

Many atheists in our modern day secular society do not fully understand what Catholics profess to be God. Most atheists conceive the Catholic view of God to be some old, bearded man watching from above or perhaps that God is some mystic who has set the universe in motion before shrinking back from it. However such notions of the Catholic God are fundamentally flawed. If the Catholic God is defined correctly, it is then possible for God's existence to be proved through logically sound arguments.

Before arguing for God's existence, it is necessary to first outline what Catholics believe to be God. The 13th Chapter of the book of Exodus gives a clue to the Catholic view and understanding of God. When Moses asks for the name of God, so that he can proclaim it to the Israelites in Egypt, God replies "I am who I am"¹. In this way, God cannot be defined as any physical object because God's very nature is simply to exist. Furthermore the human mind will never fully understand God as he is beyond what humans can comprehend. This is summed up best by the famous Catholic theologian St Augustine of Hippo, who states in one of his sermons: "Why wonder that you do not understand? For if you understand, it is not God."² If our human intellect can not conceive of such a being as God, we must therefore attempt to glimpse indirectly the beauty of God through the creation he has fashioned around us.

Although we cannot physically see or fully understand God, he can be seen indirectly through the wonderfully complex creation of our world and all who live in it, as hinted at by Exodus; "He said, 'You cannot see my face, for no man can see me and live!'"³ We cannot look upon the face of God but he allows us to feel his presence in the world, through the world's beauty, complexity and the intelligence and compassion of human kind. The very complex nature of our world and the human beings that inhabit it must surely point towards a divine being. However, as intelligent human beings can go further and develop logical reasons for the existence for God. The first and most relevant argument, even in today's egotistical society, was developed by St Thomas Aquinas at the Santa Sabina Dominican Monastery in Rome during the 13th Century and outlined in his book, Summa Theologica (Summary of Theology); it is called the Argument from Contingency.⁴

As Aquinas was walking around the cloister at his monastery, he began to realise that everything around him was at its origin contingent – meaning that they are caused by something else. Let me give you an example: if you walked into a room with a broken window and a ball; the window obviously cannot have broken itself. The cause of the window breaking must have been the ball; this in turn will have been caused by a person throwing or kicking the ball and so it goes on. Generations of human beings can be traced back to the replication of molecules; science tells us that molecules formed during The Big Bang. However scientists today recognise that even The Big Bang was contingent to a greater cause, one that we will never

¹ New Jerusalem Bible 33:20-21

² <http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/jp2augus.htm>

³ New Jerusalem Bible

⁴ Fr Barron – Catholicism Series – Episode 3 - 24/06/2014