A Catholic Catechism

"Ye Shall Know the Truth" Abp. Fulton J. Sheen www.keepthefaith.org

> <u>Lesson 3</u> CD 2, TRACK 1 (24:51)

God in Search of Man

(The Divine Invasion)

Peace be to you.

Up to this point we were talking about **conscience** as an unbearable <u>repartee</u> and about the **meaninglessness of life**. Saying that we should lay our heart and mind open to saving experiences that come from **without** and which completely **change our character**. So, the subject therefore of this particular talk will be the <u>Divine Invasion</u>.

But I believe the best way to start it is to tell you a story about a divine invasion.

A woman wrote to me about her brother, saying that he was dying in the hospital and that he had been away from the sacraments for about 30 years. She said he led not just a bad life, he was an evil man.

There was a difference between being bad and being evil.

- > A bad man steals, a bad man kills.
- An evil man may do none of those things. <u>But he seeks to destroy goodness in others.</u>

Well he was an evil man. He did much to corrupt youth and circulated all manner of evil pamphlets among the young to destroy both faith and morals and the sister of this man which she wrote said about 20 priests have called on him and he threw them all out of the hospital room. So, will you please go, *Last Resort Sheen* I am. I visited him this particular night and stayed about 5 seconds because I knew that I would fare no better than anyone else, but instead of just making one visit I made 40. For 40 straight nights I went to see this man. The second night I stayed about 10-15 seconds and I went up 5-10 seconds every night. And at the end of the month I was spending 10 or 15 minutes with him, but I never once broached the subject of his soul until the 40th night. And the 40th night I brought me with Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Oils and I said to him "William you are going to die tonight." He said, "I know it." He was dying of cancer, but cancer of the face. One of the most loathsome sights you ever saw. I said, "I am sure you want to make your peace with God tonight," he said "I do not, get out!" I said, "I'm not alone." "Who's with

you?" I said, "I brought the Good Lord along, do want Him to get out too?" He said nothing, so I kneeled down alongside of his bed for about 15 minutes because I had the Blessed Sacrament with me and I promised the Good Lord that if this man would show some sign of repentance before he died, that I would build a chapel in the southern part of the United States for the poor people. A chapel costing \$3,500. Not much of a chapel? No, but an awful lot of money for me. So, after the prayer I again said, "William, I am sure you want to make your peace with God before you die." He said, "I do not, get out!" And he started screaming for the nurse. So, in order to stop him I ran to the door as if I was going to leave and then I quickly came back. And I put my head down alongside of his face on the pillow and I said, "Just one thing William, promise me, before you die tonight you will say 'my Jesus Mercy.'" He said, "I will not, get out!" I had to leave. I told the nurse that if he wanted me during the night that I would come back. About 4 o'clock in the morning the nurse called, and she said, "He just died." And I said, "How did he die?" "Well," she said, "about a minute after you left he began saying 'My Jesus Mercy'. And he never stopped saying it until he died."

Divine Invasion:

Now you see there was nothing in me that influenced him. Here was a *Divine Invasion* upon someone who had the faith once and **lost it**. But it makes no difference whether one has the faith or not. There is this **constant intrusion from the <u>outside</u>**. It has come to many, many people. It comes to everyone, though it comes so subtly that many reject it. It came to <u>St. Augustine</u> when he was leading a wild and furious life, and it came to him in the voice of a child and picking up scripture and reading it. And so Augustine wrote those famous lines. "Our hearts were made for Thee, oh Lord, and they are restless until they rest in Thee."(1)

And there was that famous playboy of the Sahara, <u>Viscount Charles de Faucauld</u>, who in the midst of his wild life, slept under the stars in the Sahara and endured what Thompson called the "abashless inquisition of each star." And there found grace and entered his life as a priest among the Moslems in the Sahara. And died a martyr there. And this practically in our times.

Divine Invasion: A Grace

And so I might go on to mention many, many such cases of the **divine invasion** but suppose we turn from just the stories to what form this divine invasion takes. *It's an infection that gets into the soul. It's a grace* but up to this point we do not know the meaning of the word grace.

And dare I might anticipate a bit and say there are: two kinds of graces,

➤ White grace which makes us pleasing to God and the other is

- ➤ Black grace in which we feel his absence. Most people in the world today feel his absence. And really feel it; even the atheist.
- > You see really it is not man who is on the quest of God. It is God that is on the quest of man. It leaves us restless.

The first question we have in the scripture is "Man where art thou?" (2)

Francis Thompson's poem. "Hound of Heaven:"

No poet has ever better expressed this divine invasion than Francis Thompson in his magnificent poem "<u>The Hound of Heaven.</u>" Thompson was at one time a student of medicine. About the only thing he learned was how to take dope. He became a bum, slept in Covent Garden, London under the vegetable trucks, contemplated suicide and then with this poem found in his pocket was befriended by a couple, the Manells. And this poem sold 50,000 copies within a few years after his death and within 30 years was studied in the University of Tokyo in Japanese. It's because it suits the *modern mood*. The modern mood in a sense that men are beginning to feel this *stirring of the finger of God*. And he goes on to narrate the **various escapes** that he used. *God is the hound of heaven*.

Man's Escape:

- And first is the <u>subconscious or the unconscious mind</u>. He feels that if he sunk down into that, he would be <u>less</u> conscious of **this hound** who was pursuing him and so he said he **fled God**. "I fled him down the nights and down the days, down the arches of the years. I fled him down the labyrinthe ways of my own mind. Up vistaed hopes I sped, and shot precipitate adown titanic gloom from those strong feet that followed, followed after. And with majestic speed, deliberate instancy they beat, and the voice above their beat, lo naught shelters thee who wilt not shelter me."
- That failing, he tries <u>nature</u>, <u>science</u> and he has a very rare and unique way of expressing the <u>secrets</u> of science. He said, "I drew the bolt of nature's secrecies." You can almost imagine somebody pulling a giant bolt on a door and all the secrets of science and nature pouring out. "I drew the bolt of nature's secrecies, studied the swift importings on willful face of sky. I said to dawn: be sudden, to eve: be soon. Heap me o'er with thy skiey blossoms from this tremendous lover." But he said "nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my thirst. We know not what each other speaks; their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences."
- And so, he tries **another escape** from "the hound." And that <u>is illegitimate love</u>. And herein is hidden the story of one that he calls "<u>a bud</u> that fell from the coronal crown of spring." And he uses the example of a hearted casement in a window in

the northern part of England where there was a girl that he use to know and he says "by many a hearted casement, curtained red, trellised by intertwining charities." Then he goes on to speak of how he sought love with all of these little ivy growths of affection that never quite satisfied. Then he **adds his fear**. "For I was fearful lest having him I must have naught else beside." How many think that? That God is a kind of a competitor. If I have him I must reject everything else. And then he goes on to say. "And when some hearted casement curtained wide, the gust of his approach would clash it to. Fear wist not to avoid as love wist to pursue." In other words, I did not know how to run away as fast as love knew how to catch me.

And then he <u>is fearful</u>, fearful at the end and maybe after all who is this one who pursues? Maybe he is going to bring some amount of detachment. And he asks, "Is thy love indeed a weed, an amaranthine weed, that suffers no flower to grow except its own?" Then resorting to another example he asks, "Must thou char the wood ere thou canst limn with it?" In other words, must you put wood into a fire, burn it, purge it, sacrifice it before it becomes charcoal and before you can trace with it? And then another question. "Must all thy fields be dunged with rotten death?" Is there sacrifice everywhere? And there finally comes the answer. But before giving you his answer, lest this just be the poetic exploration of Thompson, let's find about this divine invasion in our own hearts.

Just suppose you could **take out your own heart** and put it into your hand as a kind of crucible. To distill out of your heart its inmost cravings, yearnings and aspirations, what would you find them to be?

What do you want most? First, *LIFE. Honor, ambition, power*, what good are these without LIFE?

And at night we put out our hand instinctively in the dark ready to lose that member than lose that which we treasure most, our life. Then as we continue we find there is something else that we want in life and that **is truth**.

One of the first questions we ask coming into the world was the question why?

We tore apart our toys to find out what makes the wheels go around. And then later on we tear apart the very wheels of the universe to find out what makes its wheels go around. We are bent on knowing causes. That is why we hate to have secrets kept from us. Men just as well as women. We were made to know.

And there is still something else we want beside life and truth, we want love.

Every child instinctively presses itself to its mother's breast in token of affection. It goes to its mother to have its play wounds bound and then later on seeks a companion

young likened to himself to whom he can unpack his heart with words. One who measures up to that beautiful definition of a friend. One in whose presence you can keep silence.

And so, the quest for love continues from the cradle to the grave and yet though we want these things do we find them here? To find life here in its fullness? Certainly not. Each tick of the clock brings us closer to the grave.

- Our hearts are but muffled drums beating a funeral march to the grave. "From hour to hour we ripe and ripe, from hour to hour we rot and rot." (3)

 Life is not here, nor truth, in all of its fullness.
- As a matter of fact, the more we study the less we know because we see new avenues of knowledge down which we might travel for lifetime.

I wish I knew now just one ten millionth as much as I thought I knew the night I was graduated from high school. So, truth is not here, and love is not here either in its fullness. Because when love does remain fine and noble, the day must come when the last embrace is passed from friend to friend and the last cake is crumbled at life's great feast.

So here we are looking for life in truth and love and not finding it.

Are we destined to live an absurd life? Would we ever have eyes unless there was something to see? These are fractions, there ought to be a whole somewhere. And so we ask ourselves, very much like asking now what's the **source of light** in this room? Certainly not here under the microphone because their light is mingled with shadow and under chairs their light is mingled with darkness.

If we are to find the source of light, we must go out to something that is pure light.

- ***And if we wish to find the source of the <u>life</u> and the <u>truth</u> and the <u>love</u> that is in this world:
- > we must go out to a life that is not mingled with its shadow: death
- > out to a truth that is not mingled with its shadow: error
- > out to a <u>love that is not mingled with its shadow: hate or satiety</u>. We must go out to <u>pure life</u>, <u>pure truth</u>, <u>pure love</u> and THAT IS THE DEFINITION OF GOD. In other words that's what we want, that's what we were made for.***

<u>And its He that invades the soul</u> as Thompson described. And after all of these evasions from the Divine Invasion, God speaks and Thompson concludes his poem with God speaking and saying "Poor, piteous futile thing. Why should any set thee love apart, seeing none but I, make much of naught, he said, and human love needs human meriting and how has thou merited? Of all man's clotted clay, the dingiest clot. Alas thou knowst not how little worthy of any love thou art. For whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee, save Me, save only Me.

All that thy child's mistakes fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at Home.

Rise, clasp My Hand and come."

God Love You.

Footnotes:

1 Confessions, Book 1, Chapter 1

2 <u>Gn 3:9</u>

3 Shakespeare, As You Like It, II, vii.

The Hound of Heaven A Modern Adaptation

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH GRACE

16. "The third part of the Catechism deals with the final end of man created in the image of God: beatitude, and the ways of reaching it - through right conduct freely chosen, with the help of God's law and GRACE (Section One), and through conduct that fulfills the twofold commandment of charity, specified in God's Ten Commandments (Section Two). "To view the context, please visit

http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/prologue.html#STRUCTURE

35. "Man's faculties make him capable of coming to a knowledge of the existence of a personal God. But for man to be able to enter into real intimacy with him, God willed both to reveal himself to man, and to give him the GRACE of being able to welcome this revelation in faith.(so) The proofs of God's existence, however, can predispose one to faith and help one to see that faith is not opposed to reason."

To view the context, please visit

http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/profess.html#COMING

54. "God, who creates and conserves all things by his Word, provides men with constant evidence of himself in created realities. And furthermore, wishing to open up the way to heavenly salvation - he manifested himself to our first parents from the very beginning. DV 3; cf. Jn 1:3; Rom 1:19-20. He invited them to intimate communion with himself and clothed them with resplendent GRACE and justice."

To view the context, please visit

http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/profess2.html#STAGES

153. "When St. Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus declared to him that this revelation did not come 'from flesh and blood', but from 'my Father who is in heaven'. [Mt 16:17; cf. Gal 1:15; Mt 11:25.] Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him. 'Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the GRACE of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and 'makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth." [DV 5; cf. DS 377; 3010.]"

To view the context, please visit

http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/profess5.html#CHARACTERISTICS

154. "Believing is possible only by GRACE and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit. But it is no less true that believing is an authentically human act. Trusting in God and cleaving to the truths he has revealed is contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason. Even in human relations it is not contrary to our dignity to believe what other persons tell us about themselves and their intentions, or to trust their promises (for example, when a man and a woman marry) to share a communion of life with one another. If this is so, still less is it contrary to our dignity to 'yield by faith the full submission of... intellect and will to God who reveals', [Dei Filius: 3: DS 3008.] and to share in an interior communion with him."

To view the context, please visit

http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/profess5.html#CHARACTERISTICS

155. "In faith, the human intellect and will co-operate with divine GRACE: 'Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through GRACE.'[St. Thomas Aquinas, STh II-II, 2, 9; cf Dei Filius 3; DS 3010.]"
To view the context, please visit http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/profess5.html#CHARACTERISTICS

158. "'Faith seeks understanding': [St. Anselm, Prosl. proem. PL 153 225A.] it is intrinsic to faith that a believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith, and to understand better what He has revealed; a more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love. The GRACE of faith opens 'the eyes of your hearts' [Eph 1:18 .] to a lively understanding of the contents of Revelation: that is, of the totality of God's plan and the mysteries of faith, of their connection with each other and with Christ, the Centre of the revealed mystery. 'The same Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and more profoundly understood.'[DV 5.] In the words of St. Augustine, 'I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe.'[St. Augustine, Sermon 43, 7, 9: PL 38, 257-258.]"

To view the context, please visit

http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/profess5.html#CHARACTERISTICS

Francis Thompson

Poet, b. at Preston, Lancashire, 18 Dec., 1859; d. in London, 13 Nov., 1907. He came from the middle classes, the classes great in imaginative poetry. His father was a provincial doctor; two paternal uncles dabbled in literature; he himself referred his heredity chiefly to his mother, who died in his boyhood. His parents being Catholics, he was educated at Ushaw, the college that had in former years Lingard, Waterton, and Wiseman as pupils. There he was noticeable for love of literature and neglect of games, though as spectator he always cared for cricket, and in later years remembered the players of his day with something like personal love. After seven years he went to Owens College to study medicine. He hated this proposed profession more than he would confess to his father; he evaded rather than rebelled, and finally disappeared. No blame, or attribution of hardships or neglect should attach to his father's memory; every careful father knows his own anxieties. Francis Thompson went to London, and there endured three years of destitution that left him in a state of incipient disease. He was employed as bookselling agent, and at a shoemaker's, but very briefly, and became a wanderer in London streets, earning a few pence by selling matches and calling cabs, often famished, often cold, receiving occasional alms; on one great day finding a sovereign on the footway, he was requested to come no more to a public library because he was too ragged.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Thompson

FRANCIS THOMPSON THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

{I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;

I fled Him, down the arches of the years;

I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways

Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears

I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

Up vested hopes I sped:

And shot, precipitated,

Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,

From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

But with unhurrying chase,

And unperturbed pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

They beat - and a Voice beat

More instant than the Feet -

'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me'.

{I pleaded, outlaw-wise,

By many a hearted casement, curtained red,

Trellised with intertwining charities;

(For, though I knew His love Who followed,

Yet was I sore a dread

Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)

But, if one little casement parted wide,

The gust of His approach would clash it to:

Fear west not to evade, as Love west to pursue.

Across the margent of the world I fled,

And troubled the gold gateway of the stars,

Smiting for shelter on their clanged bars;

Fretted to dulcet jars

And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.

{I said to Dawn: Be sudden - to Eve: Be soon;

With thy young skiey blossom heap me over

From this tremendous Lover -

Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!

I tempted all His servitors, but to find

My own betrayal in their constancy,

In faith to Him their fickleness to me,

Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.

To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;

Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.

But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,

The long savannahs of the blue;

Or, whether, Thunder-driven,

They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,

Plushy with flying lightning's round the spurn o' their feet:-

Fear west not to evade as Love west to pursue.

Still with unhurrying chase,

And unperturbed pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

Came on the following Feet.

And a Voice above their beat -

'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

{I sought not more after that which I strayed

In face of man or maid;

But still within the little children's eyes

Seems something, something that replies,

They at least are for me, surely for me!

I turned me to them very wistfully;

But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair

With dawning answers there,

Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.

'{Come then, ye other children, Nature's - share

With me (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;

Let me greet you lip to lip,

Let me twine with you caresses,

Wan toning

With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,

Banqueting

With her in her wind-walled palace,

Underneath her azured dais, Quaffing, as your taintless way is,

From a chalice

Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring'.

So it was done:

I in their delicate fellowship was one -

Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.

I knew all the swift importing's

On the willful face of skies:

I knew how the clouds arise

Spumed of the wild sea-snortings;

All that's born or dies

Rose and dropped with; made them shapers

Of mine own moods, or willful divine;

With them joyed and was bereaven.

I was heavy with the even,

When she lit her glimmering tapers

Round the day's dead sanctities.

I laughed in the morning's eyes.

I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,

Heaven and I wept together,

And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine:

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart

I laid my own to beat,

And share commingling heat;

But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.

In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.

For ah! we know not what each other says,

These things and I; in sound I speak -

Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.

Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;

Let her, if she would owe me,

Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me

The breasts of her tenderness:

Never did any milk of hers once bless

My thirsting mouth.

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,

With unperturbed pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;

And past those noised Feet

A voice comes yet more fleet -

'Lo! naught contents thee, who content's not Me.'

{Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!

My harness piece by piece Thou has hewn from me,

And smitten me to my knee;

I am defenseless utterly.

I slept, methinks, and woke,

And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.

In the rash lust head of my young powers,

I shook the pillaring hours

And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,

I stand amidst the dust o' the mounded years -

My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.

My days have cracked and gone up in smoke,

Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream

The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;

Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist

I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,

Are yielding; cords of all too weak account

For earth with heavy grief's so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed

A weed, albeit an amarinthine weed,

Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must -

Designer infinite! -

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;

And now my heart is as a broken fount,

Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever

From the dank thoughts that shiver

Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

Such is; what is to be?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?

I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds

From the hid battlements of Eternity:

Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then

Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again.

But not ere him who summoneth

I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;

His name I know and what his trumpet saith.

Whether man's heart or life it be which yields

Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields

Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit

Comes on at hand the bruit;

That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:

'And is thy earth so marred,

Shattered in shard on shard?

Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!

Strange, piteous, futile thing!

Wherefore should any set thee love apart?

Seeing none but I makes much of naught' (He said), 'And human love needs human meriting:

How hast thou merited -

Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?

Alack, thou knowist not

How little worthy of any love thou art!

Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee, Save Me, save only Me?

All which I took from thee I did but take,

Not for thy harms,

But just that thou might's seek it in My arms.

All which thy child's mistake

Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:

Rise, clasp My hand, and come!'

Halts by me that footfall:

Is my gloom, after all,

Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?

'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,

I am He Whom thou sleekest!

Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

http://poetry.elcore.net/HoundOfHeavenInRtT.html

Outline Notes:

We should lay our heart and mind open to the saving experiences that come from without and which completely change our character.

The Divine Invasion

Difference between Bad men & Evil men:

- Bad men-they steal, kill
- Evil men-they seek to destroy Goodness in others

We have this constant intrusion from the outside.

The form on which Divine Invasion takes is that of an INFECTION, that gets into the Soul.

GRACES-- TWO TYPES

- White Grace-makes us pleasing to God
- Black Grace-we feel God's absence

IT IS NOT MAN WHO IS ON THE QUEST OF GOD, RATHER IT IS GOD WHO IS ON THE QUEST OF MAN. We are then left restless.

1st question given in the bible is then," *Man where are you?*" (Genesis 3:9)

<u>POET—FRANCIS THOMPSON—THE HOUND OF HEAVEN:</u> GOD IS THE HOUND OF HEAVEN, WHO PURSUES US.

DO WE TOO FLEE FROM GOD? VARIOUS ESCAPE:

- Sub-conscience mind
- Science/nature
- Illegitimate love
- Fear

Can we find what Divine Invasion is about from our own heart? * our craving

* aspiration

* yearning

Would these things be:

- LIFE
- TRUTH/always asking why

LOVE

In order to find LIFE, TRUTH, & LOVE in this world, we must go to the source of LIFE, TRUTH & LOVE.

A source of LIFE that is not mingle with the shadow DEATH A source of TRUTH that is not mingle with the shadow ERROR A source of LOVE that is not mingle with the shadow HATE

WE MUST GO OUT TO: PURE LIFE

PURE TRUTH

PURE LOVE this equals GOD

THAT'S WHAT WE WANT!!

That's what we were made for!!

He invades our Soul / DIVINE INVASION

Discussion Questions:

1. In today's lesson on "God in Search of Man" – what stood out the most to you?

2. Why do you think Bishop Sheen gave the title "Divine Invasion" to this lesson