



**Credible Catholic**

# **7C SEVEN ESSENTIALS**

## **PRESENTATION 3**

### **STUDENT WORKBOOK**

**PHILOSOPHICAL PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE**

*Age 12+ through Adult Version*



From content by:

**Fr. Robert J. Spitzer, S. J., Ph.D.**

Adapted by: Claude R. LeBlanc, M.A.

## Welcome to CREDIBLE CATHOLIC!

**WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?** It is unbelief and skepticism. In our culture, derision of religion, God, the soul, Jesus, and the prospect of finding spiritual meaning in suffering, are not only tolerated but preached and sometimes even celebrated. Many are already infected by the faulty messages which are delivered in four popular, but inaccurate, secular myths. These myths, in one form or another, are as follows:

**Myth 1:** Science and faith are incompatible, and since science is true, it has replaced religion.

**Myth 2:** Human beings are like every other animal—merely a complex of atoms and molecules. We have no soul, no eternal destiny, and no transcendent nature. When we die, we die.

**Myth 3:** There is no explanation for why an all-loving God would allow suffering. Therefore, suffering is fundamentally negative and a loving God probably does not exist.

**Myth 4:** There is no evidence for Jesus as an historical figure, and therefore his resurrection or divinity. If Jesus did exist, he was just an interesting prophet, but not a Savior or the Son of God.

The *2016 Pew Research Center's Religious Landscape Study* indicates that over 40% of millennials have abandoned their faith to unbelief because these four challenges have not been adequately addressed. Unless we specifically and effectively address these challenges to faith, the percentage will continue to grow. *What can be done?*

**OUR SOLUTION:** *Credible Catholic*, a Magis Center curriculum correlated to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, was specifically created to address these challenging myths.

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**7 ESSENTIALS**  
**PRESENTATION 3 WORKBOOK**  
**PHILOSOPHICAL PROOF**  
**OF GOD'S EXISTENCE**  
*Age 12+ Through Adult Version*

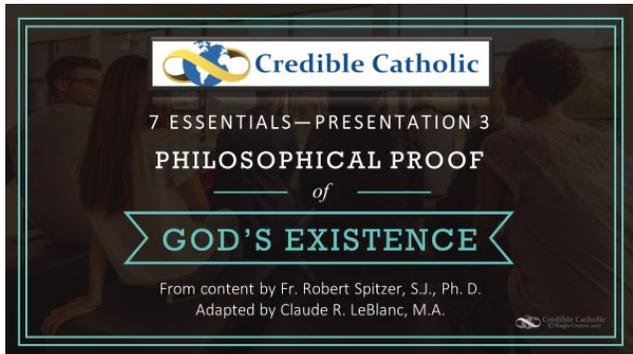
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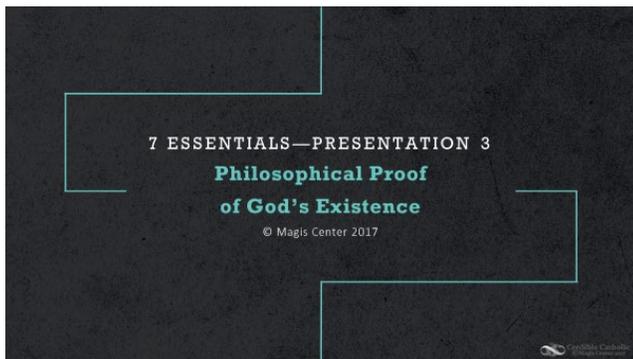
# CC 7E Presentation 3: *Philosophical Proof of God’s Existence*

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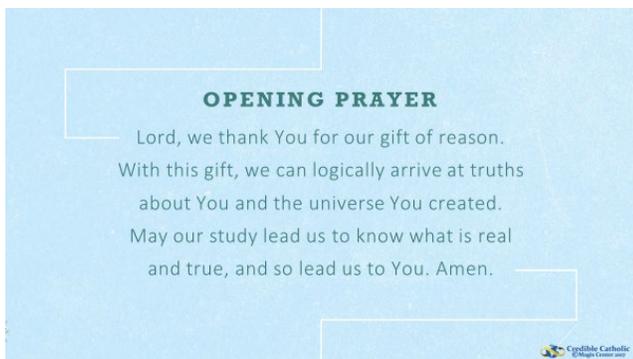
## PRESENTATION NOTES



SLIDE 1—TITLE SLIDE



SLIDE 2—COPYRIGHT SLIDE



SLIDE 3—OPENING PRAYER

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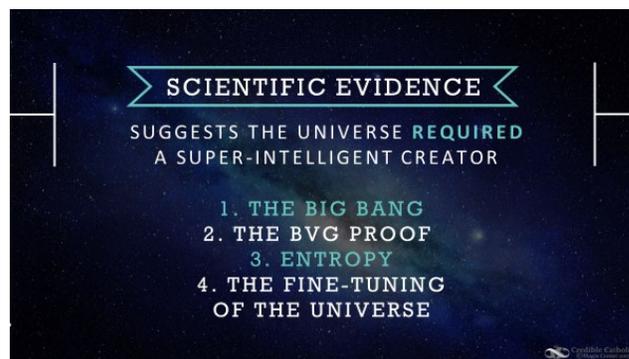
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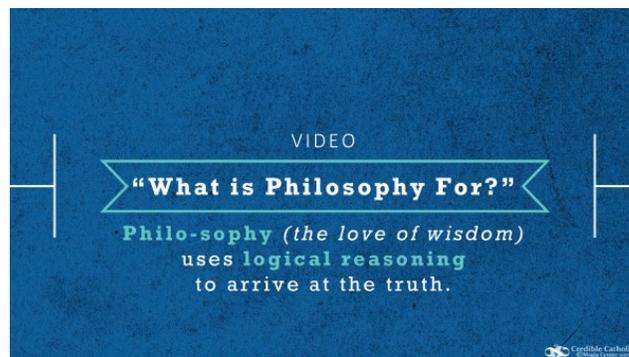
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**SLIDE 4:** We’ve looked at scientific evidence that the universe had a beginning and is expanding. Evidence like the Big Bang, the BVG Proof and entropy. We also learned about the universe’s “fine-tuning” and why “fine-tuning” makes it very unlikely that the universe happened by pure chance. Together, they show it’s very likely the universe required a super-intelligent Creator.



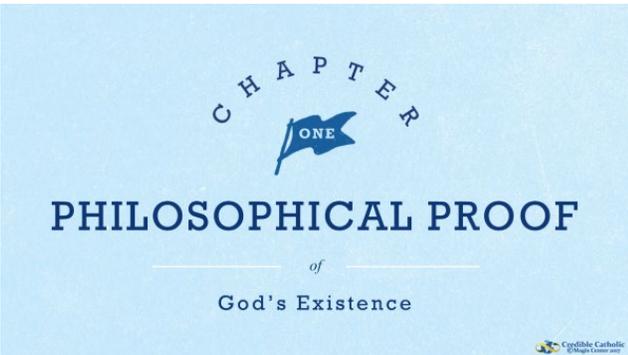
**SLIDE 5:** But we can go further. There is another method we can use to prove that the universe actually required a Creator. In this presentation, we’re going to look at some philosophical proofs for God’s existence.



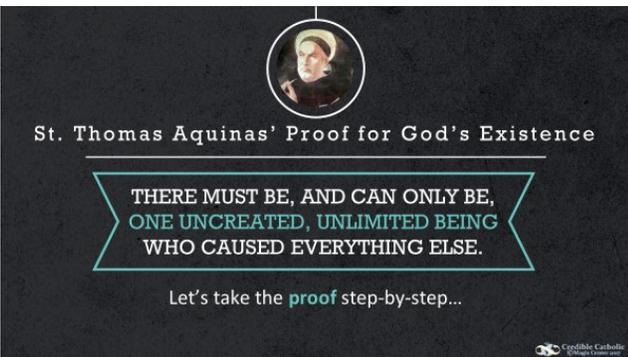
**SLIDE 6:** But first, *what is Philosophy?* Philosophy comes from the Greek, meaning “the love of wisdom.” It is a method used to arrive at truth by using logical reasoning. Here’s a video to help explain what Philosophy is for.



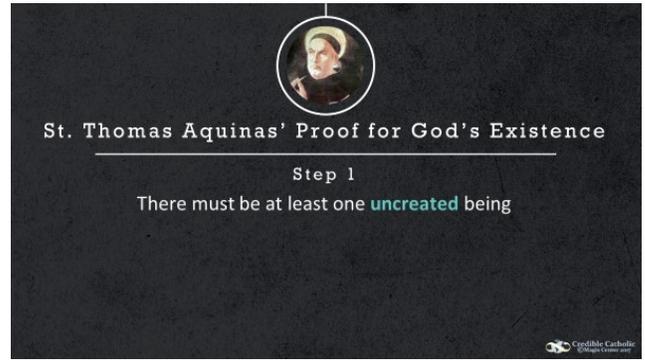
SLIDE 7—VIDEO 3-1: *What is Philosophy for?*



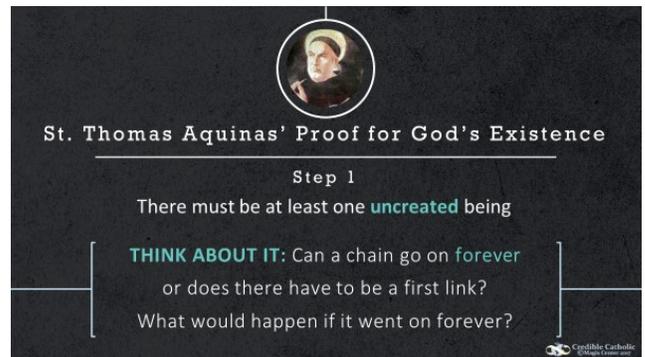
**SLIDE 8—CHAPTER 1—PHILOSOPHICAL PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE:** There was famous medieval philosopher, St. Thomas Aquinas, who believed that philosophy *could* tell us a lot about God. He used philosophy to develop five philosophical proofs of God's existence; proofs that are still used and studied today.



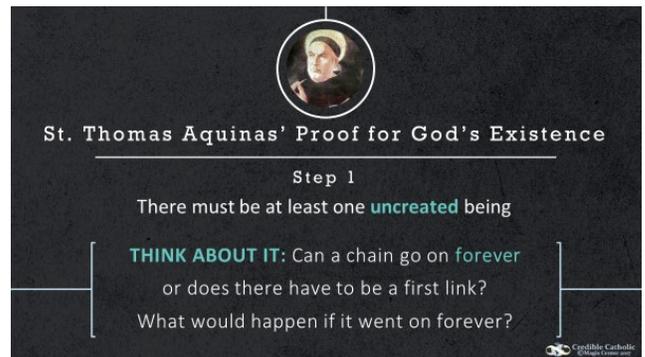
**SLIDE 9:** In these proofs, Aquinas showed that there must be, and can only be, *one uncreated, unlimited being who caused everything else*. You're probably asking, "*What does that mean?*" Philosophical language can be tough to understand, so don't worry, we'll break it down in simpler language; we'll take it one step at a time, and we'll use examples you're familiar with.



**SLIDE 10:** First, St. Thomas Aquinas said there must be at least one *uncreated* being. *What does that mean?* It means that there must be a being who was not created and who always existed.

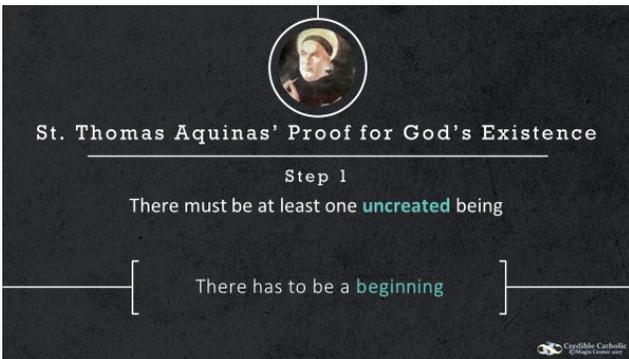


**SLIDE 11—THINK ABOUT IT:** Here's an easier way to understand what Aquinas meant. Imagine you came across a chain but you couldn't see all of it.

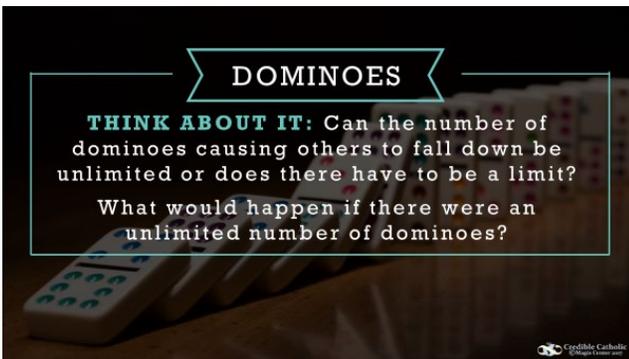


**SLIDE 12:** Obviously, there has to be a beginning, or a first-link, to a chain. If it went on forever, it would fill up the whole universe.

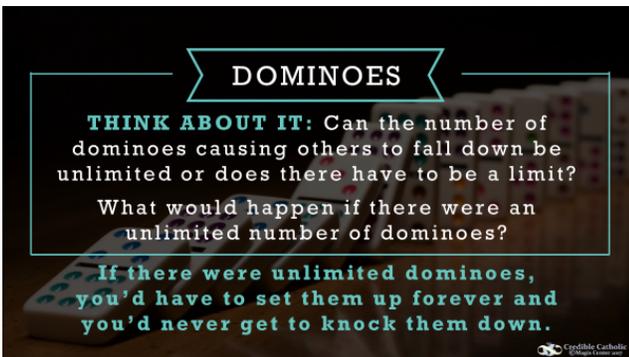
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**SLIDE 13:** St. Thomas Aquinas knew that everything created, including the universe, needs an uncreated being in order to exist, just like a chain has to have a first link. We'll explain why soon.



**SLIDE 14—THINK ABOUT IT:** Here's another example. Think about setting up a line of dominoes to be knocked down. If set up correctly, each falling domino *causes* another domino to fall down.



**SLIDE 15:** If there were unlimited dominoes, you'd have to set them up forever, and you'd never get to knock them down.

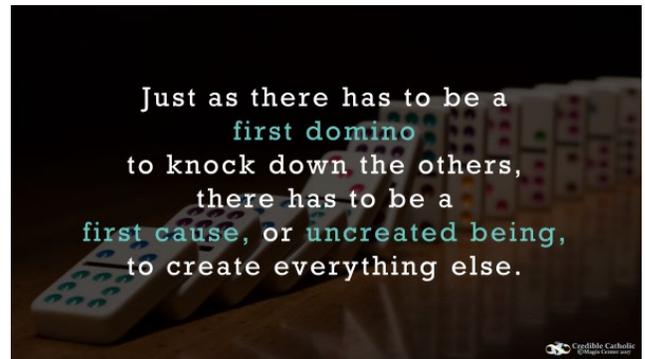
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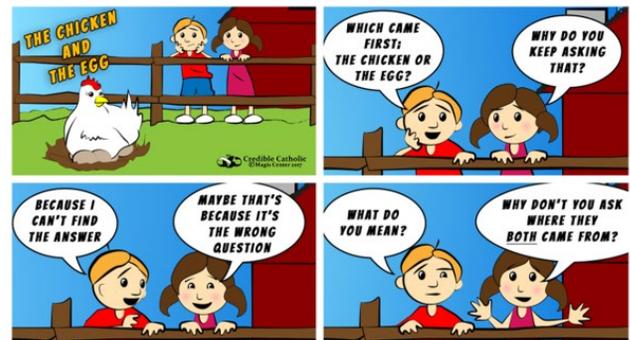
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**SLIDE 16:** There *has* to be a first domino to knock the second one down. St. Thomas Aquinas said that there can't be unlimited causes. There has to be a *first cause*, an uncaused, or uncreated, cause, just like a first domino, in order for anything else to move.



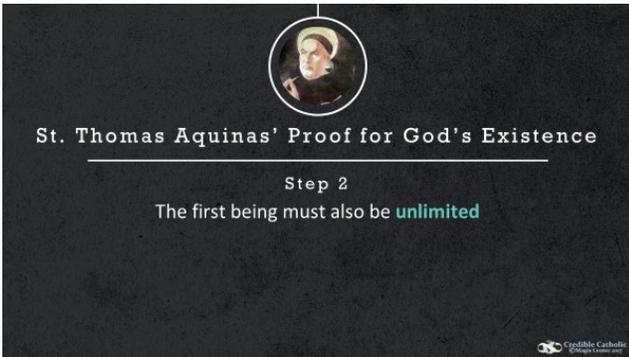
**SLIDE 17:** Now logically, this *first cause*, or *first being*, couldn't be created. *Why?* Well, it couldn't be created by anything else because nothing else existed before it, and it couldn't create itself if before it existed. So, the only possible way this first being could exist is that it *always* existed. In other words, as Aquinas said, this *first being is uncaused, or uncreated*. Because this is the *first being*, everything else that exists came *after* it, and was caused by it in some way. Nothing came before it.



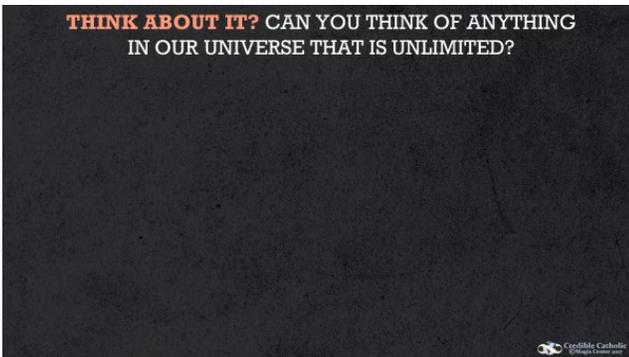
**SLIDE 18:** Here's another example of the need for a first (uncaused) being who created everything else.



SLIDE 19—LET'S DISCUSS



SLIDE 20: So far, we have a being that is uncaused and always existed. St. Thomas Aquinas explained that the first being must also be *unlimited*.



SLIDE 21—THINK ABOUT IT: *Can you think of anything in our universe that is unlimited?*

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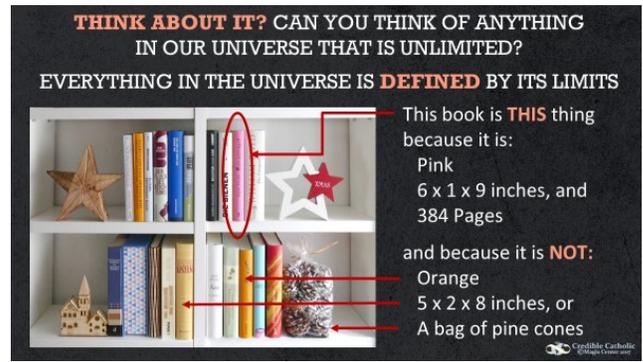
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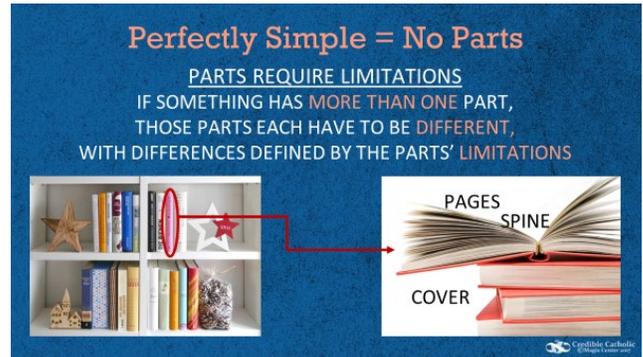
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SLIDE 22: A book, for example, has many limits; it has a certain number of pages; it has a particular shape and size; it can only be in one place at a time. In fact, these limitations are what define it. They're what make it a book, and not something else like a tree or a human. Even the universe itself has limits. It has a certain amount of matter and energy.



SLIDE 23: There's one other thing to know about an unlimited being; it has to be perfectly simple. *Why?* Because anything made up of parts is going to be limited. If something has more than one part, those parts have to be different from each other, and those difference are defined by the part's limitations, just like a book is defined by its limitations. The limits of each *part* of a thing cause the *whole thing* to be limited.

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**SLIDE 24:** So, for a being like God to be unlimited means it can't be made up of parts, it must be perfectly simple.

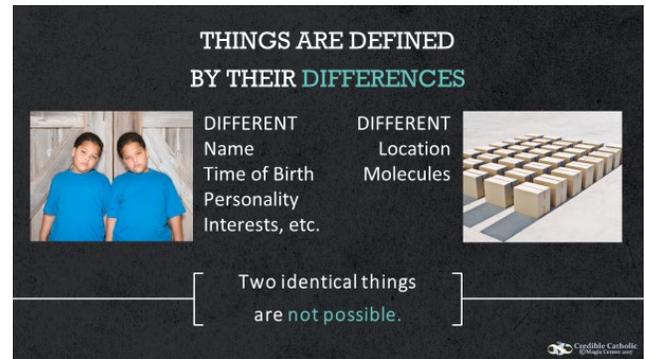


**SLIDE 25:** The third thing Aquinas said was this; there can only be *one* uncreated, unlimited, being. *Why?* Because things are defined by their *differences*. Two completely identical things are impossible.



**SLIDE 26—LET'S DISCUSS**

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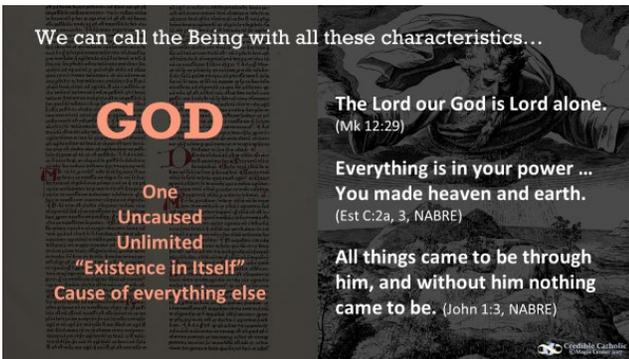
**SLIDE 27:** Even when things “appear” to be identical, there is *always* something different about them, or they would be the same thing. Something that makes two things different is just the fact that they can't be in the same place at the same time. So, there can't be two “unlimited” beings. If there were, they would both be everywhere at all times, and would be the same being. There can only be *one* uncreated, unlimited being.



**SLIDE 28:** Finally, St. Thomas Aquinas said that this one uncreated, unlimited being must be the *ultimate cause* of everything else that exists. Only the first being could create the second being.



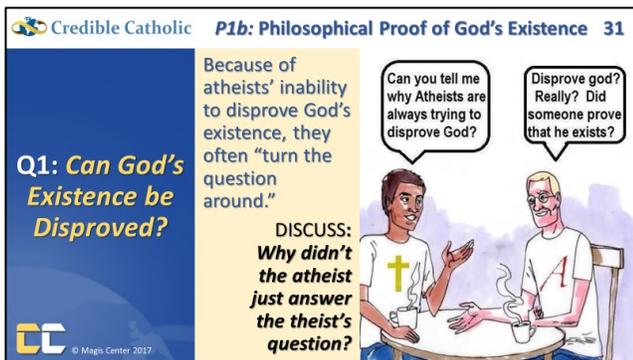
**SLIDE 29:** However, the third being came to exist, whether from the first being or the second being, its existence would still ultimately be dependent on the first being.



**SLIDE 30:** By this point, we can call this one, uncreated, unlimited being, who must be the ultimate cause of everything else that exists, God, because its characteristics are consistent with the way God is described in the Bible.

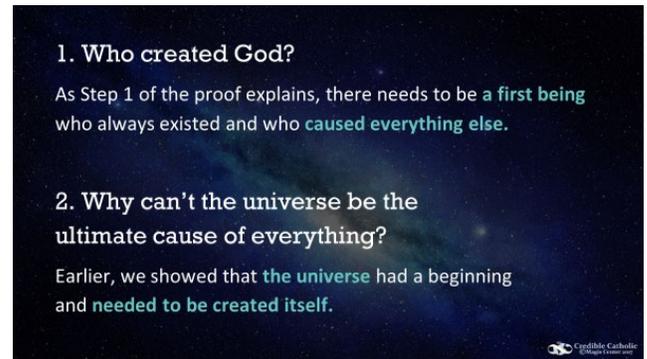


**SLIDE 31—ACTIVITY 1: Explain a Step of Aquinas' Philosophical Proof of God's Existence**



**31.** By saying "God does not exist," an atheist is making a claim. Claims need to be supported with evidence or shown to be reasonable. In the last few slides, we have shown that their claim is unsubstantiated and illogical. Of course, theists need to support their claim that God exists, as we show in *Presentations 1a and 1b*.

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**SLIDE 33:** Both these questions are handled in the 1<sup>st</sup> step of Aquinas' proof. We saw that there has to be a first being who always existed and caused everything else. Earlier, we showed that the universe had a beginning and itself needed to be created, so it couldn't be the ultimate cause of everything.



**SLIDE 34:** Here's an explanation.



**SLIDE 35—VIDEO 3-2: There Has to Be an Uncaused Being.**

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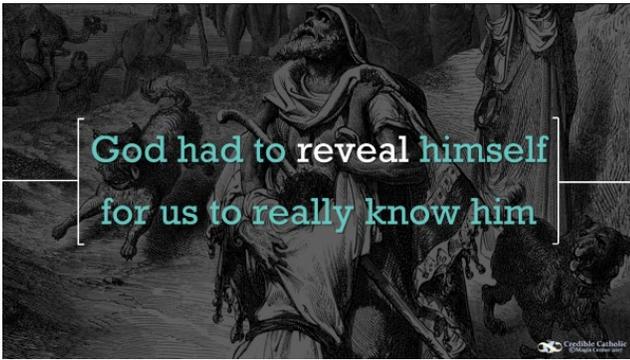
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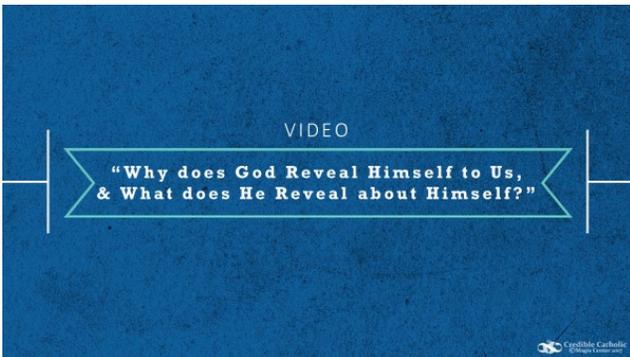
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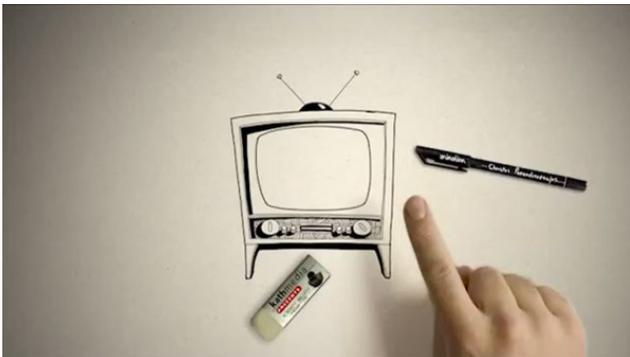




**SLIDE 41:** For us to really *know* God, not just know that he exists, God had to reveal himself to us. We could never *KNOW* that God is like the Father of the Prodigal Son by thinking about an uncaused being or by observing the red-shift of galaxies, could we? He had to tell us.



**SLIDE 42:** Let's watch this explanation of why God revealed Himself to us.

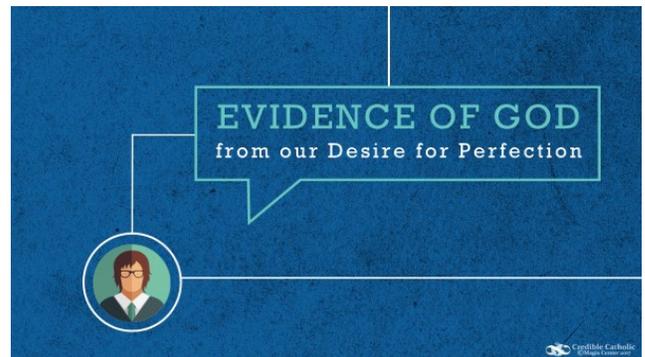


**SLIDE 43—VIDEO 3-3: Why Does God Reveal Himself?**

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**SLIDE 44:** The answers to the video's questions are related: First, God reveals Himself to us because He is perfect love; and what He reveals is that He wants to share His life with us!



**SLIDE 45:** In a way, we're just like God; we also love and want to share our lives with others. *Even though we aren't perfect, like God, we still want our relationships with the people we love to be perfect, don't we?* We all desire perfect love, and we have other perfect desires, too.



**SLIDE 46:** The ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle realized that we also want perfect justice, perfect beauty, perfect truth, and a perfect home with a perfect being!

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**SLIDE 47:** *Isn't it true, when we think we've experienced something "perfect," we still wonder if there could be something even better? We eventually get tired or frustrated with everything we experience in this world. This got C.S. Lewis, who wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia*, to wonder: "Why do we desire perfection even though we've never experienced it?"*



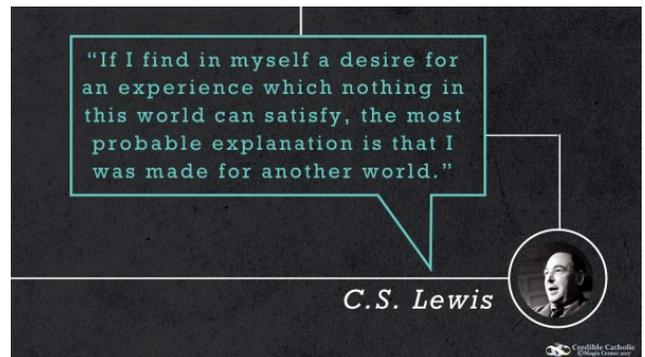
**SLIDE 48:** *Some people answered Lewis by saying "We evolved that way," but Lewis replied, "That's not how evolution works. Evolution says we adapt to our environment, but there is nothing perfect in our environment to adapt to. How can we evolve to desire something that doesn't exist? There's got to be a better answer."*



**SLIDE 49:** Let's see what that answer might be.



**SLIDE 50—VIDEO 3-4:** Chances are...You're Living with Unfulfilled Desires.



**SLIDE 51:** C. S. Lewis said: "If I find in myself a desire for an experience which nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that *I* was made for another world."



**SLIDE 52—LET'S DISCUSS**

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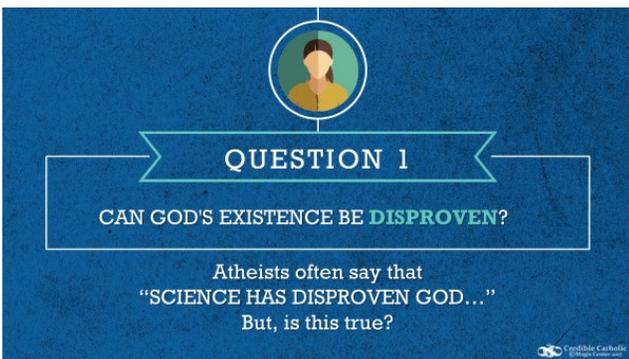
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**SLIDE 53:** According to Lewis, we have a *desire* for perfection that couldn't have evolved, but we live in an imperfect world, so there must be another world with a perfect being who can satisfy our desire for perfection. *Who might that be?* That's right, our desire for perfection is really a desire for God!



**SLIDE 54—CHAPTER 3—QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE EXISTENCE OF A CREATOR:** We've looked at philosophical proof and scientific evidence for God's existence, but other questions can come up about the existence of God.



**SLIDE 55:** For starters, *can God's existence be disproven?* This often comes up in the context of science. Atheists often say that: "Science has disproven God." *But, has it? What would be involved in disproving God's existence?*

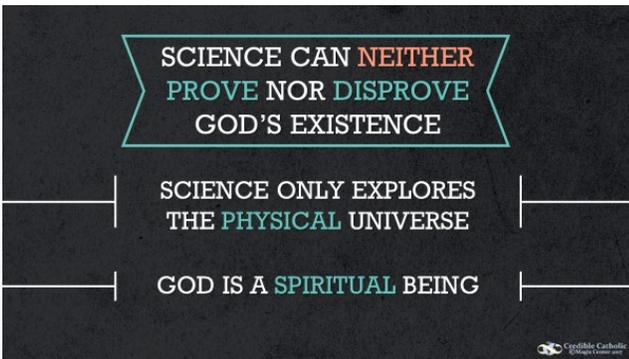


**SLIDE 56:** Actually, it's much easier to prove something exists than that it doesn't. To prove something exists, we only need to find one of them. To disprove something, we need to rule out that it exists anywhere in the universe. For example, we could prove aliens exist if we found just one, but to disprove they exist, we'd have to be everywhere in the universe at the same time. *And, how would we even know we had every possible means of detecting them?* The best an honest scientist can say is: "We have no evidence whether or not aliens exist."

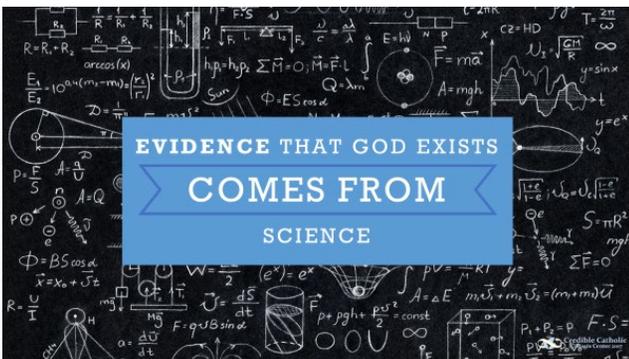


**SLIDE 57:** *So, what about God? If science can't even disprove the existence of aliens, who would be in our universe, how could science disprove God, who would be outside of our universe?*

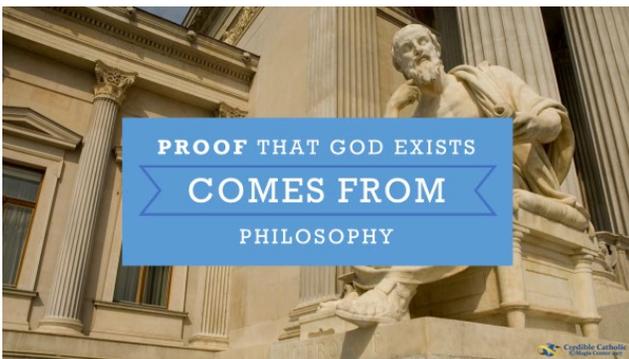
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**SLIDE 58:** In fact, just as science can't disprove God's existence, it also can't prove "scientifically" that He does exist. Science doesn't have the tools; it's limited to exploring the physical universe. But, God is not physical, He's a spiritual being. So, there can be no absolute *scientific* proof that God exists.

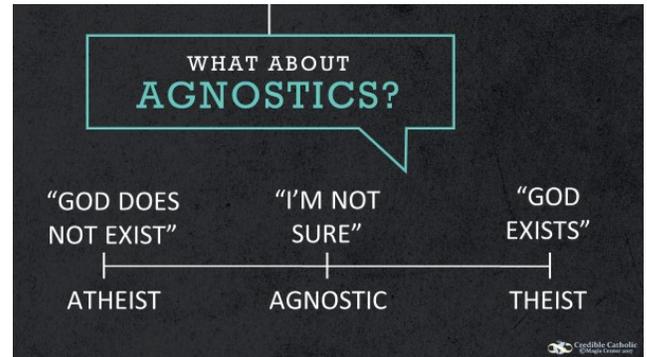


**SLIDE 59:** However, as we've seen, there's *much scientific evidence* that strongly suggests He does. The Big Bang is evidence the universe is expanding, the BVG proof and entropy are evidence the universe had a beginning, and the "fine-tuning" of the universe for life is evidence the universe very likely requires an intelligent Creator. Even though this scientific evidence is not absolute proof that God exists, it gives us many good reasons to believe that He does.



**SLIDE 60:** *Proof* that God exists, as we've just seen, comes from Philosophy. St. Thomas Aquinas proved

that there has to be *one uncreated, unlimited being who created everything else*. And, C.S. Lewis supported Aquinas' proof by showing that it's very likely our desire for perfection also comes from God.



**SLIDE 61:** Some people are *agnostics*, which means they are unsure whether or not God exists. They aren't atheists because they don't believe God has been *disproven*, and they aren't believers, or theists, either, because they don't believe He has been *proven*. They may not know about the evidence, or they may know about it but not find it convincing.



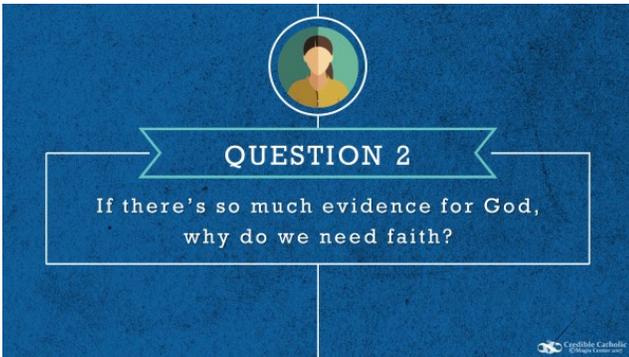
**SLIDE 62:** Let's see what Richard Dawkins says about being an agnostic.



**SLIDE 63—VIDEO 3-5:** "Atheist" Richard Dawkins Admits He's Really an Agnostic.



SLIDE 64—ACTIVITY 2: Respond to Richard Dawkins



SLIDE 65: *If there's so much evidence for God, why do we need faith?* Reason is limited in what it can tell us about God.



SLIDE 66: Someone can follow the philosophical proofs to conclude that God exists. But, just knowing God exists is not enough. Many agnostics who have studied the evidence and proofs become *deists*, which means they know God exists, but incorrectly think He doesn't care about them.

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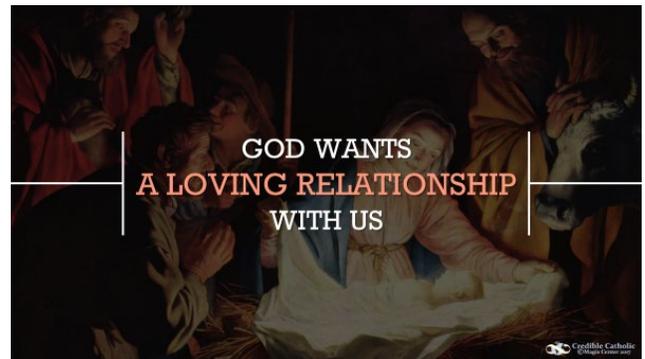
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SLIDE 67: God, however, wants *more* than us just knowing He exists; He wants a loving relationship with us. God offers His love freely; but it's our choice whether or not to accept His offer.



SLIDE 68: To have this relationship with God, just like any relationship of love, we need to take a "leap of faith" by *accepting* that His love is true and *trusting* Him with our lives.



SLIDE 69: Are you ready to take this leap of faith? Here's what it's like.

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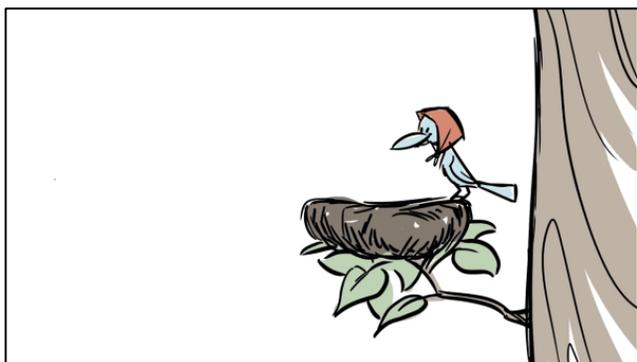
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SLIDE 70—VIDEO 3-6: Leap of Faith.

SLIDE 71: What other reasons, other than the lack of scientific proof, do people give for being atheists?

SLIDE 72: First, many people are troubled by the question of why an all-loving, all-powerful God would allow so much suffering when He could prevent it or stop it. Christianity charts a path to find positive meaning in suffering, which we'll discuss later in its own presentation. But, if someone doesn't encounter this deeper meaning, they can often conclude that suffering means "God doesn't love us," and so, they reject God out of sadness or resentment.

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SLIDE 73: Second, some don't want to be answerable to any higher authority, including God, and this feeling leads them to avoid even considering the possibility of His existence, or any evidence.

SLIDE 74: Third, some think faith is just wishful thinking. They don't see a reasonable source of faith, so they decide that atheism is more honest than taking a "blind" leap of faith.

SLIDE 75: A fourth reason given for atheism is that some, like Karl Marx, say that religion discourages the poor from fighting injustice because it distracts them with the promise of a better life after death. On the other hand, Christianity has actually been central to many advances in social justice; like the development of hospitals, orphanages and schools.

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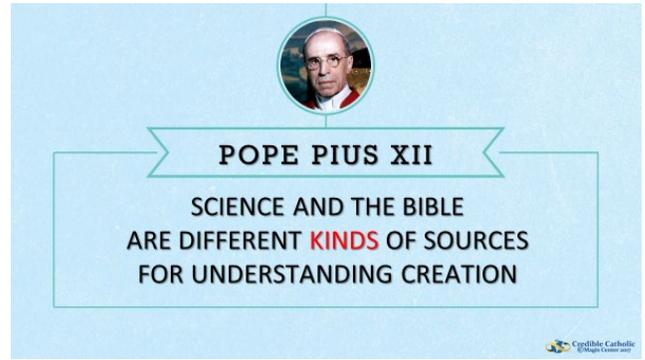
**SLIDE 76:** Finally, children are sometimes falsely introduced to God as harsh, demanding, and even hateful. Sadly, this trauma can stay with them their whole lives, leading them to avoid God and religion altogether. They may never get a chance to discover God as the loving and forgiving Father of the Prodigal Son.



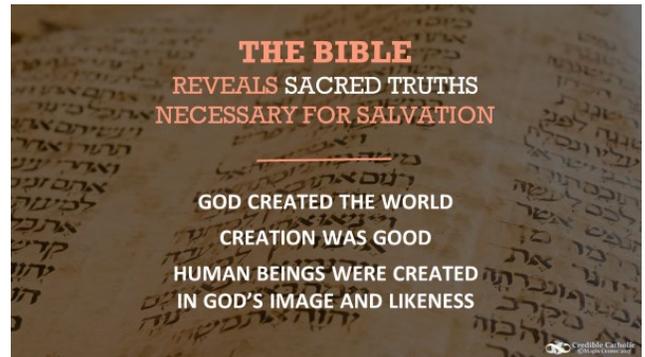
**SLIDE 77:** *Are Science and the Bible in Conflict?* We've looked at scientific evidence for God's existence, but it's common today to assume that science and faith disagree, and especially that science and the Bible are in conflict.



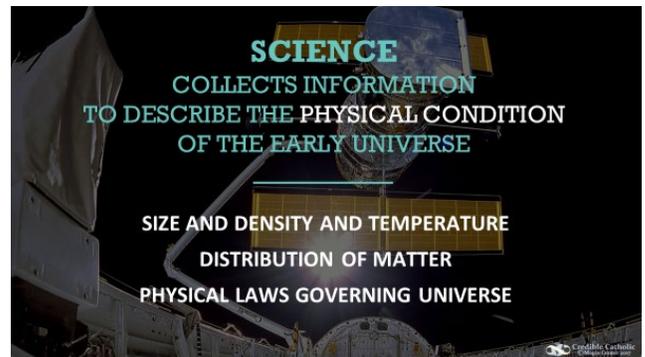
**SLIDE 78:** The most common example is the age of the universe. Some think the Bible says it is less than 10,000 years old, while science says the universe is about 13.8 billion years old. *So, do they disagree?*



**SLIDE 79:** In 1943, Pope Pius XII explained that science and the Bible are different kinds of sources for understanding creation.



**SLIDE 80:** The Bible reveals sacred truths necessary for salvation, so its focus is on explaining that God created the world, that creation is good, and that human beings were created in God's image and likeness.

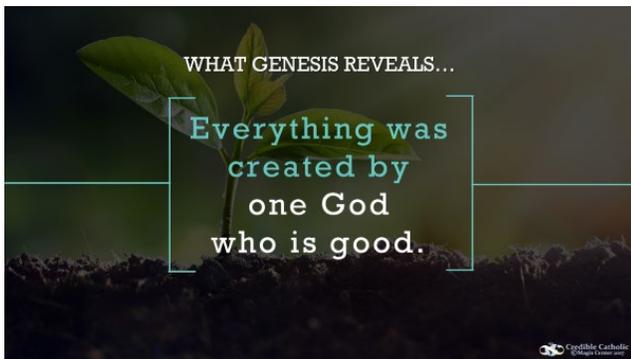


**SLIDE 81:** Science is concerned with collecting information to describe the physical condition of the early universe. We shouldn't get these sources confused and look to the Bible as the source for scientific data, nor to science as a source for the sacred truths of salvation.

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**SLIDE 82:** Ultimately, the truths revealed in the Bible, and that science has discovered, can't be in conflict because they both come from one source; the infinite mind and all-loving heart of God.

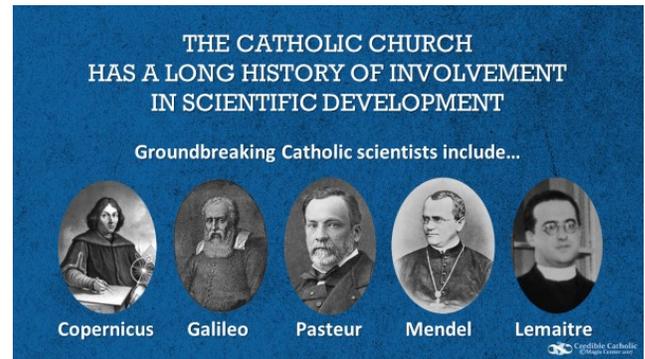


**SLIDE 83:** Even though Genesis is not a scientific account of what happened at creation, it reveals that everything in the universe was created by the one God, and is good, especially humans who are created in His image.

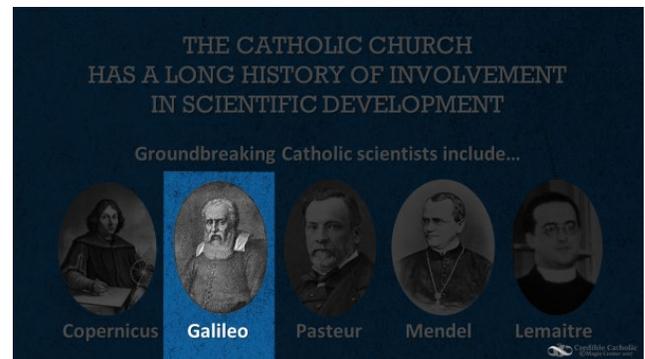


**SLIDE 84:** There *are* some interesting similarities between the Bible's creation story and the Big Bang, like creation of light before the stars, but this was not God's main purpose for the Bible.

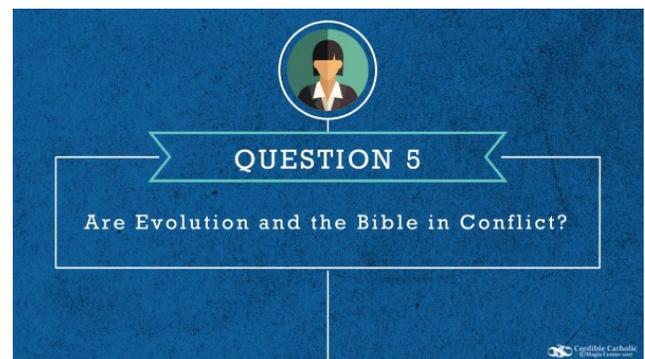
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**SLIDE 85:** Over the years, the Catholic Church has a long history of involvement in scientific development, including the contributions of: Copernicus, Galileo, Louis Pasteur, Gregor Mendel, Fr. Georges Lemaitre, and many others.

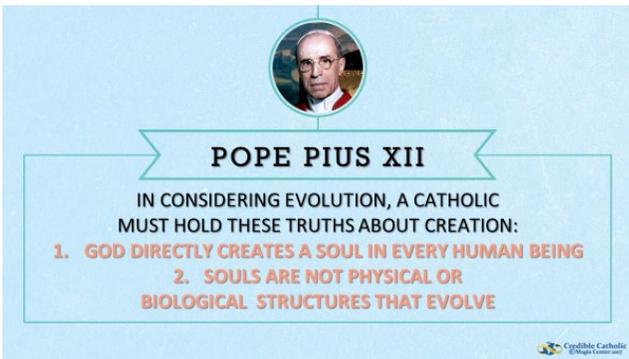


**SLIDE 86:** Galileo's case is often cited as "proof" the Catholic Church is against scientific progress, but that was really more of a political conflict between Galileo and the Pope over how much proof Galileo needed before he published his findings.

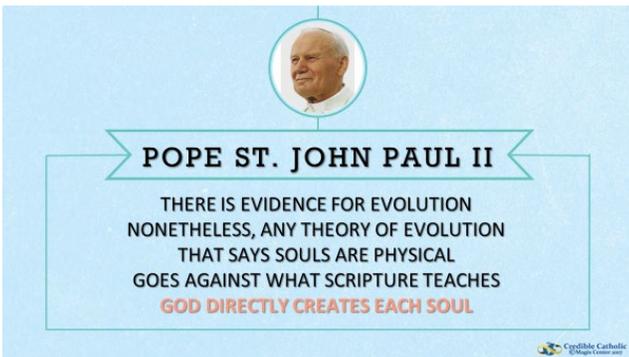


**SLIDE 87:** Another topic where science and faith are often thought to conflict is evolution. Recently, two popes have spoken about evolution.

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**SLIDE 88:** In 1950, Pope Pius XII explained that Catholics must believe two things about creation. First, that God directly creates a soul in every human being, and second, that souls are not physical or biological structures that evolve. If these two truths are maintained, Catholics are free to consider evolution as a scientific account.

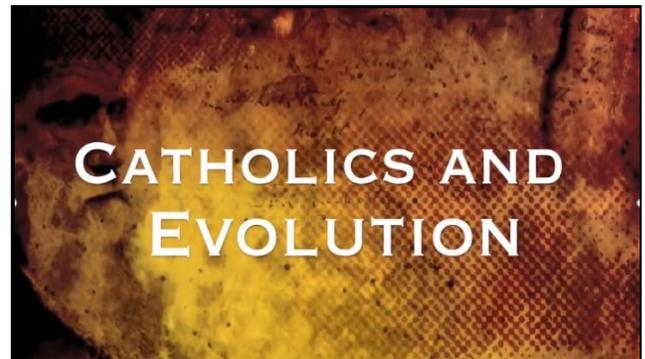


**SLIDE 89:** Then, in 1996, Pope St. John Paul II gave a similar statement. He noted that there is evidence for evolution, and he also cautioned that any theory of evolution that says souls are physical goes against what Scripture teaches. We must maintain the revealed truth that God directly creates each soul.

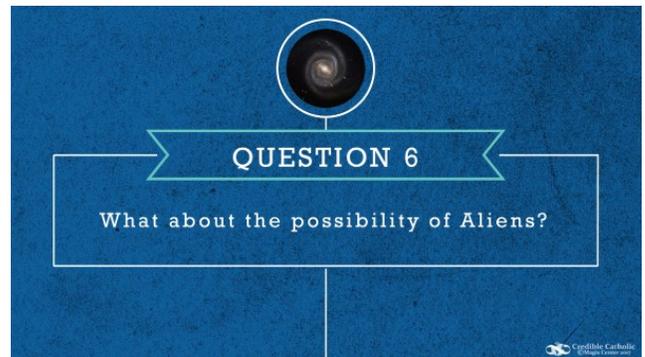


**SLIDE 90:** Let's watch a video explaining the Catholic view of evolution.

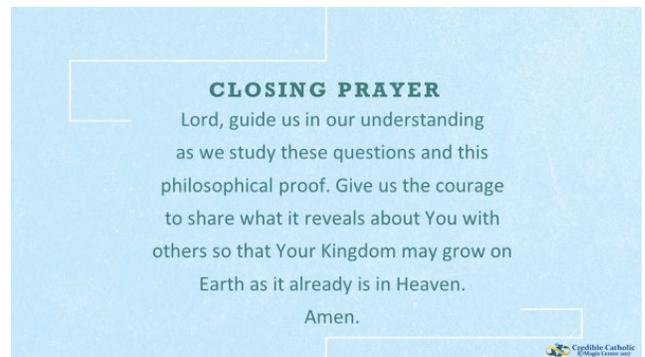
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**SLIDE 91—VIDEO 3-7:** Catholics and Evolution.



**SLIDE 92:** Catholics are also free to consider the existence of aliens. While no evidence exists for life outside of earth, the number of galaxies and stars suggests there may be planets where life could exist. If intelligent aliens were created, we can assume that they would have souls, and that God would want loving relationships with them, and offer them salvation.



**SLIDE 93—CLOSING PRAYER**

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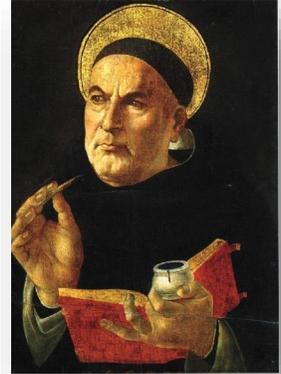
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## CREDIBLE CATHOLIC—7 ESSENTIALS Presentation 3 **ACTIVITIES**

### *Philosophical Proof of God's Existence*

**ACTIVITY #1: Explain a Step of St. Thomas' Argument to Someone Else:** We have given you examples—a chain, dominoes, a chicken and an egg, a book, a weak-link, and twins—to help you understand St. Thomas Aquinas' proof for God's existence. ***Think of an example that you can use to explain ONE of St. Thomas' steps (assigned by the presenter): 1. God is uncaused. 2. God is unrestricted. 3. God is one. 4. God is the cause of all else that exists. Write out your explanation and be ready to share it with the class.***



**ACTIVITY #2: Respond to Richard Dawkins?** Richard Dawkins describes himself as a #6 agnostic, but says he lives like an atheist.



- 1. What is he admitting about science by describing himself this way?***
  
- 2. Why do you think he describes himself like this?***
  
- 3. How would you respond to him if you had the chance?***



## THE 7 ESSENTIAL PRESENTATIONS

**Essential 1—MEDICAL EVIDENCE OF A SOUL:** We show evidence, from **Near-Death Experiences** (NDEs) and **Terminal Lucidity** (a clarity of consciousness sometimes occurring shortly before death in persons with dementia, Alzheimer’s, and irreversible brain damage) that consciousness is not dependent on physical bodies or brains, and therefore, that we have souls that survive bodily death.

**Essential 2—SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE OF GOD’S EXISTENCE:** We give evidence from the **Big Bang**, the **BVG Proof** (that all expanding universes have to have a beginning), **entropy**, and the “**fine-tuning**” of the universe for life, that our universe requires an Intelligent Creator in order to exist.

**Essential 3—PHILOSOPHICAL PROOF OF GOD’S EXISTENCE:** We demonstrate, using reasoning, from **St. Thomas Aquinas**, **C. S. Lewis**, and others, the logical necessity for there being a Transcendent Creator of the universe.

**Essential 4—PROOF OF JESUS’ RESURRECTION AND DIVINITY:** We describe evidence from the **Shroud of Turin**, the **Facecloth of Oviedo**, **Historical Documents** (biblical and non-biblical), and the work of **N. T. Wright**, that the Resurrection of Jesus is an historical fact, and that He is divine.

**Essential 5—WHY BE CATHOLIC?** We show that the Catholic Church is Christ’s only authentic living authority, and give evidence of miracles (through the intercession of **Mary** and the **Saints**, and for the real presence of Christ in the **Eucharist**) that demonstrate God’s work in the Church.

**Essential 6—TRUE HAPPINESS:** We explain the four kinds of happiness (coming from **pleasure**, **accomplishments**, **service of others**, and **a loving relationship with God**) and show why only the latter two can give us the pervasive, enduring, and deep happiness we truly desire and need.

**Essential 7—WHY WOULD AN ALL-LOVING GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?** We guide the learner to understand the **necessity**, **meaning**, and **benefits** of suffering, which are growing in the love of God, others, and ourselves, and attaining happiness for ourselves and others here, and with God for eternity in Heaven! Rev. 3-21-20