

## Attributes of God as Found in Sacred Scripture

### **all-loving or all good - God is love and the source of all love**

"We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him." (I John 4:16)

### **all-merciful**

"With age old love I have loved you; so I have kept my mercy toward you." (Jeremiah 31:3)

### **all-knowing** - God knows past, present and future, but is beyond time. He knows actions, events and thoughts.

"Yet not a single sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent. As for you, every hair of your head has been counted; so do not be afraid of anything. You are worth more than an entire flock of sparrows." (Matthew 10: 29-31)

"Nothing is concealed from him; all lies bare and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account." (Hebrews 4:13)

"He plumbs the depths and penetrates the hearts; their innermost being he understands. The Most High possesses all knowledge, and sees from of old the things that are to come: He makes known the past and the future, and reveals the deepest secrets. No understanding does he lack; no single thing escapes him." (Sirach 42: 18-20)

"O Lord, you have probed me and you know me; you know when I sit and when I stand; you understand my thoughts from afar. My journeys and my rest you scrutinize, with all my ways you are familiar. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know the whole of it. Behind me and before, you hem me in and rest your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; too lofty for me to attain." (Psalm 139: 1-6)

### **unchangeable** - remains same, He is perfect

"Perennial is His almighty wisdom; He is from all eternity one and the same, with nothing added, nothing taken away." (Sirach 42: 21-22)

"Every worthwhile gift, every genuine benefit comes from above, descending from the Father of the heavenly luminaries, who cannot change and who is never shadowed over." (James 1:17)

### **all-just**

"The Rock-- how faultless are His deeds, all right are His ways! A faithful God, without deceit, how just and upright He is!" (Deuteronomy 32:4)

### **infinite** - not bound by anything

"Can it indeed be that God dwells among men on earth? If the heavens cannot contain you, how much less this temple which I have built!" (Deuteronomy 8:27)

**eternal** - always was, always will be, and is now; never a point when He was not

"Before the mountains were begotten and the earth and the world were brought forth, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." (Psalm 90:2)

**all-powerful** - can do all things, but is always true to His nature

"For I know the Lord is great; our Lord is greater than all gods. All that the Lord wills He does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and in the deep. He raises storm clouds from the ends of the earth; with lightning He makes the rain; He brings forth the winds from His storehouse." (Psalm 135:5-7)

"A new hymn I will sing to my God. O Lord, great are you and glorious, wonderful in power and unsurpassable." (Judith 16:13-14)

**everywhere**

"Where can I go from your spirit? From your presence where can I flee? I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I sink to the nether world, you are present there." (Psalm 139:7-8)

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, #42*

"God transcends all creatures. We must therefore continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, image-bound, or imperfect, if we are not to confuse our image of God— 'the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable' — with our human representations. Our human words always fall short of the mystery of God."

*Gaudium et Spes, quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, #27*

"The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists, it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his Creator."

## Arguments from Reason Concerning the Existence of God

“Created in God’s image and called to know and love Him, the person who seeks God discovers certain ways of coming to know Him. These are also called proofs for the existence of God, not in the sense of proofs in the natural sciences, but rather in the sense of ‘converging and convincing arguments,’ which all us to attain certainty about the truth.” *Catechism*, #31.

### The Argument from the Ideal

Throughout history, individuals have sought and fought for a standard of justice, love, beauty, truth, and other "ideals." Great leaders have pursued these ideals, measuring the lived, existential situation by them. These same leaders have sought and fought to correct deviations from the ideal. Think of several examples: Lincoln, who thought slavery a violation of human dignity; Ghandi, who fought for human rights and political autonomy for India, and for all who lived in India; Martin Luther King, Jr., who fervently believed that all people were created equal and fought against racism; Mother Teresa, who fought for the dignity of all people, particularly the poor and forgotten; or Pope John Paul II, who continually preached about human dignity and the sanctity of human life. Yet while one may think of the great leaders, all people who are reasonable ought to pursue such ideals and try to live by them. Through reason, any person can know these truth principles. These ideals though, being perfect or "ideal," must be rooted in a Divine, Perfect Wisdom, which is God; otherwise, such ideals reflect our individual human imperfection. Interestingly, all of the individuals mentioned above do or have believed in God. Their belief has empowered them to be able to sacrifice, even lay down their lives, for others.

### The Argument from History

Throughout history, no matter what civilization, mankind has believed in God, albeit in different ways or expressions. Granted, atheistic governments or agnostic ones profess that there is no God or that no God can be known, and so religion is meaningless. Nevertheless, common human experience has acknowledged a God who unites, heals, and preserves mankind. Even in the atheistic governments of the former Soviet Union, Albania, North Korea, or the People’s Republic of China, the belief in God has survived, and these governments imposed their own type of god, be it “the party” or “dear leader.”

Since Plato and Aristotle, philosophical arguments for the existence of God have been formulated based on the evidence of the world and common sense.

St. Thomas Aquinas said, “There is a certain general and confused knowledge of God in all men... because by his natural reason man is able at once to arrive at some knowledge of God.”  
*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 38.

Otto Karrer in *Religions of Mankind* posited, “There is a ‘*consensus generis humani*,’ an agreement of mankind so far as our present knowledge extends, in the belief that there exists an absolute and supreme Being above ourselves which has ordered the universe and human life in particular... History knows of no people godless and devoid of religion, though here and there particular groups, school of thought, or governments may combat religion.”

### The Argument from First Cause

Everything that exists has a cause. Everything at some point comes into existence and then changes over time or even perishes. Everything therefore is also dependent upon something else for existence. So think of a flower: a flower came into existence from a seed from another flower. The flower depends upon water, air, nourishment from the soil, sunlight, and other things to survive. The flower will eventually produce seeds "to cause" other flowers. The same could be said with human beings. If one journeys backward to find what caused what, logically there must be a beginning, a "first cause." That beginning must be something which exists unto itself, was not caused by anything else, does not change, and does not depend upon anything else. That "first cause" or beginning is God. This argument was first used by Aristotle and later adapted by St. Thomas Aquinas. However, Aquinas would also argue that God, being superior, is not merely the initiator of a chain of movements, like a man who winds up a clock, but by His action had an influence upon any actual motion.

### **The Argument from Design**

In examining the universe, one finds an orderly course of events. Recently, a geologist on Good Morning America described earthquakes as the earth "burping" to make necessary shifts for survival. While an earthquake is seen as a sudden and catastrophic event for people, it is quite natural and orderly for the earth. Nevertheless, the universe and its functions are quite complex. Think of the beautiful complexity of the human body— the ability to see, digest, walk, and so on. Think of the brain: Because of the functions of this organ, a person can think as profoundly as St. Thomas Aquinas, speak eloquently as Archbishop Fulton Sheen, act emotionally as Glenn Close, be creative as Frank Lloyd Wright, and so on. Add to this the orderliness of such creatures as bees who build hexagonal cells in hives, engineering wonders in themselves, or pollinate flowers. To think that the universe, let alone humans or bees, arose from some haphazard series of chances is illogical. The order of the universe leads one to a all-powerful, all-intelligent creator who directs the universe. That creator is God. St. Thomas Aquinas posited this argument.

Scientists speak of the Antropic Principle, meaning that from the very first microsecond of Big Bang, the universe has developed according to astonishingly precise requirements that point to the final appearance of man. These requirements are specificities, precise conditions and fine tuning needed that life could not develop. If these had been minutely different from what it was or what is was becoming, life could not have arisen.

### **The Argument from Musement**

Musement arises from what he called "pure play" - "the lively exercise of one's powers" bound by no rules. The individual allows his mind to contemplate the various connections and homogeneities of the universe.

"I have often occasion to walk at night, for about a mile, over an entirely untraveled road, much of it between open field without a house in sight. The circumstances are not favorable to severe study, but are so to calm meditation. If the sky is clear, I look at the stars in the silence, thinking how each successive increase in the aperture of a telescope makes many more of them visible than all that had been visible before. The fact that the heavens do not show a sheet of light proves that there are vastly more dark bodies, say planets than there are suns. For on the whole, the solar system seems one of the simplest; and presumably under more complicated phenomena greater intellectual power will be developed. We cannot appreciate our own powers any more than a writer can appreciate his own style, or a thinker the peculiar quality of his own thought. Let a man drink in such thoughts as come to him in contemplating the physico-psychical universe without any special purpose of his own; especially the universe of mind which coincides with the universe of matter. The idea of there being a God over it all of course will be often suggested; and the more he considers it, the more he will be enwrapt with Love of this idea. He will ask himself whether or not there really is a God. If he allows instinct to speak, and searches his own heart, he will at length find that he cannot help believing it." (Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, VI, 501. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Eds. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931)

Here one could add the testimony of mystics, like St. Theresa of Avila or St. John of the Cross. When these great

souls testify in unison of their knowledge of God as a lived experience, the only adequate explanation, in the words of Bergson, “the real existence of the Being with whom they believed themselves in communication.” Add to this the example of martyrs, who so willingly died for the faith: who would die, even suffer terrible deaths, if God were not real?