

Revision Booklet



GCSE

Religious Studies

Foundational Catholic Theology

Component 1

Theme 2: Good and Evil



Theme 2: GOOD AND EVIL

Key Concepts	
Conscience	<i>Human reason making moral decisions. The knowledge we have of what is right and wrong and the God-given compulsion within all human beings to do what is right and to avoid what is evil.</i>
Evil	<i>the absence of good and the impulse to seek our own desires at the expense of the good of others which often results in suffering.</i>
Free-will	<i>the decision making part of a person's mind is called the will. A will is free if a person is able to choose right from wrong without being controlled by other forces.</i>
Goodness	<i>the quality of being like God: seeking the well-being of others selflessly.</i>
Incarnation	<i>"Made flesh" . The Christian belief that God became man in the person of Jesus, fully human and fully divine.</i>
Natural Law	<i>the moral laws of right and wrong which are universal and not dependent on human laws. The belief in natural law is the belief that the moral law is discoverable by every human being and is the same for all human beings in all places at all times.</i>
Privation	<i>the loss or absence of a quality or something that is normally present. Evil is a privation of good.</i>
Suffering	<i>pain or loss which harms human beings. Some suffering is caused by other human beings (often called moral evil); some is not (often called natural evil).</i>

Catholic beliefs on the origin of evil

Catholics believe that God is omnipotent (all-powerful) and omnibenevolent (all-loving). So, a world made by God made has to be a **good world** - a good, all-powerful God wouldn't make any other kind. (The Problem of Evil)

- But if this is true, why does the world contain so much evil and suffering?

Moral and natural evil

- One Catholic answer = evil and suffering exist because of **free-will**.
- Free-will is the human ability to make choices and a gift from God.
- Human beings can use this gift to make good choices or to make bad choices.
- When they make good choices the goodness of the world increases

'**moral evil**' is caused by the moral choices human beings make. eg bullying, theft, murder, war and poverty.

But other kinds of suffering have nothing to do with human choices. eg the suffering because of natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, famines, and disease. This kind of suffering is called '**natural evil**' because it happens naturally and is not caused by human beings.

One way Catholics explain 'natural evil' is the concept of '**original sin**'.

Original Sin

Genesis 3 = **The Fall**; the story of Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve are given a garden full of good things to eat by God and told that they can eat from any of the trees in the garden but that they must **not** eat from the tree in the middle of the garden - the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil'.

The serpent then tempts Eve to eat from the forbidden tree and Eve offers the fruit to Adam. Adam also eats the fruit from the forbidden tree.

Immediately they are changed by their act of pride & disobedience: they both realise they are naked & they are banished from the garden.



This story is called 'the Fall' because it describes the moment when human beings 'fell' from the perfect state in which God had created them.

Adam and Eve's pride, the belief that they know better than God what is good for them, is often called '**Original Sin**'.

Sin is any wrong action that is against God's plans for human beings.

Original sin is the tendency in human beings that makes us turn away from God.

Is it 'true'?

➤ **Some Christians (fundamentalists) take this story literally** (as though it is an historical fact) and believe that Adam and Eve were real people and their sinfulness introduced all kinds of bad things into the world, including pain, inequality, work and death. For many Christians, this is the best explanation for the existence of evil and suffering in the world. **God made a perfect world, but human beings sinned and so evil and suffering now exist.**

But why then didn't God just make Adam and Eve so that they wouldn't make bad choices?

➤ **Other Christians, eg Catholics, think the story of the Fall can be read in a more symbolic way, as a meditation on who human beings really are and how they relate to the world and to God.**

- Catholics believe that God is responsible for creation **is compatible with the Theory of Evolution**. If evolution is true, then human beings evolved from other kinds of human-like animals.
- The story of the creation and Fall are then reflections on the moment in the history of evolution when **human beings first understood the difference between good and evil**.
- **Original Sin is then a symbol or metaphor** for the fact that all human beings have a tendency to be tempted and to sin and that we all share some responsibility for the evil and suffering in the world.

St Augustine and 'privation'



St Augustine, one of the earliest and most important Catholic thinkers and writers, wrote a book called **the Enchiridion** (Latin word meaning "handbook").

Augustine gives three answers to the Problem of Evil:

1. The existence of evil helps people to appreciate the good in the world. Sometimes we don't appreciate the good things we have until they are gone. "And in the universe, even that which is called evil, when it is regulated and put in its own place, only enhances our admiration of the good; for we enjoy and value the good more when we compare it with the evil." (St Augustine, Enchiridion 3,11)
2. St Augustine says that God does not cause or permit evil because evil isn't even a thing. Evil is just the absence of good things. Another word for an absence is a 'privation'. When we experience evil and suffering we are not experiencing anything at all, we are just being deprived of the good things we usually have. God does not want us to be deprived of these good things but either our choices have led to these privations or God allows them for the sake of some greater good. "For what is that which we call evil but the absence of good? Disease and wounds mean nothing but the absence of health; for when a cure is effected, that does not mean that the evils go away from the body and dwell elsewhere: they altogether cease to exist." (St Augustine, Enchiridion 3,11)
3. God allows suffering because he is always able to bring good out of suffering. Sometimes we have much greater happiness through overcoming evil and suffering than we could have done without it. In other words, sometimes suffering is good for us! "For the Almighty God, who has supreme power over all things, being Himself supremely good, would never permit the existence of anything evil, if he were not so omnipotent and good that He can bring good even out of evil." (St Augustine, Enchiridion 3,11)

Other Christian views

There are other Christian answers to the problem of evil (theodices).

- eg one suggested by the philosopher John Hick. He argued that God deliberately made a world which was not perfect because only in an imperfect world could human beings learn and grow. God values human freedom so much that he **wants us to learn for ourselves how to be good and loving** - like a parent training a child.
- Hick argues that it is only through suffering that human beings can **come to perfection** and '**grow in God's likeness**'. Like athletes- exercise is painful and difficult but it leads to a stronger, healthier body. Suffering is painful and difficult, but it leads to a stronger, healthier soul.

Jewish views

- ❖ Jews do not believe that people are born evil. Rather, they are born free but with two inclinations: to do good or to do evil. 'Yetzer ha tov' is the inclination to do good actions and 'yetzer ha ra' is the inclination to do evil actions.
- ❖ The Torah teaches that God has given human beings choices and that it is important to struggle against the inclination to do evil actions by giving obedience to God.
- ❖ Jews believe it is not possible to hide evil actions from God and the Ten Days of Return between the festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur give times for people to atone (make up for or make good) for the times when they have followed their inclination to do evil rather than given obedience to God.
- ❖ Therefore, Jews see evil and suffering as a consequence of human beings' wrong choices.

The 'goodness' of God

RCs believe **God is the cause of goodness** in others.

We can't properly explain what God is like, but we can tell that God is good, because the world God created is good. Just like you can tell if a chef is good, if the food she created is good

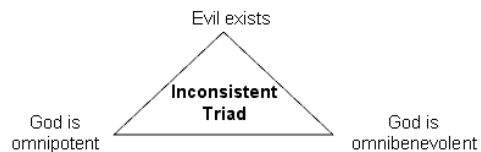
Jewish views: There are many similarities between the Jewish and Catholic views about God's goodness and the goodness of the created world. eg Jews, like Catholics, are not dualists. They believe that God is the only God and is all powerful. There is no belief in an opposite God. Jews do not even believe in the Devil, as such.

God is the source of all life and referred to throughout the Torah as the sole creator. He is the judge and he is merciful. He will protect and care for all that he has created. The goodness of God is shown by the creation of the world and the giving of the Torah. Stories such as the fleeing of the Israelites from Egypt retold at Pesach show God's goodness and care.

The Problem of Evil

Scottish philosopher and atheist called **David Hume** (1711-1776) presented what has now become known as 'the inconsistent triad'.

1. God is all-powerful (omnipotent)
2. God is all-loving (omnibenevolent)
3. Evils exists.



Therefore, either: God is not good; or God is not all powerful; or God does not exist. Hume believed that God did not exist.

A twentieth century, atheist philosopher called **John Mackie** (1917-1981) took Hume's ideas further. He rejected some of the usual answers to the problem of evil that Christians often give:

➤ **Evil is necessary as an opposite of good**

Mackie rejected this idea:

1. goodness can be noticed and appreciated without needing a contrast. We can all see and appreciate a kind and generous person, even if we have never met a mean and selfish one.
2. even if it is true that we need some evil and suffering to help us to appreciate the good, we only need a little bit. There is more suffering than is needed to make a good contrast to the good in the world.

➤ **Evil helps us to become better people**

1. Why can God not just make us perfect to begin with?
2. even if this might be true, suffering can also make people worse, rather than making them better. Some people might learn patience and courage through having to undergo cancer treatment. But other people might just as likely become bitter and resentful.

➤ **Evil is a consequence of free-will**

1. God could have made free human beings who always choose good instead of evil. Also, Mackie does not think the ability to choose evil is a required part of human freedom. Plus evil and suffering is too high a price to pay for having free will.

Is suffering always evil?

Catholics and other Christians might respond to the arguments given above by suggesting that, whilst suffering is always hard, it is not always evil.

As a result, Catholics have **an ambivalent attitude to suffering**. 'Ambivalent' means you have mixed feelings about something.



"Me, ambivalent?...Well, yes and no..."

The meaning of suffering

For Catholics, **suffering is a mystery**. God uses suffering to bring about great goods that would not have been possible without it.

In the **Book of Job**, God tells the long suffering Job that he is just not able to understand God's reasons. And it is actually **in his suffering that Job truly meets God**.

➤ Suffering as a sign of love

Love is impossible without suffering. Loving another person means that you would do anything for them, even if it means sacrificing your own pleasures and comforts. Jesus says, "**Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.**" (John 15:13)

The suffering we experience when we lose someone we love reflects the depth of the love we felt for them. The more we love a person, the more painful it is when we lose them. **Suffering and love, therefore, cannot be separated.**



➤ Suffering as a proof of commitment - 'No pain, no gain'



Jesus makes clear that being a disciple always requires sacrifice and cost: "**Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.**" (Mark 8:34).

To show we are really committed to something, we must experience suffering

➤ Suffering as a blessing

One of the hardest ideas to understand is that suffering can somehow be a blessing. In the Matthew 5, Jesus lists those people that are "**blessed**": those who are poor, those who mourn, those who suffer. We wouldn't usually think these things are blessings, but Jesus is saying that God's way of seeing the world is not our way, and that those who are lowest in the world's eyes are often closest to God.



➤ The suffering and death of Jesus



At the heart of the Gospel is "the Passion narrative". "Passion" is Latin for suffering, and the Passion describes the last week in Jesus' life when he was arrested, tried, tortured and crucified. This story is sacred to Christians because they believe that the death and resurrection of **Jesus saved all of humanity from their sins**.

So, Jesus' suffering of Jesus is not evil because it brings about such great good.

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ISAIAH 53:5

One metaphor which can help us understand the importance of Jesus' suffering can be found in the Old Testament description of the **Suffering Servant**, in **Isaiah 53**.

Christians see this as a prophecy of Jesus and the way his suffering would bring blessings for others. The "**suffering servant**" experiences the sufferings that others deserved, so that they would not have to experience them.

The acceptance of suffering by the 'suffering servant' somehow brought about their salvation. This is what Catholics believe about Jesus too and is one important reason why they are ambivalent about suffering.

Jewish views:

Jews do not read Isaiah 53 as a reference to Jesus, but as a metaphorical description of the suffering of Israel - the Jewish nation - throughout the ages, which will ultimately bring about the salvation of all other nations in the Messianic age to come. However, despite this difference of interpretation of the identity of the suffering servant, Jews would also have the same ambivalence towards suffering.

For Jews, suffering comes from two different sources - human made and natural. Often suffering has arisen because God has given free will to people to do good or to do evil. They believe that some suffering can come from God as a test or a punishment but often the existence of suffering is not to be understood. In such cases, human beings should not question why God has sent suffering. In the Ethics of the Fathers it states: 'It is not in our power to explain either the wellbeing of the wicked or the sufferings of the righteous'.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Moral evil is suffering caused by human actions and choices
- ✓ Natural evil is suffering caused by natural occurrences, e.g. earthquakes and disease
- ✓ Some Christians believe that all evil is a result of Original Sin - the inherited guilt and sinful tendency that all human beings possess
- ✓ St Augustine said evil is a 'privation' - not a thing in itself, just the absence of good.
- ✓ Some philosophers have said that suffering helps us to grow in a spiritual sense and that is why God allows evil
- ✓ Jews believe that we are free to choose between the natural human inclination to do evil and the natural human inclination to do good. Often people choose evil. Sometimes suffering is a test or punishment from God but often cannot the purpose of suffering cannot be understood
- ✓ The Catholic and Jewish belief is that God's goodness is reflected in his creation which is good
- ✓ Philosophers, such as David Hume and John Mackie, have often challenged (and sometimes rejected) believing in a loving God in an evil world
- ✓ Catholics are ambivalent about evil. They sometimes see it as beneficial and would use Jesus' suffering, shown through the image of the 'Suffering Servant', to show how good can come out of suffering

THE TRINITY

The mystery of the Trinity: Christians believe the following things about God:



- There is only one God
- God exists as three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Each of these three persons is distinct from the other two
- Each of these three persons is fully God
- But there are not three Gods (see first bullet)

When we list these beliefs separately it looks impossible for all of them to be true at once, yet every Sunday, Catholics recite the '**Nicene Creed**'.

A '**creed**' is a statement of belief.

Nicea was the name of a place in ancient Turkey, where a council of bishops met to settle the question of how Christians should speak about God.

The Nicene Creed says that Christians believe in '**one God**', but also in the '**Son of God**' who is equal with the Father ("consubstantial with" means, roughly, "the same as") and in the Holy Spirit who is '**adored and glorified**' with the Father and the Son.

Why do Christians believe that God is a trinity of persons?

Ideas about Trinity in the Bible

A belief in the Trinity emerged gradually in the history of Christianity.

- ✓ The earliest Christians were Jews who followed Jesus. The term 'Christian' doesn't even exist as a name for a group until several years after Jesus' death (Acts 11:26). So, **Christians believe in only one God because Christianity grew out of Judaism** which believed then and today there is only one God.

- ✓ The first followers of Jesus experienced **Jesus' death and resurrection** and they believed that they had **met the risen Jesus**. Because of this they came to believe that **Jesus was also God**. In the letters of St Paul (the earliest Christian writings we have access to), it is clear that he, and the Churches to whom he was writing his letters, believed that Jesus was God. eg. in his letter to the Colossians St Paul writes:

"The Son is the image of the invisible God...For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth..." (Col 1:15-17)

- ✓ In this passage, it is clear that the **Son has an equality with the Father** and was **present with the Father at the creation of the world**. However, they also knew that **Jesus was not the Father**, since they had heard Jesus pray to the Father (see for example John 11:41) So Christians, very early in the history of Christianity, **as well as believing in only one God, also came to believe that Jesus was also God, but was not the Father**.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial* with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(We bow as we pray the next three lines.)

and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.



* Jesus Christ has the same substance (nature) as the Father and the Holy Spirit - he is truly God.



✓ The early Christians had also experienced the coming of the **Holy Spirit** at Pentecost and sometimes **felt the Spirit** at work when they prayed. So Christians, also very early in the history of Christianity, as well as believing in **one God**, and that **Jesus was God**, had also come to believe that the **Holy Spirit was also God**, and was **not the Father**, and was **not Jesus**.

Before they could explain what any of this meant, they believed in **one God**, that **Jesus was God** and that the **Holy Spirit was God**. By the time the Gospels were written (later than St Paul's letters), they clearly believed in the **three persons of the Trinity**.

eg, Jesus' baptism:

"When all the people were being baptized, **Jesus was baptized** too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the **Holy Spirit descended** on him in bodily form like a dove. And **a voice came from heaven**: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'" (Luke 3:21-22)



The Gospel of Matthew ends with the clearest expression of the Trinity:

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...**" (Matt 28:19)

Christians to this day still baptise people **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**.

Historical Development

The doctrine of the Trinity developed until it was finally settled and written down at two early councils of the Church - **Nicea in 325 AD** and **Constantinople in 381 AD**.

- The **first council of Nicea** was called to settle a disagreement that had arisen in the 4th century between a priest called Arius and a deacon called Athanasius. Arius did not believe that Jesus was God. Arius argued that Jesus was he was less than God. Athanasius argued that the **Father and the Son were equal and that both were God**. The council sided with Athanasius and said that the **Father and the Son were equal to each other**.
- Following this council, another argument arose. This time people argued that the Son and the Father were so equal that they weren't really two separate persons, but just different 'aspects' or 'modes' of the one God. So another council was called in **AD 381 in Constantinople** (modern day Istanbul) which produced the **Creed** that Catholics now say at Mass every week. This creed makes it clear that the **Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all equal to each other, are all equally God, but are still three distinct persons**.

Today, the Trinity is important for two main reasons:

1. Without a doctrine of the Trinity, Christians couldn't believe that **Jesus is God**, the most important Christian belief.
2. The doctrine of the Trinity means that the God that Christians believe in is a **community of persons**. It makes sense to say "**God is love**", because even before any creatures existed for God to love there was a relationship of love within God which has existed for all eternity.

This idea of God as a trinity of love is one which is explored further by St Augustine when he tries to make sense of the doctrine of the Trinity.

St Augustine - love, lover, beloved

- ✓ St Augustine (354-430) wrote a whole book on the Trinity. St Augustine believed, as do all Christians, that "God is Love" (see 1 John 4:8). He realised that love needs three things: **the person who is doing the loving, the person who is being loved and the love itself.**
- ✓ If God is love, these three aspects must have been present in God from all eternity - even before God had made any creatures to love.
- ✓ So St Augustine says that the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is like this Trinity of love, lover and beloved.
- ✓ This idea of God as love is a helpful one for Christians because it makes it clear that **love needs to be an important part of every Christian's life.**

There are three things in love, as it were a trace of the Trinity...love is of someone that loves, and with love something is loved. Behold, then, there are three things: he that loves, and that which is loved, and love.

St Augustine, De Trinitate 8, 10

Jewish views

Jews may think that Jesus existed as a historical person but they do not attach any significance to his life and death. Nor do they believe that Jesus was God. Equally, they do not believe in the Trinity. They would see both a belief that Jesus is God and the Trinity as a challenge to the oneness of God. For Jews, God is the only God and is all powerful. The belief in only one God is stated in the most important prayer for Jews; the Shema. It is also stated in the Ten Commandments. There are different attributes of God such as 'judge' and 'merciful' but these are only characteristics of the one God. Shekinah signifies God's presence on the earth. These attributes of God though are not separate persons, but are just the different ways in which human beings experience God.

SUMMARY

- Christians believe in a God who exists as a Trinity of persons: Father, Son and Spirit
- This arose because the early Christians believed that Jesus was God incarnate
- St Augustine said the Trinity of persons was like the a lover, the beloved and love itself
- Jews have no beliefs or teachings about the idea of Trinity. They would reject it as a challenge to their fundamental belief that God is one

THE INCARNATION



Incarnation = most central Christian belief;

- Jesus is God - in Jesus, God the Son became a human being.
- God became visible 'in the flesh' in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

When Christians call Jesus the 'Son of God' they mean that he is God who has become a human being; that he is the 'incarnate Son'.

Christians believe that **Jesus is 'fully God and fully man'**.

Jesus is one person, with two natures: one human nature, and one divine (which means 'godly') nature.



John 1:1-18: Jesus is the Word of God

The author of John's Gospel begins like the opening lines of the book of Genesis. Both Genesis and John's Gospel begin with the phrase: 'In the beginning...'

- ✓ In Genesis 1, God speaks and things happen. eg God says, "Let there be light" and then light happens. God's word is the power that makes Creation happen.
- ✓ In John's Gospel, the relationship between the Father and Jesus, is like the relationship between a speaker and his words. The second person of the Trinity is distinct from the Father ('the Word was with God') but that he is also equal to God ('the Word was God'). The incarnation is made very clear with the words, 'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us'.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made...

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-3,14

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:5-8

Philippians 2:5-11: The kenosis hymn

The equality between Jesus and the Father is described in this hymn which St Paul quotes in his letter to the Philippians. It says Christians should be like Jesus who, even though he was God, willingly put aside his equality with God to become a human being. And then he makes himself even lower by accepting the death of a slave. This hymn is called the 'kenosis hymn'. Kenosis is a Greek word which means 'emptying'. It is called the '**kenosis**' hymn because it says that Jesus '**emptied himself**' of his rightful equality with God, in becoming a human being in the incarnation.



The Incarnation and the Problem of Evil

Jesus incarnation and suffering gives Christians a way of being able to continue to believe in the goodness of God, even in the face of human suffering.

eg A two year old child who has to undergo heart surgery which will be very painful but which will ultimately save the child's life. The mother will never be able to explain to a two-year old why she has to suffer, because the two-year old won't understand what heart surgery is, or why it is needed. But the two-year old can be helped to cope with the pain because she trusts in her mother's love and that her mother has her best interests at heart. The child can cope with the suffering because her mother is by her side while she suffers.

The Christian answer to the Problem of Evil is something like that: It is not an answer to why we suffer, but it can give Christians an answer to 'how' we can bear suffering without losing faith.

- ✓ Jesus is like God's loving hand, the tender love of a mother for her child.
- ✓ Jesus is a comfort to those who suffer because Christians believe that Jesus is God's presence with his people.
- ✓ Christians believe Jesus is with us in our suffering because Jesus himself experienced suffering and did not run from it but chose it out of love.

A similar answer to the problem is given by **St Pope John Paul II**:

- ✓ In his letter, **Salvifici Doloris** (which means "the saving power of suffering.") St Pope John Paul II says that the only way human beings can grasp the "why" of suffering is to try and understand the **depth of God's love for human beings**, which Jesus showed through his willingness to die on the cross.
- ✓ He also says that if Christians willingly **'offer up'** their own suffering in prayer for the sake of others, that they can somehow **share in the saving suffering of Jesus**. This is very difficult to understand but St Pope John Paul II believes that if we try and bear our suffering patiently and offer it to God in prayer, that God will somehow be able to use it to **bring about good for others**.

If a Christian can do this, it is an act of love which is like Jesus' own act of sacrifice.



But in order to understand the 'why' of suffering, we must look to the revelation of divine love...This answer has been given by God to human beings in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Those who share in Christ's suffering have before their eyes the Paschal Mystery of the Cross and Resurrection, in which Christ takes on human weakness...But if in this weakness there is accomplished his lifting up, then the weaknesses of human suffering can be filled with the same power of God made visible in Christ's Cross.

Salvifici Doloris 13 & 23

SUMMARY

- The incarnation is the belief that Jesus is God 'made flesh'; that Jesus is fully God and fully human
- The opening chapter of John's Gospel conveys these ideas clearly
- St. Paul describes the incarnation in his writings
- Jesus gives an answer to the "how" of suffering, if not the "why" of suffering
- Pope John Paul II believed that our own suffering could become saving for others if it is joined to the suffering of Jesus

Jesus as a source of moral authority

Jesus is a Christian's moral authority:

we know what's right or wrong when we **look at what Jesus did** and **listen to what he said**.

Jesus is the example Christians try to follow.

➤ **Jesus and sinners**

So Jesus spends his time with tax collectors (for example, with Levi and Zacchaeus) and with adulterers and prostitutes (for example the woman caught in adultery and the woman who anoints his feet with oil in the house of Simon the Pharisee) and he is crucified with thieves and bandits.

Jesus shows by example that God always forgives. So Christians should show forgiveness to everyone, no matter what they have done.



➤ **Jesus and people who are sick**

Jesus willingly touches lepers and heals them. He heals the woman with a haemorrhage, who was an outcast from her society because of her illness. He also heals those who were considered possessed with evil spirits (what we now describe as mental illness).

Jesus shows that Christians should never treat anyone as an outcast but be with them in their suffering and try to help them if they can.

You have heard it said... (Law of Moses)	But I say to you ... (Jesus' interpretation)
Do not kill	Don't even be angry with your brother.
Do not commit adultery	Don't even look at another person lustfully.
Divorce can sometimes be permitted.	Divorce is strictly forbidden.
You can demand an eye for an eye	Forgive anyone who hurts you and do not seek revenge.
Love your neighbour, hate your enemy	Also love your enemies and pray for them.

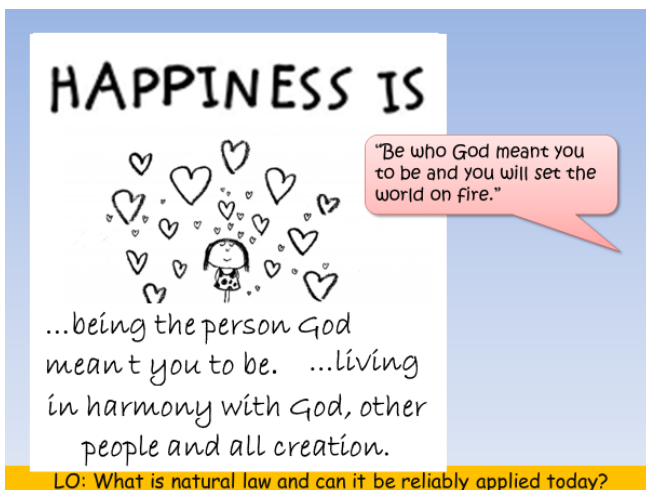
The teaching of Jesus: right actions, wrong reasons

Jesus warns people against doing good things but for the wrong reasons.

He speaks about praying, fasting and giving to charity (called almsgiving) and says that these must always be done in private. Jesus knew too well that often people do these good things publicly so that others will think well of them. Jesus says that people should do these things because they are right, not to get praise from other people.

Other sources of moral authority: Natural Law

It is the belief that above all human systems of law, there is a moral law that every human being understands and should live by.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the same idea- there are some natural rights which every human being should have, even if the laws of the land ignores these rights.

Natural Law is a key part of Catholic Moral teaching. Natural Law (put forward by **St Thomas Aquinas**) says that all human beings want the same things: - to be happy and fulfilled. We do that by looking after life, having children and educating them, living in

safe and ordered society and worshipping God.

Catholics believe everyone has this God-given ability to tell the difference between good and evil, right and wrong.

The Catechism says "If people are to do good and avoid evil, certainty about what is good and evil will be inscribed within them."

Conscience

The ability to discover this Natural Law is what Catholics call 'conscience'.

In Catholic understanding, **conscience has two parts:**

1. **the part that is to do with knowledge** (our mind's ability to decide what's right and wrong)
2. **the part that is to do with action.** (the internal impulse to do what's right and avoid what's wrong= gives us a sense of moral duty & leads to feeling guilt when we fail)

St Thomas Aquinas defined conscience as 'the mind of human beings making moral decisions'.

Conscience is unique to human beings and is proof of the goodness of God who created human beings in his own image and likeness. God gives human beings the impulse to **'do good and avoid evil'**

RC's believe we need to 'inform' our conscience by listening to what the bible and the Church say.

"Personal conscience and reason should not be set in opposition to the moral law or Magisterium (official teachings) of the Church" (CCC 2039)

If human beings followed their conscience more often there would be less moral evil in the world, and so less suffering.

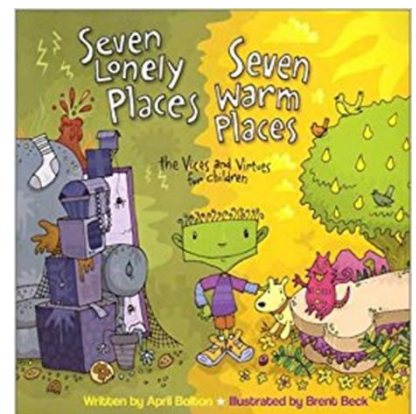
Virtues and suffering

Living a good life and following our conscience takes practice.

Moral habits we call virtues need to be practiced if we are going to become good people. eg courage, generosity, selflessness and self-control

These virtues take practice, we are not good at them straight away but can get better at them through our life experiences. One of the ways in which people can grow in virtue is through the experience of suffering. eg serious illness can make someone more courageous. If I know what it's like to be poor, I might be generous when I do have things to share. Suffering can help us to become better people.

Doing what's right will make us truly happy and fulfilled.



SUMMARY

- The examples and teaching of Jesus provide the most important moral guidance
- The Sermon on the Mount provides much of this moral teaching and also shows how Jesus has come to fulfil the religious Law (Torah) of his day
- Other sources of moral authority include Natural Law which is the belief that there are absolute moral rules that exist for all people, in all places and at all times.
- Another source of moral authority is the human conscience which has the ability to understand what is right and wrong and the desire to do what is right and avoid what is wrong. Catholics believe they have a duty to inform their conscience in order to make the right moral decisions.
- Virtues are good moral habits
- The existence of Natural Law and conscience are a proof for Catholics of the existence of a good God
- Catholics believe that suffering can help in the development of the virtues.

Sculpture and Statuary

Sculpture and statues

Catholics sometimes kneel in front of statues and light candles to leave as physical symbols of prayer intentions.

Why have statues?

Why do you think a Catholic would say statues are helpful?

I like statues because...

- They remind me about what really matters eg I don't love the photo of my family, I love my family!
- I'm not praying *to* Mary and the saints, I'm asking them to pray *with* and *for* me.
- God shows me his extraordinary love through ordinary, physical things eg bread, wine, oil - and statues. God is incarnational.

A Catholic

Why do you think a Protestant would say statues are *not* helpful?

I don't like statues because...

- The Ten Commandments say we mustn't make images objects of worship
- Statues are often of Mary and the saints, instead of Jesus who should be the focus of all our prayer.
- My prayer should be simple and straightforward - and statues cost money which would be better spent on poor people.

A Protestant

LO: How do RCs find statues a meaningful response to human suffering & what do I think?

The Significance of Statues for Catholics

Catholics would say that statues in churches is just one way in which they express an 'incarnational view' of the world.

Remember- the incarnation is the belief that God took on a physical form when he became a human being in Jesus. For Catholics, this means that **physical things are good and that God can make himself known to human beings through the ordinary physical things around us.** This is why Catholic worship uses ordinary, physical signs of God's extraordinary presence - oil, water, bread, wine, colours, incense, music etc.

A crucifix is a directly incarnational image as it is an image of Jesus himself whom Catholics believe became incarnate in order to save people from their sins.

The crucifix reminds Catholics of the incarnation, and of Jesus' suffering which reminds them of God's love for them.



The Jewish view

Jews reject the use of statues as a focus for prayer. In observance of one of the Ten Commandments; 'You shall have no other gods before me', Jews do not make images or representations of God. In the synagogue, there will be no statues. Indeed, although synagogues may be very decorative and have pictures, carvings and stained glass, they will have no human representations at all. It is God alone who should be worshipped. For Jews, anything else would be a sign of the worship of false idols. Even God is not depicted in art or statuary because God is beyond human understanding.



Statues and suffering: Michelangelo's Pietà

Statues help Catholics to reflect on the meaning of suffering.

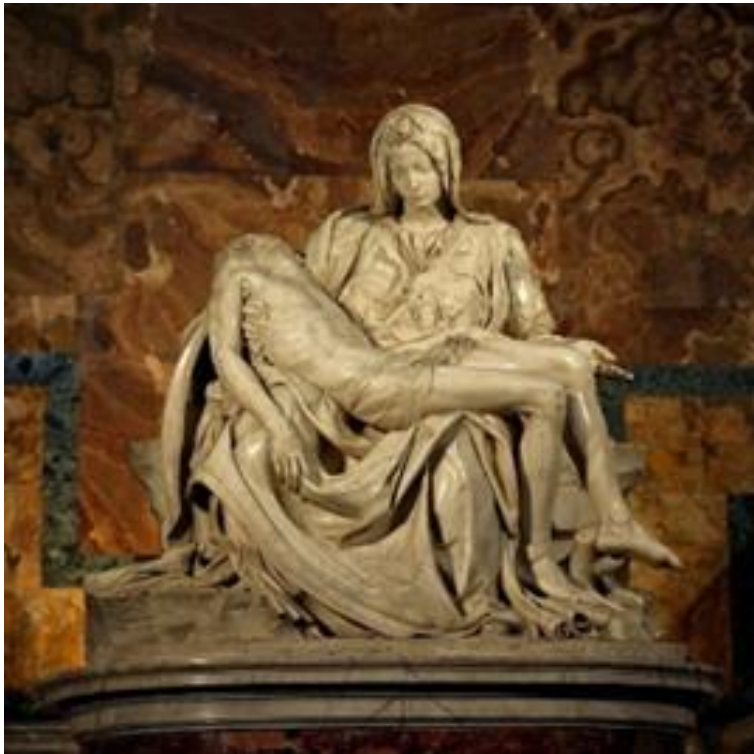
The Catechism teaches "**Arising from talent given by the Creator and from man's own effort, art is a form of practical wisdom, uniting knowledge and skill.**"

This means that the Church teaches that artistic works are a reflection of a human being's inner riches.

Michelangelo's Pietà is a statue of Mary holding the body of her son after his crucifixion.

'Pietà' is a word which comes from the Latin word for holiness.

- Her left hand is positioned with an open palm; this is a sign Mary is at peace, even after witnessing her son's crucifixion.
- the deep shadow created by the fold of the garment next to Jesus, is a symbol of an open womb representing the pain Mary bore as she gave birth to Jesus, mirrored by the pain now of his death.



- Mary is larger Jesus- an echo of Mary as the mother of the infant Jesus; as if she is holding a baby in her arms, This represents the love of a mother, which bears the pains of child bearing, both at the beginning of life and then throughout it, until the end. Many mothers who have lost their own children, report that the statue is a strange sort of comfort for them.

- Mary seems resigned to what has happened. Christ, too, is presented almost as if he is in a peaceful sleep, and not one who has been bloodied and bruised after hours of torture and suffering. His wounds are hardly visible.
- Mary's right hand does not come into direct contact with his flesh, but instead it is covered with a cloth which then touches Christ's side. This shows the sacredness of Christ's body.

Overall, these two figures are beautiful and idealised, despite their suffering.

This reflects the belief of Catholic ambivalence to suffering; that suffering is somehow a mirror of love and can be a source of blessing.

SUMMARY

- Catholics use statues in their worship as a reminder of *God* and as a focus for prayers; statues are not worshipped
- Some other Christians believe that using statues in worship is against the Ten Commandments
- Jews reject the use of statues or any images of humans in synagogues and would never represent *God* because *God* is beyond human understanding
- The *Pieta* is a statue of the death of *Jesus* that many Catholics find helpful in helping them to respond to human suffering

PILGRIMAGE

A pilgrimage is a journey to a holy place.

The journey is inside ourselves as well as to a physical place.

Why is pilgrimage important to Catholics?

Lots of reasons, including:

- to help strengthen their faith
- to share the experience and their faith with other believers
- to pray for something special
- as a way of thanking *God*
- to seek physical, spiritual or emotional healing
- to do a penitential act as a reflection of sorrow for sin
- to come closer to *God* by giving him time and attention.



A group pilgrimage may help an individual to feel part of the church community.

Pilgrims pray together and feel supported by each other.

Going on a pilgrimage can help believers to reflect on their life's journey.

It is an opportunity to take time out from every-day life and focus on their journey to *God*.

It is often a journey of self-discovery, most noticeably for those who are sick. Very few sick people come back cured. However, they may come back feeling at peace and able to accept and cope with the problems they face.



The Jewish view

Pilgrimage is not considered an obligation in Judaism. However, in practice, something like pilgrimage is an important feature of the devotional life of many Jews. The Torah refers to the traditional importance of all Jews going to Jerusalem for the three pilgrim festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot. For some Jews, it is important to visit Israel, particularly to visit or hold special celebrations at the Western Wall. In addition, for some Jews it is important to visit the graves of significant teachers and rabbis, such as Maimonides.

Pilgrimage and suffering: Lourdes - a case study

Lourdes became a pilgrimage site after a young girl called Bernadette Soubirous had a series of visions of a beautiful lady she later realised was Mary.

These visions happened in a grotto beside the River Gave in the foothills of the Pyrenees in the middle of the nineteenth century. The lady told Bernadette to dig in the ground and that from a spring of healing water would flow.

"Go and drink at the spring and wash there."

This spring of water is still a central part of the pilgrimage to Lourdes and many visitors, especially the sick and disabled, bathe in the waters to seek physical and spiritual healing.



Each year more than five million people, of whom a great number are sick or disabled, go to Lourdes, from every country of the world.

During their pilgrimage they will usually:

- Go to Mass daily
- Take part in the Blessed Sacrament and (torchlight) processions.
- Go to the baths or drink from the spring.
- Go to confession
- Anointing of the sick
- Pray at the Grotto
- Light candles for their own and other peoples intentions.
- Do the stations of the Cross.



Most Catholic dioceses go on annual Pilgrimages to Lourdes and take young people who volunteer as helpers for the sick and disabled pilgrims. These pilgrimages are often life-changing and are a **real and practical way that ordinary people can respond to the mystery of suffering.**

Many young people say they are inspired by the sick and disabled people who are so courageous and have found God in their struggles.

The Rosary

The Rosary is a traditional Catholic prayer, part of what is called 'popular piety'. Popular piety are those forms of praying and devotion which are not part of the formal rites of the Catholic Church but which are used by many Catholics as a way of bringing themselves closer to God.

The Rosary - what is it and where did it come from?

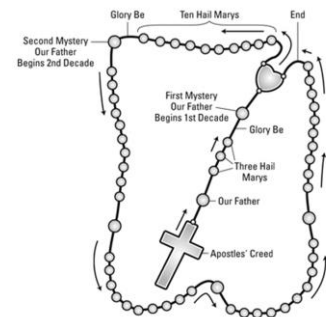
The Rosary consists of three prayers: the **Our Father**, the **Hail Mary** and the **Glory Be**; each of these prayers is said a set number of times during the reciting of a Rosary.

The practice of praying the Rosary is believed to have begun with St Dominic in the 13th century. Anyone who says a full Rosary will have prayed 150 Hail Marys, which is the same as the number of psalms in the Bible..

How and when do Catholics pray the Rosary?

The Rosary is divided into sets of mysteries:

- the Joyful,
- the Sorrowful
- the Glorious.
- St Pope John Paul II added: the Luminous Mysteries.



Decades - Then there are a set of ten beads, followed by a single bead. On each of the ten beads a **Hail Mary** will be prayed and on the single bead a **Glory Be** will be prayed to mark the end of one mystery. On the same bead, an **Our Father** is then prayed to mark the beginning of the next mystery.

The Rosary is often prayed before and after Mass on weekdays.

It is sometimes said when families gather to receive the body of a deceased relative into the Church on the evening before their funeral. For this reason, the Rosary has become a powerful way for Catholics to reflect on the meaning of suffering.

The Rosary, the Incarnation and suffering: The Sorrowful Mysteries.

The mysteries of the Rosary are the focus of the whole prayer. While repeating the well-known traditional prayers like a mantra, the person meditates on the meaning of the mysteries. Each mystery is an event from the Incarnate life of Jesus.

The Sorrowful mysteries are the five mysteries (events in Jesus' life) that help Catholics to meditate on the meaning and importance of Jesus' suffering and death.

By reflecting on our own lives and linking them to Jesus' life we can find meaning, hope and inspiration.

SUMMARY

- A pilgrimage is a journey to a site of special religious importance
- Pilgrimages help Catholics feel closer to God and help them to respond to life's difficulties
- Lourdes is an important pilgrimage site, especially for the sick and disabled.
- The Rosary is the name of a prayer and the beads that are used to say the prayer
- It consists of repeated sayings of the Our Father, Hail Mary and the Glory Be
- The Rosary helps Catholic to reflect on the main events in Jesus' life, including his suffering and death

