

The Baltimore Catechism

69. What three things are necessary to make a sin mortal?

To make a sin mortal these three things are needed: First, the thought, desire, word, action or omission must be seriously wrong or considered seriously wrong; second, the sinner must be mindful of the serious wrong; third, the sinner must fully consent to it.

70. What is venial sin?

Venial sin is a less serious offense against the law of God, which does not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and which can be pardoned even without sacramental confession.

71. How can a sin be venial?

A sin can be venial in two ways: First, when the evil done is not seriously wrong; second, when the evil done is seriously wrong, but the sinner sincerely believes it is only slightly wrong or does not give full consent to it.

72. How does venial sin harm us?

Venial sin harms us by making us less fervent in the service of God, by weakening our power to resist mortal sin and by making us deserving of God's punishments in this life or in Purgatory.



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How Old Is the Earth?

One of our favorite drives this summer was through the Bighorn National Forest in Wyoming. We left Buffalo, Wyoming and took US-14/Bighorn Scenic Byway to head to Cody, Wyoming for our base camp for trips to Yellowstone National Park. Along the Bighorn Scenic Byway — a 47-mile paved road that reaches nearly 10,000 feet in elevation — we came across several signs like the one in the middle of this page.

The first chapter of Genesis contains the order and details of six “days” worth of divine work by God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth. These six “days” of creation are not in conflict with the age of Madison Limestone, rock dating to about 330–360 million years ago (from the Mississippian period) found in the Bighorn Mountains.

A colleague of mine at Church Militant, Brad Eli, writes that

“the English word ‘day’ as used in the creation narrative is actually translated from the Hebrew word *yom*. This is the same word used in such familiar phrases as *Yom Kippur* (‘the Day of Atonement’) and *Yom Yahweh* (‘the Day of the Lord’). The word ‘day’ may stand for a day, a week, a month,

or any indefinite period of time” (https://www.churchmilitant.com/catholicism/article/catholicism_creationism).

While it’s interesting to consider an entire geological age occurring in a 24-hour period, it’s equally interesting to consider a “day” lasting the length of a geological period. Between the second and fifth days of creation, the waters were busy carving mountain ranges, canyons, farmland and coastlines. God put the creative forces in place, and, over millions of years, from the Bighorn Mountains to Yosemite Valley to the Great Lakes, from sea to shining sea, He formed this great continent and the world. God was in no rush.

It was incredibly remarkable to consider all this atop Glacier Point in Yosemite National Park last week. The headwall of Yosemite Valley sits between Half Dome, Ahwiyah Point, Basket Dome and North Dome. The glacier receded

southeast, carving the walls of the valley in stark, steep, vertical fashion. How long this took — or how long God allowed this to take — is a great mystery. But to consider God’s patient creative force lasting over millions of years is astounding! He set glaciers, rivers,



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volcanos, earthquakes and hurricanes in motion over a geological age of time to form the earth and “saw that it was good.”

I wasn't one to dismiss Genesis as myth, but I certainly was one to dismiss the “geological timescale” (see <https://geology.utah.gov/map-pub/survey-notes/glad-you-asked/glad-you-asked-how-do-geologists-know-how-old-a-rock-is/>). To blindly dismiss legitimate scientific findings in complete favor of theology is an error. It is also an error to dismiss theology in complete favor of natural science. Both of these errors put God into a box.

One of the most famous people to dismiss theology in complete favor of science was, of course, Charles Darwin. The biggest bone to pick with Darwin is not *evolution* (common descent) but *natural selection*. Natural selection (random mutations giving rise to new species) was Darwin's explanation for how evolution occurred. Darwin's observations on the Galapagos Islands turn out to be of *microevolution* (what happens within a discrete species). His theory was that these microevolutions can form new species, something that he could never prove and which has never been proven (transitory fossil records of intermediate species simply do not exist). Darwin himself knew this, titling the chapter in which he discussed this topic “On the Imperfection of the Fossil Record.”

Scientists are expected to prove theories on empirical evidence. Darwin provided no such evidence. He simply made observations and derived a hypothesis of natural selection without any scientific proof (see George Sim Johnston, *Did Darwin Get It Right? Catholics and the Theory of Evolution*, pp. 22; 26–27). Darwin was a lousy scientist.

The fossil record alone is the most damning to Darwin's theory. The Cambrian explosion — a

period from about 541 million years ago — is where animal phyla (cell classification) first appear in the fossil record. No transitional species appear before this fossil record. Of the Cambrian explosion, Darwin himself said, “If numerous species belonging to the same genera or families have really started into life all at once, the fact would be fatal to my theory of descent with slow modification through natural selection” (ibid., p. 32).

So a bunch of other lousy scientists defended and promoted Darwin's theory. It has become the gospel of the Culture of Death, where its useful idiots have bought the lie without an iota of intellectual curiosity. The theory's materialistic view has spawned a litany of bad fruits: climate change alarmism, population control, abortion and contraception. None of these befit a proper worldview of a baptized, believing Catholic.

A proper worldview is a biblical worldview, defined by the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. It's a worldview that sifts the wheat of the world's culture to leave only the truth on the threshing floor. It is your duty as a baptized Catholic of goodwill to adopt this biblical worldview.

Be proactive in understanding your need to recognize Satan's brood of vipers and their lies. What makes it difficult is that all lies are not straight-out lies. Most falsehoods contain a portion of truth. This is why a well-formed conscience is essential in sifting lies from truth. It takes fact-based intellectual scrutiny backed by sacramental grace to separate the half-truths from the truths. Don't take anything on trust, especially from mainstream media. Don't delay your duty any longer. Pray your Rosary, go to confession and go to Mass regularly.

God bless you!



Yosemite Valley Headwall from Glacier Point



El Capitan, Half Dome, Cathedral Ledge from Tunnel View



May Lake

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“Now, it can be argued that Darwin's hostility toward Christianity is beside the point. Shouldn't a scientific theory be judged on its own merits? Yes, of course — if the theory is truly scientific and confirmed by empirical observation. Isaac Newton was as strange as they come. ... But Newton's scientific theories were rigorously formulated. ... An ideology dressed up as a science is truly a different matter. Theories like Darwinism ... explain very little; they are elastic and vague enough to absorb almost any contradiction.”

George Sim Johnston, *Did Darwin Get It Right? Catholics and the Theory of Evolution*, p. 22

My dearest children: **You are in mortal danger!** I failed to properly teach you the precepts of the Catholic Church and the beauty, richness and completeness of the Catholic faith. Therefore, I have taken on this little project. My goal is to produce this newsletter every month and send it along with little tokens to help you appreciate the gift. It is meant to bring about a moment of reflection and discussion. I love you, and God bless you!