

Theology of the Body II - Genesis 2

Let us look at man and woman before the Fall. Saint John Paul develops a hermeneutic tool of biblical or theological anthropology to analyze the phenomenal events in Adam's life after the breath of life was blown into his nostrils. This tool reveals that for Adam and Eve they had the original experiences of Solitude, Unity and Nakedness.

"The Lord God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him." At first glance these verses seem very odd. Until this point, everything God has done has been very good; now we have something that is apparently not good. Also, having provided us with this observation, instead of proceeding to create so that the man is not alone, we see that God instead forms creatures of the land and air that are not suitable for man. What are we to make of this? What do we learn of Original Solitude?

Solitude must be understood in two senses. First, of course, man is "alone" without woman. Second, he is also alone as a person in all of creation. Man is alone in that he differs from all of creation. He is like animals in that he is created from the earth, but in his body and in his spirit, man is unlike anything else.

It is man alone who names creatures. Some scientists tell us that primates, dolphins and colonies and other animals are just like us and possibly just as smart. Has any animal ever come up to any one and self-identified. "Hi, I'm a Pomeranian" or "hi, I'm Koko, a chimp who studies sociology; what species are you?"

It is man alone who tills the earth. When we think of "tilling" we visualize a man in bib overalls hoeing a garden. Adam certainly did that, but "tilling" means more than that. First of all, before Adam could till, he had to make the tool to hoe. Tilling is a uniquely human activity. In a theological sense, tilling covers gardening, building, construction, teaching and many human activities. Males and females who compose

operas, who do laboratory work, pilot rocket ships, explore the depths of the oceans and the heavens are all tilling. What we are doing this very morning in our RCIA class is tilling.

Why is tilling important? Why do we till as opposed to sustaining ourselves the way animals do? In Catechism 356, we read: "Of all visible creatures only man is "able to know and love his creator." He is "the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake," and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity."

We till in all its aspects because in so doing we create and bring order to the world in a manner similar to what God did in speaking the universe into being and creating order the first six days of creation. We till because in tilling we learn more about God's creation and in turn, God Himself. We till because in tilling we are drawn closer to God. The ethereal notes of a musical composition (and here I think especially of the Fourth Movement to Beethoven's 9th Symphony), the elegance of a mathematical equation; a discovery of some mystery of the cosmos; the compassion evident among nurses and doctors; the gospel message in Rembrandt's Prodigal Son - - all these things reveal something of God, and they draw us closer to the Lord.

We till because our souls pine for God.

Again, tilling brings home to us that we are alone in the universe with the God. We live in solitude only with God because only man is endowed with the ability to till as God tilled the six days of creation.

Adam is aware of himself. Animals are not. Man chooses his actions; animals cannot. "And whatever the man called each of them would be its name." "Its" name - - not his or her name. Animals have a sexual nature in that they reproduce through sexual operations, putting aside the Protista Kingdom, through a process of sexual differentiation,

but animals are devoid of the quality of masculinity and femininity - - these are qualities we have by virtue of being created in the image and likeness of God.

When Adam is naming these animals and whatever he specifies for a name, that is what it is, how he is doing this? He is doing this with God. In original solitude, then, we learn that man is a partner with the absolute - with God.

So it is not good that man should be alone, but what does he learn from Original Solitude? He learns that he is unique among all animals and all creation. From one edge of the cosmos to the other, Adam learns that he is unique, irreproducible and above and beyond all of creation - - like God. He also learns that he acts in partnership with God. He is alone with the Absolute, one God, imaging in a sense what God has done in the previous days of creation. **MAN LEARNS THAT HE ALONE STANDS AT THE COSMIC CROSSROADS OF THE UNIVERSE WHERE THE MATERIAL AND THE SPIRITUAL INTERSECT.**

Next, we look at Original Unity and Nakedness.

Genesis, Chapter 2, verse 25: "The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame."

KENOTIC LOVE. If Trinitarian love is made manifest in the embodied spirits of man and woman and it is the body which reveals the invisible life of the Trinity, we can't help but notice that this interior gaze of love by God upon His Creation is reflected in the way in which the first man and woman gazed upon and saw each other.

Let us call to mind what we learned in our class on the Trinity. God is One. Hear O Israel, the Lord they God, the Lord is One. What is that One? The Lord Our God, the Lord who is One is Three Persons! What are the qualities of these Three Persons? They share in the one essence of subsisting, uncreated being that is immutable,

omnipotent, omniscient, love, mercy and INFINITE!!! When U-235 reaches critical mass and another neutron impacts that critical mass, we have an atomic explosion. We cannot understand or envision the infinite love of the Father being poured out into the Son and the Son pouring that love out into the Holy Spirit and that infinite love poured into the Father and each Person being eternally filled with the infinite power of that love.

In the eyes of Adam and Eve gazing upon each other's bodies, they made that Trinitarian love manifest and through that power of love, new life in their image and likeness would result. [Genesis 5:3 - - "Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when he begot a son in his likeness, after his image; and he named him Seth."

As Saint John tells us in his First Epistle, God is love. A quality of love is that it desires to create that which is good and to make a gift of that goodness. A quality of God who is love is that He makes that gift of his good Creation to us as beings created in His image and likeness. Accordingly, that love exploded into the cosmos from the Big Bang formed and blessed by God who gazed upon His Creation as very good. The Universe is God's gift to us.

The entire universe and all that is in it was created as a gift for us and for our sakes. We are the only beings in all of creation that were created for our own sakes.

When Adam and Eve looked upon each other, they saw each other as gift. Using the Trinity as our model, the highest form of love is gift of self. In offering himself to Eve, Adam gave the gift of himself in the peace and knowledge that Eve would accept him and respect his goodness and dignity as a person.

By the same token, Eve received the gift of Adam as a person and returned herself as a gift to Adam without any fear that he would not accept the gift of herself, respecting and loving her goodness and dignity as a person.

In giving in a receiving way and receiving in a giving way, similar to the unity of the Trinity, Adam and Eve perfectly image Original Unity which is expressed in the phrase:

"This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;"
PROPHETIC!!

This original unity is also expressed in the complementary giving and receiving duties entrusted to Adam and Eve in their masculine and feminine roles: (a) Abad and Shamar and (b) Neged Ezer.

Song of Songs: Some rush to attribute a disembodied love; a purely allegorical and metaphysical and abstract statement of theology. But we remember our starting thesis!!!

1. The individual soul of the Christian (cf. St. Gregory of Nyssa).
2. Mary (cf. St. Ambrose)
3. And also to her Immaculate Conception (cf. Richard of St. Victor).
4. St. Bernard of Clairvaux saw in the Song of Songs a dialogue of the Word of God with the soul.
5. For St. John of the Cross, the mystical marriage of God and man.
6. Karl Barth was the first to have demonstrated in what way this significance is linked with the biblical context of chapter two of Genesis.

7. Saint John Paul saw all of these things and also urged us to accept this book in its most evident significance as a poem exalting natural human love.

His arms are rods of gold adorned with gems; His loins, a work of ivory covered with sapphires. [**Saint Gregory of Nyssa**].

Do not awaken or stir up love until it is ready.

Let him kiss me with kisses of his mouth, for your love is better than wine, [**God breathing a living spirit into Adam**].

You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride; you have ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes, [**This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh**].

I am a flower of Sharon [**a fertile valley at the foot of Mount Carmel**], a lily of the valleys.

A garden enclosed, my sister, my bride, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed!

My lover belongs to me and I to him;

Draw me after you! Let us run! The king has brought me to his bed chambers [**Saint Augustine says the cross was the nuptial bed of our Savior who desires to marry us**]. Let us exult and rejoice in you;

Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you shepherd, where you give rest at midday. Why should I be like one wandering after the flocks of your companions? If you do not know, most beautiful among women [**Church**], Follow the tracks of the flock and pasture your lambs near the shepherds' tents [**Scripture and Sacraments**].

Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that damage the vineyards. [**Three-fold concupiscence**].

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; For Love is strong as Death, longing is fierce as Sheol. Its arrows are arrows of fire, flames of the divine. Deep waters cannot quench love, nor rivers sweep it away. Were one to offer all the

wealth of his house for love, he would be utterly despised. [**1 Cor. 13 - - It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.**]