

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

#### WHAT IS FAITH?

1. What is the threefold division of the Apostles' Creed?
2. In what way is faith a union with God?
3. Explain these words: "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed."
4. Explain the fourth effect of faith, viz., by it we overcome temptations. Discuss these questions: Why do we believe that which we cannot see? Does all our knowledge come solely through our senses? Do we take nothing in the natural order on faith?
5. Explain St. Thomas' statement that the spread of Christianity was a great miracle.

### THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

1. Either we believe in God or in chance. Develop, therefore, the argument: "All nature operates with a certain definite time and order, and is subject to the rule and foresight and orderly arrangement of someone."
2. How does the Providence of God account for the fact that the good often are afflicted, and that the wicked often prosper?
3. Give one reason why there can be only one God.
4. Discuss any one of the causes or motives which led men to believe in many gods (polytheism).
5. What is astrology, and what is wrong about it?
6. Discuss fortune-telling, palm-reading, etc.

### ONE GOD, THE CREATOR

1. St. Thomas here states the argument from causality or the First Cause for the existence of God. Can you restate it in your own words?

2. Note that the errors of which St. Thomas speaks are similar to certain views held to-day. Thus, the Manicheans and modern "reformers" who consider legitimate pleasures to be evil. Can you think of any errors to-day which correspond somewhat to the other errors mentioned in the text?
3. How does consideration of God as our Creator lead us to greater knowledge of God?
4. Gratitude, patience, and the right use of created things are taught us by our belief in the Creator. How?
5. Where does man belong in relation to the rest of God's creation?
6. Make personal the proof of the existence of God, the Creator: that He created me and is interested in me.

#### THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

1. From the words of St. Peter how does the Transfiguration prove the Divinity of Our Lord?
2. Do you see a similarity between the beliefs of some men to-day and the error of Photinus?
3. Arianism was one of the great heresies which still exists to-day (only less philosophically) in the Unitarian religion. Discuss this.
4. Did not the great English poet, John Milton, hold views similar to Arianism?
5. The eternal generation of the Word or Son of God is likened by St. Thomas to the generation of the word in the mind of man--a thought conceived in the intellect. Can you explain this?
6. In what ways are we told to give adoration and honor to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word of God?

#### THE INCARNATION

1. Explain the third article of the Creed by telling the story of the Annunciation by the Angel to the Blessed Virgin.
2. What do you mean by the Virgin Birth?
3. How is our faith strengthened by these considerations of the Incarnation?

4. What do you understand by the words of St. Thomas: "He [Christ] became man in order that He might make man divine"?
5. In what way does the thought of the Incarnation enkindle our charity?
6. Explain the words: "Christ our brother."

#### THE PASSION OF CHRIST

1. Why is it that we cannot fully understand the tremendous fact of the passion and death of Christ?
2. "He [Christ] did not die as God, but as man." Explain these words of St. Thomas.
3. Why did the Son of God suffer and die for us?
4. Discuss the various effects of sin, and observe how the passion of Christ is a remedy against sin.
5. How can our consideration of the passion and death of Our Lord bring about a complete reformation of our lives?
6. What are some of the virtues of which Our Lord is the supreme Exemplar and Model?

#### THE DESCENT INTO HELL

1. What are the three meanings of "hell" used by St. Thomas?
2. Where was Christ from the Death on the Cross until the Resurrection?
3. How does the descent of Christ into Limbo differ from that of the just men who died before the crucifixion of Our Lord?
4. Discuss a few of the reasons why Our Lord "descended into hell."
5. From a consideration of the descent of Christ into Limbo, hope, fear, and anxiety should be aroused in us. Explain.
6. How can we rescue the souls detained in purgatory?

#### THE RESURRECTION

1. What does the Resurrection of Christ really mean?

2. In what ways did Our Lord's Resurrection differ from the resurrection of Lazarus?
3. What was the actual number of days from Good Friday to Easter Sunday?
4. St. Thomas says: "Let us endeavor to arise spiritually." Discuss this.
5. What is the relation of the Resurrection of Our Lord and our own future resurrection?
6. Does the Resurrection prove the Divinity of Christ?

#### THE ASCENSION

1. Discuss the place, time, and other circumstances of Our Lord's Ascension into heaven as it is described by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles (chapter i).
2. What was the length of time between Easter Sunday and Ascension Thursday?
3. "And sitteth at the right hand of God." What does this mean?
4. Discuss the reasonableness of the Ascension of Our Lord.
5. What are the benefits to us of the Ascension?
6. If the other mysteries (incarnation, passion, death, etc.) of Our Lord manifest His humility and meekness, what is demonstrated by the Ascension into heaven?

#### THE LAST JUDGMENT

1. Does St. Thomas speak here of the general judgment of all men on the last day, or of the particular judgment which all of us will undergo immediately after death?
2. "God decreed a general judgment in addition to the particular judgment to show forth His glory and also that of Christ and of the just, also to put the wicked to shame, and in order that man might receive, both in body and soul, the sentence of reward or punishment in the presence of all" (Cardinal Gasparri's Catechism, chap. iii, sect. ii, art. 4). Discuss this.
3. Some do not hesitate to accuse God of injustice when they see the wicked prosper and the good suffer. Does not the last judgment show God's justice? Discuss this point.

4. What meaning do you attach to the phrases, "the living" and "the dead"?
5. Discuss the four classes of those to be judged.
6. What sentence will be pronounced at the last judgment? (See Matt., xxv, 34-41-)
7. Why should we have a wholesome fear of the judgment?
8. Note the remedies against fear of the judgment?

#### THE HOLY GHOST

1. Why is it necessary that there be will and love in God?
2. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." In what way is this statement of St. Paul a definition of the Holy Ghost?
3. What was the purpose of placing five articles on the Holy Ghost in the Nicene Creed?
4. Explain how each of these five articles indicates that the Holy Ghost is not a mere angelic minister but is truly God.
5. The Holy Ghost is love, and therefore He cleanses us from sin. Discuss this.
6. Name two ways in which the Holy Ghost aids the intellect or mind of man.
7. Discuss the role of the Holy Ghost in the attainment of our eternal salvation.

#### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

1. What is meant by the expression, "the Church"?
2. How do the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity give unity to the Church? Would you say that another source of her unity or oneness is sanctifying grace?
3. St. Thomas says the faithful are sanctified (that is, made holy) in four ways. What is the Source of this holiness? Discuss this.
4. Show that the Catholic Church merits the title or mark of "catholic," despite the fact that there are non-Catholics.

5. St. Thomas classifies the elements which make up the mark, "apostolicity." Discuss how these elements are contained in the text of St. Matthew, xvi, 18 (see footnote 29).

6. Why is it necessary that the Church of Christ have marks?

#### SAINTS--SACRAMENTS--SINS

1. Discuss the similarity between the natural body with its head and members, and the spiritual body, the Church, with its Head and members. Why is the Church called the Mystical Body of Christ?

2. The Communion of Saints means that between the members of the Church--in heaven, in purgatory, and on earth--there exists, by reason of their close union with one another under Christ their head, a mutual communication in spiritual riches or "good." Discuss this doctrine.

3. Why does St. Thomas give us a review of the seven Sacraments in treating of the Communion of Saints?

4. Trace the origin and growth of the life in the Mystical Body by its analogy with the life of the physical body in each of the Sacraments.

5. Discuss St. Thomas' answer to the objection: men cannot forgive sins committed against God.

6. Some day I shall be thanking people whom I never knew existed. Explain and discuss this.

#### RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

1. Show that the Holy Ghost sanctifies (that is, makes holy) the whole man.

2. Discuss the practical effects of belief in the resurrection of the body.

3. How can a strong belief in the resurrection help us to attain salvation?

4. What will the body be like after it arises from the dead?

5. Discuss what St. Thomas calls the "perfect age" of thirty-three years.

6. Compare point for point the condition of the resurrected body of the blessed and that of the damned, showing in what they are alike and in what they differ; and also point out that these differences conduce to the happiness of the saved and the misery of the damned.

## EVERLASTING LIFE

1. Discuss how in this article of the Creed, the dignity and destiny of man are set forth and defended.
2. The true end of love is union with the beloved. Will this be realized in heaven? If so, how?
3. Show that in heaven there are no unfulfilled desires.
4. If there is no heaven, earth is a hell. Explain this.
5. In what will the punishment of the damned consist?

## EXPLANATION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

### THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

1. Recall in detail the circumstances when God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses; and also when Christ confirmed them (see Exodus, xx. 2-17; Matt., v. 17-18, xix. 17-20).
2. Discuss how all the Commandments are founded on the two precepts of love of God and love of neighbor.
3. Would you say that the Ten Commandments constitute the very foundation of society? In what way?
4. How was the First Commandment violated by the ancient peoples?
5. Discuss the dignity of God and the necessity of adoring Him only.
6. What are some of the ways of refusing to give due adoration to God?
7. Does the First Commandment forbid veneration to the Saints, their relics, pictures and statues? Explain and discuss this.

### THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

1. What is actually forbidden by the Second Commandment?
2. What is the positive side of this precept, i.e., what does it tell us to do?
3. Read the words from the "Roman Catechism" in footnote 1. Do you think it

exaggerates conditions?

4. Discuss one or two of the meanings of "in vain."

5. Discuss the conditions of a lawful oath.

6. "There can be no lasting society unless men believe one another."  
Explain and discuss this statement.

7. What is the relation of the Holy Name Society to this Commandment?

#### THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

1. Explain the first reason which St. Thomas gives for observance of the Sabbath or Sunday, i.e., to remind us of the creation of the world.

2. Why do we keep holy the Sunday and not Saturday? Explain this as though you were talking to a Seventh Day Adventist.

3. The third reason for the Third Commandment refers to "the promise of rest." Is rest for the body alone meant here?

4. What is the spiritual condition of men who do not keep one day "to praise and pray to the Lord"? Discuss this.

5. Just what does "holy" mean in this Commandment?

6. What is understood by "servile works," and when may one work on Sunday?

7. St. Thomas tells us not to work and not to be idle on Sunday. Do you think that he advocates a "blue Sunday"?

8. To assist at Holy Mass (see footnote 37) and to hear a sermon are the best ways to keep the Sunday in a proper way. Observe the references from the Scriptures in support of this.

9. There is also a "Spiritual Sabbath" for those who lead saintly lives (the "more perfect" of the text). This is a continual rest for the soul while it is still here on earth. Explain this.

10. What is meant by the "Heavenly Sabbath"?

#### THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

1. Notice the difference as to object (God--neighbor) between the first three Commandments and the last series of seven Commandments.



2. Discuss some of the reasons which St. Thomas gives us to honor our parents, such as birth, nourishment and care, education.
3. Discuss a number of the references from the Scriptures which support this Commandment.
4. Although the obligation to honor our parents rests upon the natural law, yet observe the rewards which are promised those who keep this precept.
5. Our superiors in the Church, our temporal rulers, and our benefactors are called by the name "father." Discuss the obligation of giving them reverence and honor.
6. Parents also have an obligation to supervise the religious and moral education of their children; and if they find it insufficient in school, they must supply it. Discuss this teaching of the "Roman Catechism."

#### THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

1. What does this precept forbid, and what positive virtue does it command?
2. What does St. Thomas say about killing of animals?
3. How do you justify the killing of criminals, killing in a just war, killing by accident?
4. "But to repel force by force against an unjust aggressor, while careful to preserve due moderation in a blameless self-defense is permitted by every law and right" (Gasparri's Catechism, chap. iv, sect. ii, art. 2). Discuss this principle.
5. Why is suicide prohibited?
6. What is the relation between killing and anger? (See footnote 27.)
7. What are some ways of avoiding anger?
8. What is the difference between righteous anger and anger that is sinful?
9. Discuss St. Thomas' reasons why we should not get angry easily.

#### THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

1. How does St. Thomas distinguish between stealing and robbery?
2. Discuss the forms of theft enumerated by St. Thomas which to-day would

be listed as: paying starvation wages; cheating; "graft."

3. Explain the obligation of restoring to the rightful owner what is stolen.

#### THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

1. Perjury is defined in civil law as the crime of willfully uttering false evidence while one is under oath to tell the truth. Recall the references from the Scriptures which support this definition.

2. Since calumny refers to spreading what is untrue about our neighbor, and detraction refers to spreading what is true but otherwise unknown about him--which seems to be the greater evil?

3. St. Thomas says this precept is violated by detraction, by listening to detractors, and by gossipers. Discuss this.

4. Why is lying in all its forms forbidden by this Commandment?

5. Some will tell a falsehood for their own advantage, viz., out of humility, out of shame, to gain or to avoid something, or even to benefit some one else, and even out of vanity. Give examples of these points, and discuss the wrongfulness of all such motives.

#### NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

1. Covetousness--wrongful desires and longings--destroys a man's peace of soul. Discuss this.

2. Notice the similarity between the Seventh and Tenth Commandments, and also between the Sixth and Ninth Commandments (see footnote 16).

3. Discuss the differences which St. Thomas gives between human laws and divine laws.

4. Observe the differences between the Ninth and Tenth Commandments (see footnote 4 under Tenth Commandment).

5. Explain how love of God and neighbor is the one principle or force underlying all the Commandments.

#### THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

#### SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

1. "A sacrament is a visible sign of invisible grace." Explain these words of St. Thomas and give some Sacraments as examples (see footnote 3).
2. One Sacrament pertains to society, another to the entire Church, and five Sacraments perfect the individual. Explain this.
3. Discuss the parallels between the physical and the spiritual life.
4. Discuss the three elements that go to make up a Sacrament: (1) certain things as the matter; (2) certain words as the form; (3) a minister.
5. What is common to all the Sacraments?
6. What is characteristic of each individual Sacrament?

#### THE SACRAMENTS. PART I

1. What is Baptism?
2. Discuss the matter and the minister of Baptism.
3. How would you administer Baptism in case of necessity?
4. Discuss the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday, and relate it to the Sacrament of Confirmation.
5. Discuss the matter and form of Confirmation.
6. Why must we be confirmed?
7. Discuss the matter and form of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. St. Thomas says the chief effects of the Holy Eucharist are: (1) the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, and (2) the union of the soul of a communicant with Our Lord. Discuss these effects.
9. Discuss the Last Supper and the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. What is the relation of the Last Supper to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass?
10. Explain the two separate consecrations, one of the bread and one of the wine, in the Mass (see footnote 21).

#### THE SACRAMENTS. PART II

1. Discuss the three parts of the Sacrament of Penance.
2. What is the form of the Sacrament of Penance?

3. Our Lord instituted this Sacrament when, after the Resurrection, He breathed upon the Apostles and said: "Receive you the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained" (John, xx. 22-23; Matt., xvi. 1[9]). Did Christ mean that this power would cease at the deaths of the Apostles?
4. Discuss the practical value of the Sacrament of Penance.
5. Discuss the words of St. James regarding the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and point out in these words the different effects of this Sacrament.
6. Why does the priest anoint on "the places of the five senses"? What are they, and what does the priest say?
7. Discuss the view that the last anointing is a sure sign of death.

#### THE SACRAMENTS. PART III

1. Name and discuss the various orders according to their importance (see "Roman Catechism" for special treatment of each order).
2. Our Lord instituted the Sacrament of Holy Orders when He gave the Apostles and their successors in the priesthood the power to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass (at the Last Supper: "Do this for a commemoration of Me," Luke, xxi. 19), and when He breathed on the Apostles and gave them the power to remit or to retain sins (on the day of the Resurrection, John, xx. 23). From this discuss the power and dignity of the priest.
3. What is the effect of the Sacrament of Holy Orders?
4. How many years are required for the education of a priest?
5. The Sacrament of Matrimony is marriage validly entered upon between Christians, that is, all who are baptized. Does the Church legislate for marriage between non-baptized persons? Explain and discuss this.
6. Who are the ministers of the Sacrament of Matrimony, and what is its form?
7. Discuss the importance of consent in the Sacrament of Matrimony.
8. What is the threefold "good" or purpose of marriage?

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

### PRAYER

1. Why should prayer be "confident" and "suitable"?
2. May we not pray for temporal things? Explain.
3. Discuss the connection between "fervor" and "brevity" in our prayers.
4. Discuss the qualities of the prayers made by the Publican and the Samaritan (Luke, xviii. 10-14).
5. Enlarge upon the three effects of prayer mentioned by St. Thomas. Why is the Our Father called the "Lord's Prayer"?
6. How should we honor and imitate God our Father?
7. In the Lord's Prayer, why not say "my Father" instead of "our Father"?

### WHO ART IN HEAVEN

1. "Who art in heaven" in general signifies heaven where God dwells, and also the good things of heaven. Explain how this is an incentive for us to use this prayer.
2. We are told that "in heaven" also refers to devout persons in whom God dwells by sanctifying grace. Explain this, and cite the references from the Scriptures in support of it.
3. St. Thomas says that the phrase "who art in heaven" gives us confidence in our prayer because of God's power, our familiarity with God, and because we feel our petitions are good for us. Explain this and discuss it.

### HALLOWED BE THY NAME

1. There are seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer. Can you think of other series (such as Seven Sacraments) which are seven in number?
2. God's name is: wonderful, venerable, ineffable. Explain this and observe the Scriptural references.
3. The word "hallow" comes from Anglo-Saxon, meaning "to honor as holy," and is preserved in "Hallowe'en," etc. Discuss the other meanings of the word "hallow" in reference to God.

## THY KINGDOM COME

1. St. Thomas joins the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost with the seven petitions of the Our Father. How does he bring in the gifts of fear and piety?
2. Why do we pray that the "kingdom of God may come," since it has always existed?
3. The word "kingdom" here means the rule of God in the hearts of men by His grace, and the reign of God in all society and in every nation by His law. Discuss this.
4. How do we assist the foreign missions when we pray "Thy kingdom come"?
5. In another sense, "kingdom" means the glory of heaven. Explain.
6. We also pray that we may one day live in the kingdom of God because of its perfect justice, its perfect liberty, and its great riches. Explain and discuss this.
7. In what ways can we cooperate in the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth?

## THY WILL BE DONE

1. Explain how the gifts of knowledge and wisdom teach us to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
2. God wills of us that we gain eternal life, and that we keep the Commandments. Discuss this.
3. "God has made man without the help of man, yet He cannot save man without his cooperation." What does this mean?
4. "Thy will be done" is our prayer that we obey the will of the spirit and not the will of the flesh or of the world. Discuss this.
5. The final object of this petition is that we pray for the bliss and happiness of "those who mourn." Explain this and notice the references from the Scriptures.

## OUR DAILY BREAD

1. What is the relation between the gift of fortitude and this petition of the Lord's Prayer?

2. Notice how we ask only for spiritual things in the first three petitions of this prayer, and we ask for our temporal necessities in the fourth petition.

3. "Give us this day our daily bread" includes our prayer to avoid five sins associated with the temporal needs of man. What are these sins, and what are the means of avoiding them?

4. What does St. Thomas say about excessive solicitude for the things of this world? What well-known sermon of Our Lord does he recall? (See Matt., vi. 24-34.)

5. "Bread" here means all our temporal wants and our spiritual needs as well. Explain how this refers particularly to the Holy Eucharist.

6. Does the "Word of God" also have a share in this petition? How?

#### FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES

1. Through the gift of counsel we pray that God may "forgive us our trespasses." Explain this.

2. Discuss how "trespasses" are our debts or sins.

3. Explain how the virtues of fear and hope arise out of this petition.

4. The answer of this prayer for forgiveness is had first of all in the Sacrament of Penance. Discuss this.

5. Discuss the means of remitting the temporal punishment due to sin.

6. Explain the last part of this petition, viz., we pray to forgive others the offenses they commit against us. Is this not included in a good confession?

#### WHAT IS TEMPTATION?

1. How is this petition connected with the previous petition?

2. What is temptation? Discuss how it refers to performance of good and to avoidance of sin.

3. Discuss the ways in which man is tempted by the world, by the flesh, and by the devil.

4. What is the chief safeguard against temptation?

5. Do we ask to be delivered entirely from temptations? Or do we pray that God may give us grace to overcome temptations?

6. Does God actually lead us into temptation? Explain this.

#### DELIVER US FROM EVIL

1. In this final petition do we not pray for deliverance from all sins and from all conceivable evils?

2. How does St. Thomas explain our deliverance from adversity and afflictions in this world?

3. What is the virtue of patience, and how do we practise this virtue?

4. How does this prayer secure peace for us?

5. Explain the meaning of "Amen."

6. Discuss how the Lord's Prayer contains all that we ought to desire and all that we ought to avoid.

7. Discuss how the Our Father has all those excellent qualities of prayer which St. Thomas says belongs to all prayer. The qualities are: confident, ordered, suitable, devout, and humble.

#### THE HAIL MARY

1. What parts of the Hail Mary were contributed by the Angel Gabriel. by St. Elizabeth, and by the Church?

2. Recall the words of the "Angelus" prayer, and discuss how it recalls the Annunciation.

3. Discuss how the Blessed Virgin was truly "full of grace" (see footnote 11).

4. Explain the difference between the Immaculate Conception and the Virgin Birth.

5. How is Mary the "Mother of Christians"?

6. Explain and discuss the title: "Mediatatrix of all graces" (see footnote 20).



7. "The Lord is with thee" are words of greatest possible praise and honor to Mary. Explain this.
8. Discuss the Angel's words: "Blessed art thou among women."
9. What are the penalties of sin, and how was the Blessed Virgin entirely free from them?
10. Explain Mary's beautiful title: "Star of the Sea."
11. Make a comparison between Mary and Eve.
12. Describe the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, and explain the words: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb."
13. The last part of the Hail Mary was added by the Church. Explain this prayer.
14. How is the Mother of God also our Mother? Recall the words of Our Lord to Mary spoken while He was dying on the cross (John, xix. 25-27)