

LESSON 5: THE INVISIBLE WORLD

Instruction for Faith Educators

For Basic Level / Age 7	:	Cover points 1 to 7
For Intermediate Level / Age 10	:	Cover points 1 to 7
For Advanced Level / Age 13	:	Cover points 1 to 12

Revision from previous lesson:

In the previous lesson, we learned that God is a communion of perfect love known as the Holy Trinity. In this lesson, we learn that God created beings outside of His own communion in order to share His great and overflowing love with His creation. He began by creating the invisible world before He created the visible world.

Current lesson:

1. Existence did not begin with the history of creation. Existence preceded creation. It began with God, who exists before time and space. The Holy Trinity exists in communion, in all eternity, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
2. God is a communion of perfect love, and He decided to create the universe in order to share His love with His creation. God does not need creation to love Him back, because His love is already sufficient in Himself. However, He desires to share His love because God's love is self-giving.
3. God created the spirit world (or the invisible world) before He created the physical world (or the visible world). When God first created angels, He created them as pure spirits with the gift of freewill. Angels were created naturally good, but their "eyes" were not automatically open to the beatific vision (i.e. the full experience of heaven). They were created to love God, to know Him, and to serve His will and purpose.

CCC 329: "St Augustine says: "Angel' is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is 'spirit'; if you seek the name of their office, it is 'angel': from what they are, 'spirit', from what they do, 'angel.'" With their whole beings the angels are *servants* and messengers of God. Because they "always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" they are the "mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word"."

CCC 330: "As purely *spiritual* creatures angels have intelligence and will: they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendour of their glory bears witness."

4. St Thomas Aquinas (the Angelic Doctor, 13th century) taught that angels belong to nine different choirs according to their intelligence and their place in God's plan.

The highest group of angels — the seraphim, the cherubim, and the thrones — see and adore God directly but are totally concerned with Him. In Him, they contemplate the source

of all creation, the ultimate ideas and causes from which all creation flows. In other words, they contemplate God in His highest perfections. The *seraphim*, which means “the burning ones” have the most intense “flaming” love for God and understand Him with the greatest clarity among all the angels. The *cherubim*, which means “fullness of wisdom”, contemplate God’s divine providence and plan for His creatures. The *thrones*, symbolising divine justice and judicial power, contemplate God’s power and justice.

The second sphere of the angels — the dominations, the virtues, and the powers — do not possess the same kind of unified vision as the higher choirs. They see reality divided into the fundamental causes from which all things stem. They fulfil God’s providential plan for the universe. The *dominations* or *dominions*, whose name evokes authority, govern the lesser choirs of angels. The *virtues*, whose name originally suggested power or strength, implement the orders from the dominations and govern the heavenly bodies. Lastly, the *powers* confront and fight against any evil forces opposed to God’s providential plan.

The third group — the principalities, the archangels, and the angels — have a further de-veloped understanding of the truth of the universe, from the large and basic causes of all things into a multiplicity of particular causes. They are directly involved in human affairs. The *principalities* care for earthly principalities, such as nations or cities. The *archangels* deliver God’s most important messages to mankind, while each *angel* serves as a guardian for each of us.

St Thomas also taught that the angels of the higher choirs enlighten those of the lower choirs, sharing their intelligence and understanding with them so that there is, in fact, true communication among the angels. And the angels in this way can cooperate with one another to fulfil the mission that God gives them.

5. God revealed to the angels that He was going to create humanity, which was a little lower than the angels. But He also revealed that He intended to come one day as man to unite Himself to humanity so that mankind could share in His divine life. This would make mankind ultimately higher than the angels.
6. This revelation provoked jealousy among the angels (Wisdom 2:24), and Lucifer, the most beautiful of the pure spirits created by God, incited a rebellion (“*non serviam!*”) Lucifer (whose name means “light bearer”) was a seraphim whose beautiful light was changed into darkness because of his rebellion. St Thomas Aquinas says he brought about the downfall of one third of the angels in heaven (Revelation 12:4). Since they rebelled against God’s plan, they were all cast down to earth (Revelation 12:9) whilst the other angels who desired to cooperate with God’s plan were given the gift of the beatific vision.
7. After God created mankind, Satan (the highest of all angels that God had created but who had fallen) brought about the fall of mankind (Genesis 3:1-24). Satan, together with all those other fallen angels (also called demons or devils), prowl about the world like a “roaring lion” to bring about the ruin of souls (1 Peter 5:8). Those fallen angels roam around earth to destroy humanity whilst awaiting their final damnation.
8. Church Fathers have traditionally considered these Scripture passages to be descriptive of the fall of Satan:

Isaiah 14:12-15: “How did you come to fall from the heavens, Daystar, son of Dawn? How did you come to be thrown to the ground, conqueror of nations? You who used to think to yourself: ‘I shall scale the heavens; higher than the stars of God I shall set my throne. I shall sit on the Mount of Assembly far away to the north. I shall climb high above the clouds, I shall rival the Most High.’ Now you have been flung down to Sheol, into the depths of the abyss!”

Ezekiel 28:12-19: “Son of man, raise a lament for the king of Tyre. Say to him, ‘The Lord Yahweh says this: You used to be a model of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty; you were in Eden, in the garden of God. All kinds of gem formed your mantle: sard, topaz, diamond, chrysolite, onyx, jasper, sapphire, garnet, emerald, and your ear-pendants and spangles were made of gold; all was ready on the day you were created. I made you a living creature with outstretched wings, as guardian, you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked amid red-hot coals. Your behaviour was exemplary from the day you were created until guilt first appeared in you, because your busy trading has filled you with violence and sin. I have thrown you down from the mountain of God and destroyed you, guardian winged creature, amid the coals. Your heart has grown proud because of your beauty, your wisdom has been corrupted by your splendour. I have thrown you to the ground; I have made you a spectacle for kings. By the immense number of your crimes, by the dishonesty of your trading, you have defiled your sanctuary. So I have brought fire out of you to devour you; I have reduced you to ashes on the ground before the eyes of all who saw you. Of the nations, all who know you are stunned at your fate. You are an object of terror; gone for ever.’”

9. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us some important facts about these fallen angels:

CCC 391: “Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy. Scripture and the Church’s Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called ‘Satan’ or the ‘devil’. The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: ‘The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing.’”

CCC 392: “Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels. This ‘fall’ consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably rejected God and his reign. We find a reflection of that rebellion in the tempter’s words to our first parents: ‘You will be like God.’ The devil ‘has sinned from the beginning’; he is ‘a liar and the father of lies’.”

CCC 393: “It is the irrevocable character of their choice, and not a defect in the infinite divine mercy, that makes the angels’ sin unforgivable. ‘There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death.’”

10. The choice made by the angels was irrevocable, and for those who had chosen to oppose God, there was no repentance (CCC 393). There is no repentance for these pure spirits because their choice was made with full knowledge of the consequences of their rebellion, and they are therefore incapable of reversing their decision; in other words, they themselves would never want to reverse the choices they have made.

11. The fallen angels were expelled from heaven and cast down to earth (Revelation 12:4). They prowl about the world like a “roaring lion” to bring about the ruin of souls (1 Peter 5:8). Those fallen angels roam around earth to destroy humanity whilst awaiting their final damnation.
12. The main agenda of the fallen angels, now known as demons, is to bring about the downfall of mankind. They stand in opposition to everything that God plans to do for the perfection of creation and the sanctification of humanity in His Son, Jesus Christ.



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