

## CATHOLIC DOGMA ON THE SOUL *A Basic Catholic View of Human Nature*

### Theological Grades of Certainty

- Dr. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*

- ⇒ *De fide* – infallible teaching.
- ⇒ *Sententia fidei proxima* - doctrine that all regard as true, but not yet explicitly defined as infallible.
- ⇒ *Sententia theologica certa* – guaranteed by intrinsic connection to Divine Revelation.
- ⇒ *Sententia communis* – doctrine; generally accepted by theologians.
- ⇒ Theological opinions of lesser grades of certainty are called probable, more probable, well-founded, pious and tolerated opinions.

### Do Animals ‘Go to Heaven’?

- The animal’s sensitive soul is not immaterial, rational, or *immortal*.
- Animals are not capable of moral acts (i.e. do good or evil) and so can’t merit reward / punishment.
- No compelling logic of faith or of reason to argue animals alive on this earth will ‘go to Heaven.’
- God will create a New Heaven and a New Earth (Apoc. 21:1). He could populate it with animals if He so wills, but St. Thomas Aquinas argues convincingly that there is no need for it.
- Moreover, nothing with a corruptible nature will exist in Heaven.
- See *Summa Theologiae*, Supplement to the Third Part, Question 91, Article 5.

### Catholic Dogma on the Soul

- ❖ Man has a material body and a spiritual soul – ***de fide*** (4th Lateran Council, 1215)
- ❖ The rational soul is the form of the body – ***de fide*** (Council of Vienne, 1311)
- ❖ Each person has an individual soul – ***de fide*** (5th Lateran Council, 1515)
- ❖ The human soul is immortal – ***de fide*** (Scripture, e.g. Mt 10:28; Mt 25:46)
- ❖ The individual soul is created *ex nihilo* by God – ***sententia certa*** (Pius XII’s *Humani Generis*, 1950)

### Death

- In this life, the soul and body are inseparable. Natural death is the separation of the soul and body.
- The soul can suffer natural death (separation from the body). At the supernatural level, the soul can be dead (lack sanctifying grace). Eternal death is when the soul [and body] suffer in hell forever.

### “Image and Likeness”

See Genesis 1:26

- ❖ All men have God’s image, reflected chiefly in our soul (mind and will). We can think of this on the level of nature, for all humans are God’s creatures.
- ❖ All men have the capacity to be ‘like God’ as we can receive His supernatural grace. The more grace we have, the more virtuous we are, the holier we become, the more ‘like God’ we will be. We can think of this on the supernatural level, for we become adopted children of God by sanctifying grace.
- ❖ Our end is perfect union with God which requires us to be perfect *like* our Heavenly Father.

\* See also Question #7 and #8 in The Fatima Center’s Catholic Catechism.