03 – Handing on the Faith

How do we know who God is? Who God is and how He relates to us form the basis of religion and form the differences between religions.

Handing on the Faith: Catechesis

All cultures and times have religious leanings. Even “secular” societies form religions, even if it is the ideology itself.

We can come to know about God from the natural world and logic

Every artist reflects themselves in their works

Any brief or extensive review of my photography will quickly show some truths about me, the artist.

Many photos of flowers, mountains, and trees, interspersed with photos of family and friends, most of them Melida.

The one true God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certainty from his works

Follow the evidence, observe the clues, apply logic and study what is in front of you. Acknowledge purpose, form, and cause-effect. Apply the scientific method, first outline by se reason and logic, think deeply.

But nature can only take us so far: God exists, God is perfect, God is one

God has also reached down into His creation to reveal Himself – the essence of a loving relationship, revelation.

Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God, for He is God Himself made manifest in the flesh. God lowered Himself to become one of us, so there can be no further revelation – He has nothing more to reveal.

God cannot contradict Himself, therefore logic, reason, and faith cannot contradict. There may be seeming contradictions, but they lay in the miscomprehension within ourselves. Revelation and reason go hand in hand, and questioning is a natural method of coming to an understanding of the Truth, God Himself.

Jesus became incarnate to reveal God to us in ways we could comprehend, so that we might have a life in relationship with Him.

Jesus was born of a woman in time, for two related reasons: form a community to hand on the faith, and suffer, die, and rise for the remission of sins.

Jesus formed a community, a Church, and specifically entrusted His teachings to the 12 Apostles

They handed on what Jesus taught, and some of it was written down (BIBLE)

Peter was handed the keys to the kingdom – deep background understanding lets us know that Jesus meant Peter could rule with the authority of Jesus

Levels of authority

Tradition versus tradition; doctrine versus custom or practice – one is divinely inspired and cannot be changed; the other is changeable but to be respected

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

77 “In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them ‘their own position of teaching authority.’ ” Indeed, “the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time.”36 (861)

78 This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, “the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes.” “The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer.”38 (174; 1124, 2651)

And so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved by an unending succession of preachers until the end of time. Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3) Now what was handed on by the Apostles includes everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the peoples of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes.

As part of its liturgy, the New Testament was produced by the Church as an aid to teaching the faith

It was expected to be backed up with orthodox preaching

The Bile is the inerrant word of God, but it does not stand on itself but requires the lenses of Tradition and the authority of the magisterium – the teaching authority of the Church.

Faith is not just a me and Jesus, it’s also an us and Jesus. We are made to be connected to others, we are social creatures, and faith is no different.

God forms covenants with communities, and related to individuals within that community

Learning about God takes place in community.