



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies A

Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Philosophy and Ethics

Option 3A – Catholic Christianity

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Question Paper Log Number P78611A

Publications Code 1RA0_3A_2506_MS

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Paper 3: Philosophy and Ethics 3A – Catholic Christianity Mark Scheme

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
1(a)	AO1 3 marks Award one mark for each point identified up to a maximum of three marks. • Jacob had a vision of a ladder leading to heaven (1) • An example of a biblical vision is the Transfiguration (1) • Saul was converted by a vision (1) • Daniel had a vision that God will bring all nations under his rule (1) • John had a vision of the end of time (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Lists (maximum of one mark)	3

Question number	Answer	Reject	
1(b)	AO1 4 marks Award one mark for providing a way. Award a second mark for development of the way. Up to a maximum of four marks. • Catholics respond by saying that if a person witnesses a miracle, their first reaction may be to look for a natural explanation (1) however if they cannot find it, it must therefore be God (1) • Miracles have occurred throughout history without an explanation (1) therefore miracles are a way that God shows his power and love (1) • The people experiencing a miracle have had direct contact with God which changes their life as a result (1) this proves it is a miracle from God (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated way/ development • Development that does not relate both to the way given and to the question.	4

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
1(c)	AO1 5 marks Award one mark for each way. Award further marks for each development of the way up to a maximum of four marks. Award one further mark for any relevant source of wisdom or authority. • Catholics argue that nothing happens by chance (1) therefore the only thing powerful enough to start everything off would be God (1) 'If we can explain the many bits of the universe by one simple being which keeps them in existence, we should do so' (Swinburne, Is there a God? 1996) (1) • You cannot keep going back with causes because in any causal chain you have to have a beginning (1), so, the universe must have a first cause which is God, (1) Aquinas refers to God as being the 'unmoved mover' (1) • Everything must have been created by something else (1). As the universe exists it must have been created by God (1) as "nothing comes from nothing" (Parmenides) (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated way/ development • Development that does not relate both to the way and to the question • Reference to a source of wisdom that does not relate to the way given.	5

Question number	Indicative content	Mark
1(d)	AO2 12 marks, SPaG 3 marks Candidates must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. Candidates will be required to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding as well as accuracy of religion and belief when responding to the question and in meeting AO2 descriptors. AO2 Arguments for the statement: • The inconsistent triad suggests that the existence of suffering is incompatible with an all-loving and all-powerful God. As such the existence of suffering may lead some people to question their belief in God • Catholics may see children suffering and wonder how God allows this to happen especially when they prayed for help. If Jesus healed the children, they might examine why God is not helping those who suffer • Some people might believe a good God would not design the world with natural evil, why would he create a world with floods and earthquakes and where people suffer? Arguments against the statement: • Millions of people in the world believe in God despite the existence of suffering. Therefore, it might appear that the existence of suffering is not an obstacle to belief in God • Catholics may believe that suffering is not the fault of God, people are given free will and can cause suffering. Therefore, suffering is a result of humans abusing their own moral conscience • Some Catholics believe that suffering is part of God's greater plan. Therefore, suffering does not lead to people questioning their belief in God. Accept any other valid response. Candidates who do not consider philosophical arguments (as instructed in the question) cannot achieve marks beyond Level 2.	15

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable response.
Level 1	1–3	A superficial analysis of the statement that uses undeveloped arguments, underpinned by isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief. Judgements are asserted without clear links to the analysis.
Level 2	4–6	A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief. This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis, leading to a conclusion with limited justification.
Level 3	7–9	A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief. This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.
Level 4	10–12	A sustained and coherent analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by thorough understanding of religion and belief. This leads to reasoned judgements supported by the appraisal of arguments, leading to a justified conclusion that is consistent with the analysis.

'Point(s) of view' **always** means arguments for and against the statement. **Where specified in the bullet points under the question**, it may also include one of the following:

- different views within the religion
- non-religious views
- philosophical arguments
- ethical arguments.

SPaG

Marks		Descriptors
0 marks	No marks awarded	• The candidate writes nothing • The candidate's response does not relate to the question. • The candidate's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning.
1 marks	Threshold performance	• Candidates spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy. • Candidates use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall. • Candidates use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate.
2 marks	Intermediate performance	• Candidates spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy. • Candidates use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall. • Candidates use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate.
3 marks	High performance	• Candidates spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy. • Candidates use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall. • Candidates use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate.

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
2(a)	AO1 3 marks Award one mark for each point identified up to a maximum of three marks. • The nuclear family is found within 21st-century church (1) • Some families are blended families (1) • Same sex families are found in churches (1) • Single parent families are found in 21st-century churches (1) • Some people live within an extended family (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Lists (maximum of one mark)	3

Question number	Answer	Reject	
2(b)	AO1 4 marks Award one mark for providing a way. Award a second mark for development of the way. Up to a maximum of four marks. • The family is supported by the parish running children's liturgies (1) children can worship and learn about their faith at their own Level (1) • Parishes offer a Catholic Counselling service called Marriage Care (1). This helps families who are experiencing problems in their relationships (1) • Through offering the sacrament of baptism (1) the family are given the strength to bring the child up as a Catholic (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated way/ development • Development that does not relate both to the way given and to the question.	4

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
2(c)	AO1 5 marks Award one mark for each teaching. Award further marks for each development of the teaching up to a maximum of four marks. Award one further mark for any relevant source of wisdom or authority. - The Catholic Church teaches that if a person remarries, the couple commit adultery (1) because in the eyes of the Church the original marriage stands (1) 'I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife.... and marries another woman commits adultery' (Matthew 19:9) (1) - The Catholic Church will not remarry couples as it does not accept divorce (1), a sacramental bond cannot be broken, so remarriage is a sin (1) 'Contracting a new union, even if it is recognized by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery' (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2384) (1) - A Catholic who divorces and remarries cannot receive Holy Communion (1) this is because they believe that it contravenes the law of God. (1) 'They are not separated from the Church, but they cannot receive Eucharistic communion' (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1665) (1). Accept any other valid response.	- Repeated teaching / development - Development that does not relate both to the teaching and to the question - Reference to a source of wisdom that does not relate to the teaching given.	5

Question number	Indicative content	Mark
2(d)	AO2 12 marks Candidates must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. Candidates will be required to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding as well as accuracy of religion and belief when responding to the question and in meeting AO2 descriptors. AO2 Arguments for the statement: • Catholics would argue against the use of artificial contraception as they believe that it goes against religious teaching by preventing humans from fulfilling God's command to 'be fruitful and multiply' (Genesis 1:28) • Catholics believe that life begins at conception and some forms of contraception allow the egg to fertilise, they view these as abortifacients and therefore breaks the sanctity of life • Some Christians believe that sex was given by God for procreation within a marriage, so every sexual act should allow for the possibility of conception taking place, artificial contraception takes this opportunity away and is against the marriage vow to accept children from God. Arguments against the statement: • Some Christians do not regard contraception as against God's plan so will support the use of artificial contraception as they believe that God created sex for pleasure and to provide an experience unique to the married couple • Some Christians believe that artificial contraception is permitted as the essence of Christianity is love and contraception can be used to protect a woman's health and allows sex to be free from fear of pregnancy • Some Christians believe that natural forms of family planning involving monitoring a woman's menstrual cycle to determine whether she is fertile or not. This is acceptable because it does not involve any interruption to the act of sexual intercourse or the natural process of conception. Accept any other valid response. Candidates who do not consider different points of view within the religious tradition (as instructed in the question) cannot achieve marks beyond Level 2.	12

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable response.
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