Knowledge organiser: GCSE Catholic Christianity Unit 6- Eschatology

Sub topics

- Catholic beliefs on the afterlife:
  - The four last things
  - Purgatory and Judgement
  - Scripture- The Rich Man and Lazarus
- Magisterial teachings
  - Cosmic reconciliation
  - Vatican 2 teachings on end of time
- Catholic practices regarding the afterlife:
  - Sacrament of anointing of the sick
  - Funeral rite
  - Memorials for the dead
  - Sanctity of life and Euthanasia.
- Artefacts and eschatology:
  - Paschal candle
  - Art and eschatology

Key words

Eschatology - Beliefs about the 'end times', including life after death and judgement.
Euthanasia - Assisting with the ending of life for a person who is terminally ill or has degenerative illness; often known as assisted suicide.
Paschal mystery - Four key ideas about parts of Jesus' life and death and how they led to saving humanity from sin (life, death, resurrection, ascension); important for beliefs about redemption and salvation.
Sanctity of life - The belief that all human life is precious and holy/sacred as it is created by God.
Heaven - Belief that after death Christians can enter a state of being with God for eternity.
Judgement - The belief that God will decides whether each person should receive eternal life or eternal punishment based on their earthly life
Last rites - Prayers and actions that prepare a dying person for death.
Purgatory - A state of cleansing to remove the effects of sin.
Hell - Belief in a place of eternal suffering, or a state after death of being in separation from God.

Possible H/WK tasks-

Assessed H/WK tasks

1. **Mid-module H/WK assessment**
2. **End of module test**

Self/Peer assessed H/WK tasks

1. **Create a leaflet – a Catholic's guide to the after-life.**
2. **12 Mark essay: "Funerals are for the living not the dead" Evaluate this statement.**

Students may be set additional assessed tasks by their class teacher which will help the class teacher to assess their progress and inform their planning.

Opportunities for independent learning/Stretch and challenge

- Investigate non-Christian beliefs and teachings regarding the afterlife.
- Investigate art associated with the afterlife and eschatological themes.
- Research the law around Euthanasia and the changes internationally over the last 100 years.
- Catholic answers on YouTube
- Ascension presents on YOUTUBE

What is eschatology?

- Eschatology is a study of the end times. It is concerned with the ultimate fate of human kind at the end of the world.
- Jesus provides some insight into the afterlife and the end of time in some of his teachings. In the eschatological discourse in mark's Gospel he points towards cosmic disasters that will take place towards the end of time and the parable of the sheep and the goats points to Jesus' second coming as judge at the final judgement.
- The resurrection of Jesus proves for Christians that in death life is changed, not ended. St Paul teaches that without the resurrection our faith is in vain.
- The resurrection signalled the defeat of power and sin and the establishment of God's supreme reign.

Catholic beliefs and teachings on the afterlife and end of time

- -Christians believe that all people will encounter death, judgement, heaven and hell at the end of their earthly existence; these are known as the four last things.
- The Catechism defines heaven as the state of eternal happiness in the presence of God and defines hell as the state of eternal and total separation from God.
- Catholics believe that when a person dies they will receive particular judgement. This is their personal judgement and is referred to as particular judgement.
- Jesus also talked about final judgement which is when Jesus will come in glory at the end of time to judge the living and the dead.
- Catholics also believe in purgatory which is a cleansing process, in which the effects of sin are removed so that the person can feel happy to go to heaven and experience the full presence of God. All those who go to purgatory will go onwards to heaven.
- The parable of the Rich man and Lazarus helps us to understand judgement and provides a guide to what heaven and hell are like.

Magisterial teachings

- The second Vatican council showed that one of the roles of the Church is to prepare for the end of time. Lumen Gentium stressed the idea that the Church is not yet in its perfect form, but rather a community of sinners trying to reach perfection.
- The Church teaches that it is made up of 3 distinct parts: the people on earth, the souls in purgatory and the faithful in heaven. These three sections of the Church are dependent on one another, and all are called to be saved.
- St Paul taught that through Jesus' death, he restored not only the relationship between god and humans, but he restored the harmony of all creation.
- Julian of Norwich taught that at the end of time there will be cosmic reconciliation, all things will be brought back together in the love of Jesus. All things will be made perfect at the end of time.

Catholic practices regarding the afterlife

- The anointing of the sick I one of the seven sacraments that may be received at the end of life. This sacrament aims to give healing, strength, and forgiveness to those that are seriously ill or facing death.
- The anointing of the sick is one of the last rites that a person receives before death which also include the last confession, last communion, and commendation of the dying.
- The Catholic funeral rite reflects Catholics believes about dying and will include themes of hope of eternal life and resurrection. The whole of the funeral mass is centred around praying that the deceased may be in the presence of God in heaven, with their sins forgiven.
- Catholics believe that the body must be treated with respect even after death. This will be reflected in different memorials for the dead including tombstones, monuments, and remembrance gardens.

Art, artefacts and eschatology

-One key piece of art associated with the end times is Michelangelo's creation of Adam, The painting can be found in the Sistine chapel and depicts the final judgement when Christ will come to judge the living and the dead.

The paschal candle is also a key symbol in the Catholic church linked to eschatology. The paschal candle is one of the first and most important features of the Easter Vigil ceremony. It is also lit at Baptisms and funerals and represents the presence of the risen Christ.

Euthanasia and care for the dying

Euthanasia is the killing of someone painlessly and with compassion who is suffering from a terminal or incurable disease, to end their suffering. It is a key moral issue concerned with the end of life.

Catholics oppose the practice of Euthanasia as they uphold the sanctity of life principle- they believe that all life is holy and belongs to God- only God can give life, only God should take it away. Rather than practice Euthanasia, we should care for those who are dying nd uphold and maintain their dignity.