

The Baltimore Catechism

50. How is the soul like God?

The soul is like God because it is a spirit having understanding and free will, and is destined to live forever.

51. Who were the first man and woman?

The first man and woman were Adam and Eve, the first parents of the whole human race.

52. What was the chief gift bestowed on Adam and Eve by God?

The chief gift bestowed on Adam and Eve by God was sanctifying grace, which made them children of God and gave them the right to Heaven.

53. What other gifts were bestowed on Adam and Eve by God?

The other gifts bestowed on Adam and Eve by God were happiness in the Garden of Paradise, great knowledge, control of the passions by reason and freedom from suffering and death.

54. What commandment did God give Adam and Eve?

God gave Adam and Eve the commandment not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree that grew in the Garden of Paradise.



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Understanding Evil

Jesus was having a normal day healing people and battling the Pharisees. The episode in Matthew 12:1–30 shows conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees about eating and healing on the Sabbath. After addressing complaints from the Pharisees about eating and healing on the Sabbath, Jesus summarizes the discussion by saying, “Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate: And every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: How then shall his kingdom stand? Or how can anyone enter into the house of the strong man [i.e., Satan] and rifle his goods unless he first bind the strong man? And then he will rifle his house.”

Jesus is pointing out that Satan and his demons are more united than His own believers. There are two remarkable things about this.

First, Satan and demons exist. This is Jesus, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, the Savior of the World, stating that Satan exists! Perhaps you believe this already. However, many do not (and, by the way, there are far too few reminders about this from the episcopacy, our Catholic bishops). But how Satan and his demons conduct their mission is something that requires better understanding.

Fr. Chad Ripperger, a former exorcist for the diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma, says demons want to control what people think. They operate in people's imaginations and by controlling the knowledge that their targets obtain. None of this, however, occurs without the permission of the person or God. After all, we are not referring here to a Hollywood-style demonic possession. Rather, this is about the everyday process of temptation and how demons under Satan's authority operate.

Isn't it true that the big battle we fight every day happens in our heads? Our actions are born out of our thoughts and perceptions. Satan, through his demons, attacks our thoughts and perceptions, which evoke our emotions, which cause us to act — *unless* we “put on the armor of God.” In other words, we must build and invoke our intellects, conforming them to the will of God. We need to stick our intellects into this temptation equation:

Thoughts + perceptions = intellect / emotions

“For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places” (Ephesians 6:10).

Second, in this battle, we must be united because Satan and his demons are more united than we are as

Sin Makes Us Stupid

followers of Christ. Jesus compares the battle with Satan to “entering the house of a strong man.” Satan must be subdued in order to defeat him. We cannot subdue him unless we are stronger than he is (by being united against him). In fact, of this battle, Jesus says, “He that is not with me, is against me: And he that gathereth not with me, scattereth,”

It has been said, “There is no medium. We must either be with Christ, or against Christ: If we are not of Christ, whose then must we be, when nothing but sin can separate us from Christ and God? Oh, where will the generality of Christians, who [show] themselves so indifferent with regard to salvation, find themselves at the last day? Can they say they are with Christ?”²

Are you in this fight? You need to be in this fight for your salvation and for the salvation of those you love. For your children, you need to be in this fight. For your work or businesses, you need to be in this fight. For your hopes and dreams, you need to be in this fight. Satan is attacking you on all fronts. Get in the battle!

You must be aware though that God “has ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight” (Wisdom 11: 21). Per St. Alphonsus Liguori, He has “fixed for each person the number of the days of his life, and the degrees of health and talent which He will give him.” We know this. But did you know that, according to St. Alphonsus, “**He has also determined for each the number of sins which He will pardon; and when this number is completed, He will pardon no more**”?

That’s right: We are all running out of time to repent.

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into Hell Satan and all evil spirits, who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

My dearest children: **You are in mortal danger!** I failed to properly teach you the precepts of the Catholic Church and the beauty, richness and completeness of the Catholic faith. Therefore, I have taken on this little project. My goal is to produce this newsletter every month and send it along with little tokens to help you appreciate the gift. It is meant to bring about a moment of reflection and discussion. I love you, and God bless you!

Indeed, there are people who have run out of time!

Two of the four sins that the Catholic Church defines as sins *that cry to Heaven for vengeance* are murder of the innocents and sodomy. These sins exist in the world today as abortion and widespread homosexuality.

You must seek God’s forgiveness through the sacrament of penance before He decides to withdraw His graces from you. Without practicing the four keys of salvation, Satan attacks our imagination and tries to limit our knowledge. Put differently, **sin makes us stupid**; it dulls our intellects. We are punished for the sin of pride, believing that we have no dependence on God and that we have no need to honor Him. St. Alphonsus teaches, “The sinner who abandons himself to sin without striving to resist temptations ... and hopes that the Lord will one day draw him from the precipice, tempts God to work miracles, or rather to show to him an extraordinary mercy not extended to the generality of Christians.”

This battle is played out *every day*, especially in the media and in politics. Pay attention to the those who commit or support the sins that cry out to Heaven for vengeance. Sins make us stupid. How much of what they say should you believe? Pray for the gift of understanding (see side panel).

¹<https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/on-the-number-of-sins-beyond-which-god-pardons-no-more>

²<https://web.archive.org/web/20171204061938/http://haydock1859.tripod.com/id27.html>

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

(from SMM/CM: [Nine day Novena of Justice](#))

The Gift of Understanding

Understanding, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, perfects our faith by enabling us to penetrate the inner meaning of revealed truths in a way that transcends human reason. Our natural way of knowing is elevated by a graced intuition and insight into the things of God. By faith we know them, but by the gift of understanding we learn to appreciate and relish them. This appreciation radiates outward to others because our faith is no longer just a matter of information from a book, but a way of living rooted in intimacy with the mysteries of Christ. May the Holy Spirit attune our hearts and minds to a deeper spiritual understanding of these mysteries so that, as missionary disciples of a new Pentecost in our time, we may draw others to Christ and to His Church.

Let us pray.

All: Father, send the Holy Spirit into our minds and hearts, giving us a deeper understanding of the mysteries of salvation. May He teach and instruct us, the people you have made your own, so that we may never waver in our faith, but by the gift of understanding may be ready to give an answer to all who ask the reason for the hope that is within us. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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“For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts. ... They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. ... Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts.

Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind. ... They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. ... They not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them” (Romans 1:21–32).