

## Creation ex nihilo

Theologian St Augustine argued:

God is omnipotent & thus created 'out of nothing'

'You created this thing out of nothing' - Confessions X11,7

The assertion that God exists outside of space & time (is transcendent) is dependent on the belief that only the present exists (the past is a memory, the future is a mere expectation)

Divine inspiration:

Scripture was written by prophets who were divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit, so the Bible is inspired by God's word

Genesis 1: depicts God's omnipotence (+ eternal nature) & transcendence for he created the world in 6 days, resting on the 7th

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth',

'Let there be light'

'it was good'

'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'

Genesis 2: depicts God's benevolent & immanent nature, he created Adam & Eve out of his agape love for man

'Breathed life into Adam', 'God made a woman from his rib'

'Planted a garden east of Eden'

Man was given dominion over animals, Adam was commanded to name the animals = stewardship importance

God's creation was good, thus he is good by nature by giving humans food to sustain & companionship ('they became one flesh' + 'be fruitful and multiply')

## Religious views on the origin of the universe:

Catholics: Contextualisation of scripture is key, both Genesis accounts are mythical/allegorical, teaching us about relations between man & God

Fundamentalists assert the Bible as being complete fact as God's irrevocable word, believing in creationism

Jews uphold God's nature as creator: 'blessed he who spoke and the world existed', they pray the Model Ani prayer (thanking God for life), they observe the Sabbath ('keep the Sabbath holy' - 10 commandments), however reject the notion of inheritable, original sin

All believe:

God is the source of all creation

Man is the pinnacle of creation

God made everything good

## Secular views on the universe's origins:

Cosmology: earth orbited Sun, it isn't the centre of the universe

## Big Bang theory:

Universe expanded from a 'point of singularity'

Lemaitre proposed the theory, Hawking explored it

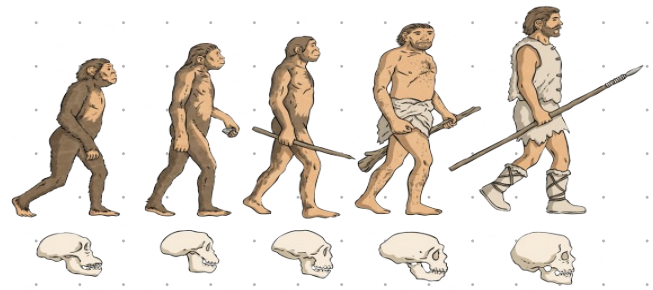
Evidence:

Red shift supports universal expansion at an accelerated rate

## Catholic views on the Big Bang:

Coincides with God as creator on the basis of non overlapping magisteria (science explains how, religion explains why -> no overlap in the 2 domains of enquiry) = compatibility in beliefs

& the Big Bang is a part of God's divine plan



Evolution:

Darwin's 1859 'on the origins of species' states man evolved from apes via natural selection 13b years ago (evidence by his observations of finches on the Galápagos Islands)

Evidence:

Fossil records & Bacteria mutations

Dawkins: 'most famous atheist in the world'

His 'Selfish gene' book argues man to be a mere carrier of DNA and nothing more, so he rejects dualism

Catholics on evolution:

'Earthly matters & the concerns of faith derive from the same God'  
- Guadium et Spes

'No conflict between evolution & the doctrine of faith regarding man and his vocation' - Humani Generis encyclical of Pope John Paul II

= evolution is part of God's divine plan, there's no conflict between religion & science as they address different questions

Evangelical Christians:

Evolution = an attack on faith as species & their characteristics were complete at the time of creation

Gen 1 = factual account so God created everything in 6 days

Catholics on the sanctity of life:

Humans are made imago dei

'From its beginning life involves the creative action of God' - CCC

'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness' - Genesis 1

Catherine of Sienna on imago dei in her 'dialogue of divine providence':

'The soul knows her own indignity, which is the consequence of her own fault'

Humans are a reflection of God's personhood & his characteristics manifest amongst mankind, but by sinning, humans reject his grace which flaws their character

She states:

Humans originate from God

We have a conscience to make moral choices

God created out of agape love

Immortality of the soul:

The destiny of man is to be in 'glorious splendour' with God in heaven

Humans have freewill (the ability to make moral choices, with the guidance of their conscience & by abiding by natural law)

'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden'- Gen 2

Humans are the pinnacle of creation & should be dignified as such:

'God breathed life into Adam'

= everybody has the right to life so abortion & euthanasia are a 'grave violation of the law of God'

Secular views on human life:

Humanists' views align with the existential movement: we only have 1 life with no intrinsic meaning so make the most of it, create purpose for yourself!

Views have rational roots with a rejection of a deity

## Abortion:

1967: abortion (up to 28 weeks) was legalised in the UK

### Catholics on abortion:

Abortion = great moral evil, it's a 'grave violation of the law of God'

Life begins at conception, when man is given a soul ('it would never become human if it wasn't human already')

Psalm 139: 'I knitted you in your mother's womb'

Goes against 'do not murder'

But Aquinas' doctrine of the double effect teaches:

Abortion is morally ok if the intention is to save the life of a mother, with the baby's death being the unintended by-product ('lesser of the two evils')

Alternative: adoption

### Humanists on abortion:

Place humans at the centre of their worldview so...

Mother's quality of life overrides need to preserve baby's life

Embryo isn't a baby at conception

Support legalisation of abortion = prevents unsafe backstreet abortions

Advocate for better sex ed & for contraception to be more widely available

### Peter Singer:

Embryo = 'biological life' but a 'non-human person'

Condemns speciesism, animals are sentient & have a higher cognitive ability than babies

### Catholics vs Singer:

Animals don't have souls

Humans remain 'persons' when in comas, if suffering with dementia or embryos

Humans are stewards of the earth & have dominion over animals, so can use them for food & clothes

### Jews:

Condemn abortion but believe foetus is a baby at birth, not at conception

Life is sacred as it was made imago dei & Mosaic Decalogue says: 'do not kill'

Pikuach nefesh upholds sanctity of life

'He who takes one life is to be considered to have destroyed the whole world' - Talmud



Humans & their relationship with creation:

Climate change = environmental catastrophe & a social injustice (natural disasters exacerbate poverty)

Catholics on stewardship:

All creation reflects God's love

Laudato Si (Pope Francis' encyclical) encourages STEWARDSHIP:

'The world is a gift which we must freely share with others... we can no longer view reality in a purely utilitarian way in which productivity is entirely geared to individual benefit'

= his plea against consumerism

Stewardship = preserving the environment for future generations (sustainable approach)

'The Lord put man in the garden of Eden to take care of it' - Genesis 2

Laudato Si outlines ways of being stewards:

'recycling, reducing water consumption, using public transport'

'Love thy neighbour' extends to future generations = Catholics have a duty to preserve God's creation (striving towards the common good)

'We do not inherit the earth from our parents, we borrow it from our children'

'You shall not steal' - Exodus : preserve the environment, don't take it from descendants

'Requires great respect for the universal destination of goods' - CCC

Humanist views on the environment:

'Good without God':

We should care about the planet to preserve resources that benefit humanity

Population control:

Demand for finite resources leads to diplomatic tensions & wars

Birth control programs limit population growth = less strain on resources (quality of existing life overrides need to preserve 'non-human animals' lives)

Speciesism:

Singer: condemns discrimination of animals

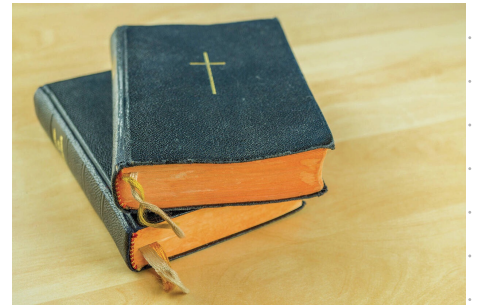
Interdependence questions man's superiority over animals as we NEED them for life e.g. bees for pollination of fruit & veg

Jews on the environment:

Intelligent design upholds God as creator

They partake in Tikkum olam, seen in Genesis when soldiers don't destroy trees in war

Sukkot commemorates God's creation during the harvest season



Bible's structure:

Eye witnesses to miracles & the prospect of Jesus returning was dying out so oral tradition was scrapped

4th century: Pope Damasus created Canon of Scripture

Testament means covenant

Old Testament: (46 books)

Law: Pentateuch (Mosaic Decalogue)

History: Abrahamic & Mosaic covenant

Prophets: Isaiah & Jeremiah etc were divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit

Wisdom: poetry & prayers

New Testament: (27 books)

Gospels: Good news, details Jesus' life

Acts of apostles: early church growth

Letters: Peter to Paul, critique & guide the church

Revelation: apocalyptic literature alludes to end of the world

Contextualise scripture = can apply it to modern day

'Take into account conditions of their time & culture to understand the author's intention' - CCC

Writers of scripture were DIVINELY INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT = the Bible is inspired by God's word!!

Jews:

Tenakh = Bible

Torah = Pentateuch: most authoritative scripture (Moses received this on Mount Sinai)

Maimonides = Torah cannot be changed, mitzvot are life duties

Mishnah & Talmud = oral Torah passed down from Moses



Art:

Expresses faith in times of low literacy rate

Michelangelo's Creation of Adam:

Sistine Chapel, Rome

Commissioned by Pope Julius II

Symbolisms:

Adam: same physical build as God = imago dei

Laid back = awaiting spark of life = 'God breathed life into Adam'

God: dynamic & active figure = immanence & role in creation

Older & wiser = source of life & wisdom, thus omnipotent as created ex nihilo ('beginning & end' - Revelations)

God is the father of all creation

Hands: Spark of life, Adam needs 'breath of life' from God = relationship between man & God

Cloud: Brain = God is source of all wisdom & is omniscient

Womb = God is source of life (psalm 139)

Female figure: Eve in the mind of God ('suitable helper' - Gen 2) or

Mary as the 'new Eve' & Jesus as the 'new Adam' = original sin is humanity's downfall but the atonement rebuilds man's relationship with God

'The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man is of heaven' - Corinthians 15



Tree of Life Mosaic:

12 century by Panicalè

Representations of Jesus:

Alpha & Omega = 1st & last letters of Greek alphabet = God is eternal & complete (revelations)

Chi-ro = (XP is Christ in Greek), on baptismal candles & vestments

12 apostles:

12 lambs looking towards 13th: central lamb has a halo = Jesus is the 'lamb of God' (atonement sacrifice), parallels drawn from Pesach in Exodus

Apostles had sacrificial lives in spreading the Gospel e.g. St. Peter was executed in Rome

Dove: Holy Spirit during Pentecost = 'the birthday of the church' (without Pentecost, evangelisation of Gospel wouldn't have happened = no church)

4 evangelists: spread the Gospel

Cross: complete crucifixion scene → God hands Jesus a crown (transcendence → immanence via the incarnation)

Light cross vs black background = Jesus overpowering death = 'light overpowering sin'

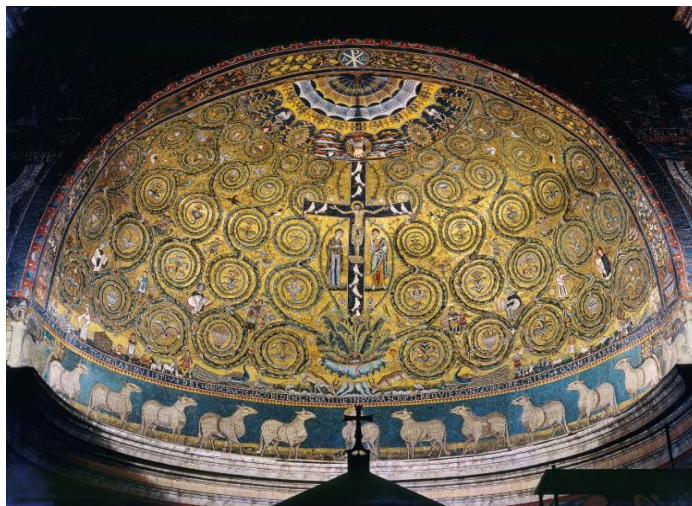
Tree of life:

Revelation: 'the leaves of the tree are for the healing of nations'; the atonement 'saved all nations', reminder of tree of knowledge & consequences of original sin in distorting God's relations with man

Vine:

Garden of Eden & paradise vision, Jesus: 'I am the vine' - John

'We have likened the church of Christ to this vine: the law made it wither, but the cross made it bloom'



Catholic communities in the UK:

1948 UN human rights charter concludes all humans have the right to: freedom, good health, education, movement ect

'All human beings were born free & equal in dignity and rights'

It reflects 'loving thy neighbour'

Social justice:

Cultivating a just (fair) society, free from discrimination that burdens opportunity

CST: Cultivating a society built on justice, peace & reconciliation, attained via a respect of dignity in all

1891: Pope Leo XIII condemned exploitation of oppressed factory workers

Man being made imago dei in Genesis lays at the heart of CST, the Church calls upon Christians to not rest until 'all discrimination has been eradicated... (which is) contrary to God's intent' - *Guadium et Spes*

Working for peace:

War & conflict: War e.g. in Ukraine (2022) saw Europe welcome in refugees, war denounced by Pope Francis as a 'madness' that 'ruins God's creation'

Personal conflict: mental ailments

Working for justice:

Peace requires justice, Church calls upon all to actively challenge injustice e.g. discrimination

'The practise of brotherhood is absolutely necessary for peace' - *Guadium et Spes*

Working for reconciliation:

Righteous indignation/anger = justified in tackling injustice e.g. Jesus condemned the selling of idols in a Temple

'You have to work with your enemy to make peace' - Nelson Mandela

CST works by:

Protecting human rights, standing in solidarity with the oppressed, caring for the planet

IFD/IPD:

Discourse & acceptance of those with opposing faiths/secular world views for the common good of society

2013: Pope Francis washed the feet of prison inmates (including Muslims) on Maundy Thursday (drawing parallels with Jesus & the 12 apostles during the 1st mass) & lived in the Vatican's guesthouse, generating a reputation of breaking convention

The great commandment of 'love one another' extends to people of all creeds, ethnicities & genders

Multi-faith society of Britain:

2011 census saw 20% decrease in Christianity & 15% rise in secularism, with an increase in Muslim populations since 2001

Religious pluralism Pros: cultural understanding, UK as a safe haven for refugees & immigrants (derived from Commonwealth & free movement within the EU before Brexit)

Cons: discrimination & tensions, particularly towards Muslims who experience Islamophobia due to rise in extremism, scapegoating = religious intolerance-> since 2016 Brexit referendum, hate crime has increased

Aim of IFD:

Community cohesion in promoting shared values of religious tolerance e.g. through the inter faith network

Catholics on IFD:

Pope Benedict XVI stressed that: 'inter-religious dialogue is not an option but a vital need for our time'

1960s: Pope Paul VI said Jews shouldn't be blamed for the death of Christ, also stating: 'the church regards with esteem Muslims... we cannot refuse to reach any man in a none brotherly way, for his is made in the image of God'

Charity:



'Poverty has the face of a child' – Pope Francis

'Feed the people dying of hunger, if you don't you're killing them' – Gaudium et Spes

It's a Catholic duty to create a 'preferential option for the poor'

CAFOD:

Global agency, 'the helping hand of the church' who tackle poverty  
Run on the principles of CST

Works:

Aid in war or natural disasters e.g. DEC appeal in Ukraine (2022)

Campaign for social responsibility

Fundraise in schools on family feast days

G8 agreed to cancel debt of poorest nations

Retaining dignity:

Parable of Good Samaritan inspires CAFOD

They create sustainable solutions for developing nations e.g. bottom up projects in rural communities

SVP:

Set up by Ozanam in 1833 Paris to offer PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE to the poor  
born out of empathy in 'sharing the secrets of their lonely hearts & troubled minds'

'Love thy neighbour' message source of their works:

Run support centres

Soup kitchens

Donating furniture & possessions into the service of others

