

Chapter 1

Answer Key for Double-Check Questions

1. *Why are human beings unique among all of God's creation?*

Human beings are unique among God's creation because we are created in his image and are given a spiritual soul, a divine gift that is unique to us. By giving us a soul, God enables us to be in loving communion with him beyond limitations of time or space.

2. *Briefly describe the three God-given gifts that allow us to live in true, loving communion with God.*

God endows us with the gifts of a soul and its faculties, intellect and free will, so that we may live in true communion with him.

- Our soul, or spiritual principle, is immortal and makes us most like God. God creates our soul and unites it with our body at conception. The soul is our seat of consciousness and freedom, and it enables us to be in communion with God. It also lives on after death and will be reunited with our resurrected body at the Last Judgment.
- God's gift of intellect gives us the ability to see and understand the order of things created by God and to know and understand him through creation. Intellect also allows us to distinguish what is good from what only appears to be good. Intellect helps us understand how to be in communion with God.
- Free will is the gift from God that allows us to choose between the various actions that our reason (or intellect) enables us to understand. We are held accountable for our actions and moral choices. Free will is the basis for moral responsibility. God gives us free will so that we are free to choose to be in communion with him.

3. *What are some factors that can diminish our freedom and lessen the moral responsibility of our resulting actions?*

Factors that diminish our ability to make free choices include unexpected behavioral side effects of a medication, psychological factors such as fear, and strong social pressures. None of these excuse bad behavior, but such factors can prevent us from acting with perfect freedom when we make moral decisions.

4. *What is concupiscence?*

Concupiscence is the tendency of all human beings to sin, as a result of Original Sin. Original Sin weakened our human nature, so that things that should come naturally are more challenging.

5. *Describe what it means to live the Beatitudes.*

To live the Beatitudes means to live according to Christ's guidance for entering into the Kingdom of God—our vocation as Christians, and the goal of our existence. The Beatitudes bring meaning to our moral choices. When we live according to the Beatitudes, we begin to experience on Earth the happiness that God has wanted us to know from the beginning of creation. Living the Beatitudes thereby prepares us for eternal happiness and joy of life in Heaven, in perfect communion with the Trinity.



6. *How does God provide us with the direction and the strength to live a life of beatitude?*

To give us direction and strength as we seek to live the Beatitudes, God gives us Scripture and Tradition to show us the way to live as disciples. He also sends his grace to us through Baptism, the Eucharist, and the other sacraments. Grace helps us move toward the goal of Christian life: union with the Holy Trinity in Heaven.

7. *Define justification.*

Justification is the process by which God frees us from sin and sanctifies us.

8. *How do we gain merit in the sight of God?*

There is nothing we can do to earn merit in God's sight. He doesn't need anything we can give. But everything that we are and have is already a gift from him. The merit we have in God's sight is his free gift to us and, at the same time, comes from our acceptance of his gift and our participation in his plan of salvation.

