

WHY WE'RE CATHOLIC

Summary & Discussion Questions

PART 5: MORALITY AND DESTINY

God created us with dignity, gave us freedom, calls us to love, and ultimately created us for Himself.

Catholic teaching on life, sexuality, marriage, hell, and heaven all point toward the same reality: our lives have eternal meaning because we are made for eternal relationship with God.

Ch. 21 - Why We Protect Life

The value of a human life comes from who we are, not from what we can do.

1. The Church teaches that human dignity does not depend on age, ability, health, independence, or whether someone is wanted by others. Human dignity comes from being created in the image and likeness of God.
2. This is why Catholics defend human life from its earliest beginning until natural death. The unborn child is not merely a "potential person." He or she is a human person with tremendous potential.
3. The Church is not simply trying to impose morality on society. She proposes principles that protect the dignity and rights of every human being—especially those who are most vulnerable.

Questions & Application

- What does human dignity mean to you?
- Why does the Church believe every human life has equal dignity?
- Which teachings about human dignity are most challenging in today's culture?

Ch. 22 - Why We Cherish Our Sexuality

Catholic teaching sees sexuality not as something dirty to avoid, but as something sacred to be understood and lived according to God's design.

1. The Church does not teach that sex is bad or shameful. Quite the opposite: sexuality is a good gift from God.
2. Our bodies communicate something about who we are and what we promise. In marriage, sexual intimacy expresses the total gift of husband and wife to one another—the commitment to love one another faithfully and to remain open to life.
3. Sex outside of this context, including oral sex and masturbation, involves a lie, because the body expresses marital love outside the bonds of marriage.
4. The Church's teaching is ultimately about the dignity of the human person and the meaning of love. God's plan is not designed to shame us but to lead us toward authentic freedom, intimacy, and joy.

Questions & Application

- How does the Church's understanding of sexuality differ from the messages you hear from society?
- Why are love, commitment, and sexuality connected?
- What does it mean to view sexuality as a gift rather than something shameful?

Ch. 23 - Why We Defend Marriage

Marriage is designed to be a lifelong covenant of love that is both unitive and open to life.

1. The Catholic Church understands marriage as more than a legal arrangement. Marriage is a covenant—a lifelong, faithful, and life-giving union between a man and a woman.
2. Marriage has two inseparable purposes: the good of the spouses and the generation and education of children.
3. This is why the Church emphasizes permanence and openness to life. The love promised in marriage is meant to be a complete gift: faithful, lifelong, and open to God's plan.

Questions & Application

- What qualities make a marriage strong and life-giving?
- Why does the Church emphasize permanence and openness to life?
- How can families strengthen marriage in society?

Ch. 24 - Why We Believe There's a Hell

Hell exists because God respects human freedom, even when that freedom is tragically used to reject Him.

1. Hell can be difficult to understand if we think of God as nothing more than a judge who sends people away. But God is love, and love cannot be forced.
2. God gives us genuine freedom—including the freedom to reject Him. Hell is ultimately the consequence of definitively choosing separation from God rather than accepting His love and mercy.
3. God does not desire anyone's damnation. He continually calls us toward repentance, forgiveness, and eternal life.

Questions & Application

- Why does God allow people to reject Him?
- How does the existence of hell relate to human freedom?
- How should Catholics speak about hell with both charity and hope?

Ch. 25 - Why We Believe Hope for Heaven

Heaven is not simply "a place we go when we die"; it is eternal communion with God, for whom we were created.

1. The story doesn't end with sin, suffering, or death. We were created for heaven.
2. Heaven is a perfect union with God—the fulfillment of every desire for love, goodness, peace, and happiness.
3. Our hope for heaven changes how we live now. The choices we make, the people we love, the sacrifices we make, and the way we respond to suffering all matter because our lives are ultimately directed toward eternity.
4. And because God desires salvation for all, Christians are called to share the Gospel so that others can know the hope we have found in Christ.

Questions & Application

- What do you most look forward to in eternal life with God?
- How does hope in heaven influence our lives now?
- What part of the Church's teaching on heaven inspires you most?

Part 5 Applications

- Take one concrete step to support and affirm the dignity of another person.
- Consider one way you can better honor the dignity of yourself and others in relationships.
- Identify one way to strengthen a marriage in your family, parish, or community.
- Pray for someone who is far from God and consider how you might witness Christ's love to them.
- Spend a few minutes imagining what it means to be completely united with God in heaven.