

EVERYTHING YOU FORGOT FROM CCD

Session 3 - Fall 2010

St. Raymond's Roman Catholic Church

THE BRONZE SERPENT



“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a poisonous serpent and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.’” – Nu. 21:8

“Hezekiah broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it; it was called Nehushtan.” – II Kings 18:4

SYMBOLS BECOMING IDOLS

When the bronze serpent became an idol instead of a symbol of divine deliverance, it was destroyed. The serpent was an unusual symbol of divine deliverance, arguably a pagan one. But then so was the Cross. Jesus made that connection: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” – Jn. 3:14-15



WALKING



THE OBJECTIVE...

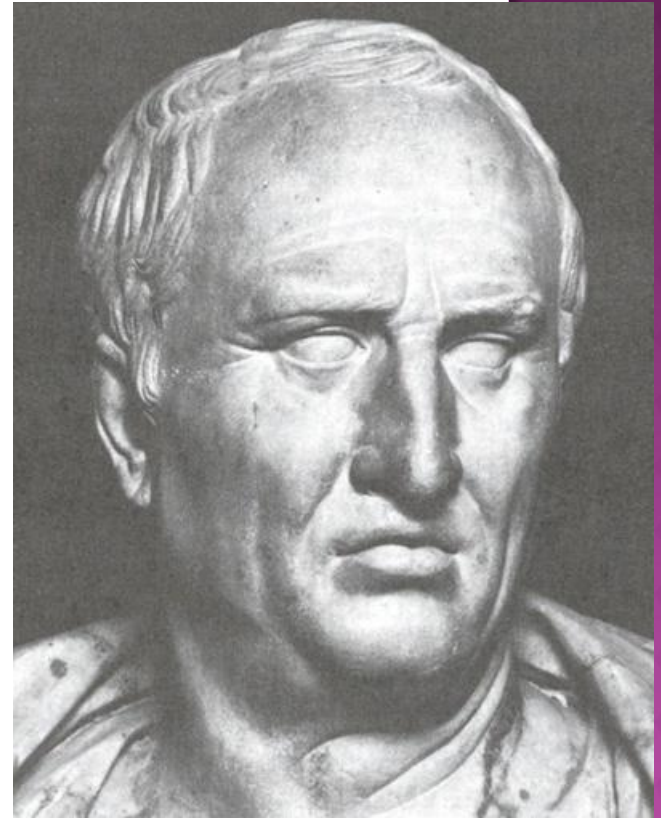


The oldest prayer in the Bible is called the *Shema* and begins, “Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might!” Jesus himself said this was the greatest commandment. What does this mean, and how do we get there?

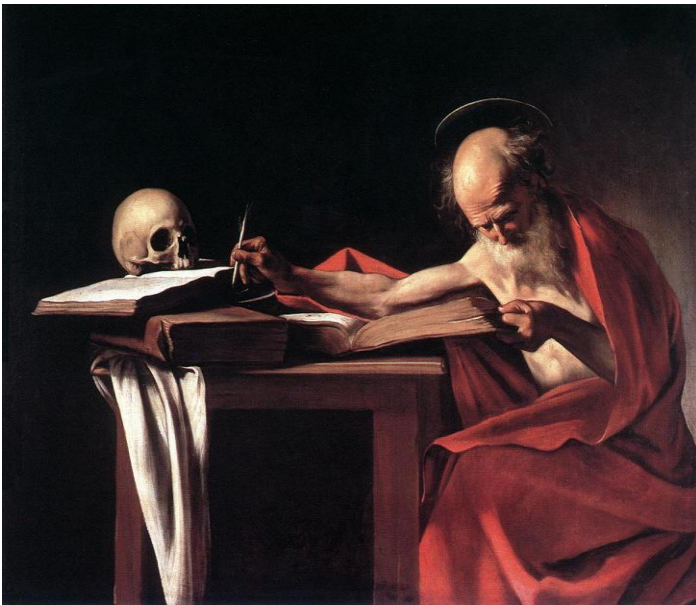
FOUR WORDS...

The Roman statesman Cicero wrote of four words for love, each one higher than the one before.

1. Cupiditas - *desire*
2. Amor - *romantic love*
3. Amicitia - *friendship*
4. Dilectatio - *sacrifice*



THE FATHERS...



Many of the ancient Christian Fathers had such great respect for Cicero that they worried they were more Ciceronian than Christian. St. Jerome regarded Cicero's teaching on love to be a faithful model of the growth of a Christian soul. The moral teaching of the church is designed to produce people who love God, and their neighbor as Christ does.

THE AIM OF APOLOGETICS...

Apologetics doesn't aim at the "isms" (atheism, cynicism, fascism, etc.). Any "ism" claims to have something more true than God, and all eventually collapse under their own weight. The real adversary is the sloppy thinking that doesn't recognize the exaggeration of ideas. Challenging how people use speech is immensely important.



LANGUAGE IS POWER



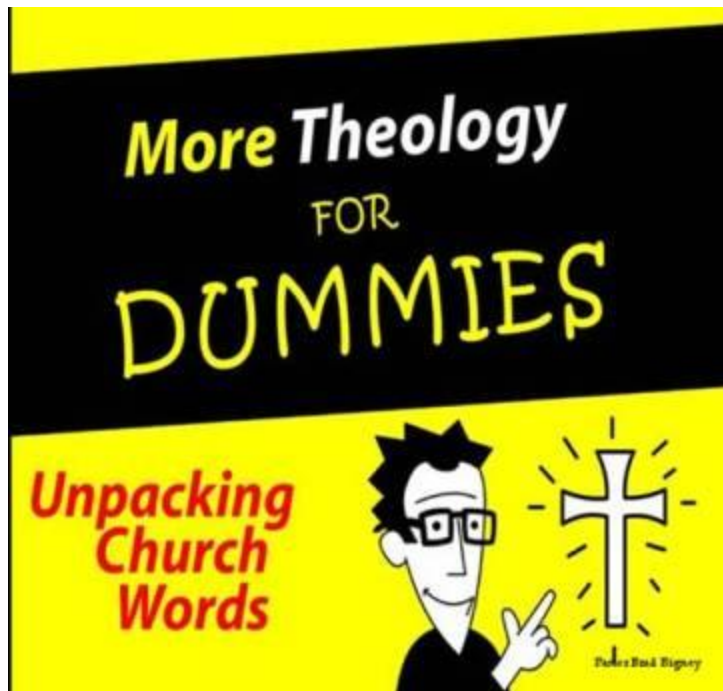
The Pormpuraaw in Australia don't speak of left and right, but of compass points: "You have an ant on your southwest leg." Their language gives them a uniquely accurate sense of where they are. They are capable of feats of navigation once thought impossible. Language makes it possible to see the world and live in the world differently.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT



“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain” (Exodus 20:7). Thinking and language go together. In fact, no thinking can take place without language. The more we know about language, the better our thinking becomes. The kind of language we use forms the kind of thinking we can do.

GOD TALK



Theology is simply talk about God. Bad talk about God leads to bad theology and bad religion, leading ultimately to bad citizenship and an unhappy world. Catholics are taught to use God talk carefully because not doing so is disrespectful, dangerous and unkind.

GOD QUESTIONS

- ◉ Why is there something rather than nothing?
- ◉ Why do we have this kind of universe rather than another kind?
- ◉ Why do I even think about thinking? What purpose does it serve?
- ◉ Why do I care about questions like right-wrong, true-false, safe-unsafe?
- ◉ Why doesn't nature religion satisfy my curiosity? Why don't nature religions survive?
- ◉ Why doesn't agnosticism satisfy my curiosity?

COMPASSION



Damir Sagolj / Reuters

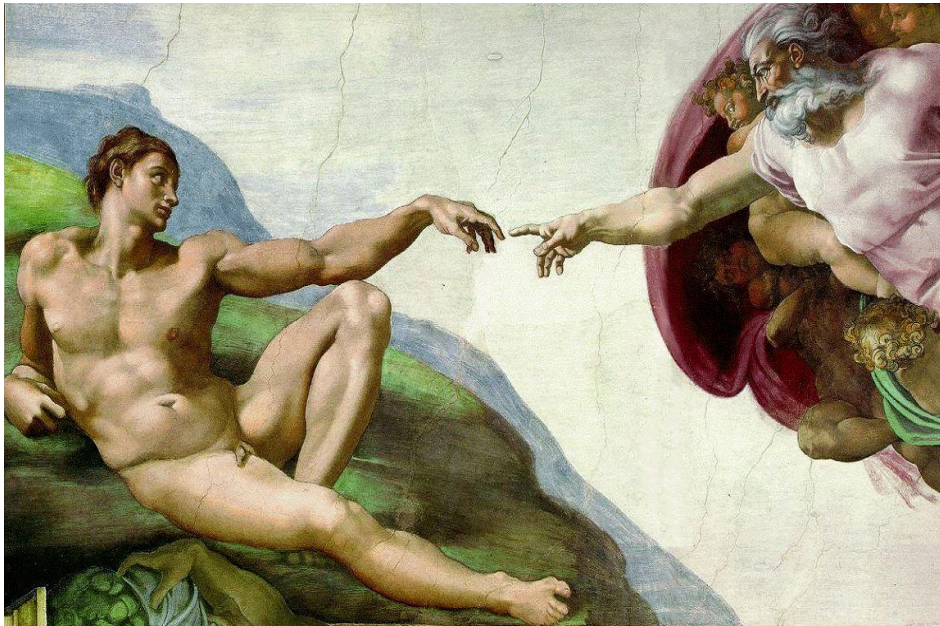
Careless talk about God often leads people not to ask these questions, or not to trust the answers when they hear them. Catholics are careful in their speech about God because we want people to have answers to the questions that are most important to them.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

“Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh is a sabbath to the Lord your God.... In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, but rested on the seventh day.” – Exodus 20:8-11



WAS GOD TIRED?



Is sabbath because God was worn out from creating and needed to rest? It is more theologically consistent to say that God blessed the sabbath to *enjoy* his creation. The purpose of sabbath is *joy*.

WORKAHOLICS

© Cartoonbank.com

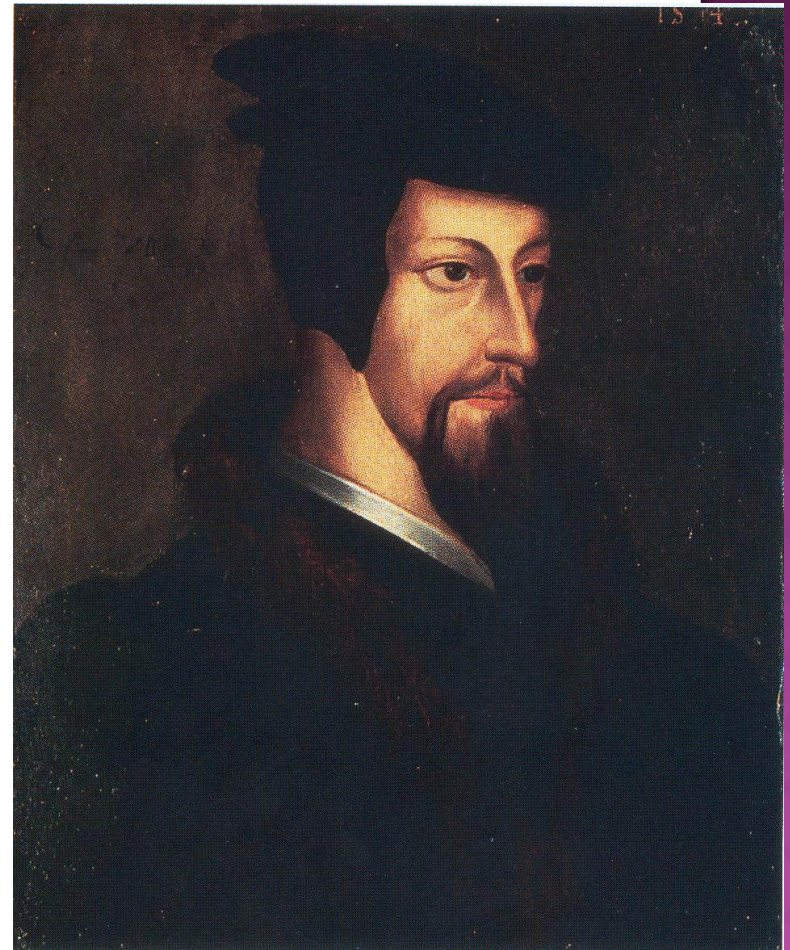


"I am not a workaholic. I just work to relax."

Jews have so many precise definitions of work because we are inclined to work all the time – to show our worth, to make ourselves indispensable, to acquire more, etc. In other words, work can become an idol, one that we cherish more than any other. We want to be gods, and so miss true joy.

“PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC”

In 16th century Geneva work became the way you showed you were going to heaven. It was an idea that became the engine of the Industrial Revolution. But did it make people any more joyful or grateful? Common sense exposed the flaws in this thinking, but the disordered approach to work went on.



NEXT TIME...

The Fourth Commandment: Honor your Father and your Mother.

The Fifth Commandment: You shall not murder.