



'Let us make man in our own image,' and this You did, oh eternal Trinity, that man might participate in everything belonging to You, the most high and eternal Trinity'



Catholic beliefs about the sanctity of human life

The Catholic Church teaches that everyone has the right to life and that 'Human life is sacred because from the beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end' (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] 2258). Catholic views about the dignity of human life are rooted in their fundamental belief in the sanctity of human life

Attitudes towards abortion

The Catholic Church believes that God gives us the gift of life at the moment of conception "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you"

From conception onwards the Catholic Church believes that no one has the right to interfere with anyone's life and that we have a duty to preserve life.

The Church will always think that adoption is a better solution to abortion in the case of an unwanted child.

In some situations the Church will support the doctrine of double effect.

Other Christian Views

The Church of England recognises that there will be different views on the issue of abortion, but summarises its own position to be as follows: 'The Church of England combines strong opposition to abortion with a recognition that there can be – strictly limited – conditions under which it may be morally preferable to any available alternative.' It considers the number of abortions in the UK to be unacceptably high.

Humanist

Although there is no 'official humanist' position on abortion, humanists tend towards the pro-choice position. They think that abortion is morally acceptable as a personal choice. Humanists do not consider life 'sacred' but they have respect for human life. They think that, rather than 'sanctity of life', the 'quality of life' of mother, unborn, or both is much more useful in helping us decide what to do, especially if there is a conflict of interests. While acknowledging that it is a complex situation with lots of factors, humanists think that preference should be given to a more mature human being who already exists in the world. Effectively this supports the woman's right to choose.

HUMANISM
in a nutshell

1. Putting human beings and other living things at the centre of your moral outlook

2. Seeing the world as a natural place and looking to science and reason to make sense of it

3. Promoting and supporting human flourishing across all frontiers, and championing human rights for everyone

The Bible

Catholics believe that the Bible emerged from certain events, which were interpreted and passed on in oral traditions, before eventually being written down by human authors in different literary forms.

Catholics believe that the Bible contains God's revelation. Revelation means "uncovering" or "showing". In the Bible God communicates himself and his will to human beings.

"In order to discover the sacred authors intention, the reader must take into account the condition of their time and culture, literary genres in use at that time, and the modes of feeling, speaking and narrating" (CCC110)

We must read the Bible in the context of when it was written including the literary forms.

Catholics believe that the authors of the Bible were inspired however they do not believe that everything that is written in the Bible is 100% true.

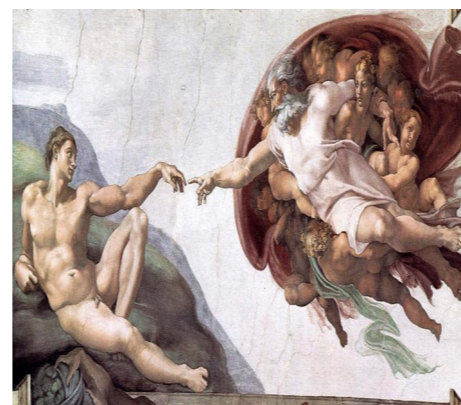
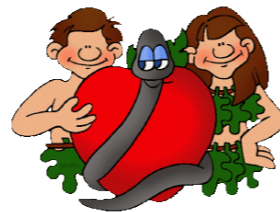
Fundamentalist Christians believe that in order to understand the Bible all we need to do is read it. They take every word in the Bible as literally true. They have a literalist approach.

What does Genesis teach us about humans?

Human dignity and sanctity of life. This gives humans a special status and sanctity in creation. We reflect something of God in our intelligence, our free will and our ability to relate and love.



Goodness of Creation. Again and again, at the end of each of the six days of Creation, God declares what was created that day to be 'good'. All that is brought into being by the omnibenevolent, generous and living God is good.



Origins and Meanings 2



What does Genesis teach us about God and Human Beings?

God is eternal. Genesis 1:1: 'In the beginning God...' – only God has no beginning.



God is omnibenevolent (all-loving). God is infinitely loving and infinitely generous. He is the Supreme Being who needs nothing and so cannot be self-interested, and yet he created the universe with us in it. So Creation is the result of God's love. Creation comes into existence out of God's infinite love. It is 'God-loved' into being.

1In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit hovered over the water. 3God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. (Genesis 1:1-3)

God as transcendent = God is beyond our reality, beyond time and space.

Creation happens at God's word. 1:3 'God said, "Let there be light", and there was light' – God speaks creation into existence. For Christians, the universe is not a random accident, a cosmic coincidence that just happens to be here, nor has it always been here.

Although the second Creation account tells us of God's omnipotence and other qualities, it is less cosmic and more anthropocentric (focused on human beings), underlining God's closeness to us and his desire to be in relationship with us. It is a story about human beings and their place in creation and in relationship to the Creator God.

Imago Dei and Catholic Social Teaching

For Catholics Genesis tells the truth that God is Creator of everything, that creation is "good" (Genesis 1:31) and that human beings were made in the image and likeness of God and given the task of caring for creation. Catholic call this task "stewardship of creation"

To care for creation means to protect and conserve it using the earth's resources in a sustainable way. This benefits both the earth itself and human beings, especially the poorest people living in LEDC, who are most affected by climate change even though they have done the least to cause it.

Dignity is a key principle of Catholic Social Teaching; it is also one of CAFOD's key values: 'We believe in the intrinsic dignity of every person. We work with all people regardless of race, gender, religion or politics.' CAFOD says that part of its vision is a world where 'the rights and dignity of every person are respected'.

St Vincent de Paul said: 'God does not consider the outcome of the good work undertaken but the charity that accompanied it'. The SVP says that its vision is inspired by Christ's message to love our neighbour as ourselves. The Society is non-judgemental about those asking for assistance – it will help anyone in need, as long as the local membership is able to do so.

CAFOD
Just one world



St Vincent's
a place of help, hope and opportunity