

Class 2

Who is God?

Q: Who is God to you?

Q: Where does your belief in God come from?

A: Upbringing - a church family or a person or people outside of the family who taught/influenced. School/College.

A: Creation/nature - the perception of a creator behind the universe we see and experience. A feeling of awe and majesty, a mind behind everything.

A: The Bible/ Scripture/ teaching - 'inspired'; God's story, made alive by the Holy Spirit

A: Going to Church - worship/prayer/influence of priest or clergy or an individual/ congregation. The sacraments; baptism, Eucharist. Prayer is more listening than asking

A: Experience/calling/yearning/longing - an awareness of an unseen hand guiding life/ circumstances. Conscience, insight, discernment. Directly through dreams/angels/miracles/signs and wonders/ hearing God speak. A 'spiritual DNA'.

Q: How does God reveal Himself?

A: Through all the above.

Q; What is God like?

A: God is:- Holy (separate, transcendent)

Omnipresent (everywhere)

Omnipotent (All-powerful)

Omniscient (All knowing)

Eternal (outside space and time)

Trinity.

Creator.

The creeds begin with belief in 'God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth' (Apostles) or, 'one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of Heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and

unseen'(Nicene). They begin, therefore, stating that what we see revealed around us, is not just nature, but creation. It is not just 'what happens to be there', the accidental outcome of a series of chemical reactions at the beginning of time, but the work of a cosmic artist, a Creator who created out of nothing. (Psalm 8, Psalm 139)

Above all, God is LOVE! - Unchanging, forgiving, faithful, steadfast (Hebrew word, 'hesed')

'Before God made us, he loved us, and this love has never faded, nor ever shall. And in this love, he has done all his works and in this love he has made everything for our benefit and in this love, our life is everlasting'. (Julian of Norwich)

How else does God reveal Himself?

In the Old Testament - YHWH - God refers to Himself on confronting Moses in the 'burning bush'. Literally means 'I am', 'I exist' - translated from Hebrew four letters, as YAHWEH.

By creating the Hebrew people from Abraham.

By speaking through the prophets and through events.

In the New Testament -God reveals Himself perfectly in Jesus Christ, 'the Word made flesh'. (the Incarnation - 'Immanuel' meaning, 'God with us')

By the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost thereby creating the Church of God

By choosing Saul to be the Apostle to the non-Jews as Paul.

The further worldwide mission to the whole world by apostles and evangelists and the Church in order to fulfil the '*Missio dei*' (Mission of God). *'Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission, not vice versa. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love.'*

'In particular, we have begun to see that the church of Jesus Christ is not the purpose or goal of the gospel, but rather its instrument and witness.... God's mission is calling and sending us, the church

of Jesus Christ, to be a missionary church in our own societies, in the cultures in which we find ourselves."

'The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community of faith that adheres to Jesus. To obstruct this is to block God's purposes in and through God's people'

As individuals, God reveals Himself through conscience and a desire to live rightly - morals.

Through a sense of yearning and incompleteness.

'Mystical experience.' Is there something of 'God' in everyone of us? In our DNA? c/f Genesis 1: 26, "*Then God said, 'let us make humankind in our image'.*"