

## CHAPTER ONE - MAN'S CAPACITY FOR GOD I. THE DESIRE FOR GOD

Para 27- The desire for God is written in the human heart because man is created by God and for God.

-- God always draws man to Himself. -- Only in God will man find truth and happiness.

Vatican Council II GS 19 paragraph 1:

1. Man's dignity is tied intimately to communion with God.
2. God invites man to converse with Him at creation.
3. God created man through love and through love continues to hold him in existence.
4. Man cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges God's love given to him.

Para 28- Men have been in history on a quest for God:

1. In their religious beliefs
2. In their behavior
3. In their prayers
4. In their sacrifices
5. In their rituals
6. In their meditation

"The above forms of religious expression, even though ambiguous at times, are so universal that one may well call man a *religious being*." (CCC)

Para 29- This is an intimate and vital bond of man to God and is easily overlooked by man.

Results that lead to such attitudes:

1. Revolt against evil in the world
2. Religious ignorance or indifference
3. The care of riches of this world
4. The scandal of bad examples in the past:
  - a. of believers
  - b. currents of thought hostile to religion
  - c. "Attitude of sinful man which makes man hide from God out of fear run from his call."

(Cf. GS 19-21; *Mt* 13:22; *Gen* 3:8-10; *Jn* 1:3)

Para 30- Even though man may reject God, God never ceases to seek him out. God never ceases to call man.

Although man's heart may forget God, God will never forget him. God never ceases to call every man to reach him so as to find life and happiness.

This search for God demands every effort of intellect, sound will, an upright heart, as well as the witness of others who teach him to seek God. St. Augustine wrote, "You yourself encourage men to delight in your praise, for you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." (St. Augustine, Conf. 1, 1, 1:PL 32, 659-661)

## CHAPTER ONE- MAN'S CAPACITY FOR GOD II. WAYS OF COMING TO KNOW GOD

Para 31- Proofs for existence of God- not natural science proof but proof in the sense of "converging and convincing argument," which allows us to ascertain and obtain a certainty about truth. (CCC)

Approaching God from creation has a two -fold point departure: The physical and the human person

Para 32- Through the worlds order & beauty one can come to a knowledge of God as the origin and end of the universe. (See Rom 1:19-20 ..."His deity has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.")

St. Augustine issued a challenge regarding the beauty of the sea, air and sky - These beauties are subject to change. "Who made them if not the 'Beautiful One' who is not subject to change." ( St. Augustine, *Sermo* 241, 2:PL, 38, 1134)

## CHAPTER ONE- MAN'S CAPACITY FOR GOD II. WAYS OF COMING TO KNOW GOD (CONT.)

Para 33- Through the *human person* - "The soul, the 'seed of eternity we bear in ourselves, irreducible to the merely material,' can have its origin only in God." (GS 18 S 1; cf. 14 S2 and CCC)

Man questions himself about God in at least four ways: 1. Man is open to truth and beauty. 2. Man has a sense of moral goodness. 3. Man has the voice of his conscience. 4. Man longs for the infinite and for happiness. (PM)

Para 34- "Man can come to know that there exists a reality which is the first cause and final end of all things, a reality that everyone calls 'God'...Man can only participate in Being itself, which alone is without origin or end...Man cannot contain within himself their first principle or their final end." (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* 1, 2, 3)

Para 35- Faith is not opposed to reason. Man is capable of coming to a knowledge of the existence of a personal God - But for man to enter a real intimacy with God- God revealed himself to man and also gave man the grace of being able to welcome this grace by faith. (PM) (CCC)

## CHAPTER ONE- MAN'S CAPACITY FOR GOD III. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE CHURCH

Para 36- "The Church (our holy mother) teaches that God, the first principle and last end of all things, can be known with certainty from the created world by the natural light of human reason." (Vatican Council I, *Dei Filius* 2: DS 3004; Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum* 6)

"Because man is created in the image of God man has the capacity to welcome God's revelation." (PM) (*Gen* 1:27)

Para 37- The historical conditions in which man finds himself makes it difficult for him to come to God by reason alone. (CCC)

"The human mind, in its turn is hampered in the attaining of truth not only by the impact of the senses and the consequences of original sin. --The result can too easily be: Men easily persuade themselves that what would not like to be true is false or at least doubtful." (Pius XII *Humani Genes* 561 DS 3875)

Para 38- "For the reasons previously mentioned, that is why man stands in need of being enlightened by God's revelation. This is true not only about the things beyond his understanding. But also, about those religious and moral truths which of themselves are not beyond the grasp of human reason... considering man's fallen state with the help of God's revelation all these truths regarding God can be known by all mankind with ease and with certainty and without an admixture of error." (Pius II, *Humani Genes*, DS 3876; cf. *Dei Filius* 2: DS 3005; DV 6; St. Thomas Aquinas *STh* 1,1,1)

## CHAPTER ONE- MAN'S CAPACITY FOR GOD IV. HOW CAN WE SPEAK ABOUT GOD?

Para 39- Because the Church believes in man's ability of human reason to know God. The Church expresses her confidence in the possibility of speaking about Him to all man and with all men. Thus, the Church is hopeful to have dialogue with those of other religions, philosophies, unbelievers, atheists and those of the scientific world. (PM)

Para 40- We are limited in the following ways:

1. Our knowledge of God
2. Our language
3. Our naming God is tied up with starting to name creatures.
4. Our limited human ways of knowing and thinking.

**CHAPTER ONE- MAN'S CAPACITY FOR GOD IV. HOW CAN WE SPEAK ABOUT GOD? (CONT.)**

Para 41- By observing the manifold perfections of creature --their truth, their goodness, their beauty all reflect the infinite perfection of God. Our perception of God can be perceived from his creatures at least in part. (PM) (Wisdom 13:5)

Para 42- God transcends all creatures; The responsibility for the Church is to continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, image bound or imperfect. Our words always fall short of the mystery of God- God is-

1. The inexpressible
2. The incomprehensible
3. The invisible
4. The ungraspable (PM) (*Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, Anaphora*)

Para 43- Even though we are using only human modes of expression, nonetheless, it really does attain to God himself. Though His infinite simplicity cannot be expressed. (PM)

“Between Creator and creature no similitude can be expressed without implying an even greater dissimilitude.”  
(Lateran Council IV: DS 806)

What we are left with concerning of speaking of God is that we really can't grasp what God is, but more commonly we can discern what He is not and how other beings stand in relation to Him. (PM) ( St. Thomas Aquinas, SCG I, 30)

**1. IN BRIEF (PM)**

Para 44- Fullness in this life can only come from our bond with our Creator. We are religious creatures and we cannot escape this even though we deny it. Since God created us to be religious we miss out on life's fullness if we deny it.

Para 45- Our lives can be perfected by God alone. No matter how hard we try to perfect ourselves we will always fall short. God designed us to be reliant upon Him, his creation and his creatures. Communion with God brings happiness.

Para 46- The cause and end of everything can be found in God who gives us a clear and clean conscience for us to know him or not. He gave to us this creation to know him and to free us to love Him and thereby love his creation.

Para 47- The Church teaches that the God we worship is able to be known by His human creatures through observation of his handiwork and illuminated reason. (PM) (Cf. Vatican Council I, can. 2 S 1: DS 3026)

Para 48- Human words are not able to exhaust God's perfections, but we begin to know God's name through his multiple and wondrous manifestations of his creation.

Para 49- The main reason we desire to bring God to all his creation is because God has revealed to us that without Him, we have no lasting value. Therefore, even though others reject Him, and us as well, we still persist in God's love for them. Because God does not give up on us, we do not give up on others he has laid on our hearts. (PM) (GS 36)

**SUMMARY**

Because God has permitted it so, we may arrive at the reality of the existence of God, if we do not dismantle our conscience. Notice that the very word, “conscience,” requires a decision for or against the One who gave it to us. We must fight the desire to be against what God gave us, so that we may be for Him and His natural means of reaching out to us for His sake and ours as well.