remain puzzling), then we may conclude that we are in the presence of an authentic datum.” Example: that Jesus foresaw his passion and death and informed the apostles about it multiple times. This explains (i) his determination to go to Jerusalem, (ii) Go tell that fox... (Lk 13:32-33); (iii) The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men (an enigmatic phrase that could not have come from the post-Easter community); (iv) other veiled hints of his death without mentioning the Resurrection (cf. Mt 17:12; Mk 9:15; Lk 17:25).
* So where does this leave us regarding our knowledge of Jesus through the Gospels?
* Cfr Lat pp. 395-396: even adopting a moderately critical position (halfway between confidence in principle and suspicion in principle), historical criticism allows one to “salvage” most of the Gospel and to obtain a knowledge of Jesus for an authentic Christology and ecclesiology. This includes the more crucial events in the life of our Lord (public life, passion, death, Resurrection: his claims to divinity; miracles; sending of Apostles to form a new community. For each of these themes, Latourelle can invoke the agreement of the majority of important exegetes. He is convinced that as study of the texts continues, the extent of the material accepted as authentic will continue to grow, and eventually will include the entire Gospel (still working on infancy narratives). The bottom line is that there is now a renewed confidence in the historicity of the Gospels.
* “The presupposition that the Gospels deserve trust is well founded, while the pre-judgment that the Gospels are not trustworthy is not well founded. The reversal of outlook does not mean that critics have settled for an attitude of naive and uncritical trust. The point is simply that the Gospels have regained their credibility in the eyes of historical criticism” (*Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p. 396).

[class 29]

1. *Motives of belief in Christ as Messiah sent by God.*
2. Jesus’ consciousness of himself as Messiah and Lord. (O&B pp 256-261)
* *Jesus avoided self-definition.* The apostles proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah and Lord (Acts 2:36) (NB the Jews of Jesus’ time used “Lord” as a name for God because “Yaweh” was too sacred to be spoken by mere humans), as well as the Son of God (Acts 9:20**)**, in their preaching after his death. Their assertions are abundant and direct: “Jesus, the Son of God”(Heb 4,14). When we look at our Lord's preaching in the Gospels, in contrast, it seems as though he avoids direct self-definition. The title he applied to himself most frequently was “Son of Man,” which does have some Messianic connotations. More often, he describes himself as *the one sent from the Father*. (We will investigate these two titles later). He seems to refrain from directly describing himself as Messiah or Lord.
* Why were the apostles were so convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, when he refrained from defining himself as such? To answer that, we need now to look at the claims Jesus made about himself, the manner in which such claims were made and how he established the credibility of these claims. This will show that Jesus taught publicly that he was: (1) a messenger from God sent to men in the tradition of the OT prophets, (2) the Messiah, (3) the Son of God, (4) and Himself true God. This order also reflects the chronological progression of understanding in the Apostles’ mind about who Jesus is.
* *(1) Envoy/prophet*: Jesus presents himself clearly and unambiguously as a prophet sent by God to establish the kingdom of God.
* *Prophet*: He refers to himself once as a prophet (Mt 13:57); he compares himself (rather indirectly) to Elijah and Elisha (Lk 4:23-27); more frequently, people recognize him and proclaim him as a prophet: in Naim (Lk 7:16; 7:39); disciples on way to Emmaus (Lk 24:19; cf. 24:21); crowds during his entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:11) Jesus’ predictions were all fulfilled (see above).
* *Envoy*: More significantly, Jesus has a clear awareness of being sent by his Father: Jn 8:42; in the Synoptics, Jesus talks about being sent (Lk 4:43 and Mt 15:24), and that it is the Father who sends him (e.g. Lk 9:48**)**. But this terminology appears much more abundantly in John, about 40 times cfr in chap 6 alone: (Jn 6:29,38,39,44,57**)**. Those who do not accept his word will merit punishments (Jn 12:44-50).
* *Cred of Jesus' claims*: Jesus met in his person all the OT criteria necessary for a true prophet (sent by God to speak on his behalf, spoke publicly, predictions fulfilled, (see Sec 20 e) above), hence it is credible that he was truly sent by God to speak on God’s behalf and to establish his kingdom.
* *(2)* *Messiah:* Jesus appears to avoid self-definition as the Messiah. Scholars agree that in Jesus’ time, popular expectation for the Messiah was very high, with expectations differing considerably among the various ideas about the Messiah within Judaism: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, etc., but Jesus identified himself with none of them. And this separation was historically manifested in Jesus' caution about calling himself the Messiah, which in Hebrew means “Christ” (Greek for “the anointed one”)
* *Jesus applies the title “Christ” to himself*: In Jn 4:25-26(Samaritan woman) and Jn 17:3(priestly prayer after Last Supper), Jesus refers to himself as *the* *Christ* or *Jesus Christ*. Before his Resurrection Jesus uses the word “Christ” directly referring to himself (Mk 9:41 and 16:20) and indirectly (Mt 22:42=Mk 12:35=Lk 20:41; Mt 23:10, Mt 24:5,23-2=Mk 13:21,22; Lk 24:26,46);
* Given the importance of such a claim, we are surprised that He doesn't say more about it; he even prohibits the apostles from calling him the Christ (Mt 16:20)*.* His caution led Jewish officials to ask him to say openly whether he was the Christ or not (Jn 10:24), and people debated whether he really was the Christ or not (Lk 7:41**)**. Why the caution? Many theologians now believe Jesus was cautious as a matter of prudence, so as not to be considered the wrong sort of Messiah, especially at a time of such high expectation. Jesus rejected the temporal and political vision of the Messiah as well as the religious vision, spiritual but rigid, popular in that period (cf. O&B*,* p.261). So he went to great pains to present himself as a very *different* Messiah, e.g. to those who expected the Messiah as a vindictive judge, he responded with his benign and merciful action (Mt 11:2-6 = Lk 7:18-23) and repeatedly taught that he had not come to judge but to save (Jn 3:17).
* *Indirect claims as Messiah.* Jesus made claims to being the Christ more indirectly, mostly through the testimony of others: At the right times, he allows others to call him Messiah (Jesus is not into self-glorification, which is another motive of cred): Peter (Mt 161:5-16), Martha (Jn 11:27), in judgment before Caiaphas (Mt 26:63-64), even in Mark’s account of that trial, when asked *are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* Jesus responds *I am* (Mk 14,61-62). (Lk follows Mt). He makes similar admissions before the Sanhedrin and even before Pilate. However, he would *not* let demons bear witness to his being the Christ or son of God (cf. Lk 4:41), because the witness of demons is not a worthy source of credibility. Other allusions: in synagogue at Capernaum, in ref to Is 61 he refers to himself as the one anointed by the Spirit (Lk 4:18-21). To Jews who ask him to tell them openly if he is the Christ, Jesus replies that his works speak for themselves (Jn 10:25-26). To disciples of Emmaus: *did not the Christ…* (Lk 24:25-27).
* *Cred of Jesus’ claims of Messiahship*: The contrast between Jewish expectations of a political Messiah and reality of Jesus’ words and actions argues in favour of the authenticity of his claims to be the true Messiah. What ultimately led people to believe in him as Messiah was based not on their expectations but on his words, his conduct, and esp his miracles (main motive), i.e. his person.
* *(3 and 4) Son of God and God*: Jesus’ testimony concerning his divine filiation shows similar caution to that concerning his Messiahship.
* There are three instances where he applies “Son of God” to himself: Jn 5:25, 10:36 (most direct one), and 11:4. He is God: *I and the Father are one* (Jn 10:30)
* *Indirectly*: He is greater than all previous prophets (Mt 12:38-42), greater than the Temple (Mt 12:6); he is Lord of the Sabbath (Mt 12:8). He interprets the Law with the authority of God: you have heard…, but I tell you that… (Mt 5-6). He always called God “Father” rather than “God” when he addressed him directly (*Abba* in Aramaic was the family term, like our “Daddy”) he employed the term “my Father” when speaking to others and making reference to God and never used the expression “Our Father,” except when teaching his disciples how *they* should pray. He would say “my Father and your Father”, thus distinguishing his filiation from ours. However, he did call himself “the Son.” This conduct shows his awareness of having a singular and highly familiar relationship with God” (O&B, p.280).
* Reaction/understanding of others: if Jesus had meant an “adopted” son of God alone, then he would have avoided much difficulty (Jn 5:18). It is clear that people interpreted his words as meaning Son in a proper and transcendent sense. …*because you, being a man, make yourself God* (Jn 10:33). The synoptic Gospels point out that he was sentenced to death because he declared that he really was the Son of God (Lk 22:70–71 = Mk 14:61–64 = Mt 26,63**–**66**)**. Pilate resisted all he could to put Jesus to death; but became particularly afraid when the Jews give as the reason for requesting a death sentence that Jesus claimed to be God (Jn 19:7-8).
1. His Christological titles.
* Jesus used several titles for himself:
* Son of Man: our Lord’s favourite expression (80 times in Synoptics and John, but not found in rest of NT). It comes from book of Daniel (cf. Dn 7:13). Could be, but not necessarily, a Messianic title. Its Greek use emphasizes that Jesus is calling himself a son of mankind.
* Son of David: used by others appealing to Jesus (e.g. Bartimaeus, Mk 10:47-48). Clearly Messianic: Jesus had to be a descendant of David, or he could not be the Messiah (note Paul’s insistence upon this point in his letters, cf. 2 Tim 2:8).
* Christ: see a) above; applied regularly to Jesus in Acts; for Paul it was almost like a personal name for Jesus.
* Lord (Kyrios): used by Apostles in the Gospels but mostly in a secular sense, as a term of respect. After the Resurrection, it takes on whole new meaning (=God, in Thomas’ profession of faith, Jn 20:28). Used by Paul to refer to Jesus as God all the time, reserving “God” for God the Father.
* Son of God: e.g. Mk 1,1; see a) above; found in every book of NT.
* The one sent by the Father: see a) above; described sparingly as such in Synoptics, but in John’s Gospel about 40 times. It is a formula Jesus uses all the time, before all audiences.

[class 30]

1. His miracles.
* See sec 20 above for miracles in general and some meanings of Jesus’miracles as signs and motives of credibility
* The historical truth of Jesus’ miracles has been a topic of theology in recent years (O&B pp 269-272)
* Jesus wanted belief in him to be founded not on his personal claims but on evidence provided by his deeds, especially miracles, and words that accredit him as the Messiah and God before the eyes of his fellow citizens.
* “Jesus’ contemporaries came to consider him a great envoy of God and Messiah not only because of his conduct and doctrine, which were proper to a true envoy of Yahweh, but also because of the numerous miracles that he worked before many people” (O&B, p.269).
* *Did Jesus really perform miracles?*
* First of all, Jesus Christ performed miracles by *himself*, in his own name, not by invoking God or God’s name. Moreover, we have the following considerations:
* *The witness of others:* personal testimony of evangelists, often, but not always, eyewitnesses; the adversaries of Jesus (Jn 3:2; Mk 6:14; Jn 11:47; Mt 27:42), who lacked neither the opportunity to examine his miracles, nor the motive and will to do so (cf. miracles of man born blind and Lazarus). Negative witness in Talmud, treats Jesus as a trickster, magician, but never denies he performed marvels.
* *The reactions of Jesus’ contemporaries*: wonder, but also recognition of the might and wisdom of Yahweh in these signs. *When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men* (Mt 9:8 = Mk 2:12 = Lk 5:26). After the healing of the epileptic man, all were astonished at the majesty of God (Lk 9:43). Healing of woman with crooked back (Lk 13:17). Gospels often mention how these events stir up faith in Jesus: water to wine at Cana (Jn 2,11); multiplication of loaves and fishes (Jn 6,14-15): raising of Lazarus: the people went away *believing in Jesus* (cf. Jn 12:9-11).
* The way his miracles form an integral part of the Gospel story: though indirect, this point adds considerable credibility to the above two assertions. Jesus’ miracles are so numerous and so intimately connected with the other deeds and words of Christ that they belong to the very substance of the entire Gospel. Thus, they cannot be considered to be mythical “additions” to the Jesus story from the post-Easter Christian community (e.g. Bultmann). If this were true, then one would have to remove: the commotion that Lazarus’ raising produced (Jn 11), the entire Eucharistic sermon (Jn 6), the Pharisee’s examination of the man born blind (cf. Jn 9). Mark is 31% miracles (47% if one excludes the Passion and Resurrection). The Gospel of John is made of two parts, the book of signs and the book of the Passion. The first part consists of twelve chapters narrating how Jesus performed seven miracles and then how he gave explanations and speeches about them. In short, it’s all of a piece.
* Moreover, His miracles are in full agreement with his character, messianic mission and teaching, not just spectacular actions; they are to benefit others, show his mercy and love, etc. The style or manner in which these miracles are narrated is also credible: simple, sober, spontaneous, detailed, set within concrete circumstances, free of exaggerations.
1. His miracles as signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God and of the sublimity of his Person. (O&B pp 271-278)
* *Jesus’ miracles as Yahweh’s saving actions*. The meaning of our Lord’s saving actions was not lost on the people who experienced it, as we have seen. Everyone who experienced these miracles were convinced that they had same character as saving works of Yahweh in favour of his chosen people as those related in OT. In fact, the four Evangelists describe these miraculous actions by Jesus with the same words (*teras*, *sémeia*, *dynamis*, *erga*, etc.) used by the Septuagint to translate different Hebrew terms that described God’s wondrous interventions on behalf of his people (cf. O&Bpp.271-272). Therefore, the OT can be seen as a preparation for people of faith capable of recognizing God’s actions in the person of Jesus.
* *Jesus’ miracles as signs of the arrival of the kingdom*. And more importantly, those who experienced his miracles were able to understand that the kingdom of God had arrived and that the promised salvation had been fulfilled. Mt stresses that Jesus’ miracles were the proof that the promised kingdom had come (cf. Mt 11:2-6 – *Go and tell John what you see and hear…*). Jesus’ exorcisms are also a sign of the coming of the kingdom: *But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you* (Mt 12:28) (*the finger of God* in Lk).
* *Miracles as a sign of Jesus’ great love*. For the credibility of our Lord’s miraculous deeds, it is important to determine the motive behind them. A cold, distant and punishing God would not inspire strong faith. A careful study of the Gospels reveals that Jesus performed his miracles for no other purpose than his love for man. He never uses his divine power to punish, only to heal, cure, re-establish good by removing physical and even moral evil. This great manifestation of divine love is perhaps one of the greatest motives of credibility and shows us the true character of God’s inner life as substantial love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8,16).
1. His miracles as witness of the Father and of the Holy Spirit.
* This is included in the sections above, especially refs to Jn for the Father and to Lk for the Holy Spirit
1. Jesus and his death and man’s death in general. (O&B pp 284-285)
* *Jesus was aware of the manner, time, place, and circumstances of his death*: Jesus makes multiple references to it to his disciples; some are explicit and detailed, e.g. right after Peter’s confession (Mt 16:21), others are rather veiled (cf. Mk 2:20 *the bridegroom is taken away*). They imply tremendous suffering: (Mt 16:21 and 10:38). Jesus identifies himself with suffering Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah (cf. Lk 22:37). He explains the meaning of his death at the Last Supper: *which will be given up for you, shed for you*. This is something that permeates our Lord’s self-awareness as the suffering Messiah.
* *Jesus’ attitude toward death*. Fully aware of the above, Jesus’ attitude is one of serenity, purpose, determination, even though combined with great sadness (cf. agony in garden). Importance of his attitude:
* *God's love*: His attitude toward death lends credibility to what he states to be its purpose: Jesus’ death is the proof of God’s great love for us (cf. 1 Jn ch 4, also Jn 3:16 and Rom 8:32). No greater love than to lay down one’s life for his friends (Jn 15:13); this is the most credible proof of his love that God could have given us.
* *Filiation*: The cross is the ultimate expression of Jesus’ testimony about his filiation, which was manifested in all his conduct. Perfect obedience: *My judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me* (Jn 5:30). At Gethsemane, Jesus faithfully obeyed the Father, giving a most definitive testimony, the highest possible one, of his divine filiation while he was on earth, i.e. to obey His Father even to death, death on a cross.
* Veracity: Jesus’ death is the definitive proof of the truthfulness of his testimony, because he sacrificed his own life for the sake of *fidelity* to his truth. In John’s writings, one cannot miss this link between the truthful and faithful testimony of Jesus and his death upon the cross: *For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth* (Jn 18:37**)**.
* Jesus’ death teaches that death for man is part of God’s plan of salvation; not only is it reparation for sin (as was Jesus’death) but it is above all the door to salvation, union with God and eternal life and happiness for those whose faith in him has never wavered (Jn 11:23-27). He witnesses to the truth of this by his own death and Resurrection (see next section)
* Summarizing Jesus Christ’s self-awareness and cred as
* *a prophet sent by God*: he explicitly called himself a prophet, and others believed he was a prophet; he fulfils all the criteria of the OT for a prophet;
* *the Messiah*: he rarely if at all claims to be the Messiah because of the distorted ideas people had of that title, but he approves that others call him Messiah when there is no distortion; he works miracles prophesied in the OT to characterize and inaugurate the Messianic kingdom of God
* *the Son of God*: he never calls himself the Son of God directly, but calls God his Father. He was put to death for claiming to be the Son of God. He acts like a son, especially through his Paschal Mystery (obedience to Father even to death on the Cross), and His miracles prove him to be Son of the Father.
* *the Lord, i.e. God*: his filiation implied equality to God, as understood by the Jews of his time. He is the principal agent of his miracles; his cred is backed up by his passion, death and Resurrection. His merciful love is the same as that of Yahweh.

[class 31]

1. *The Resurrection of Jesus.*
2. The Resurrection of Christ, event and mystery.(O&B pp286-290)
* Jesus Christ’s Resurrection is the crowning truth of our Christian faith, and the principle motive for our belief in him (1 Cor 15:14 and entire chapter 15). It is both a mystery and an event, just as Rev itself is. As a real, historical event, the Resurrection can be verified and not only believed through faith. Elements of that historical proof:
* Historical “proofs” of events in the distant past are based on the interpretation of evidence from witnesses, documents, objects and whatever other sources are available. Such “proofs” can seek to establish the fact of an event, its situation in time and space, other features and circumstances, its causes and effects, and its meaning, both in immediate terms and also in broader contexts
* The evidence for the fact (event) of the Resurrection involves mainly the empty tomb and the appearances of the risen Jesus to many people. This is considered in the next section.
* Although Jesus’ Resurrection is truly an event that took place in human history, it is also a transcendent one, and as such, it remains a mystery. No one ever *saw* (with their eyes) the Resurrection, so we cannot say how it came about; what is clear is that Jesus is alive.
* Cfr CCC 647: “Although the Resurrection was an historical event that could be verified by the sign of the empty tomb and by the reality of the apostles’ encounters with the risen Christ, still it remains at the very heart of the mystery of faith as something that transcends and surpasses history. This is why the risen Christ does not reveal himself to the world, but to his disciples, “to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people” (Acts 13:31; cf Jn 14:22).
* This event is mysteriously transcendent insofar as it is a miraculous intervention of God himself in creation and in human history, as well as the entry of Christ’s humanity into the glory of God. It begins in history but ends outside of history.
1. Critical analysis of the historical authenticity of New Testament data about the Resurrection. (O&B pp 288-299)
* Summary of what NT says:
* *Jesus foretold his Resurrection*: three direct predictions of passion, death *and* Resurrection (Mt 16:21 = Mk 8:31 = Lk 9:22; Mt 17:22-23 = Mk 9:31-32; Mt 20:17-19 = Mk 10:33-34 = Lk 18:31-34). Indirect predictions of Resurrection: *Tell this vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead* (Mt 17:9 = Mk 9:9). After I have risen, I will go before you into Galilee (Mk 14:27-28). Even Jesus’ enemies understood that he had foretold his Resurrection (Mt 27:62-64). He foretold it as a proof of his mission: Jn 2:18-19 (throw out money changers, destroy this temple); as a sign of Jonah Mt 12:38-40, the whole context of this passage demonstrates his connection of the Resurrection with his mission of proclaiming kingdom of God, with his Messiahship, etc.
* *Jesus really was crucified, died and was buried:* This was explicitly stated by all evangelists (breathed his last Mt 27,50 = Mk 15,37 = Lk 23,46; gave up his spirit Jn 19,30). The actions of Jesus’ friends indicate they all thought he had died: they entombed him, wrapped him in cloths tightly, anointed him with ointment. Apostles experienced difficulty in believing that Jesus was alive, which is proof that they thought he was dead. Jesus’ enemies thought he was dead; why would they let him be taken down from Cross if they thought he was still alive? The soldiers thought he was dead, which is why they did not break his legs. But as an extra precaution, a lance was thrusted in such a way as to insure death. Pilate learned from the centurion that Jesus was already dead (Mk 15:44-45).
* *Jesus came back to life*: The tomb was empty, in spite of being sealed and guarded by soldiers. Testimony of angels, holy women, Apostles (first Peter, then all of them), many people later (500 according to St Paul in 1 Cor 15:4-8). More importantly, Sanhedrin could not deny that tomb was empty Mt 28:11-15. Many critics believe that this passage was invented by Matthew, but the story is too complex to be a purely Matthean invention. It betrays several levels in the argument. It reports not just a distant memory, but a fact verifiable at the time of final editing of the Gospel text (thought to be some 30 years later). Unbelieving Jews were claiming that the disciples stole Jesus' body while the guards slept. Jesus appeared to many people in many places and under varied circumstances (Acts 1:3).
1. The Resurrection as culmination of the Revelation of God in Christ and as definitive motive for believing that He is the Lord, Messiah and Son of God.
* Given these facts, what is the best explanation: several have been offered over time:
* (1) Jesus really died and rose again
* (2) Jesus didn’t die, but only swooned
* (3) Jesus died, but didn’t rise again; the apostles were deceived
* (4) Jesus died, but didn’t rise again; the apostles conspired to deceive, i.e. to lie
* (5) Jesus died, but didn’t rise again; the apostles started a myth
* Explanations (3) to (5) attempt to explain the empty tomb. The last explanation is from more recent times (18th-19th cents). These will be dealt with one by one below.
* The appearances of Jesus were not mere apparitions, i.e. only images, like a ghost): Jesus shared meals with them, invited them to touch him, etc., saying he was not a ghost (Lk 24:39)
* Jesus’ risen body was real, but glorified. His resurrection was not a return to ordinary human life, as were the other resurrections he performed (Lazarus, son of widow of Naim, 12-year old girl), but a new kind of life (not bound by space and time, but could act in them, could appear and disappear, glorious, fully so after Ascension).
* Explanation (2): swoon
* The NT evidence that Jesus truly died is too strong. Roman procedures were very careful to eliminate the possibility that Jesus somehow survived crucifixion (breaking legs of other two, spear in Jesus’ side, with blood and water coming out, etc.) Post-Resurrection appearances do not show Jesus as half-dead, badly in need of a doctor, etc.; he would have been hardly one to receive worship as divine Lord and conqueror of death. How could he have gotten out of the tomb when he was so weak and without the guards knowing it? Moreover, if Jesus awoke from a swoon, where did he go off to? This explanation is now hardly even mentioned.
* Explanation (3) Apostles were deceived
* This theory has two parts: (a) Jesus’ body somehow disappeared from the tomb, but not taken by Apostles, *and* (b) Apostles thought they saw Jesus alive but really didn’t.
* (a) Who could have stolen the body? No one but the Apostles would have had any interest in doing so; several theories have been put forward, none of them reasonable:
* Suppose the Jewish authorities themselves stole the body under authority of Pilate. *Reply*: why would Jewish authorities remove our Lord’s body? They had strong motives not to. Even if they had done this, wouldn’t they have produced the (dead) body of Jesus when the disciples started proclaiming the Resurrection? (cf. Acts 4:1-22). Rabbinic writers do not hint at such a procedure.
* Suppose Jesus was never even buried, but thrown into the common grave of criminals. This is Loisy’s theory (Modernist). *Reply:* (i) All evangelists agree in saying Jesus was buried. (ii) 1 Cor 15:3 indicates Jesus was buried (*etáphē* indicates normal burial). This passage is presumably the oldest Resurrection tradition. Also, why would Paul say we are buried together with Jesus in baptism if Jesus wasn’t buried? (iii) Peter, on Pentecost, compares the tomb of King David to that of Jesus, something difficult to maintain had Jesus not been buried (cf. Acts 2:29).
* Suppose Joseph of Arimathea he had placed the body in the tomb only temporarily. *Reply*: the Apostle’s preaching of the Resurrection would have forced him, either as friend or foe of Christ’s followers, to reveal his action. But he doesn’t. Even if he did take the body, how could he get it out?
* Suppose Jesus’ body was swallowed up by an earthquake, like the one at the crucifixion (Mt 27:51-53)? *Reply*: Then why were wrappings laying on the ground?
* (b) This part of explanation (3) also doesn’t hold water. *Reply*:
* There were too many witnesses, up to 500, and when Paul wrote 1 Cor, many of those witnesses still alive, which means anyone could have verified their testimony for himself. All 500 hallucinating? Maybe, but 500 at the same time and in the same place? (Consider how 500 individual Elvis sightings don’t mean much, but if 500 fishermen in the same town in Maine saw, touched and talked with Elvis at the same time, that would be a different matter.) Hallucinations usually happen only once, except to the insane. The appearances of Jesus occurred many times, to many ordinary people.
* Other evidence against hallucinations: Nor would the Apostles and other followers have been carried away by an enthusiastic expectation of the Resurrection. Mary Magdalene (Jn 20) saw the stone rolled back and did not think of Resurrection. The Apostles thought the words of the women were nonsense (Lk 24:11). The two disciples of Emmaus had found no ground for hope even in the report of the Resurrection. The fact of the empty tomb makes them think first that the corpse has been stolen (Jn 20:2,13,15). At Jesus’ first appearance, the Apostles thought they were seeing a ghost and only believed after Jesus showed them his hands and feet and ate something. The unbelief of Thomas was only dispelled by actually touching Jesus’ body, not a visual image of it. Even when Jesus appeared just before the Ascension on a mountain in Galilee, some followers still had their doubts (Mt 28:17). Moreover, when Jesus appeared to St Paul on the road to Damascus, the latter was not disposed at that time to believe in a risen Jesus, but he still did see him. Clearly a self-induced vision is not involved here.
* The apostles (assuming good intentions) could not have believed in a hallucination as long as Jesus’ corpse had been in the tomb. Even if they had, the Jews needed only to produce the body to stop them. Again we see the critical importance of the empty tomb.
* Since *both* parts of explanation (3) have to be reasonable for it to be believable, and either part by itself is *not* reasonable, the whole thing fails

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* Explanation (4) would say that Jesus’ body was stolen from the tomb by Apostles, or someone in cahoots with them, e.g. Joseph of Arimathea; then they invented the story of the Resurrection and succeeded in getting people to believe them. Such a theft was what the Jewish authorities alleged in order to forestall the story of the Resurrection (Mt 28:11-15). *Reply*: how could despondent Apostles dare to attempt such a crime, which would have had very little chance of succeeding? How to roll back a huge stone and take away the body without waking up the guards and hide it without anyone ever knowing where? As one apologist puts it, one would have to believe
* (a) that eleven (no Judas!) poor and uneducated fishermen were able to change the world through a plot laid so deep that no one has ever been able to discern where the cheat lay, (b) that these men divested themselves of the pursuit of a comfortable life and ventured into poverty, torments, and persecutions all for nothing, (c) that dispirited men should suddenly grow so resolute as to force the sepulchre and steal the body; recall that they were afraid of the authorities (Jn 20:19), and that Peter denied Our Lord three times to save his own skin (d) that in the theft they should take the time to nicely fold the grave clothes prior to departure, and (e) that these impostors should furnish the world with the greatest system of morality that ever was. *Reply*: it is less reasonable to believe this explanation than to believe the Apostles’ testimony that Jesus did rise from the dead.
* What if they did not steal body, but simply said that Jesus was alive? *Reply*: all the Jews had to do to refute this superstition would be to produce the body. But they didn’t, because they didn’t know where it was. What about story the guards were told to say, that the disciples stole the body while they were asleep? *Reply*: any sensible person would ask, how did they know it was the disciples if they were asleep? The Jews never questioned the fact of empty tomb, they just sought to explain the fact in a different way, which is why Mt 28:15 can say (final editing is thought to have occurred 30 years later) *and this story is spread among the Jews to this very day*. If the Jews and Romans could have undercut this deceit of the Apostles other than with another deceit, they most certainly would have.
* Some have alleged that the discrepancies in the Gospel accounts of the events around the Resurrection indicate that the Apostles contradicted each other because they had fabricated their stories. *Reply*: Small inconsistencies in the evidence of eyewitnesses to and protagonists of dramatic events, e.g. car accidents, is common in forensic work, because of the excitement involved and the rapid course of such events. Such apparent incoherence is usually taken as a sign of the reality of the personal experiences involved, not their unreality. The Resurrection was a very dramatic experience for all involved, as the Gospels show (fear of the women, uncertainty of the Apostles, deep sorrow of everyone preceding it, “too good to believe”, etc.), and the inconsistencies are about minor details of timing, order of events, who actually did what, etc, not about the main event.
* Explanation (4) is thus not a reasonable one.
* Explanation (5) is the only logical one for someone intent on denying the reality of Jesus’ Resurrection. A myth is neither literally true nor literally false, but rather spiritually or symbolically true. This explanation would have to assume: (i) the historical Jesus was not divine, did not claim divinity, performed no miracles, and did not rise from dead. (ii) the mythologized Jesus of the Gospels did all these things. (iii) in the meantime, an evolutionary scenario for the sincere but erring belief in Jesus Christ’s Resurrection, which grows in stages. The seeming discrepancies of the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection would, in the minds of some authors who favoured this explanation, support this; so would the earliest Resurrection tradition recorded by St. Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8 (around 50 AD), where he does not mention an empty tomb. They say that the empty tomb in Jerusalem was invented later to make the Resurrection more credible, as well as the mention of guarding tomb and the initial doubts of Apostles about the Resurrection. And since several generations would be needed for a myth to develop in those times, there could not be any belief in a divine and resurrected Jesus during the first century AD (this is the view of Rudolf Bultmann).
* *Reply*: Assumption (i) above is refuted by the credibility of the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ claim to divinity and performance of miracles in sections 20 and 22 above. Assumption (ii) is dealt with in section 21. Assumption (iii) is dealt with as follows:
* (a) Paul’s letters are the earliest Christian witness to Jesus’ Resurrection, ca. 50 AD, i.e. before a myth could develop. He expresses all the main Resurrection claims found in the Gospels, written a bit later. Eyewitnesses were then still alive. Although he does not explicitly mention the empty tomb, he does so indirectly: by saying that Christ died, was buried and rose again; also he contrasts Jesus and David in Acts 13:34-37; Jesus’ body did not undergo corruption, but David’s did. (b) The early dates (1st cent) of the Gospels also make the myth theory problematic. Few scholars now believe like Bultmann did that they were written after 100 AD (John’s might have been a few years after that date). (c) The NT explicitly says it is not a myth (cf. 2 Pet 1:16). Since it says it is *not*, then if it *is* myth, it is deliberate lie, i.e. explanation 5 becomes Explanation 4. (e.g. once a child asks you if Santa Claus is real, your yes becomes a lie, not a myth. (d) The Gospels do not have the character of the literary myths of their time. If the Apostles made up a story, why not include full details the Resurrection “story”? This is what the apocryphal Gospels actually do, with incredible fanfare. The laconic character of the Gospel narratives (not only about the Resurrection) contrast sharply with every other kind of known mythical writings of that time.
* Explanation (5) is thus not a reasonable one.
* This leaves explanation (1), i.e. the NT accounts, as the only reasonable explanation of the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus. Of course, this process of elimination is not itself the ultimate motive of credibility, but simply preserves the credibility of the Gospel accounts drawn from a consideration of the NT texts themselves. The evangelists related what really happened, and this is backed up by (i) the dates and manner of the composition of the Gospels, (ii) the behaviour and words of everyone (including Jesus’ enemies) involved in those accounts (including after the Ascension and Pentecost), (iii) the fulfillment of prophecies about the Resurrection, and (iv) the nature of the Resurrection itself, as both an event in history, and one whose mysterious meaning lies outside history and time, in the eternity to which it leads us.

[class 33]

1. *The Church as sign of credibility.*
2. Classical treatment of the credibility of the Church: *via notarum* and *via empirica*.
* *Steps toward an understanding of the Church as a sign of credibility*. This understanding begins with the *demonstratio Catholica* of classical apologetics from the 16th cent onwards (dealing with issues raised by the Protestant Reformation), i.e. a scientific (in sense of having a foundation in truths of Faith, systematic and rational methods) demonstration of the truth of the Catholic Church, and thus that Roman Catholic Christianity is in complete continuity with intentions and work of Jesus Christ. The implicit ecclesiology (theology of the Church) of such a procedure reaches its most developed form in the document *De Ecclesia* of Vatican I, which was never officially promulgated by the Council because its work was interrupted by the taking of Rome by the new political movement in Italy.
* *Three “ways” of demonstrating the truth of the Catholic Church*. Classical apologetics developed these three ways: (1) *Via historica*: established the historical continuity of Church of today with the primitive Church, through examination of documents, etc. It was usually centred on establishing the continuity of the see of Peter. (2) *Via notarum*: Jesus endowed the Church with its four distinctive marks or notes: *unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity*. Only the Roman Catholic Church has all four. This way avoids some of the complicated work of the *via historica*. (3) *Via empirica*: adopted especially by Vatican I. It avoids conflicts with other religions over interpretation of documents, etc. Instead, it focuses on the value of the Church in itself as a moral “miracle”, and hence a motive of credibility as a divine sign confirming its transcendence (cf. Dz 1794). It did not appeal to the historical founding of the Church by Christ, but rather the Church as an extraordinary phenomenon in itself.
* The *via notarum* was taken up by the CCC, giving a richer understanding of the notes and of what could seem objections to them (more on this later).
1. The Church, mystery of faith and sign of credibility.
* Vatican II developed teaching on the nature of the Church as a sign of credibility. The Council brought some changes of perspective: (1) it offered a more profound theological exposition of the Church which (2) in turn gives a new meaning and greater emphasis to the Church as a sign. This certainly includes the Church as a sign of the credibility of Rev but goes beyond that. The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation (LG 1) from which all other sacraments flow. Hence it is a sign of (i) salvation for the world, for it represents and communicates the invisible grace of salvation (ii) unity in charity: it reflects in its faithful (the members of the Church) the oneness and love of Trinitarian life, inviting all men into its *communion* (cfr LG 1, Church is universal sacrament of communion of men with God and with each other). (iii) faith in as much as it is capable of leading people to faith in God and in Christ (cf. Is 11:12) (iv) above all the Church is a sign of Christ, of his action, as well as that of Holy Spirit in the world today.
* The emphasis on the Church as a sign of salvation in Vat II is important for FT. By sign of salvation, we mean: if they ask “What does salvation mean? How can I be sure it is real?” then one can point to the Church as something visible and active for salvation here and now.
* Christian witness. How does the sign of the Church reach and become perceptible to all men? Vat II says through Christian witness. When the People of God are assembled in unity, faithful to their calling to sanctity, and when they live to the full their life of union with God and with other people, they bear witness (through their holiness) to the fact that the salvation proclaimed and preached by the Church has been truly bestowed on humanity. Their unity of life and unity in love visibly shows that the Church is truly the visible location of salvation in Jesus Christ through the continual action of the Holy Spirit.
* This has brought a deeper understanding of the Church as a sign of Rev. The change of emphasis from Vat I is to consider the “miracle” of the Church not only in itself, as distinct from other (erroneous) churches and religions (although that viewpoint still has its merit). Vat II considers the full value of the Church as a sign is in its orientation (relevance) toward each person's salvation in Christ. The Church in this view has the same properties (notes), but its value as a sign is now seen in terms of personal and common witness. (i) The individual members of the Church themselves, by their holy lives, (ii) Christian communities, by their life of unity and charity, and (iii) the whole People of God, by their life in conformity with the gospel, demonstrate to all men that the Church is the locus of salvation. In short, sanctity and apostolate (i.e. witness) are at the core of what it means for the Church to be a sign of Rev. In this one can also see how the mission of the Prelature fits in with the life of the whole Church.
* The advantage of this viewpoint is that it handles the paradoxes and tensions that beset the perennial reality of the Church. Its unity, though real, is disrupted, fragile and in constant need of mending. Its sanctity arises from sinful ground. Do these facts detract from its value as sign? No, because they help us to see even better that the Church is a reality which would be incomprehensible if viewed from only a human standpoint, were it not for the active presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit in it. The defects in its members help to understand its divine character even more. These defects mitigate the efficacy of the sign, but they do not vitiate that efficacy.
* The Church is Christocentric. The Church derives its entire value as a sign from the mystery of Christ:
* The fullness of the testimony concerning Christ is found only in Church.
* The Church is credible because it reflects the credibility of Christ. This credibility in the Incarnate Word is perpetuated in history particularly and mainly through his Church.
* She is a sign and an historical instrument of Christ, Son of God and Lord. That is, the credibility of the testimony of the Church(the reason for believing in her life and doctrine, her structure and activity) depends upon God’s action in her and through her.
1. Origin of the Church: the will of Jesus Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit; historical origins of Christianity as object of study for fundamental theology.
* There are three essential questions for FT about Church:
* Did Jesus Christ found the Church? Here we ask about Jesus' intention and actions by which the Church was established.
* What is the relationship between the Church and the kingdom of God that Jesus preached? Is the kingdom identified with the Church? If not, in what is it different?
* How can we be sure of the continuity between the primitive Church of the Apostles guided by the Holy Spirit and the Church as we know it today?

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* These are basic questions of apologetics since they all pertain to her cred (mainly her historical truth); but they are also fundamental to the Church’s own self-understanding. Clearly more than just a question of what we believe, but also of something that we can demonstrate historically (and hence a question for FT). A brief historical sketch of these questions and teachings of the Magisterium about them:
* *Questions on the origins of the Church.* SS, the Fathers, and the scholastics all have something to say about the origins of the Church, which classical Apologetics expressed. Two historical challenges however have led to a deeper reflection on her nature:
* *The Reformation*: This questioned the continuity between the Church in apostolic times and the Catholic Church of modern times. The Catholic response placed great emphasis on the ministry of Peter and on the papacy as a guarantee of this continuity.
* *Modernism and liberal Protestants*: 20th cent critical thought threw into question the intention of Jesus to actually found the Church. Von Harnack, Loisy, Bultmann deny any kind of organized church in Our Lord’s thought and preaching. Therefore, they say that the kingdom of God that Jesus preached is not to be identified with Church, and the Church as we know it arose as a later confederation of local communities. The Church in its Catholic mould as a sacramental community would have taken shape under the influence of Hellenism and the Roman Empire.
* *Earlier Magisterial response*. “The Church was instituted immediately and directly by the actual historical Christ himself while he lived among us” (Dz 2145, Pius X, *Oath against the errors of Modernism*). Hence Jesus is seen as the founder, whose specific founding acts call the Church into being, as shown in SS: (i) calling and sending of the 12 Apostles, (ii) the institution of primacy of Peter and its succession, (iii) the transmittal to the apostles of the threefold power of Christ (to teach, to sanctify and to rule), and (iv) the institution of the Eucharist as the definitive covenant.
* *Vatican II:* Vat I wanted to issue a fuller document on the Church, but this had to wait. Vat II has made ample indications; a summary follows:
* the Church is bound up with the will of all three persons of the Trinity (cf. LG nn.2-4)
* the Church was founded in stages throughout out Lord's life; LG speaks of a “foundation” and refers to Our Lord as a “founder;”
* LG also lists some of His founding acts: (i) the inauguration of the church in Christ's proclamation of the promised kingdom; (ii) the manifestation of that kingdom through his words, works, and presence, especially his miracles; (iii) the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost; (iv) the reception of her mission to proclaim the kingdom of God among all peoples.
* The Church represents the initial budding forth (*germen et initium*) of the kingdom. Even today Church is not all that kingdom of God will eventually be
* What about the continuity between the early Church and the present-day Church? This can be demonstrated using non-Scriptural documents of the early Church (*Didache*, Letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter of Barnabas, etc.), in which elements of continuity stand out, e.g. hierarchical structure of the Church, Baptism, the Eucharist, divinity of Jesus, the Creed, etc.

d) The Church as a sign of credibility: aspects and dimensions. (O&B pp 319-319)

* *The universal spreading of the Church*. The rapid growth of the Church in the early centuries was a feature of its life. This came about not through the use of violent means by members of the Church, or by the promise of pleasures for joining her, but by the exact opposite, i.e. persecution, slander, injustice, etc. borne by Christians. All types of people came into the Church: brilliant, humble, noble, slaves… Not for things seen do they suffer everything, but things unseen. In words of St Augustine (*De fide rerum quae non videntur*, c. 4, no. 7: PL 40, 176): “Look at what exists now, consider what you see. […] Do you think it is a small thing, do you think it is not a miracle, moreover, a marvellous miracle, that the whole of mankind follows after a crucified man?”
* *Catholic unity*: people of all languages, races, cultures, conditions, professing exactly the same creed, worshiping God the same way, hoping in the same eternal glory. A particularly worthy argument of credibility, as our Lord states: *that they may be one … that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me* (Jn 17:21). The charity of Christs’ disciples: *by this all men will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another* (Jn 13:35). Moreover, the Church represents the only truly universal society on this earth, and even beyond this earth.
* *Stability*: All human institutions come to an end. The Church is the only exception, because what is proper to God lasts forever. It survived against great pressures from outside (persecution) and from within (bad actions of a few Popes, heresies, lack of sanctity in many Christians…). A stability that is dynamic, since the Church finds ways to formulate and present her faith in every age with the “gift of tongues.”
* *Church as the sign of Jesus, crucified and risen*: This is so because she constantly confesses her faith in him, worships him, imitates him, and invokes him in her prayers. The Church revolves around Jesus like the moon around the earth. St. Augustine said: “the Apostles saw Jesus Christ in his glorious body, and believed in the Church. We many years later do not see Jesus Christ but we see the Church. Let us learn to believe the Head by seeing the body.” The suffering of the Church is a participation in his Passion and death; her continuity and stability reflect his Resurrection. By the power of the Risen Lord she is able to overcome trials, temptations, sorrows and difficulties.
* Summary: the life and doctrine of the Church, her structure and activity, can be considered a sign of faith (of credibility of the faith) for the following reasons: (i) they grant a certain experience of God’s saving action in history (e.g. universal extension of Church); (ii) they allow a certain anticipation of her definitive condition in glory. Her stability and unity makeher a sign of that condition of firmness and permanency *proper to the eschatological future*; this makes allowances for the shortcomings and defects of Christians at any time in history (iii) they make the crucified and risen Christ present to mankind.
1. Holiness, privileged sign of God’s presence in the world.
* The principle effect of God’s saving action in the world is the holiness with which the Church is endowed. The person who has accepted the Word of God and responded with faith, enters into the divine life (*communio*) of the Trinity: the fullness of that communion of life is called holiness.
* The Church holy for following reasons: (i) her Founder is holy; (ii) her mission is holy; (iii) she has received the gift of visible and external holiness of (a) the means of sanctification (sacraments), (b) her members (at least some), (c) her charisms. The holiness of her members is a sign of her credibility. A religion whose members lead a life that is in keeping with their demanding beliefs, even to point of martyrdom is eminently a sign of God’s action in world. Even more so when this high ideal is presented to all its adherents (i.e. holiness is a goal not just for an enlightened few). The Church is credible as a sign of holiness because it does not fail to demand of its faithful the radical sanctity and unity of life that accepting the Gospel implies.
* The sanctity of the Church (with respect to its members) is a sign because it is immediately verifiable in history. Saints are present in every age, hence the important role of canonization in the life of the Church, to maintain this sign of holiness. Christians are saints in the ordinary sense (habitually free of mortal sin) but especially in the exemplary sense (high degree of excellence in living supernatural and natural virtues).
* *Objection*: not everyone in the Church is a saint. In fact, the many bad examples in history can darken this sign in eyes of some, e.g. priest scandals, Christians who live inconsistently with their professed ideals, etc. *Response:* (i) Even in the worst times of Christian history (e.g. 10th cent Rome, 15th cent Western Schism) there have been heroic examples of holiness among the faithful. (ii) Holiness in other aspects of the life of the Church, e.g. institutions, dogmas, rituals also count for something. iii) *Already but not yet* (a common expression in Christian writing): her holiness is a sign in anticipation because her sanctity is not yet perfect as it will be at the end of time in her glory. The sanctity we can see today in the Church is a sign of her eschatological and definitive sanctity; for the moment, she participates in rather than possesses it fully. Precisely because this sanctity of the Church is a sign of faith, to discover and understand it requires a minimum of faith, spiritual sensibility,

***X. GRACE, REASON AND FREEDOM IN CHRISTIAN FAITH***

[class 35]

1. *Genesis of the act of faith.*
2. The *analysis fidei* in classical apologetics.
* The approach of classical CA (16th cent onwards, drawing on medieval contributions, especially St Thomas Aquinas) to the defense of the Faith included an attempt to analyze the act of faith by which we believe what God has revealed. This involved a reflection on what might be going on in the believer’s mind and will, helped by grace. From this reflection there emerged a series of acts that distinguished stages in which a person passed from not believing to believing. There have been different ways of doing this analysis and different outcomes, so that not all authors agree on the details. But most agree that the act of faith is mysterious, since it involves both man and God. Nevertheless, as St Thomas observed, we can seek to understand it better, so that we can believe and love better.
* We have already covered much of the material in these last sections of the subject. Here we hope to tie them all together, so that Rev, faith and credibility can be seen as one unitary and yet articulated process bringing together God and man, grace and human nature, so that faith, freedom and truth, unite to enable man’s loving response to God’s love in revealing himself
1. Elements of the genesis of the act of faith: proposal of the Word, intention to believe, judgment of credibility, decision to believe.
* We are considering here the *genesis* of the act of faith, i.e. how a human being *begins* to have faith; later we will also consider how faith enlightens the life of a person and society
* God always takes the initiative in his dealings with man: his act of creation precedes the existence of the world and of each person, his Rev precedes man’s awareness and acceptance of it, his grace precedes each believer’s act of faith
* Since faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:17), the first step is for God’s Rev to reach a person; everyone receives God’s natural Rev, and in the measure that one reacts with a humble and sincere desire for truth and love, in that measure one will be disposed to respond positively to historical Rev when one encounters it; God provides for those who never encounter it, in ways that only he knows, so that no one is left outside his will to save them (1 Tim 2:4), except by their own (bad) choice; God’s mysterious Providence works through natural and human causes in enabling people to encounter Rev, but mostly he works through the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit, i.e. the Church, and in his supreme freedom he also works directly on some people, even those opposed to Rev as they know it (probably distorted), e.g. St Paul.
* As we have seen, some steps seem to be generally discernable in most cases:
* The proposal of the Word is made in some way (preaching, writing, living example, etc.);
* Then comes an initial attraction to Rev as the first effect of grace received with good dispositions; the connaturality with divine life that this grace can bring about shows itself in an interest in Rev and the Christian life, at least a removal of previous negative or indifferent attitudes to it, so that the person freely becomes open to “knowing more about it”
* This can then lead to a desire for faith, even an intention to believe “I wish I could believe” as the person comes to know more about Rev (both its contents and the process by which it has come to us, especially through Jesus Christ); grace is acting and dispositions are improving, so that the person becomes willing to make some sacrifices to know more about Christianity, e.g. reading and study, attending Mass, engaging in deep conversations, etc.
* At some point the person makes a judgment of credibility, “this is believable”, based on one or more of the motives of credibility or signs of Rev that God has built into his Rev to help us to believe: the events in the history of Rev and salvation, miracles and prophecies, the life and teachings of Jesus, the life and work of the Church, lives of saints, etc.
* Some authors also recognize a judgment of credentity, i.e. “I ought to believe this, since God seems to be behind it”; this is clearly the work of grace, as the person moves from the possibility (a somewhat theoretical situation) of believing to a moral imperative to believe (a more existential situation) on God’s authority (this is the formal motive of faith); nevertheless the person’s freedom always remains intact, so they can go forward to faith or stay stuck in a rut of possibility
* Finally comes the act of faith, a mysterious blend of divine and human freedom, where the person says feely “I want to be a Christian”, makes an act of faith, “I believe in Jesus Christ” and asks for Baptism.
1. Grace, reason and freedom in the genesis of faith.
* At every stage God’s grace and human freedom are intertwined; while the Church recognizes that the judgment of credibility can be made without grace, since God gives enough evidence (the signs or motives of credibility) in historical Rev to make *that* judgment, his grace will often be helping as well, since he knows perfectly well the needs of each person
* Reason also continues to act, as it does in every free human act, since God wants children, not slaves or robots; but this has to be “good” reason, open to truth and goodness for *their* sake, not for some lower personal advantage (economic, pleasure, power, etc.)
* Freedom is maintained in the encounter with Rev, since God does not want to overwhelm people, force their response, leave them spiritually blind (sometimes he leaves someone physically blind, like St Paul) or feeling defeated (faith is a victory over sin and the devil); this makes the act of faith meritorious, thus bringing more grace to continue to believe, to overcome obstacles, e.g. opposition from family, friends, society, etc.
1. Concepts and terminology.
* Prior to Vat II, the term “motive of credibility” was used to designate an element of Rev that God provided to help man to believe: miracles, prophecies, lives of holy men and women, etc. Vat II preferred to use the term “sign”, probably because it was more biblical (cfr frequent use in OT and NT to refer to God’s actions in the world, on people, etc.), more in keeping with what God intended, and more “existential” than the somewhat “philosophical” previous term; it also has a broader meaning than “motive of credibility”, since it also refers to God’s presence, his power, his goodness, etc. and not only his manifestation of truth
1. The modern concept of the journey of the whole man toward faith.
* Similarly, after Vat II it became more common to see the genesis of faith as a *journey*, something more fully human and personal, and not just an intellectual process; in this way the involvement of the whole person was “built in” to the genesis of faith, as was the action of God’s providence; it also took more account of the varied experience of each person and of different persons, with ups and downs, steps forward, sideways and backward, interactions with other people and other elements of life (family, work, study, leisure, suffering, etc.)
* What also has become clearer is that *everyone’s* life is a journey toward faith, whether they arrive at faith or not (which depends on how they use their freedom), since God wants everyone to be saved and this requires coming to know the truth of Rev (again 1 Tim 2:4), either explicitly or implicitly in natural Rev.
* All this emphasizes the anthropological dimension of salvation, which will be considered in the next section.

[class 36]

1. *Anthropological roots of faith.*
2. Man’s ordination to God and calling to divine life.
* Natural Rev already represents God’s desire for human salvation, since it is meant to provoke man’s awareness of God as the source and goal of existence
* However, the reality of sin darkens man’s experience of life and therefore his ability to reach this awareness of God through nature; God’s goodness has come to man’s aid through historical Rev, which leads to the awareness that God’s plan for man’s salvation not only involves restoring man’s natural ordering to truth and goodness, but raising man to a higher kind of life ordered to participating in God’s own life
* This has brought traditional CA to a renewed focus on man’s side of all this; without in any way diminishing the centrality of God and Christ in Rev and salvation, it has renewed Christian appreciation for man himself, seeing man more as God sees him, i.e. with immense love and mercy; this is reflected in the expression of St John Paul II, that “man is the way of the Church”, meaning that the Church is the way and instrument that God has provided for man’s salvation and happiness, and therefore the Church has to focus its attention on all aspects of human life in order to facilitate man’s encounter with God in them
* Some theologians, after Vat II, unfortunately misinterpreted the Council’s texts to mean more attention to human situations *in themselves*, i.e. leaving God and faith somewhat in the background. This led to all kinds of distortions of what Vat II actually meant and created a kind of “alternative” Rev, e.g. liberation theology, man-centered liturgy, democratization of Church authority, etc. Things moved back to a better interpretation of the Council with St John Paul II, who fostered a very good consideration of the anthropological dimensions of Rev, starting with his first encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (The Redeemer of Man), which made Christian anthropology solidly Christocentric.
1. Reflections on human psychology: openness to the divine, religiosity, consciousness of meaning as preparation for faith.
* The focus on man after Vat II brought certain topics to the fore in FT, such as:
* Man’s natural openness to the divine and to religiosity; this helped to overcome the bad effects of the rationalism of the 19th and 20th cents, which tended to see man as naturally atheistic or agnostic
* The signs (motives of cred) of Rev as helps that God gives man to help him respond to Rev with faith, because those signs resonate with basic needs of human nature (for truth, for freedom, for love, ultimately for God himself)
* What is the meaning of human life, activity, work, family, suffering, death, etc. (GS deals with this)? These basic questions that everyone asks sooner or later find wonderful answers in Rev
* All of these deeply human topics and more can and do function as helps for people to turn to God and what he has revealed to us; they can serve as preparation for faith in Rev, showing that God has had our human needs in mind from the very beginning of mankind
1. By grace man is *capax Dei*.
* Many of the Fathers of the Church also had a focus on human anthropology, as it was understood in their time, e.g. St Irenaeus, St Leo the Great, St Augustine, St John Chrysostom; the phrase *capax Dei* (capable of God) came to be a description of man in the deepest sense; it signifies that man is capable of receiving God, not only in a natural sense, i.e. *knowing about God*, but also in a supernatural sense, i.e. through grace *knowing God*, experiencing him.
* Without confusing the natural and supernatural orders, the Fathers had the insight, which has been preserved throughout the intervening centuries, but focused on more directly after Vat II, that grace not only does not destroy or weaken human nature, but it answers man’s deepest yearnings for fulfillment in a way that man could never achieve by himself: to become divinized
* because God had this plan for man from the very beginning, it seems to have left an echo in man’s nature, even after original sin; the account of man’s temptation and fall in Gen 3:1-7 seems to put the core of that temptation in becoming like God by one’s own natural powers, independently of God; this sin left man worse off, because now he could barely reach, and with great effort, even a natural knowledge of God, let alone a supernatural one; but the devil was not able to fathom the depths of God’s love and mercy in responding to man’s original sin by promising redemption and restoration of man’s supernatural goal; man was once again *capax Dei*
1. The desire for God.
* Rev thus corresponds to the yearning of man for complete fulfillment, which he can only find through personal and communal response in faith to that Rev; creation can in principle awaken man’s desire for God, but in practice, this is very difficult and in any case it cannot satisfy the desire for the *complete* fulfillment that God intends for man; sin tends to reduce man’s desire for God, without eliminating it altogether, since it is inscribed in the deepest recesses of human nature;
* but sin leaves man open to the same temptation that our first parents faced: to be like God by one’s own efforts; it can become a desire for the wrong sort of God: knowing and controlling everything, self-exaltation, power over others, amassing wealth and/or pleasures, etc.; only with the help of grace can man re-discover his true goal in God and find the means God himself has given us to reach it;
* God can give this grace to anyone, even someone totally ignorant of Rev or totally corrupted by sin, but ordinarily he gives grace to encounter Rev, in general through the mediation of others in or somehow drawing on the Church, and to respond to it with faith, helped by the signs that accompany Rev.

[class 37]

1. *Perception of credibility.*
2. It is reasonable to believe in Christ as God and Saviour.
* From what was covered in sections 18-24, the conclusion has been drawn that faith in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour is reasonable, i.e. there are sufficient signs (motives of credibility) in Rev to satisfy the demands of reason about the credibility of Rev, without actually producing an act of faith, i.e. complete assent to the content of Rev itself.
* The perception of credibility is an act of reason for which grace is not strictly necessary, but certainly helpful, and no doubt provided by God according to a particular person’s need for it
* That perception is as far as reason can take someone in the face of Rev; to move on to a judgment of credentity (one ought to believe) is already more than the human intellect and will can manage unaided; it takes one to the very edge of the act of faith, and in most cases would lead on to faith itself
1. Perception of the Gospel’s relation with the last end of man; recognition of the divine origin of Christianity.
* We can ask whether the judgment of credibility makes it possible for a person to accept *some* truths that might not require faith itself, but would belong more to the preambles of faith; the signs of credibility might make these truths more accessible to the person concerned. Two of these could be the following:
* The relation of the Gospel to the last end of man, i.e. that the Gospel, the teachings of Jesus Christ, is the way to complete fulfillment, i.e. the beatific vision of God; while faith is needed to accept Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, and therefore his teaching as the way to salvation, it would be possible to grasp, through study of the content of Rev, that the Gospel does *promise* salvation, i.e. reaching the last end of man, and that this promise is *credible*; however to actually assent to this promise requires faith
* Similarly, to assent to the divine origin of Christianity requires faith, but one could arrive at the judgment that such a truth is credible through the signs of Rev.
1. Certainty of the judgment of credibility.
* Insofar as the judgment of credibility is a human judgment, its certainty would depend on many factors, including to some extent human faith in those who have mediated in presenting Rev to the person concerned
* However, grace would probably accompany this judgment for most people, and to this extent its certitude would be much stronger. Grace gives to human judgments a certainty that depends on God more than on natural factors, and this can make the judgment absolutely certain, as happens with the act of faith itself. Nevertheless, the human will remains free, and the person could give in to factors that drew their will into some sort of doubt, which would weaken the certainty of their judgment. This brings up the subject of asking God for grace, i.e. prayer, which will be treated in the next section.

[class 38]

1. *Action of grace in the recognition of credibility.*
2. The *pius credulitatis affectus.*
* It is generally recognized that the help of God’s grace is never lacking, but that God wants his people to ask him for that help, since this brings their freedom more into play in seeking union with him
* This highlights the importance of prayer in the process of coming to faith and in living by faith.
* The virtue of piety, which renders to God what we owe him (even on a natural level), but with a certain keenness and child-like confidence, manifests itself primarily in prayer, a dialogue with God which is already a response to his Rev, and in the process of coming to faith, a necessary component. A person attracted to Rev will ordinarily feel some desire to pray, since God has become more “real” for them, and they can sense, even in a vague way, that they can ask him for help. This is often the experience of people who begin to move toward faith; they pray with some hesitation, perhaps, but with the conviction that prayer is a good thing. Something similar can occur with acts of public worship (the Mass, especially), which are also expressions of the virtue of piety.
* Theologians and pastors have recognized that piety helps the process of coming to faith (and certainly living by faith after Baptism); prayer in particular seems to “soften” the heart of a person, making their will “feel” more attracted to God (often this does have an emotional component as well, since grace attracts the whole person). This has been given the name of *pius credulitatis affectus* (pious feeling of attraction to faith).
* When a person has come into the life of faith and grace by Baptism, the supernatural virtue of piety gives their relation to God, and hence their prayer, a markedly filial character; Baptism is a real adoption of the person by God, so that they become “sons in the Son”, participating in the naturally (divinely) filial relation of the Son of God to his Father in the Holy Spirit.
1. Faith transcends the intellectual preparation for faith.
* As we have seen, the various steps leading to the act of faith have the character of preparation of the person’s intellect and will for the act of faith.
* In particular, the intellectual preparation involving the preambles to faith, the knowledge of the contents of Rev, with their signs of cred, the overcoming of intellectual obstacles to faith (often the result of exposure to writings or other presentations of intellectual content contrary to faith, attacking Christianity, emphasizing bad behaviour of Christians at present or in history, etc.) dispose the person’s intellect to make the judgment of credibility and to be open to the action of the will when the time comes for making the act of faith.
* Nevertheless, faith itself transcends this intellectual preparation for faith, so that the latter can only dispose to the former, not actually bring it about. This is why, e.g. some school students or adults can excel in knowledge of the faith, but not actually come to have faith or do not live it out well in their life. In these cases it is possible that the *pius credulitastis affectus* is weak or lacking, and the person does not “feel” much loving attraction to God and Jesus. Hence the importance of accompanying intellectual preparation for faith with growth in piety, especially prayer.
1. Christian progress in the perception of credibility: credibility and Christian praxis (life).
* As a believer progresses from the first experiences of living s a child of God, which is ordinarily accompanied by more or less intense feelings of joy and fulfillment, it is important for them to continue to study their faith and to grow in the practice of prayer, reception of the Sacraments and support from family, friends, pastoral care, etc.
* Along with growth in the Christian virtues, this progress should also lead to greater perception of the cred of Rev; the practice (*praxis* in theological terminology) of Christian life is a cooperation between human freedom and grace; the person’s acts are supernaturally meritorious, and this leads to a more intense action of grace in their soul, including a light to their intellect to “see” with more depth the truths of Rev, including their credibility.
* For someone already having habitual faith, the credibility of Rev is not so much a help to coming to believe, but a help to deepening in faith; this can have several features:
* Making the supernatural realities expressed by Rev more “real”, strengthening assent to their truth and allowing that truth to permeate one’s other faculties: will, imagination, memory, emotions, etc, so that one lives according to those truths
* Making the assent of faith depend more on God alone and less, or not at all, on other factors; in this way the person’s faith will not be “damaged” if a friend ceases to practice their faith, if some scandal in the Church is reported in the media, if some person they respect speaks against the faith, etc.
* Making the assent of faith more “extensive”, i.e. assenting with faith to truths the person was not much aware of before, e.g. some point of the CCC they had not encountered before or had forgotten. This can be especially important in truths of faith on moral matters, when bad habits widespread in society can make it harder for a person to accept wholeheartedly the teachings of the Church on those matters.
1. The Holy Spirit and credibility: it is possible for a Christian to be constantly aware—with well-founded objectivity—of the reasonableness of his faith.
* The Christian virtues of faith (together with hope and charity) and piety, and the gift of the Holy Spirit of understanding all have the effect of deepening the faith of a believer, so that they “see” with greater supernatural insight, the truths of faith *and* their credibility; grace helps the intellect to do its own work, including making judgments of credibility more readily.
* The effect of this is to give a Christian a more constant awareness of the reasonableness of their faith; this can have the following manifestations:
* The virtue of faith becomes more “connatural”, so that acts of faith are made with greater ease, constancy and consistency (less attention to small doubts, more readily accepting difficulties and sufferings, including those that might be occasioned by practice of the faith, doing God’s will, etc.)
* Obstacles to faith from others are more readily dealt with through prayer, study, seeking advice from others qualified to give it, dialogue with the person placing obstacles, removing occasions of sin, etc.
* The person experiences a deeper and “purer” joy (because it comes from God) as the fruit of their faith, all the more so if it is lived out with personal commitment in daily life

[class 39]

1. *Harmony between supernatural light and reason in the life of the believer.*
2. Faith as light that heals and strengthens reason.
* While faith always involves a certain darkness in the mind of the believer caused by the sublimity of the truths of Rev, which remain “beyond” the capacity of the intellect to grasp them spontaneously, it also gives “light” to the intellect, allowing certain truths and judgments to “make sense”, when those truths would appear as contradictions or unreasonable when considered without faith
* Examples of such light strengthening reason could be:
* Accepting events that cause suffering in a way that reason cannot interpret in a positive way, e.g. unexpected deaths of loved ones or reverses of fortune which one is not responsible for
* Obeying lawful authority (religious or civil) when it is personally difficult to do so (assuming that what is asked does not offend God); perhaps even *not* obeying civil authority when it seeks to make a Christian act contrary to faith or morals
* Retaining faith in the light of knowledge obtained by other methods, e.g. science or history, when the latter knowledge appears to contradict truths of Rev; faith leads the believer to be patient, seek clarification and/or advice, study both sides of the question, etc., rather than jump to a hasty conclusion, which can only make the problem worse
* Faith also heals reason, when the latter has been darkened by sin or improper use; thus faith has enabled scholars to overcome deficient methods in the study of Rev or even of nature, especially in human sciences, which are more susceptible to erroneous philosophical judgments about human nature and behavior, e.g. about human freedom, moral judgments, sexuality, etc. In particular faith helps believers to grasp the natural moral law more clearly; even though it is accessible to unaided human reason, the reality of sin often darkens the ability of people to accept it readily without the help of grace
1. Reason in the process of deepening one’s knowledge of the faith: theology.
* Reason also helps to grasp the content of Rev more fully, when the latter has been assented to with strong faith. This occurs in theology, which is the “science of the faith”, the knowledge of truths drawn from Rev by reasoning upon it
* This reasoning has been carried out almost since the beginning of Christianity; it has produced excellent bodies of knowledge about dogmatic and moral matters, and it continues to “spawn” new areas of specialization, e.g. spiritual theology, ecumenical theology, theology of religions, etc.
* Reason needs to be used carefully in doing theology, since the subject matter is “beyond” reason in its fundamentals (truths of Rev); these must be accepted with firm faith, following the guidelines of the Magisterium, and being ready to modify or abandon conclusions if they do not accord with the fundamentals, as guided by the Magisterium.
* Theology performs a positive role when it is carried out faithfully: truths of faith are more fully grasped, new knowledge and practices in human life are seen and judged more in keeping with Rev, the spiritual life of believers can be enriched with helpful insights and practices, errors in theology itself can be corrected over time, etc.
1. Unity of intellectual life, ideal of a believer’s conscience
* The ordinary Christian will have some intellectual content from his/her educational background, professional training and personal acquisition from reading, dialogue with others, etc. There are several ways they can relate this to their Christian beliefs:
* *Opposition*: their human knowledge is allowed to develop in a way that produces opposition to truths of faith, e.g. by reading inappropriate material, not resolving apparent conflicts when they arise, allowing adverse comments of friends and colleagues to go unanswered, etc. It would not be long before they suffered a crisis of faith.
* *Separation*: their human knowledge and their faith are kept in separate “compartments” so that neither affects the other; any apparent conflicts are simply handled by operating mentally on two different levels; this approach of “two truths” was common in some medieval intellectual circles, where philosophical conclusions and truths of faith were developed independently, sometimes with contradictory outcomes, but this situation was simply left without resolution; it eventually weakened the faith of those involved; at least this approach prevents either body of knowledge from contributing anything positive to the other, and at worst, it leads to a kind of “split personality” where the demands of life itself can bring about an existential crisis
* *Unity*: a Christian’s faith should enlighten their mind not only about revealed truth, but also about human knowledge, leading them to seek harmony in the whole span of their intellectual activity; with faith having primacy of place, because its content comes from God, the person should try to work out a synthesis of their human and supernatural knowledge, studying more fully those matters where some apparent conflict might arise, and seeking to integrate all that they know into a tapestry that reflects the goodness and greatness of God at all levels, from the most mundane to the most exalted; many matters of opinion (in politics, artistic taste, cultural preferences, etc.) will be included, and faith will not reduce the believer’s freedom to adopt those options that are compatible with Rev and seem preferable to their judgment; they will also respect the opinions of others and exchange knowledge in mutual dialogue, while seeking to help others come to know and embrace Rev with faith.
1. Relations between faith and culture: evangelization
* Rev transcends all human cultures and is compatible with all elements of each culture when the latter is compatible with the natural moral law; hence Christian faith and practices can be “inculturated” in all societies, just as the faith was inculturated in the societies of the ancient world
* Some of the elements of any culture will be adversely affected by sin, and so Christians need to gradually purify their culture of those elements, e.g. in the ancient world: slavery, worship of idols and superstitions, “sacred” prostitution, etc. This might prove to be an arduous task, even leading to martyrdom in some cases, but the fruits will be a more human and Christian society, many conversions, the spread of the faith, etc.
* The work of evangelization in any culture proceeds along lines of public proclamation of the faith, gradual inculturation of Christian practices and purification of unworthy cultural elements (CCC 854), guided by the universal and local Magisterium, witness by martyrs and other exemplary Christians, the living of the faith in ordinary life, and much prayer and sacrifice, seeking abundant grace from God
1. Christianization, inculturation of the Faith.
* When the process of inculturation has progressed significantly, that society will have been effectively Christianized; this process can take place slowly or more rapidly, depending on the fidelity of Christian witness, the workings of God’s grace and many other factors; it is both an ordered (more or less) apostolic effort and a mysterious action of God’s providence, hence it transcends human abilities to predict its course. But every Christian should feel called to contribute to it according to their personal abilities, professional aptitudes, family and social contacts, possibilities of influencing social customs, etc.
* What is essential is to bring as many people as possible to know Rev and to help them respond to it with faith. The Christianization of the whole world is God’s will, and his grace is ceaselessly at work, helping to bring it about.

[class 40]

*Review*

1. “Cardinal Ratzinger said that the problem with much of modern ‘scientific’ Scripture study, in its use (or misuse) of the ‘historical-critical method,’ is a philosophical one: scholars like Rudolf Bultmann and others early in this century applied ‘a model of evolution… to the analysis of biblical texts;’ therefore, he said, ‘the non-historicity [untruthfulness] of the miracles stories was no question anymore. The only thing one needed to do yet was to explain how these miracle stories came about’ – that is, were ‘invented’ – in the early Christian communities. The real philosophic presupposition for the “evolutionary / non-historical” view of biblical texts, said Ratzinger, lies in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which leads to a denial of supernatural intervention by God in human history. ‘In theological terms,’ he said, ‘this means that … what might otherwise seem like a direct proclamation of the divine can only be myth, whose *laws of development* [evolution] can be discovered. *It is with this basic conviction that Bultmann, with the majority of modern exegetes, read the Bible*.’ Thus, said Ratzinger, ‘At its core, the debate about modern exegesis is not a dispute among historians: it is rather a philosophical dispute’ (*Campbell*, pp. 53-54). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)