

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners:

I am pleased to report that forty-five adults are participating in our catechism class, "What We Believe & Why." In our first session we discussed some of the arguments for the existence of God. For the benefit of those who are unable to attend the class I would like to share these arguments with you here. While we cannot "prove" that God exists like we can prove that $2+2=4$, there are many strong arguments for the existence of God. Here are three of them.

The first is the Argument from Existence or "Causality." I know that I exist. I also know that I did not create myself. Just as I know my parents and their parents did not create themselves. Neither evolution theory and the "big bang" theory can explain how the material universe came into existence. They attempt to explain how the universe developed but they cannot explain why it exists. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that there must be some power outside the material universe that is responsible for the fact that the world exists.

The second argument is the Argument from Desire. Every natural innate desire in us, that is- desires that we are born with, such as the desire for food, drink, sleep, sex, knowledge and friendship, corresponds to some real object that can satisfy that desire. However, there exists in us a desire that cannot be fully satisfied by anything or person on earth. Therefore, there must exist something which transcends the limits of space and time that can satisfy this desire. This "something" is what we call "God."

What we desire that no thing and no person in this world can completely satisfy is love. Think about it. We learn to love other people and desire to be with them always only to be separated from them by death, theirs or ours. Our human existence would truly be absurd if this is all there is and our desire for love was never completely satisfied.

As the Christian writer C.S. Lewis put it; "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

A third argument for the existence of God is the Argument from Design. The universe displays a remarkable degree of order. The human body for example is the wonderful result of some very complex interactions. The intelligible order we see in nature is either the result of random chance or intelligent design. To say that this intelligent order is the result of random chance is unreasonable. The intelligent order of nature points to an Intelligent Designer.

In his book, *Why Preach?*, Father Peter Cameron offers another argument for the existence of God based on our human experience. Father Cameron uses the word "I" to signify our humanity. He writes: "I expect happiness. I possess no contract, no written guarantee, but something inscribed in the very fiber of my *I* certifies that I have been promised happiness. We live looking for that "thing" that makes life worth living, that gives life consistency, substance, significance. The expectation of happiness exists in me with the force of an inviolable pledge. We are certain that we have a "right" to happiness and fulfillment.... Regardless of the means they use, every person at every moment strains toward this goal...This is the motive of all actions of all persons, including those about to hang themselves.

In fact, we feel cheated if happiness does not happen in our lives. We get grumpy . . . aggrieved. I do not live for five minutes without pursuing something that will fill this level of being in me. But, just as I cannot adequately fulfill my desires, neither can I make myself happy. Even more, I am not able even to conceive of all that I require to be happy.

And, as with my desires, I cannot excise this expectation that is identical with my *I*. Expectation is the very structure of my life. I live looking for Something more . . . something totalizing . . . the consummate Something within something. But if I possess an innate expectation for happiness, then it is reasonable for me to conclude that this expectation is meant to be fulfilled. Yet I, left to myself, am not the fullness that I need. And since I cannot satisfy my expectation for completeness, then it only makes sense for me to look to the One who put that expectation in me in the first place—my Maker—in order to find the fulfillment for which my heart languishes.

Once again, the expectation of my *I* for happiness has me looking beyond my *I* to the *You* who has fashioned me to live with such urgent expectation. The more I contemplate this fact of my *I*, the more I am filled with anticipation and wonder about the happiness that I am sure exists as much as I exist. And my experience tells me that the only thing that will fulfill my heart totally is not a thing at all: it is a Person.”

If you haven't yet come to our class “What We Believe and Why” you are still welcome to join us. This week we will be discussing why Jesus gave us the Sacraments and how they continue His work. We meet in the Notre Dame Center on either Tuesday evenings from 7 to 8:30 or Thursday mornings from 9:30 to 11 am.

With my prayers,

Fr. Conley