

<i>Apologetics of Love</i>	<i>New Evangelization</i>		
Silencing distractions and distortions in order to lovingly turn our gaze to the Silence of the Word, as Origen tells us. Apologetics is not <i>primarily</i> about answering a person’s objections, disabling an opposing objection, or reproving distortions of Christian teaching. It is <i>primarily</i> about giving “an explanation (<i>apologian</i>) to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Pet. 3:15). “ <i>Apologia</i> ” in Greek refers to the <i>basis</i> of something: <i>why do you hope? Who do you believe? Why do you love?</i> That’s what it’s about. — What’s apologetics about then? It’s about <i>the mystery of God’s love</i> , which is <u>why</u> we hope, <u>why</u> we believe, <u>why</u> we love. Of course, apologetics involves responding to distortions and objections; but we can never forget that responding to those objections or distortions is not a goal <i>in itself</i> , but is a <i>goal oriented towards opening them up to an encounter with the mystery of God’s love</i> . As such, you must respond to objections/ distortions in such a way that you <i>simultaneously</i> : (1) show the person how the objection or distortion is problematic, while showing them how the <i>fullness</i> of the underlying intention of their position is actually found in the fullness of the Christian mystery; (2) this leads to an expounding of the Christian mystery.	Expounding Christian teaching as an act of directing our gaze to the Face of God’s Love in Jesus Christ Christian Teaching (“doctrina”) as fostering an encounter with the Person of Christ as the Love of God really offered to us. As such, our arguments and presentation are not directed to call attention to “our” reasoning or “our” arguments, etc. Rather, much like the painter of an icon, we are to use direct all modes of expression at our disposal (words, art, work, etc.) and our whole lives to call attention to the Face of God’s Love in Jesus Christ. Thus, the <i>apologetics of love</i> is intrinsically bound with the <i>new evangelization</i> . The CCC tells us: “The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends. Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope or for action, the love of our Lord must always be accessible, so that anyone can see that all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love” (CCC #25). What this means is that if “the whole concern of doctrine and its teaching” is love and if “God is love” (1 Jn 4.16; cf. CCC#221), then one can say that <i>all of the doctrines of the Christian faith are attempts to express and preserve in some way the ultimate mystery, the mystery of God’s love</i> . Thus, as you read the CCC, try to ask yourself: <i>how does this doctrine express and preserve the mystery of God’s love?</i> Consistently posing this question will make your study time and your ministry more fruitful.		<i>Reducere ad Gloriosum Mysterium Caritatis Dei!</i> <i>“Lead [everything] back to the Glorious Mystery of God’s Love!”</i> Love alone is credible; and nothing else should be believed. Love is what gives every mystery its intrinsic worth. It is the mystery of God’s love that is the <i>nexus</i> connecting all of the mysteries of the faith.
<i>Responses to Common Objections, Distortions, and/or Catechetical Questions</i>	<i>Study List from the Catechism</i>	<i>Scripture & Tradition to Memorize</i>	<i>Reducere ad Gloriosum Mysterium Amoris Dei</i>
	CREATION CCC## 268, 272, 280, 282-84, 287-289, 293-94, 295-96		
How is God the Father almighty? When we see so much suffering and evil in the world, God appears powerless. But if God reveals his power in the Cross, doesn’t that mean that God is weak? That God doesn’t really have any power? What is the relationship between creation and salvation?	Paragraph 3. The Almighty 268 Of all the divine attributes, only God's omnipotence is named in the Creed: to confess this power has great bearing on our lives. We believe that his might is <i>universal</i> , for God who created everything also rules everything and can do everything. God's power is <i>loving</i> , for he is our Father, and <i>mysterious</i> , for only faith can discern it when it “is made perfect in weakness” (Cf. Gen 1:1; Jn 1:3; Mt 6:9; 2 Cor 12:9; cf. 1 Cor 1:18.). The mystery of God's apparent powerlessness 272 Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by the experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the Father has revealed his almighty power in the voluntary humiliation and Resurrection of his Son, by which he conquered evil. Christ crucified is thus “the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor 1:24-25). It is in Christ's Resurrection and exaltation that the Father has shown forth “the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe” (Eph 1:19-22).” The Creator		

Is creation a scientific theory?	280 Creation is the foundation of “all God's saving plans,” the “beginning of the history of salvation” (<i>GCD</i>, 51) that culminates in Christ. Conversely, the mystery of Christ casts conclusive light on the mystery of creation and reveals the end for which "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth": from the beginning, God envisaged the glory of the new creation in Christ (Gen 1:1; cf. Rom 8:18-23). Catechesis on Creation. 282 Catechesis on creation is of major importance. It concerns the very foundations of human and Christian life: for it makes explicit the response of the Christian faith to the basic question that men of all times have asked themselves (Cf. <i>NA</i>, 2): "Where do we come from?" "Where are we going?" "What is our origin?" "What is our end?" "Where does everything that exists come from and where is it going?" The two questions, the first about the origin and the second about the end, are inseparable. They are decisive for the meaning and orientation of our life and actions. 283 The question about the origins of the world and of man has been the object of many scientific studies which have splendidly enriched our knowledge of the age and dimensions of the cosmos, the development of life-forms and the appearance of man. These discoveries invite us to even greater admiration for the greatness of the Creator, prompting us to give him thanks for all his works and for the understanding and wisdom he gives to scholars and researchers. With Solomon they can say: “It is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements. . . for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me” (Wis 7:17-22). ... 284 The great interest accorded to these studies is strongly stimulated by a question of another order, which goes beyond the proper domain of the natural sciences. It is not only a question of knowing when and how the universe arose physically, or when man appeared, but rather of discovering the meaning of such an origin: is the universe governed by chance, blind fate, anonymous necessity, or by a transcendent, intelligent and good Being called "God"? And if the world does come from God's wisdom and goodness, why is there evil? Where does it come from? Who is responsible for it? Is there any liberation from it? 287 The truth about creation is so important for all of human life that God in his tenderness wanted to reveal to his People everything that is salutary to know on the subject. Beyond the natural knowledge that every man can have of the Creator (Cf. Acts 17:24-29; Rom 1:19-20), God progressively revealed to Israel the mystery of creation. He who chose the patriarchs, who brought Israel out of Egypt, and who by choosing Israel created and formed it, this same God reveals himself as the One to whom belong all the peoples of the earth, and the whole earth itself; he is the One who alone “made heaven and earth” (Cf. Isa 43:1; Ps 115:15; 124:8; 134:3). 288 Thus the revelation of creation is inseparable from the revelation and forging of the covenant of the one God with his People. Creation is revealed as the first step towards this covenant, the first and universal witness to God's all-powerful love (Cf. Gen 15:5; Jer 33:19-26). And so, the truth of creation is also expressed with growing		
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Hasn’t science proved the Bible wrong? Don’t we know that the creation narrative has been disproved? Science gives us an alternative explanation, right? The world was created for the glory of God? Why does God want or need to be glorified? What’s the significance of that for us? Dawkins claims that we can explain the emergence of the material universe from a minimal state of gravitations forces. Why do we need to talk about God when it comes to ‘creation out of nothing’?	vigor in the message of the prophets, the prayer of the psalms and the liturgy, and in the wisdom sayings of the Chosen People (Cf. Isa 44:24; Ps 104; Prov 8:22-31). 289 Among all the Scriptural texts about creation, the first three chapters of Genesis occupy a unique place. From a literary standpoint these texts may have had diverse sources. The inspired authors have placed them at the beginning of Scripture to express in their solemn language the truths of creation - its origin and its end in God, its order and goodness, the vocation of man, and finally the drama of sin and the hope of salvation. Read in the light of Christ, within the unity of Sacred Scripture and in the living Tradition of the Church, these texts remain the principal source for catechesis on the mysteries of the "beginning": creation, fall, and promise of salvation. “The world was created for the Glory of God” 293 Scripture and Tradition never cease to teach and celebrate this fundamental truth: "The world was made for the glory of God" (<i>Dei Filius</i>, can. § 5: DS 3025). St. Bonaventure explains that God created all things “not to increase his glory, but to show it forth and to communicate it” (St. Bonaventure, <i>In II Sent.</i> I, 2,2,1), for God has no other reason for creating than his love and goodness: “Creatures came into existence when the key of love opened his hand” (St. Thomas Aquinas, <i>Sent. II</i>, Prol.). The First Vatican Council explains: This one, true God, of his own goodness and "almighty power", not for increasing his own beatitude, nor for attaining his perfection, but in order to manifest this perfection through the benefits which he bestows on creatures, with absolute freedom of counsel "and from the beginning of time, made out of nothing both orders of creatures, the spiritual and the corporeal. . ." (<i>Dei Filius</i>, I: DS 3002; cf. Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800). 294 The glory of God consists in the realization of this manifestation and communication of his goodness, for which the world was created. God made us "to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace” (Eph 1:5-6), for "the glory of God is man fully alive; moreover man's life is the vision of God: if God's revelation through creation has already obtained life for all the beings that dwell on earth, how much more will the Word's manifestation of the Father obtain life for those who see God” (St. Irenaeus, <i>Adv. haeres.</i> 4,20,7: PG 7/1,1037). The ultimate purpose of creation is that God “who is the creator of all things may at last become ‘all in all’, thus simultaneously assuring his own glory and our beatitude” (AG, 2; cf. 1 Cor 15:28). The Mystery of Creation. <i>God creates by wisdom and love.</i> 295 We believe that God created the world according to his wisdom (Cf. Wis 9:9). It is not the product of any necessity whatever, nor of blind fate or chance. We believe that it proceeds from God's free will; he wanted to make his creatures share in his being, wisdom and goodness: "For you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Rev 4:11). Therefore the Psalmist exclaims: "O LORD, how		
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What’s the meaning of ‘creation out of nothing’?	manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all"; and "The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made” (Ps 104:24; 145:9). God creates "out of nothing" 296 We believe that God needs no pre-existent thing or any help in order to create, nor is creation any sort of necessary emanation from the divine substance (Cf. <i>Dei Filius</i>, can. 2-4: DS 3022-3024). God creates freely "out of nothing" (Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800; cf. DS 3025): If God had drawn the world from pre-existent matter, what would be so extraordinary in that? A human artisan makes from a given material whatever he wants, while God shows his power by starting from nothing to make all he wants (St. Theophilus of Antioch, <i>Ad Autolycum</i> II, 4: PG 6,1052).		
	Providence and Evil CCC 302, 309-13		
The world looks like a messy place. Why didn’t God just create it the way he wanted it from the beginning and kept it that way? There is so much evil in the world. How do Christians respond to the reality of evil and suffering? Couldn’t God have made a better world?	God carries out his plan: Divine Providence 302 Creation has its own goodness and proper perfection, but it did not spring forth complete from the hands of the Creator. The universe was created "in a state of journeying" (<i>in statu viae</i>) toward an ultimate perfection yet to be attained, to which God has destined it. We call "divine providence" the dispositions by which God guides his creation toward this perfection: By his providence God protects and governs all things which he has made, "reaching mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and ordering all things well". For "all are open and laid bare to his eyes", even those things which are yet to come into existence through the free action of creatures (Vatican Council I, <i>Dei Filius</i> 1: DS 3003; cf. Wis 8:1; Heb 4:13). Providence and the scandal of evil. 309 If God the Father almighty, the Creator of the ordered and good world, cares for all his creatures, why does evil exist? To this question, as pressing as it is unavoidable and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice. Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question: the goodness of creation, the drama of sin and the patient love of God who comes to meet man by his covenants, the redemptive Incarnation of his Son, his gift of the Spirit, his gathering of the Church, the power of the sacraments and his call to a blessed life to which free creatures are invited to consent in advance, but from which, by a terrible mystery, they can also turn away in advance. <u>There is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil.</u> 310 But why did God not create a world so perfect that no evil could exist in it? With infinite power God could always create something better (Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, <i>STh</i> I,25,6). But with infinite wisdom and goodness God freely willed to create a world "in a state of journeying" towards its ultimate perfection. In God's plan this process of becoming involves the appearance of certain beings and the disappearance of others, the existence of the more perfect alongside the less perfect, both constructive and		

Doesn't faith spare us suffering? If Jesus bore our sins, doesn't that mean he suffered in our place and so we don't have to suffer? If not, what's the point of being a Christian? What do you get out of it?	destructive forces of nature. With physical good there exists also <i>physical evil</i> as long as creation has not reached perfection (Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, <i>SCG</i> III,71). 311 Angels and men, as intelligent and free creatures, have to journey toward their ultimate destinies by their free choice and preferential love. They can therefore go astray. Indeed, they have sinned. Thus has <i>moral evil</i>, incommensurably more harmful than physical evil, entered the world. God is in no way, directly or indirectly, the cause of moral evil (Cf. St. Augustine, <i>De libero arbitrio</i> 1,1,2: PL 32,1221-1223; St. Thomas Aquinas, <i>STh</i> I-II,79,1). He permits it, however, because he respects the freedom of his creatures and, mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it: For almighty God. . . , because he is supremely good, would never allow any evil whatsoever to exist in his works if he were not so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil itself (St. Augustine, <i>Enchiridion</i> 3,11: PL 40,236.). 312 In time we can discover that God in his almighty providence can bring a good from the consequences of an evil, even a moral evil, caused by his creatures: "It was not you", said Joseph to his brothers, "who sent me here, but God. . . You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive" (Gen 45:8; 50:20; cf. Tob 2:12 (Vulg.)). From the greatest moral evil ever committed - the rejection and murder of God's only Son, caused by the sins of all men - God, by his grace that "abounded all the more" (Cf. Rom 5:20), brought the greatest of goods: the glorification of Christ and our redemption. But for all that, evil never becomes a good. 313 "We know that in everything God works for good for those who love him" (Rom 8:28). The constant witness of the saints confirms this truth: St. Catherine of Siena said to "those who are scandalized and rebel against what happens to them": "Everything comes from love, all is ordained for the salvation of man, God does nothing without this goal in mind" (<i>Dialogue On Providence</i>, ch. IV, 138). St. Thomas More, shortly before his martyrdom, consoled his daughter: "Nothing can come but that that God wills. And I make me very sure that whatsoever that be, seem it never so bad in sight, it shall indeed be the best"(<i>The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More</i>, ed. Elizabeth F. Rogers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), letter 206, lines 661-663). Dame Julian of Norwich: "Here I was taught by the grace of God that I should steadfastly keep me in the faith. . . and that at the same time I should take my stand on and earnestly believe in what our Lord shewed in this time - that 'all manner [of] thing shall be well'" (<i>The Revelations of Divine Love</i>, tr. James Walshe SJ (London: 1961), ch. 32,99-100).		
	Sin in General; the Doctrine of Original Sin CCC 385-89, 396-400, 403-05		
	The Fall		

Why do you believe in “the fall”? Doesn’t that sound like a fairytale? Where is there proof for the fall? What is the reality of sin? Isn’t sin just like a big learning curve for humans? There’s no such thing as sin. There are only life lessons, right? ... Also, what does me choosing to do this or that have to do with God? Why is he so uptight and have so many rules? Why do we believe in original sin? What is original sin? How should we read Genesis 3?	385 God is infinitely good and all his works are good. Yet no one can escape the experience of suffering or the evils in nature which seem to be linked to the limitations proper to creatures: and above all to the question of moral evil. Where does evil come from? "I sought whence evil comes and there was no solution", said St. Augustine (St. Augustine, <i>Conf.</i> 7,7,11: PL 32,739.), and his own painful quest would only be resolved by his conversion to the living God. For "the mystery of lawlessness" is clarified only in the light of the "mystery of our religion" (2 Thess 2:7; 1 Tim 3:16.). The revelation of divine love in Christ manifested at the same time the extent of evil and the superabundance of grace (Cf. Rom 5:20). We must therefore approach the question of the origin of evil by fixing the eyes of our faith on him who alone is its conqueror (Cf. Lk 11:21-22; Jn 16:11; 1 Jn 3:8). Where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more <i>The reality of sin</i> 386 Sin is present in human history; any attempt to ignore it or to give this dark reality other names would be futile. To try to understand what sin is, one must first recognize the profound relation of man to God, for only in this relationship is the evil of sin unmasked in its true identity as humanity's rejection of God and opposition to him, even as it continues to weigh heavy on human life and history. 387 Only the light of divine Revelation clarifies the reality of sin and particularly of the sin committed at mankind's origins. Without the knowledge Revelation gives of God we cannot recognize sin clearly and are tempted to explain it as merely a developmental flaw, a psychological weakness, a mistake, or the necessary consequence of an inadequate social structure, etc. Only in the knowledge of God's plan for man can we grasp that sin is an abuse of the freedom that God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving him and loving one another. <i>Original sin - an essential truth of the faith</i> 388 With the progress of Revelation, the reality of sin is also illuminated. Although to some extent the People of God in the Old Testament had tried to understand the pathos of the human condition in the light of the history of the fall narrated in Genesis, they could not grasp this story's ultimate meaning, which is revealed only in the light of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Cf. Rom 5:12-21). We must know Christ as the source of grace in order to know Adam as the source of sin. The Spirit-Paraclete, sent by the risen Christ, came to "convict the world concerning sin" (Jn 16:8.), by revealing him who is its Redeemer. 389 The doctrine of original sin is, so to speak, the "reverse side" of the Good News that Jesus is the Savior of all men, that all need salvation and that salvation is offered to all through Christ. The Church, which has the mind of Christ (Cf. 1 Cor 2:16), knows very well that we cannot tamper with the revelation of original sin without undermining the mystery of Christ. <i>How to read the account of the fall</i> 390 The account of the fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place at the beginning of the history of man (Cf. GS		
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What does the narrative really tell us? What I don't understand is how the mistake of Adam and Eve affected anyone else. Is that fair? Why should other people bear responsibility for someone else's mistakes?	13 § 1). Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents (Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1513; Pius XII: DS 3897; Paul VI: AAS 58 (1966), 654). Original Sin <i>Freedom put to the test</i> 396 God created man in his image and established him in his friendship. A spiritual creature, man can live this friendship only in free submission to God. The prohibition against eating "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" spells this out: "for in the day that you eat of it, you shall die" (Gen 2:17). The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:17) symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that man, being a creature, must freely recognize and respect with trust. Man is dependent on his Creator, and subject to the laws of creation and to the moral norms that govern the use of freedom. <i>Man's first sin</i> 397 Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of (Cf. Gen 3:1-11; Rom 5:19). All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness. 398 In that sin man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good. Constituted in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully "divinized" by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to "be like God", but "without God, before God, and not in accordance with God" (St. Maximus the Confessor, <i>Ambigua</i>: PG 91,1156C; cf. Gen 3:5). 399 Scripture portrays the tragic consequences of this first disobedience. Adam and Eve immediately lose the grace of original holiness (Cf. Rom 3:23). They become afraid of the God of whom they have conceived a distorted image - that of a God jealous of his prerogatives (Cf. Gen 3:5-10). 400 The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed: the control of the soul's spiritual faculties over the body is shattered; the union of man and woman becomes subject to tensions, their relations henceforth marked by lust and domination (Cf. Gen 3:7-16). Harmony with creation is broken: visible creation has become alien and hostile to man (Cf. Gen 3:17,19). Because of man, creation is now subject "to its bondage to decay" (Rom 8:21). Finally, the consequence explicitly foretold for this disobedience will come true: man will "return to the ground" (Gen 3:19; cf. 2:17), for out of it he was taken. Death makes its entrance into human history (Cf. Rom 5:12). <i>The consequences of Adam's sin for humanity</i> 403 Following St. Paul, the Church has always taught that the overwhelming misery which oppresses men and their inclination towards evil and death cannot be understood apart from their connection with Adam's sin and the fact that he has		
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Is original sin like a disease that is passed on genetically? Or is it like a series of really bad examples that corrupts everyone? Explain this. Is original sin my personal fault? How does it affect me?	transmitted to us a sin with which we are all born afflicted, a sin which is the "death of the soul" (Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1512). Because of this certainty of faith, the Church baptizes for the remission of sins even tiny infants who have not committed personal sin (Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1514). 404 How did the sin of Adam become the sin of all his descendants? The whole human race is in Adam "as one body of one man" (St. Thomas Aquinas, <i>De Malo</i> 4,1). By this "unity of the human race" all men are implicated in Adam's sin, as all are implicated in Christ's justice. Still, the transmission of original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand. But we do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature. By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state (Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1511-1512). It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. And that is why original sin is called "sin" only in an analogical sense: it is a sin "contracted" and not "committed" - a state and not an act. 405 Although it is proper to each individual (Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1513), original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called "concupiscence". Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.		
	Incarnation CCC 422-23, 457-60 (only the italicized words in the first sentence of each), 461, 463, 466-67 for the meaning of “Theotokos” (“Mother of God”) and dates of Ephesus and Chalcedon, 478 (Sacred Heart); excellent summary section: 483		
	The Good News: God has sent his Son 422 'But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons' (Gal 4:4-5). This is 'the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (Mk 1:1): God has visited his people. He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation - he has sent his own 'beloved Son' (Mk 1:11; cf. Lk 1:5,68.).		

	423 We believe and confess that Jesus of Nazareth, born a Jew of a daughter of Israel at Bethlehem at the time of King Herod the Great and the emperor Caesar Augustus, a carpenter by trade, who died crucified in Jerusalem under the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of the emperor Tiberius, is the eternal Son of God made man. He 'came from God' (Jn 13:3), 'descended from heaven' (Jn 3:13; 6:33), and 'came in the flesh' (1 Jn 4:2). For 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. . . And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace' (Jn 1:14,16). Why did the Word become flesh? 456 With the Nicene Creed, we answer by confessing: "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." 457 The Word became flesh for us <i>in order to save us by reconciling us with God....</i> who "loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins": "the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world", and "he was revealed to take away sins."⁷⁰ 458 The Word became flesh <i>so that thus we might know God's love....</i> "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him."⁷² "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."⁷³ 459 The Word became flesh <i>to be our model of holiness....</i> "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."⁷⁴ On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: "Listen to him!"⁷⁵ Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: "Love one another as I have loved you."⁷⁶ This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example.⁷⁷ 460 The Word became flesh <i>to make us "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pt 1:4)....</i> "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."⁷⁴ On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: "Listen to him!"⁷⁵ Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: "Love one another as I have loved you."⁷⁶ This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example.⁷⁷ The Incarnation 461 Taking up St. John's expression, "The Word became flesh",⁸² the Church calls "Incarnation" the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to		
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	accomplish our salvation in it. In a hymn cited by St. Paul, the Church sings the mystery of the Incarnation: Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.⁸³ 463 Belief in the true Incarnation of the Son of God is the distinctive sign of Christian faith: "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God."⁸⁵ Such is the joyous conviction of the Church from her beginning whenever she sings "the mystery of our religion": "He was manifested in the flesh."⁸⁶ True God and True Man 466 The Nestorian heresy regarded Christ as a human person joined to the divine person of God's Son. Opposing this heresy, St. Cyril of Alexandria and the third ecumenical council, at Ephesus in 431, confessed "that the Word, uniting to himself in his person the flesh animated by a rational soul, became man."⁸⁹ Christ's humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception. For this reason the Council of Ephesus proclaimed in 431 that Mary truly became the Mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb: "Mother of God, not that the nature of the Word or his divinity received the beginning of its existence from the holy Virgin, but that, since the holy body, animated by a rational soul, which the Word of God united to himself according to the hypostasis, was born from her, the Word is said to be born according to the flesh."⁹⁰ 467 The Monophysites affirmed that the human nature had ceased to exist as such in Christ when the divine person of God's Son assumed it. Faced with this heresy, the fourth ecumenical council, at Chalcedon in 451, confessed: Following the holy Fathers, we unanimously teach and confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, composed of rational soul and body; consubstantial with the Father as to his divinity and consubstantial with us as to his humanity; "like us in all things but sin". He was begotten from the Father before all ages as to his divinity and in these last days, for us and for our salvation, was born as to his humanity of the virgin Mary, the Mother of God.⁹¹ We confess that one and the same Christ, Lord, and only-begotten Son, is to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, change, division or separation. The distinction between the natures was never abolished by their union, but rather the character proper to each of the two natures was preserved as they came together in one person (prosopon) and one hypostasis.⁹²		
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	468 After the Council of Chalcedon, some made of Christ's human nature a kind of personal subject. Against them, the fifth ecumenical council, at Constantinople in 553, confessed that "there is but one hypostasis [or person], which is our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the Trinity."⁹³ Thus everything in Christ's human nature is to be attributed to his divine person as its proper subject, not only his miracles but also his sufferings and even his death: "He who was crucified in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ, is true God, Lord of glory, and one of the Holy Trinity."⁹⁴ The heart of the Incarnate Word 478 Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us: "The Son of God. . . loved me and gave himself for me."¹¹⁶ He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation,¹¹⁷ "is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that. . . love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings" without exception.¹¹⁸ Summary 483 The Incarnation is therefore the mystery of the wonderful union of the divine and human natures in the one person of the Word.		
	The Life of the Lord as Mystery CCC 512, 514-15, 536, 539		
What are you referring to when you say “the mysteries of Christ’s life”? How is Jesus’ whole life a <i>mystery</i>? What does that mean?	The Mysteries of Christ's Life 512 Concerning Christ's life the Creed speaks only about the mysteries of the Incarnation (conception and birth) and Paschal mystery (passion, crucifixion, death, burial, descent into hell, resurrection and ascension). It says nothing explicitly about the mysteries of Jesus' hidden or public life, but the articles of faith concerning his Incarnation and Passover do shed light on the whole of his earthly life. "All that Jesus did and taught, from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven",¹⁷¹ is to be seen in the light of the mysteries of Christmas and Easter. Christ’s Whole Life is Mystery 514 Many things about Jesus of interest to human curiosity do not figure in the Gospels. Almost nothing is said about his hidden life at Nazareth, and even a great part of his public life is not recounted.¹⁷² What is written in the Gospels was set down there "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."¹⁷³ 515 The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith¹⁷⁴ and wanted to share it with others. Having known in faith who Jesus is, they could see and make others see the traces of his mystery in all his earthly life. From the swaddling clothes of his birth to the vinegar of his Passion and the shroud of his Resurrection, everything in Jesus' life was a sign of his mystery.¹⁷⁵ His deeds, miracles and words all revealed that "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."¹⁷⁶ His humanity appeared as "sacrament", that is, the sign and instrument, of his divinity and of the salvation he brings: what was visible in his earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of his divine sonship and redemptive mission.		

If Jesus was not a sinner, then why was he baptized in the baptism of sinners? If Jesus is truly God, then how could he be tempted?	The Mysteries of Jesus’ Public Life <i>The baptism of Jesus</i> 536 The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world".232 Already he is anticipating the "baptism" of his bloody death.233 Already he is coming to "fulfill all righteousness", that is, he is submitting himself entirely to his Father's will: out of love he consents to this baptism of death for the remission of our sins.234 The Father's voice responds to the Son's acceptance, proclaiming his entire delight in his Son.235 The Spirit whom Jesus possessed in fullness from his conception comes to "rest on him".236 Jesus will be the source of the Spirit for all mankind. At his baptism "the heavens were opened"237 - the heavens that Adam's sin had closed - and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Spirit, a prelude to the new creation. <i>Jesus’ temptations</i> 539 The evangelists indicate the salvific meaning of this mysterious event: Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation. Jesus fulfills Israel's vocation perfectly: in contrast to those who had once provoked God during forty years in the desert, Christ reveals himself as God's Servant, totally obedient to the divine will. In this, Jesus is the devil's conqueror: he "binds the strong man" to take back his plunder.243 Jesus' victory over the tempter in the desert anticipates victory at the Passion, the supreme act of obedience of his filial love for the Father.		
	The Trial and Execution of Jesus CCC 597-98		
Weren’t the Romans or the Jews responsible for Jesus’ death?	The Trial of Jesus <i>Jews are not collectively responsible for Jesus' death</i> 597 The historical complexity of Jesus' trial is apparent in the Gospel accounts. The personal sin of the participants (Judas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate) is known to God alone. Hence we cannot lay responsibility for the trial on the Jews in Jerusalem as a whole, despite the outcry of a manipulated crowd and the global reproaches contained in the apostles' calls to conversion after Pentecost.385 Jesus himself, in forgiving them on the cross, and Peter in following suit, both accept "the ignorance" of the Jews of Jerusalem and even of their leaders.386 Still less can we extend responsibility to other Jews of different times and places, based merely on the crowd's cry: "His blood be on us and on our children!", a formula for ratifying a judicial sentence.387 As the Church declared at the Second Vatican Council: . . . [N]either all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his Passion. . . [T]he Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture.388 All sinners were the authors of Christ's Passion		

How can we here today be responsible for Jesus’ death 2,000 years ago?	598 In her Magisterial teaching of the faith and in the witness of her saints, the Church has never forgotten that "sinners were the authors and the ministers of all the sufferings that the divine Redeemer endured."389 Taking into account the fact that our sins affect Christ himself,390 the Church does not hesitate to impute to Christians the gravest responsibility for the torments inflicted upon Jesus, a responsibility with which they have all too often burdened the Jews alone: We must regard as guilty all those who continue to relapse into their sins. Since our sins made the Lord Christ suffer the torment of the cross, those who plunge themselves into disorders and crimes crucify the Son of God anew in their hearts (for he is in them) and hold him up to contempt. And it can be seen that our crime in this case is greater in us than in the Jews. As for them, according to the witness of the Apostle, "None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." We, however, profess to know him. And when we deny him by our deeds, we in some way seem to lay violent hands on him.391 Nor did demons crucify him; it is you who have crucified him and crucify him still, when you delight in your vices and sins.392		
	Atonement CCC 599, 603-04, 609, 616		
Why did Jesus have to die such a terrible and gruesome death? Was God the Father so angry and bloodthirsty that his anger couldn’t be satiated until he saw blood offered as atonement for sins? Couldn’t God just wave a wand and say, “you are forgiven”? How does Jesus’ death have any meaning for me? For example, if someone else is sick—say, someone has cancer—by me getting cancer with them, I don’t heal them of cancer, rather we both die. So, how does this work?	Christ’s Redemptive Death in God’s Plan of Salvation <i>"Jesus handed over according to the definite plan of God"</i> 599 Jesus' violent death was not the result of chance in an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances, but is part of the mystery of God's plan, as St. Peter explains to the Jews of Jerusalem in his first sermon on Pentecost: "This Jesus [was] delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God."393 This Biblical language does not mean that those who handed him over were merely passive players in a scenario written in advance by God.394 <i>"For our sake God made him to be sin"</i> 603 Jesus did not experience reprobation as if he himself had sinned.405 But in the redeeming love that always united him to the Father, he assumed us in the state of our waywardness of sin, to the point that he could say in our name from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"406 Having thus established him in solidarity with us sinners, God "did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all", so that we might be "reconciled to God by the death of his Son".407 <i>Jesus freely embraced the Father's redeeming love</i> 609 By embracing in his human heart the Father's love for men, Jesus "loved them to the end", for "greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."425 In suffering and death his humanity became the free and perfect instrument of his divine love which desires the salvation of men.426 Indeed, out of love for his Father and for men, whom the Father wants to save, Jesus freely accepted his Passion and death: "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own		

	accord."427 Hence the sovereign freedom of God's Son as he went out to his death.428 <i>Jesus consummates his sacrifice on the cross</i> 616 It is love "to the end"446 that confers on Christ's sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction. He knew and loved us all when he offered his life.447 Now "the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died."448 No man, not even the holiest, was ever able to take on himself the sins of all men and offer himself as a sacrifice for all. The existence in Christ of the divine person of the Son, who at once surpasses and embraces all human persons, and constitutes himself as the Head of all mankind, makes possible his redemptive sacrifice for all.		
	Descent Into Hell CCC 634-35.		
What does it mean that Christ descended into Hell? When did 'Hell' begin?	Christ's Descended into Hell 634 "The gospel was preached even to the dead."484 The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfillment. This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission, a phase which is condensed in time but vast in its real significance: the spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption. 635 Christ went down into the depths of death so that "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."485 Jesus, "the Author of life", by dying destroyed "him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and [delivered] all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage."486 Henceforth the risen Christ holds "the keys of Death and Hades", so that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."487 Today a great silence reigns on earth, a great silence and a great stillness. A great silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. . . He has gone to search for Adam, our first father, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow Adam in his bonds and Eve, captive with him - He who is both their God and the son of Eve. . . "I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. . . I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead."488		

	Resurrection of the Lord CCC 639-40, 642, 646-47		
	The historical and transcendent event 639 The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. In about A.D. 56 St. Paul could already write to the Corinthians: "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. . ."491 The Apostle speaks here of the living tradition of the Resurrection which he had learned after his conversion at the gates of Damascus.492 The empty tomb 640 "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."493 The first element we encounter in the framework of the Easter events is the empty tomb. In itself it is not a direct proof of Resurrection; the absence of Christ's body from the tomb could be explained otherwise.494 Nonetheless the empty tomb was still an essential sign for all. Its discovery by the disciples was the first step toward recognizing the very fact of the Resurrection. This was the case, first with the holy women, and then with Peter.495 The disciple "whom Jesus loved" affirmed that when he entered the empty tomb and discovered "the linen cloths lying there", "he saw and believed".496 This suggests that he realized from the empty tomb's condition that the absence of Jesus' body could not have been of human doing and that Jesus had not simply returned to earthly life as had been the case with Lazarus.497 The appearances of the Risen One		

	642 Everything that happened during those Paschal days involves each of the apostles - and Peter in particular - in the building of the new era begun on Easter morning. As witnesses of the Risen One, they remain the foundation stones of his Church. The faith of the first community of believers is based on the witness of concrete men known to the Christians and for the most part still living among them. Peter and the Twelve are the primary "witnesses to his Resurrection", but they are not the only ones - Paul speaks clearly of more than five hundred persons to whom Jesus appeared on a single occasion and also of James and of all the apostles.⁵⁰² The condition of Christ's risen humanity 646 Christ's Resurrection was not a return to earthly life, as was the case with the raisings from the dead that he had performed before Easter: Jairus' daughter, the young man of Naim, Lazarus. These actions were miraculous events, but the persons miraculously raised returned by Jesus' power to ordinary earthly life. At some particular moment they would die again. Christ's Resurrection is essentially different. In his risen body he passes from the state of death to another life beyond time and space. At Jesus' Resurrection his body is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit: he shares the divine life in his glorious state, so that St. Paul can say that Christ is "the man of heaven".⁵¹² The Resurrection as transcendent event 647 O truly blessed Night, sings the Exultet of the Easter Vigil, which alone deserved to know the time and the hour when Christ rose from the realm of the dead!⁵¹³ But no one was an eyewitness to Christ's Resurrection and no evangelist describes it. No one can say how it came about physically. Still less was its innermost essence, his passing over to another life, perceptible to the senses. 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."⁵¹⁴		
	<i>Excursus: Relationship between the Cross and the Resurrection</i>		

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