Our Quest for Happiness—Book I

OUR GOAL AND OUR GUIDES





Our Quest for Happiness

This graphic summary of our holy Catholic religion, and of our course, presents in scriptural order the deeds by which God has striven to prove His love for all mankind: The Creative Love of God the Father in the Old Testament; the Redeeming Love of Christ our Incarnate Savior in the Gospels; the Sanctifying Love of the Holy Spirit at work in Christ's Mystical Body since the first Pentecost; the Beatifying Love of our Triune God in the Apocalypse and in eternity.

Our Quest for Happiness
the story of divine love

HIGH SCHOOL RELIGION, BOOK

for the freshman year

Our goal and our guides

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Our quest for happiness

od has placed in every human being a natural desire to be happy. So true is this that we can say that life is a quest for happiness. Everyone looks for happiness wherever he thinks he will most surely find it. But not everyone knows where to search for real happiness. And many, knowing better, blindly look for it where they know in their inmost souls it cannot be found.

Some seem to believe they can find happiness in riches. Others hope they will have it in fame. Others look for it in power and influence. Still others, even less wise, give themselves over to pleasure and dissipation, foolishly trusting that they will make them happy.

Where does happiness lie?

Do you know where true happiness lies? If someone were to ask you: "What do you want most in life?" or "What are you going to high school for?" what would you say? Your answer would reveal whether you know where to find real happiness.

Would your answer be that your chief purpose in going to high school is to get yourself ready for a good paying job? Then you would be looking for happiness in riches. Would you say you wished most to make a name for yourself as a great athlete? a famous actress? an outstanding surgeon? a scientist? a musician? That would be looking for happiness in fame.

Would you say your chief goal in life was to work yourself up to a position where many people would be at your command? or that you would be really happy if you could be free to have long vacations, in which to enjoy every kind of physical recreation? You would be placing your happiness in power or in pleasure.

We are all tempted to believe that such things might make us supremely happy. Yet any man knows that creatures cannot insure complete permanent happiness. A Christian who knows God and what He has revealed knows that man's yearning for happiness is above all a yearning for perfect, eternal happiness. It is really a yearning for God.

We yearn for the Infinite

Our quest for happiness then is a quest for the infinite goodness, the infinite truth, the infinite beauty which only the supernatural possession of God in glory can truly give.

Thus, we need more than earthly success or possessions to make us happy. We have such a great desire for and capacity for happiness that only one thing will satisfy us completely, God who is Infinite Goodness itself. If we possess God, we really possess everything. God is all we could ever want, and to possess Him in heaven is to have every craving and longing fully satisfied, not for just a short time, but forever. That is real happiness. That is really what we are all seeking. The void in our hearts is so great that only God can fill it. Our yearning for happiness is a yearning for Him; our quest for happiness is a search for Him. He is our Source; He is our Goal. That is why we study our religion, namely, so we may know the goodness and greatness of God and place all our hopes for happiness in loving and possessing Him for all eternity.

We cannot know, love, or possess God fully on earth, so we cannot find perfect contentment here below. As St. Augustine said: "Our heart, O Lord, is restless until it rest in Thee." It is only in heaven in possession of the Beatific Vision that we will know full and unending joy.

This brings up two questions. Our first question is:

Must we wait for happiness until we possess God in heaven?

If perfect happiness is meant, we shall surely have to wait. But God wants us to be happy here on earth as well as in eternity. Since God alone can satisfy the longing of the human heart, it follows that the really happy persons on earth are those who seek Him-the Source and Goal of true joy. The happiest persons are those who forget self entirely and devote all the powers of body, mind, and soul to the promotion of God's honor and glory. These are the saints—noble in character, peaceful of mind, merry of heart. The beautiful prayer: "O God, I love Thee for Thyself," expresses this ideal. Let us read it thoughtfully.

> O God, I love Thee for Thyself And not that I may heaven gain, Nor yet that they who love Thee not Must suffer hell's eternal pain. Thou, O my Jesus! Thou didst me Upon the Cross embrace. For me didst bear the nails and spear And manifold disgrace; And griefs and torments numberless And sweat of agony; E'en death itself-and all for one Who was Thine enemy. Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ, Should I not love Thee well: Not for the sake of winning heaven, Or of escaping hell; Not with the hope of gaining aught, Not seeking a reward, But as Thyself hast loved me O ever-loving Lord. E'en so I love Thee, and will love And in Thy praise will sing Solely because Thou art my God And my eternal King.

Would you like to spend some time discussing the meaning of this beautiful prayer?

We shall experience true contentment in the degree that we love our God with a sincere, unselfish love, and to the extent that we devote our lives to serving Him in Himself and in His creatures. This secret of happiness is summed up in the Great Commandment—love of God and love of neighbor for His sake. This love implies service to God and to man, to Church and to country and to society, to home and to school, to friends and to enemies. The more we give of ourselves to God, and to neighbor for the love of God, the more God will give Himself to us; and consequently the happier we shall be, both here and hereafter.

List the ways that you, now as a student and later as an adult, can serve God and others.

Our second question is:

Are honors, wealth, and pleasures to be despised?

In answer, let us emphasize the fact that all things on earth are good, since God made them. But he has made them for a purpose. He did not make them for themselves alone, nor for us to fall in love with to such an extent that we forget Him. He made them to serve as rungs of a ladder leading to Himself, and to real happiness.

This does not mean that we are not to use and enjoy earthly things. For example, God made the trees and lakes and mountains. It is surely not wrong to enjoy their beauty, or to use them lawfully, that is, in moderation. But we must not allow such things to become a bar to our loving the God who made them.

The same is true of possessing money or earthly goods. It is also true of seeking power or knowledge. It is no sin to be rich, provided we do not get so interested in our riches that we forget our fellow men and the God who gave the riches to us. It is not wrong to be famous, to attain high position, or to be a scholar, provided we do not "let it go to our heads," or worse, to our hearts, corrupting them.

On the contrary, all these things can be used to help us as well as others to be better men and women. The rich man can use his

wealth to help his fellow men; the statesman or labor leader can use his power and influence to promote the welfare of all; the scientist, the physician, or the inventor can use his talents for God and for man.

Selfish or unselfish?

Unfortunately, however, due to the fall of our first parents and original sin, men have been blinded, and so they are easily led astray. They become selfish, and try to grasp at wealth or power even though they may crush others in the process. Or they try to enjoy to excess the pleasures of the body. Yes, unfortunately, men and women misuse the things God has made, and so we have sin and all the evils it leaves in its wake: suffering, squalor, remorse, disease, and misery among thousands of people.

God does not want these evils; He only permits them so that greater good may come from them. We all know of cases where people born in poverty have used their very poverty as a means of growing in holiness and helping others. We know of persons falling sick and, through their very distress and suffering, developing Christian piety and charity, whereas they were previously cold and indifferent.

Unselfish!

In contrast to sinners, there are people who seek contentment and happiness where it can surely and always be found—in God. Because of this, we see in the world unselfish deeds, devotion to justice, purity, heroism, and the like. Even such blessings as better living conditions are often brought about because someone has been unselfish, because someone has corresponded with God's grace.

If more people were to look for happiness where it really lies—in the love of God and in the service of God's other human creatures—good things would be more common on earth. And then, since there would be more good things for all men everywhere, there would be less temptation for people to be dissatisfied with their lot in life. There would be fewer wars, less misery, less sin.

There would be more peace, more contentment, and more virtue in the world.

We must not deceive ourselves, however. Happiness means the attaining of our final goal. Here on earth we are entitled only to the quest—the pursuit of happiness. We will taste something of its joys in proportion as we keep moving in the direction of the supreme goal and draw closer to it. But the joys of this earth, no matter how sweet they may be, will always be imperfect. We shall never be completely happy until we see and possess God in the Beatific Vision.

Here it might be well to stop and read pages 156 to 162 of My Way of Life, by St. Thomas Aquinas, in a simplified, pocket edition.

What is heaven like?

Did you ever try to answer that question? Some people have the most foolish ideas! No wonder they do not have a very strong wish to go to heaven! Some think it is a place where we sit down all day, twiddle our thumbs, listen to nice music, and look at God. But it is ever so much more than that.

Heaven is so wonderful that it is hard for us to realize just what it is like. Our minds are so weak, and even our greatest pleasures on earth are so small, that it is very difficult to imagine how intensely happy we shall be in heaven. But we must try, especially when we pray. It might be best to go into church and spend some time thinking about heaven. Kneel quietly in front of the Blessed Sacrament, and imagine that you are in heaven. Think of how you would talk with the Holy Trinity, to our Blessed Lord, with our Lady, with your favorite angels and saints. Ask them to help you come to a better appreciation of heaven so you will really want to get there.

Face to face. Heaven is a real place. It is also a state of happiness. There we shall enjoy beauty, and truth, and justice, and love, and unity, and peace, and friendship, and all good things. The greatest happiness in heaven will be to possess God for eternity and to see Him face to face. That does not sound too exciting, does it? But

stop a minute and imagine how happy you would be if you were suddenly given as a present a gold wrist watch, or a nice ring, or a suit, or beautiful dress, or even a new shiny automobile, or some other thing you want very much. You would feel good all over, wouldn't you? Now multiply that a billion times and maybe you will begin to realize what it will be like to possess God. He made every good thing you can think of, and in possessing Him you will possess all these things and infinitely more. Having Him, you will have everything your heart could ever desire.

Beauty. If you like beautiful things, you will like heaven, because everything there is beautiful, since it reflects the beauty of God, who is Beauty Itself. In God we shall see a never-ending and ever-fascinating beauty.

Many a young man has looked on the beauty which God has given to a pretty girl or woman and has been pleased and attracted by it. All of us are attracted by beauty. But human beauty is only a faint ray of the beauty we shall behold when we see God face to face. If we love human beauty and are attracted by human goodness, then we shall love the immeasurably more perfect beauty of the saints and angels and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and above all we shall love and be enraptured by the beauty of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Trinity, the fountainhead of all beauty.

Truth. Moreover, if you like to learn and know things, you will enjoy heaven because, by looking at God, you will see the explanation of all things—for He is Wisdom and Knowledge and Truth. If you like to do things you will enjoy heaven, because heaven will be a place of infinite activity for your whole being—and you will never get tired!

Goodness. In heaven your soul will be gloriously brilliant, because it will participate in the glory of God; your intellect will be filled and satisfied; and your will so drawn to the Goodness of God that it will be impossible to sin.

Glory. The body, too, after the Last Judgment, will be glorified. Recall what happened to the face of Moses when he spoke with God on Mount Sinai when God gave His Chosen People the Ten Commandments. Remember the Transfiguration of our Lord on Mount

Tabor. This will help you to realize the glory and beauty of our bodies in heaven. Besides this, our bodies will possess some other very wonderful qualities. It will be impossible for them to suffer pain or disease or death; they will be able to pass from one end of the universe to the other instantly, and they will be spiritualized so as to be free from their present physical limitations, for example, hunger, thirst, and fatigue.

In addition to this, if you appreciate the pleasant company of friends, you will like heaven. There will be Christ in His human and divine nature, the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels, and all the saints, including many persons you knew on earth; and every one of them will like you and you will like them. They will love you and you will love them. With all this we have hardly said anything. For God can teach you more about heaven in a moment of prayer than any weak human words can. If we were to meditate about God and heaven, as St. Augustine and St. Monica did, our minds might be opened by Him to knowledge more wonderful than any study could gain for us.

Discussion

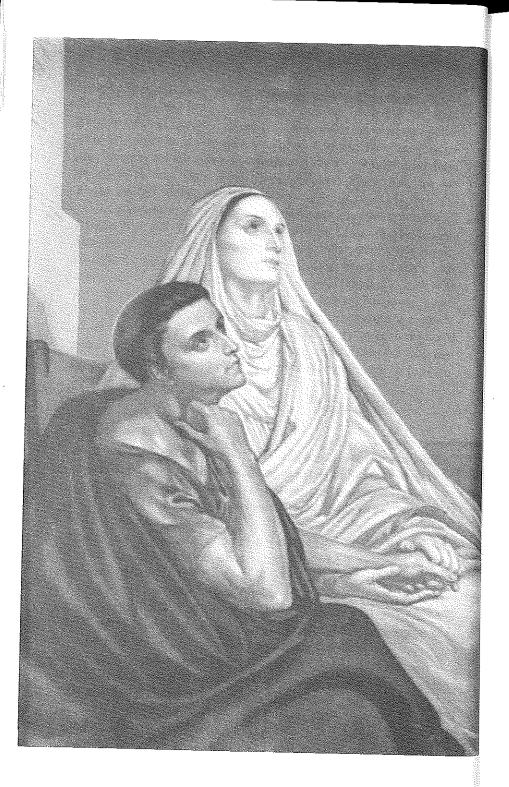
If the members of the class will read some books or pamphlets about heaven, they will learn many other wonderful facts which could be used as the basis of an interesting discussion.

Which of the following persons do you think will most likely find real happiness?

- 1. Doris, who intends to marry a wealthy man so she can have a fine home, smart clothes, an automobile, and a continual round of pleasure.
- 2. Leo, who has made up his mind never to work hard but to drift through life and take it easy.
- 3. Francis, who wants to work in the foreign missions because he longs to bring the light of faith to the pagans.
- 4. Joe, who wants to be a test pilot of high-speed airplanes.
- 5. Jane, who wants to be a movie star or go on the stage because she likes applause and wants to be popular.

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ST. AUGUSTINE AND HIS MOTHER, ST. MONICA: SCHEFFER



- 6. Luke, who is preparing to be a doctor because he plans to make a fortune and retire early in life.
- 7. Martha, who intends to get married to a good Catholic boy and raise a family of fine children in the likeness of Christ.
- 8. Mary, who wants to enter the Carmelites or the Poor Clares in order to unite herself with Christ in offering reparation for the sins of the world.

We all want to succeed in our quest for happiness. We want to obtain eternal possession of God in heaven. If we are really sincere and honest in that desire, we will take the steps necessary to success. These steps can be reduced to one-love of God-because true love always leads to deeds.

But we will not want to love God unless we know Him and appreciate His great love for us; unless we make use of the helps that God offers us; unless we realize and live up to the obligations which love imposes on us. The purpose of our religion course, therefore, is to assist us to realize these aims:

to know God.

to place all our confidence in Him,

to love and serve Him unselfishly,

and to find happiness in possessing Him.

facing page

ST. AUGUSTINE AND HIS MOTHER, ST. MONICA

"We talked together . . . discussing in the presence of Truth, which You are, what the eternal life of the saints could be like . . .

"Rising as our love flamed upwards toward the Self-same, we passed in review the various levels of bodily things, up to the heavens themselves, whence sun and moon and stars shine upon this earth. And higher still we soared, thinking in our minds and speaking and marveling at Your works: and so we came to our own souls, and went beyond them to come at last to that region of richness unending where You feed Israel forever with the food of truth."

Confessions of St. Augustine. (Translated by F. J. Sheed, Sheed & Ward, 1943, p. 200; quoted with permission.)

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Our Quest for Happiness:
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	our God and Our Guides	SOPHOMORE YEAR	JUNIOR YEAR	SENIOR YEAR
	The story of the creative	The story of the redeeming	The Ark and the Dove	Toward the Eternal
	love of God the Father	love of Christ, the	love of God the Holy Ghost	Commencement
		Incarnate Son	and the Church	The story of the beatifying love of Our
	Our guides to our goal	The promised of		Triune God
unit	Desire for happiness,	Protoevangelism prophesis	The dove	Our life, our sweetness,
,	guides to it; reason and	Incarnation, nativity and	the Holy Chost and His mission	and our hope
	Church	early life		The Blessed Virgin, her
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	Our illustrated guidehook	The Dodocurer TT:) weeks	5 weeks
unit	The liturgical year as a	messes and and a	The ark	A senior looks into the
	dramatic summary of faith	Diklic 1:0 of Chedentials	The Church—second, third,	future
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unit	Our Source and our Goal	The promise fulfilled	The dove quides the ort	TL
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	Love, pride, and the promise	From the rising of the	12 weeks	10 weeks
unst	Creation, the Fall and the	Sacrifice of the Man	I he plank in shipwreck	Building a better world
`	Protoevangelium	Third commandment	Forgiveness of sins,	Seventh, eighth, and tenth
4		First precept	renance	commandments
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Trutt	Divine aids in our quest	The gift of divine love	Temples of the Holy Chast	
	Sacraments—Baptism in	The Eucharist as a sacrament	Fifth, sixth and ninch	
v	for the Fall: Confirmation	Fourth precept	commandments	synopsis of apologetics
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	Divide for a second of) weeks	> weeks	8 weeks
unit	Names for a successful quest	In His tootsteps		
	pasic principles of morality	Principles of		
9	(first three commandments)	morality		
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The four-year plan

In the freshman year we shall see how deeply God loves us, from the deeds of love which are especially attributed to

the creative love and power of God the Father.

We shall strive to return that love by the practice of all the virtues, but each year we shall stress one in particular. This year it will be faith.

In the sophomore year we shall unfold God's charity as it is revealed to us in

the redeeming love and wisdom of the Incarnate Son.

We shall endeavor to show our appreciation by imitating Christ, and especially by the practice of the virtue of bobe.

In the junior year we shall try to open our minds and hearts to the sanctifying love of God the Holy Spirit,

who dwells in the souls of faithful members of the Church. The practice of the virtue of charity will indicate our gratitude to Him.

In the senior year we shall study

the beatifying love of the Blessed Trinity.

We shall look into the future, on earth, and in heaven, in order to see the happiness God has prepared for those who serve Him. During this last year, we shall give equal attention to all three great virtues: faith, hope, and love.

We have sketched the framework of Our Quest for Happiness. All the other doctrines and practices of our holy religion are woven into this basic pattern to form one complete and beautiful whole. A careful examination of the chart on the back endsheets will show how this has been done.

It will also reveal how logically and beautifully the sacraments and the commandments and all the other matters comprised in our holy religion fit together with one another in a most amazing manner: Baptism with creation and the Fall; Holy Eucharist with our study of Christ; Penance with the Holy Ghost and the Church, "whose sins you shall forgive."

Study the chart on the back endsheets and answer these questions:

- 1. Is there any benefit in studying the sacrament of Baptism in the same year that we study about creation and the Fall? What year is that?
- 2. Is it appropriate to study the Holy Eucharist and the Mass in the same year that we study about the life and death of Christ?
- 3. Is it fitting to study about the sacrament of Penance after studying about the Holy Spirit, the Church and the forgiveness of sins?
- 4. Do the first three commandments have any special connection with a study of God?
- 5. Is a study of purity appropriate in the year we study about the Holy Spirit?

Our theme: love for love

We are seeking for perfect happiness. We can find it only in the measure in which we forget self and dedicate our lives to the glory of God. He loves us so much that He wants only our love in return so that He may make us happy with His immense love. This is the theme which will run through the entire four years of our religion course.

Our chief objectives

In keeping with our central theme, we shall strive to attain these three main objectives:

To know the story of God's immense love from Faith for us and to believe all that it contains in order-To place our entire confidence in Him and to Hope

To love Him so deeply that we will do to Charity

everything He asks.

Now that we have plotted our course for the four years, let us examine the work which lies ahead for our first year.

Our central theme this year

The central theme for the freshman year is this: to succeed in my quest I must first know about God, about what He has done for me, and what I must do in return out of love for Him. Faith tells me this and enables me to believe it.

Our objectives this year

Our chief objective for this year will be to build a firm foundation for our hope and love by increasing our knowledge of our holy religion and strengthening our faith. Therefore we shall strive:

- 1. To realize clearly why we are on earth.
- 2. To desire to succeed in our quest for everlasting happiness.
- To understand the necessity of good habits, and to develop the habits of faith and humility by practice.
- 4. To become better acquainted with the Holy Bible and the entire content of our holy Faith.
- 5. To learn how great God is and what He has done to prove His love for us so that we may love, worship and serve Him as He deserves.
- 6. To acquire a knowledge of some of the fundamental rules for the quest and the means of grace which are necessary to help us and to strengthen us in the arduous search for God and happiness.
- 7. To practice our faith by living with Christ in His Church in the liturgy and liturgical year.

Topics to be covered

The list of topics to be treated includes the following (see chart also, back endsheets):

- 1. The aim of life.
- 2. The first article of the Creed.
- 3. The sacraments in general and Baptism and Confirmation in detail.
- 4. The basic principles of morality and the first three commandments.
- 5. The liturgical year.
- 6. The Holy Bible in general and the Old Testament and Genesis in particular.
- 7. Lives of the saints; prayers; and some of the errors and objections related to the subject matter in the first six items mentioned above.

- 8. The development of the virtues, habits, practices, and attitudes that should be fostered as a result of the knowledge acquired, particularly at this age; and the elimination, suppression or supplanting of the opposed vices.
 - a) Virtues to be emphasized:
 - 1) Theological virtue—faith
 - 2) Cardinal virtue—prudence
 - 3) Other moral virtues—humility, zeal, purity, fortitude
 - b) Habits to be acquired:
 - 1) Daily prayer, frequent acts of faith
 - 2) Reverence for God and His holy name
 - 3) Humility

Special practice

Our special practice this year as freshmen is to go out of our way to do things which are an exercise of the virtue of faith. For instance, I'll tip my hat or make a bow before every Catholic church or chapel I pass as an act of faith in God and in the sacrifice that takes place on the altar of that church or chapel or institution, and as an act of faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the tabernacle. Or, I'll show some sign of recognition and respect to every priest and religious I meet. Or, I'll say the Act of Faith as a part of my morning prayers every day. Or, I'll go to Communion at least weekly as a public act of faith. Or . . . can you think of other and better ways of exercising your faith?

Review of introduction

- 1. What is the title of your religion series? What does it mean?
- 2. What is the title of this year's book? What does it mean?
- 3. What is the main thing we shall study in each of the four years? (See text, p. 19, and chart, back endsheets.)
- 4. Describe the happiness which all men seek.
- 5. What is the secret of true human happiness?
- 6. Tell how heaven fulfills man's desires for happiness.
- 7. What is this year's central theme? Its special objective?

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Where to locate major subdivisions of subject matter in this series

Creed			Sacraments			Commandme	ents	
	yean	unit		yea	r unit		year	uni
Article 1	9	3	Baptism Confirmation	9 9	5 5	First Second Third	9	6
Articles 2-7	10	1,2,3	Eucharist	10	4,5	Third Fourth	10 10	5 2
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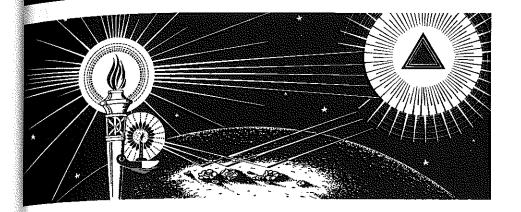
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Our guides to our goal

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PLANNING THE UNIT as the thought ever occurred to you: Where have I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? or as some people might express it, What is life all about? The little catechism used in the primary grades gave answers to these problems. Do you recall the answers?

Who made us? God.

Why? to show forth His goodness and to share with us His everlasting happiness in heaven.

We have already seen in the Introduction that we were made for perfect happiness, and that it will be ours, finally and completely, when we attain the possession of God. We will, however, not be able to work for this happiness as we should and as we must unless we know God and appreciate His greatness and goodness. Therefore we must learn as much about Him as we can, God