

Challenges to the Catholic Faith Today

An Introduction to Catholic Apologetics

with Mark Brumley, Facilitator



Challenges to the Catholic Faith Today

An Introduction to Catholic Apologetics

6 Sessions

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6 Sessions

Session 1: February 28

Session 2: March 7

Session 3: March 14

Session 4: March 21

Session 5: March 28

Session 6: April 4

Challenges to the Catholic Faith Today

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6 Sessions

We will explore questions about:

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We will explore questions about:

- God, creation, and the human person

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We will explore questions about:

- God, creation, and the human person
- The Bible, Jesus, who he is, what he did, and why he matters

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We will explore questions about:

- God, creation, and the human person
- The Bible, Jesus, who he is, what he did, and why he matters
- The Church, world religions, and human destiny

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We will conclude by considering:

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➤ The Deadly Sins of Apologetics

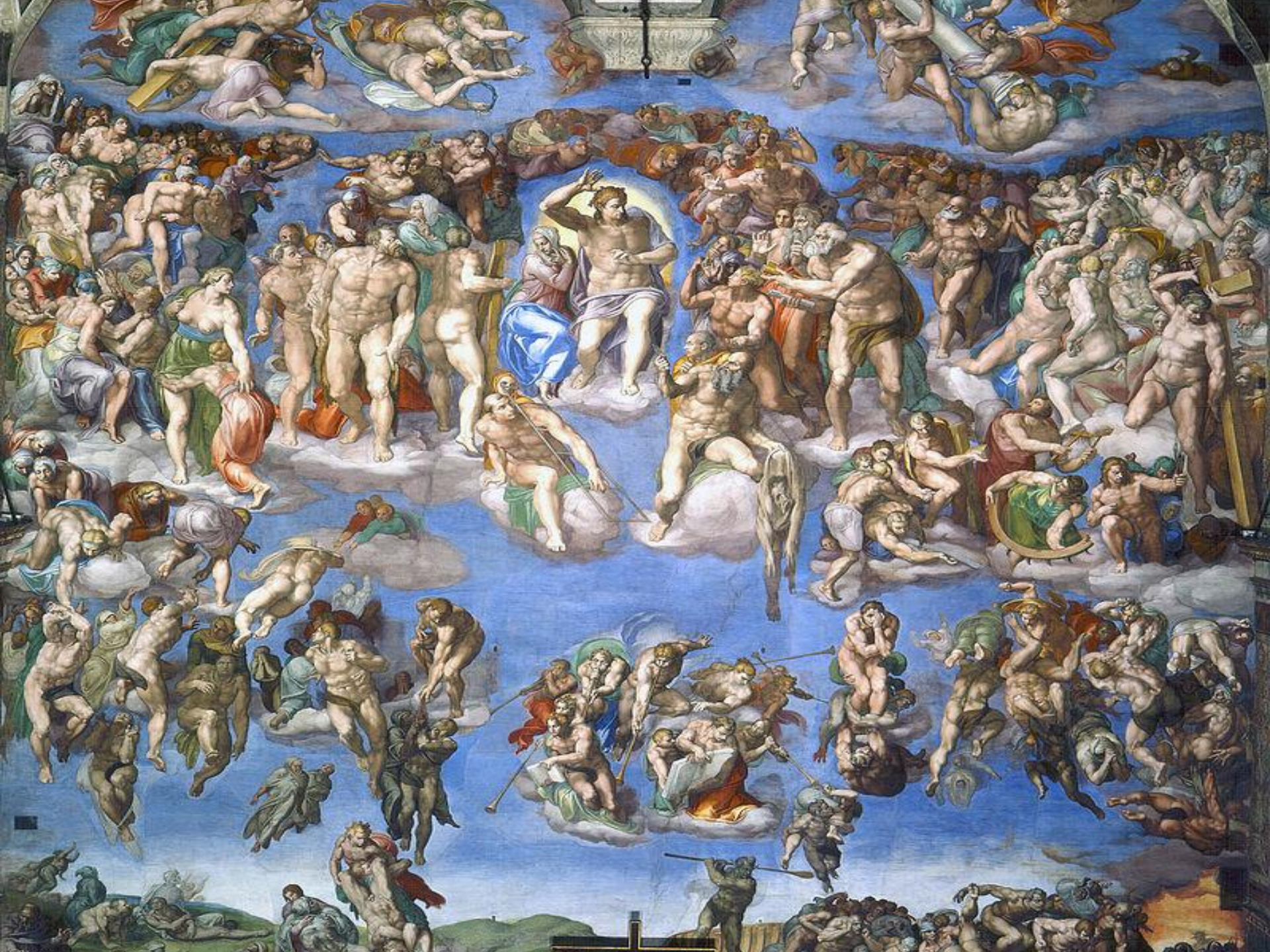
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An Introduction to Catholic Apologetics

6 Sessions

We will conclude by considering:

- **The Deadly Sins of Apologetics**
- The Habits of the Faithful Apologist



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An Introduction to Catholic Apologetics

Tonight

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An Introduction to Catholic Apologetics

Tonight

- What Apologetics is

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Tonight

- What Apologetics is
- Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling

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- What Apologetics is
- Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling
- Thinking and Talking about God and Religion

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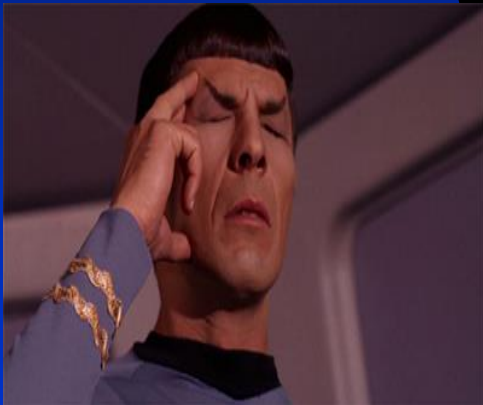
What Apologetics is

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What Apologetics is

What do
you think?



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What Apologetics is

It's not going around
apologizing for being a
Christian!

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What Apologetics is

- the aspect of Christian mission concerned to show that the mysteries of God and his Word are worthy of faith (credence).

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What Apologetics does:

- considers the signs of God's revelation and focuses on showing their credibility

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What Apologetics means:

- “defense” or “reasoned explanation”, from a Greek word meaning this

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What Apologetics means:

- “defense” or “reasoned explanation”, from a Greek word meaning this
- “defending the faith” without being defensive

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What Apologetics is NOT:

- A replacement for faith

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What Apologetics is NOT:

- A replacement for faith
- Irresistible proof of Christianity or Catholicism

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- Philosophy of religion

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What Apologetics is NOT:

- A replacement for faith
- Irresistible proof of Christianity or Catholicism
- Philosophy of religion
- An excuse so Christians never have to say they're sorry

Apologetics in Scripture

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Jesus' miracles were apologetical signs to confirm his identity and message:

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Jesus' miracles were apologetical signs to confirm his identity and message:

Jesus confirms his authority to forgive sins by healing the paralytic man:

“But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth”— he said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.” (Mk 2:10-11).

Apologetics in Scripture

Peter pointed to Jesus' miracles as apologetical signs to confirm his identity and message:

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.” (Acts 2:22-25)

Apologetics in Scripture

1 Peter 3:15: “Always be prepared to make a defense (*apologian*; *apologia*) to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you yet do it with gentleness and reverence”.

Apologetics in Scripture

2 Corinthians 10:5: “We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ ...”

Apologetics in Scripture

Philippians 1:7: “It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense (apologia) and confirmation of the gospel”.

Apologetics in Scripture

Paul preached to pagans in Athens, at the Areopagus (Mars Hill). He quoted pagan poets to help make his case that the God of Jesus Christ was the “unknown god” to whom the Athenians had dedicated a statue.

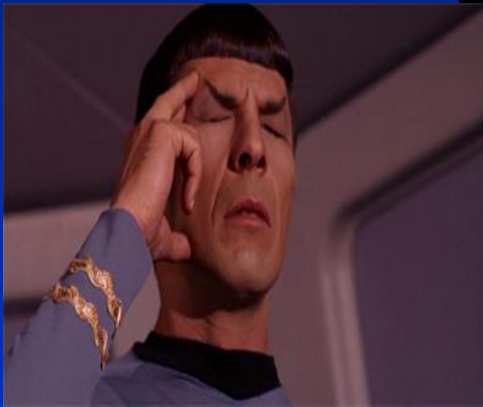


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What Apologetics is

What do
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Tonight

- What Apologetics is
- Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling

Apologetics

Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling

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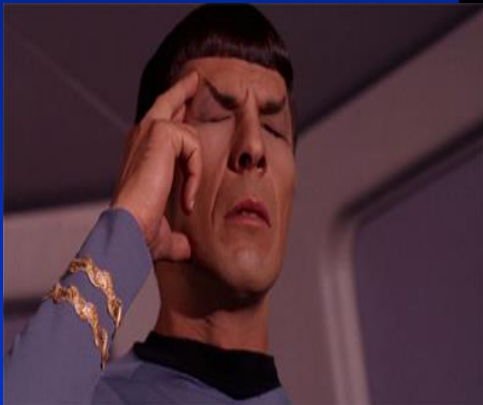
To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.

Apologetics

Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling

To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.

What do you think?



Apologetics

Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling

Believing has to do with faith

Apologetics

Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling

Believing has to do with faith

What does it mean to believe something or someone?

Apologetics

Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling

Thinking has to do with reason

What does it mean to think about something?

Apologetics

Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling

Stories are narratives

How do you understand the idea of
“story”?

Believing and Thinking

Faith and Reasonableness

Believing and Thinking

Faith and Reasonableness

- **The Catholic view:** faith and reason are different but authentic faith is reasonable, even though some Catholic beliefs are beyond human reason's power to know, apart from God disclosing them (revelation).

Believing and Thinking

Faith and Reasonableness

- Faith and Reason are like two wings that allow the mind to soar (Pope St John Paul II; encyclical *Fides et Ratio*)

Believing and Thinking

Faith and Reasonableness

- **Faith** is the (graced) act (or virtue) by which we believe God and what he reveals on the authority of God who reveals.

Believing and Thinking

Faith and Reasonableness

- **Reason** is the power of the mind to know truth, either from perceiving a thing as self-evidently true, or through experience, or from inference.

Believing and Thinking

Faith and Reasonableness

Faith believes on the basis of what God reveals.

Reason knows on the basis of what the divinely created human mind apprehends, judges, and reasons about.

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Faith and Reasonableness

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Reason knows on the basis of what the divinely created human mind apprehends, judges, and reasons about.

Because **faith believes** what God says (**revelation**; the Word of God) and **human reason** receives from the divine Reason the **power to know**, **faith and reason** cannot contradict each other.

Believing and Thinking

Faith and Reasonableness

Faith and Reason have their respective areas of truth, though they also overlap.

Catholic View of Faith and Reason

Reason

(things that the human mind
can know on its own:
philosophical truths, science,
history, how-to, etc)

Faith

(things that the human mind
can affirm based on what
God has revealed)

**Area of overlap: Things we can
know by either faith or reason**

Objective and Subjective Paths of Knowing and Believing

Your truth, my truth, and the Truth?

Or, as the Vorlons say: understanding is a three-edged sword: there's your side, the other side, and the truth?



Objective and Subjective Paths of Knowing and Believing

Objective aspect of truth refers to what is the case, regardless of what you or I think is so.

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Objective aspect of truth refers to what is the case, regardless of what you or I think is so.

Subjective aspect of truth refers your or my assent regarding what is the case

Objective and Subjective Paths of Knowing and Believing

Objective and Subjective Aspects of Truth apply to our acts of believing and knowing

Objective and Subjective Paths of Knowing and Believing

Objective and Subjective Aspects of Truth apply to our acts of believing and knowing

This is because faith and reason both unite us to the truth

Stories

We are all situated as knowers and believers

Storytelling

We are all situated as knowers and believers

Our situation includes our sense of the stories
we see ourselves as part of

Storytelling

We are all situated as knowers and believers

Our situation includes our sense of the stories we see ourselves as part of

Our desires, inclinations, hopes, and fears are part of our situation, too

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We are all situated as knowers and believers

Our situation includes our sense of the stories we see ourselves as part of

Our desires, inclinations, hopes, and fears are part of our situation, too

Our sense of our story affects what we assume or accept as “what everybody knows” and “what everybody wants or does”

Storytelling

We are all situated as knowers and believers

Our stories are our frameworks of authenticity, worldviews, values systems, sets of desires and aspirations, structures of plausibility, and networks of commitments.

Storytelling

We are all situated as knowers and believers

Our stories are our frameworks of authenticity, worldviews, values systems, sets of desires and aspirations, structures of plausibility, and networks of commitments

Our stories deeply affect what we think is reasonably to believe and what we desire for ourselves and others

Storytelling

Evangelization involves presenting the true, good, and beautiful story of God's love for us in Jesus

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How well someone can understand depends in part on how he interprets based on his situation or his sense of his story

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Questions, objections, rejections of the gospel are things to which apologetics responds

Thinking and Talking about God and Religion

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Our language uses images

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Images are part of how we interpret reality and communicate with one another about it

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God is infinite; our language is drawn from our experience with finite things, so it is hard to speak accurately about God

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Images are part of how we interpret reality and communicate with one another about it

God is infinite; our language is drawn from our experience with finite things, so it is hard to speak accurately about God

Many problems in religion and in thinking about God arise from the limits of human language

Thinking and Talking about God and Religion

Our language uses images

Much of apologetics is clarifying mistakes due to misusing language about God and religion

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Much of apologetics is clarifying mistakes due to misusing language about God and religion

C. S. Lewis' example from his book *Miracles*, the chapter called "Horrid Red Things".

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Summary

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- Believing, Thinking, and Storytelling
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- Believing, Thinking, and Stories
- Thinking and Talking about God and religion