

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • February 8, 2015

*O God, your light  
of truth and love shines  
through the darkness of this  
world for those who are  
upright of heart.  
Your Son, Jesus,  
illuminates the way with  
the power of his Cross,  
healing us and setting us  
free from the drudgery  
of sin and evil. Amen.*



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## Sunday Word

Job 7:1–4, 6–7

Psalms 147:1–2, 3–4, 5–6

1 Corinthians 9:16–19, 22–23

Mark 1:29–39

### Drudgery

Job describes the human condition in unfavorable terms. We are beset by misery. We experience sleepless nights, filled with restlessness. So often life is drudgery to be endured; it seems as if happiness eludes our every grasp.

### Obligation

Paul admits that he is impelled to preach the Good News. His divine commission has such weight to it that his discipleship obliges him. It is a commission that must be discharged in order to win over many to Christ.

### Healing

This Gospel passage reveals a typical day in Jesus' life of ministry. He preaches in the synagogue, and then he heals the sick, infirm, and the possessed who seek him out. He travels everywhere in Galilee preaching and healing.

## Church Teaching: Evil in the World

### Existence of Evil

The world is not a perfect place. Harsh realities abound. Even unbelievers acknowledge that human existence is imperfect. Life frequently presents itself as broken and wounded. Yet, through eyes of faith, believers perceive the root reason for this imperfect existence: evil is afoot in the world. The Church teaches that there are two distinct types of evil. One is moral evil. The other is physical evil.

Moral evil results from Original Sin and personal sin. Physical evil is evidenced in phenomena such as natural disasters, pain, physical illnesses, mental disorders, and all sorts of accidents and mishaps that harm us. Our experiences of this fallen world lead us to know that evil does exist. So when we plumb the reasons

for these two types of evil, we are led to inquire about the root cause of evil.

### *The Root Cause of Evil*

Divine Revelation clarifies for us that Adam and Eve, in the beginning, shared in the grace of original holiness and justice. In succumbing to temptation by Satan, they both turned away from God by freely choosing to follow their will instead of God's will.

When we interpret the story of the Fall from Genesis, we understand that humanity is responsible for evil entering into this world. We are all born into a fallen state called Original Sin, a reality contracted by us because we are human, not because we commit it. And flowing from this state of Original Sin, personal sins occur, for which we are personally responsible.

### *This Fallen World*

The disruption and chaos experienced in physical evil is a consequence of Original Sin. It is symbolized in Sacred Scripture by the loss of Eden. In spite of our experience of this type of evil, we affirm that God is good and all-powerful. Any other affirmation would simply reduce God in our eyes and would ultimately embrace the lie that Satan insinuates: "God is the enemy of his creatures."

Nothing could be further from the truth. God has only love and compassion for us, his creatures. To resolve the "problem" of evil, believers rely on the Revelation of divine love in Jesus Christ. The Son of God shares in our hurts, yet without succumbing to sin. He himself suffered death and then rose from the dead. In this Paschal Mystery, we are lifted to a new life of redeeming grace by the Risen Lord.

### *Distinctiveness of Church Teaching*

The ultimate source of meaning for everything that exists resides in divine love. Love is also the richest source of the meaning of suffering, which nevertheless remains a mystery. We are conscious of the insufficiency and inadequacy of our explanation, even as we cling to Christ who causes us to enter that mystery. Nevertheless we seek to understand and discover the "why" of suffering—insofar as we are able to contemplate the sublime depths of divine love shining through the Cross and Resurrection.

### **Key Terms**

#### **EDEN**

Biblical name given to the place where Adam and Eve abided in the original harmony and wholeness of God's creation prior to their sinning (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 375).

#### **EVIL**

Opposite of good, that is, its absence; Jesus Christ is God's response to the existence of evil in the world (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 309).

#### **SATAN**

Also called "the devil," and "the Evil One;" originally a good angel who chose to rebel against God (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 391).

### **Voices of Faith**

So tell us how faith is to be defined, if even the devils can believe and tremble? Only the faith that works by love is faith.

—Saint Augustine

In sacrificing himself for us all, Christ gave a new meaning to suffering, opening up a new dimension, a new order: the order of love.

—Pope Benedict XVI

### **Further Reading**

***Catechism of the Catholic Church***: 375 (interpretation of the biblical story of Adam and Eve), 385 (goodness of God and reality of evil), 395 (Satan's finite power), 407 (broken condition of the world)

#### ***United States Catholic Catechism for Adults***:

Chapter 6, especially the section entitled "Understanding the Impact of Original Sin," pages 69–71

#### ***Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church***:

75 (the first sin), 76 (Original Sin), 77 (consequences of Original Sin), 78 (God's initial response to sin)