



# Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI IESUM

Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

Salus Animarum Suprema Lex Esto (Canon Law 175)

The Salvation of Souls is the Supreme Law in the Church

## “What is the Will of God for me ... for *My* Life?”

**This perennial question**, wrought from the depths of perplexity and suffering in the human soul, cannot be answered by man. It must be answered by God.

In fact, it is answered by God.

Another way of stating the question is really this: “Why did God create me?”

It is no mere coincidence that this is the very first question asked in the Baltimore Catechism used by generations of Catholics throughout America and which had a clear-cut Question and Answer format. The answers were straight-forward, simply stated, and did not diffuse into unrelated issues, allowing the student to focus on

the answer, and yes, encouraging them to memorize it, knowing full well that the answer to the question will serve the student later in life when confronting some issue about God or what Holy Mother Church teaches.

There is nothing wanting, nothing evil, and nothing untoward in memorizing the truth. Students of geometry have done it from time immemorial, and no one disdains either the question, “What is a triangle?”, or the answer, “A triangle is a polygon with 3 sides, the sum of whose internal angles equal 180 degrees.” It is simply the case. No matter how much you may wish that it were otherwise and that a triangle had 4 sides with 5 internal angles equal to a sum of 360 degrees ... and one is certainly free to choose to believe this ... the objective nature of a triangle is quite different. We may not like it, but it nevertheless remains so, however much we choose to believe otherwise. To wit, **the Baltimore Catechism** puts the question this way:

***Question: Why did God create me?”***

***Answer: God created me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this life, and to be happy with Him forever in Heaven.***

Our present question, however, is less general and far more specific: “For what purpose, for what reason, did God create me? In creating me, what does He will for me, what was and is His will for my life — why did He create me and what does He want me to do?”

Can we answer this question in general terms? Yes. “God created you to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this life, and to be happy with Him forever in Heaven. In this lies your happiness and the meaning of your life. This why you were created (“to know Him”). This is what you must do (“To love Him and to serve Him”). And this why you should do this (“to be happy with Him forever in Heaven”).

Is not all of this true? Why, then, would we hesitate in stating it? It may not please the questioner any more than a triangle having 3 sides may not please the aspiring but misguided geometer. But it is true, no less, and we may state it with absolute certainty. For all our hubris, it is not ours to define the truth or to articulate it to our liking or the liking of another. Ours is to recognize the truth, and if questioned relative to it, to state it. In the end, we cannot give someone a round stick to fit into a triangular hole simply because the idea pleases him ... or us.

Can we, however, answer this question relative to particular and clearly distinguishable circumstances? “What does God wish me to do in this matter?” Note that the person is not asking what you think he ought to do, but what God would have him do.

Can you answer this? Or do you think yourself presumptuous in answering for God? You can answer this and you are not being presumptuous in answering for God. In fact, it is what He expects of you (“to serve Him”)!

Presumably, you know the Scriptures. You know the 10 Commandments. You know the Sermon on the Mount. You know what Jesus Christ actually said and what He explicitly and clearly expects of us:

**“So, what then is the Will of God for my life? What is God now asking me to do?”**

- It is to “renounce yourself daily, to take up your Cross, and to follow after Him.”
- It is to do as He has done: “I give you an example” (St. John 13.15)
- It is to be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.”
- It is to forgive perfectly ... as He Himself has forgiven you.
- It is to be merciful, just as God has shown you mercy.
- It is to give unstintingly ... just as He has given to you.
- It is to love others not simply as you love yourself, but as Christ has loved you.

- It is to make disciples of all nations (*yes, that means evangelizing ... by your words, and above all, by your example*). Christ *commanded* this!

It is to lose your life for His sake. Literally. To die to yourself, and if necessary, to die for Him, for His Name, for His Church, and in the face of wanton persecution.

In other words, *all that Christ has taught us!* All that His Holy Church teaches us! *This* is what God is now asking you to do.

We have heard the *WORD OF GOD HIMSELF!* *We know what He said!* We know what He expects of us! He has taught us, told us, and shown us by His own example — very clearly what His will is.

For any Catholic to claim, “I do not know what God’s will for me is in this life” is a terrible, terrible indictment of the appalling failure of the Church to teach Her own children what Christ, both by word and example, commanded Her to teach.

We know what God would have us do, what God’s will for us is, in nearly every venue of human life — by appealing to His word and His example.

## **Freedom and Obedience do not Conflict**

God, wishing to endow us with every perfection, also gives us the beautiful gift of freedom! As with our First Parents in the Garden, we are free, free to do what we will — God only asks that we be attentive to Him, to what He has told us, taught us, shown us, so that we will not be deceived by the evil one and unwittingly choose what will bring us to sorrow and death. That is why His yoke is gentle, and His burden light. We are free to do all that brings us happiness ... but we only find happiness through obedience to God — to Whom alone all ends are known.

But we can obey only what we know, and will only know what we are taught.

This has been the great failure of the Church for the past 50 years: the failure to teach us what God would have us do ... rather than what is currently “correct” by the standards of the world with a thin veneer of Christianity to anoint it. It is a systematic failure much in the form of the triangle we invoked earlier, with the Bishop at the apex, indifferent to his primary responsibility as “Teacher of the Faith” and either tolerant or ignorant of whatever is taught in his diocese, to a broadening base of administrators in collusion with deeply entrenched and highly profitable publishers of glossy and insipid “catechisms” and “workbooks” ... that

are mandatory for each student to “buy”, and which remain largely unopened. (A mandatory new edition every year to guarantee continued and uninterrupted sales and profits ...).

The Religious Education Teachers, of course, constitute the broad base of this triangle, many, if not most of whom, are themselves largely clueless about Catholic Doctrine and teach what is most comfortable to them in the classroom, even if it does not square with the Faith. Pastors, by and large, do not visit classrooms, and never question what is being taught within them.

Is it really any wonder that many Catholics can ask in good earnest, “What is the will of God for me? Can you tell me, because no one ever has? Indeed, can anyone?” That they genuinely do not know is not their fault. They have never been taught. It is a low priority on the bishop’s, the pastor’s, the priest’s — and yes, the parents’ — agenda. There are more important things to be done ... and after all, as long as there are warm bodies to “teach”, the pretense of “Religious Education” will continue as it has for 50 years, churning out proud “graduates” for their Confirmation in a Faith never taught them and subsequently about which they know nothing. In the end, it is why the question itself — “What is the will of God for my life?” — is, and is likely to remain, perennial.

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