



How can we know that God exists?

Catholics believe that man CAN know there is a God, a creator of all that he sees, by simply using the information available to his senses and human reason alone.

If we take the time to observe the events of our world we soon see that things happen because other things cause them to happen. Every occurrence is preceded in time by a cause or causes. Nothing happens without a cause.

We can also see that for one thing to cause another it must have the potential to cause it. An apple seed can only grow to become an apple tree. It has no potential to grow into a pear tree, so this does not happen.

Can there be an endless string of causes with no beginning? Can there be an endless string of railroad cars rolling down the track with no engine moving them along? Was the universe always there with no purpose and no beginning? When said so starkly, these ideas don't make sense.

It seems more plausible that there was a First Cause. This First Cause would then have the potential for all that followed, all that we see in the universe. It would have the potential for matter, energy, time, life, order, intelligence, and even love. It would be outside of time in order to create time. Could such a First Cause have brought about all of those things without possessing great power and knowledge? Could I paint a masterpiece without knowing how to paint? If we have a First Cause with the potential to bring about all that we see, and more, we have God.

Some modern thinkers say, "Isn't it possible that the universe came about by random chance?" This question is based on a misconception. Random chance does not cause things to happen; it merely identifies that the forces at work

in a situation are so complex that we cannot predict the outcome. If I flip a coin we say there is a chance it will land heads up. That is true; however, chance did not flip the coin. It was flipped by the sum of the forces imposed on it.

We can know much about *God's* capacities by examining His creation, but we cannot know all. First of all, reason tells us that He may be much greater than the sum of creation. Secondly, we are very limited in our ability to observe and to reason.

For us to know much more about *God* He would have to actively reveal Himself to us.

For instance, it would be reasonable to think that *God* has the potential for evil since we see so much of it in our world. It is only through divine revelation that we can know that *God* is all good and that evil is a deprivation or a corruption of a good. The desire to eat is a good because it helps us to grow, but if this appetite is corrupted toward the wrong things it can lead to health problems. Love of self is good because it leads to self-preservation, but if this love is too great in comparison to love of others our corrupted appetites may lead us to using them in bad ways.