

The Human Longing For God

Table of Contents

MAN'S SEARCH FOR GOD AND HIS DESIRE FOR TRUTH AND LOVE	3
THE HUMAN LONGING FOR GOD	3
MORALITY	6

The Human Longing For God

“As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God.”

(Ps 42:2, NABRE)

“The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for:”

(Catechism of the Catholic Church 27)

Your faith journey that brings you to the RCIA is your journey toward God through His Son, Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is also our common journey to truth, happiness, and love in the context of the Christian community.

The Human Longing For God

MAN'S SEARCH FOR GOD AND HIS DESIRE FOR TRUTH AND LOVE

1. *"In many ways, throughout history down to the present day, men have given expression to their quest for God in their religious beliefs and behavior: in their prayers, sacrifices, rituals, meditations, and so forth. These forms of religious expression, despite the ambiguities they often bring with them, are so universal that one may well call man a religious being."*¹

God gave us minds that will never be satisfied until they know the truth. He gave us hearts that long for absolute love. These goals are attainable because God is truth and love and wants to share His life with us.

2. Our faith journey to truth, joy and personal fulfillment is toward the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."²

THE HUMAN LONGING FOR GOD

3. *"He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being,' as even some of your poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'"*³
4. *"With his openness to truth and beauty, his sense of moral goodness, his freedom and the voice of his conscience, with his longings for the infinite and for happiness, man questions himself about God's existence. In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul. The soul, the "seed of eternity we bear in ourselves, irreducible to the merely material," can have its origin only in God."*⁴
5. We want to be happy, and we desire peace and personal fulfillment. We also seek to love and be loved. We will find happiness love and peace in Jesus who shows us God the Father, and sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts. *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you."*⁵
6. On Earth, each of us begins to find divinely given happiness, love and peace on earth. But its fullness will come only in heaven.
7. God's kindness is eternal and He is ever gracious, merciful and compassionate. *"You continue your kindness through a thousand generations."*⁶
8. We can tell that God wants us to be happy in three ways – Creation, Providence and

¹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 28) Print.

² St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 1,1

³ Acts 17:26-28

⁴ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 33) Print.

⁵ Acts 1:8

⁶ Jer. 32:18

The Human Longing For God

Salvation.

- **Creation** – In His wisdom and love God gave us our lives and a world that was created “Good” for us to live in, and care for.⁷
 - **Providence** – The Lord continues to make His presence and purpose known to bring us love happiness and peace. Therefore we seek God in the experiences, needs and hopes of people, all things as well as in the beauty of creation. This is evidenced by the lives of holy men and women – the saints, as well as in natural events many times taken for granted like a magnificent sunrise or a sunset, the majestic snow capped mountains, or the beautiful flowers. *“Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them.”*⁸
 - **Salvation** – God’s greatest sign of His desire for our happiness is manifested in the saving work of His Son. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”*⁹
9. We are too often tempted to try to find happiness in a world without God, seeking satisfaction in money, food, sex, drugs, possessions, and other earthly sources. Jesus tells us to, *“seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness,”* and God will provide for all of our needs.¹⁰ We will be able to live in peace, love and happiness no matter what the circumstances.
10. God has put desires in our hearts to draw us to His love, happiness and peace. He has implanted:
- Love of truth – even a liar has this hunger but suppresses it.
 - Attraction to goodness – we have a desire for moral goodness that leads us to God.
 - Enchantment with beauty – *“One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek: to dwell in the Lord’s house all the days of my life, to gaze on the Lord’s beauty.”*¹¹
 - Human affection – Experiencing human affection is a powerful opening to the possibility of experiencing God’s love. We can meet Christ in our acts of kindness. *“Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”*¹²
 - Personal relationship with Jesus – The desire for a personal relationship with Jesus brings us closer to God and the hope for love, happiness and peace. *“If you know me, then you will also know my Father.”*¹³ Jesus draws us to

⁷ Gen. 1:27-31

⁸ Lk. 12:27

⁹ Jn. 3:16

¹⁰ Mt. 6:33

¹¹ Ps. 27:4

¹² Mt. 25:40

¹³ Jn. 14:7

The Human Longing For God

Himself by this truth, goodness, beauty and love, manifested by His passion and resurrection.

God calls us to the life of grace which conforms us to Christ. This calling is God's pure gift, over and above any natural capacities, elevating us to membership in God's family, making us sharers in the divine nature and a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

11. God comes to meet us and draw us to Himself. We respond to this call by going to God through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. **We should be aiming our sights towards God, to enter a love relationship that grants us happiness.** *“What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him.”*¹⁴ We cannot do any of this on our own. We need the grace of God, imparted by the Holy Spirit who forms us as children of God in Jesus Christ. *Our human capacity for God is matched by the divine initiative. The divine initiative in the work of grace precedes, prepares, and elicits the free response of man. Grace responds to the deepest yearnings of human freedom, calls freedom to cooperate with it, and perfects freedom.*¹⁵
12. God thinks of each one of us as someone lovable; *“I have called you by name: you are mine - Because you are precious in my eyes and honored, and I love you.”*¹⁶ God does not think that we should be afraid of him, for we need not fear one who loves us. It is God's love that makes us lovable, above all through divine adoption in the act of salvation. Through His Son Jesus, we have been saved from our sins and restored to friendship with God.
13. God loves us like true friends. *“See, upon the palms of my hands I have engraved you.”*¹⁷ God loves and accepts us with both our strong and weak points. He treats us like a friend who knows everything about us and still accepts us. At the same time God wills us to be more than we are. His grace-filled love transforms us into His adopted children in Jesus Christ His Son.¹⁸ St. Paul said, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved.”*
14. God's greatest proof of love is that he sent His son to be our friend and redeemer. His Son was born and experienced life as we do with all of its joys, trials and tribulations. He was tested in every way yet He did not sin.¹⁹ But he died for our sins. *“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.”*²⁰

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 2:9

¹⁵ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 2022) Print.

¹⁶ Is. 43:1, 4

¹⁷ Is. 49:16

¹⁸ Eph. 1:3-5; Gal. 4:4-5

¹⁹ Heb. 4:15

²⁰ Jn. 15:13

The Human Longing For God

Through Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection, God reconciled mankind to Himself. Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory? *"Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures."*²¹ The Scriptures foretold the coming of Jesus Christ and the Old Testament points to Him as the servant of God who is to come to suffer for our sins;

*"Though harshly treated, he submitted and did not open his mouth; like a lamb led to slaughter or a sheep silent before shearers, he did not open his mouth. Seized and condemned, he was taken away. Who would have thought any more of his destiny? For he was cut off from the land of the living, struck for the sins of his people."*²²

15. We need to look to Jesus and love Jesus our Savior because He shows us what it is like to be fully human and to live a life that is pleasing to God. Jesus is *"The way and the truth and the life."* No one comes to the Father except through Him.²³ We should love Jesus and he tells us how - *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."*²⁴ If we want to share eternal life with God, we have to live as Jesus taught us, and love as Jesus told us.

MORALITY

16. The moral law is the work of divine Wisdom. Its biblical meaning can be defined as fatherly instruction, God's pedagogy. It prescribes for man the ways, the rules of conduct that lead to the promised beatitude; it proscribes the ways of evil which turn him away from God and his love. It is at once firm in its precepts and, in its promises, worthy of love.²⁵
17. Rejection of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit hardens our heart to God's divine love, peace and happiness. It leads to self as the primary driver of all of our actions which seldom consider the good and welfare of others. Individuals make choices in accordance with their values not according to God's laws.

²¹ Lk. 24:26-27

²² Is. 53:7-8

²³ Jn. 14:6

²⁴ Jn. 14:15

²⁵ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 1950) Print.