

Class 5  
Creation and Original Sin

1. Creation

- a. Before the world existed, nothing but God existed
- b. God choose to create the world as a free gift
- c. Only God can create
  - i. we don't create we assemble
    - 1. God created the whole material world from nothing
- d. Since God created all things; the whole world is a reflection of Him
- e. God created to manifest and communicate His glory and to share in His truth, goodness, and beauty
- f. God is continually present in and through Creation
  - i. He is present in his essence, because His essence gives creation its being
  - ii. He is present through His presence
  - iii. He is present in power because all creation is subject to His power

2. Genesis and Creation

- a. The book of Genesis gives us the story of creation
  - i. a unique genre of literature
    - 1. Not a history in the sense that it was intended to communicate exactly what happened
  - ii. Truths of the first 3 chapters of Genesis
    - 1. The creation of all things at the beginning of time
    - 2. The special creation of man
    - 3. The original happiness of our first parents
    - 4. the command given by God to test man's obedience
    - 5. the breaking of God's command at the temptation of the devil
    - 6. the falling of our first parents from that state of innocence
    - 7. the promise of a savior
  - iii. Genesis deals with the what not the how
    - 1. 1950 Pope Pius II released the encyclical *Humanae Generis* which taught:
      - a. the question of the origin of man's body from pre-existing living matter is a legitimate matter of scientific inquiry
      - b. Catholics must believe that the human soul was created immediately by God
      - c. All men have descended from a first individual through whom original sin is transformed.

3. Evolution

- a. evolution is a process whereby overtime organisms change so that descendants differ from their ancestors
  - i. It has been established beyond a reasonable doubt by science that some sort of process takes place
- b. The role of theology
  - i. theology studies who what, and why and not necessarily how
- c. Avoid the extremes
  - i. Evolutionism

1. an ideology which understands the universe as being matter in formation which denies a spiritual or supernatural reality.
- ii. Fundamentalism
  1. a form of religion that upholds belief in a strict, literal interpretation of the scriptures
    - a. There are two accounts of creation in Genesis that are not literally compatible
      - i. Gen 1:1-2:3
        1. Humans are created after the other animals (Gen 1:25 – 27)
      - ii. Gen 2:4-25
        1. Humans are created before the other animals (Gen 2:18 – 19)
    - b. Does not disprove creationism, just disproves a fundamentalist approach to the scriptures
      - i. God could still have created the world in an order and with a structure, we just don't have the play by play of how that happened
      - ii. There are solutions to solve the apparent differences, but that is beyond the scope here.
- iii. Neither fundamentalism nor creationism seem to be the answer
  1. Both faith and reason have something to teach us within their respective fields about the creation of the world
    - a. makes the biblical story of creation seem scientifically possible
    - b. possible

#### 4. Man

- a. Humans are the crowing achievement of God's creation
- b. Genesis tells us that God took great care to create humans
- c. All of creation exists form man's good: to cultivate, care for and make use of
- d. What is man
  - i. rational creatures
    1. we have an intellect
      - a. the ability to know, judge, and reason
    2. we have a free will
      - a. the ability to make free choices
  - ii. We are created after God's own image and likeness
    1. Gen 1:26
    2. This is the source of human dignity
      - a. this cannot be lost no matter what age or condition the person is in
    3. We share certain characteristics with God
      - a. only man is able to know and love his creator
      - b. the ability to know, reason and love, are the acts that make us most like God
    4. Being made in God's image and likeness is a pure gift.

## 5. Original Justice

- a. Refers to man's state prior to the fall
- b. Man possessed certain characteristics
  - i. supernatural gifts (these are restored to the individual at baptism and after the reception of Confession if they are lost through mortal sin)
    - 1. sanctifying grace
    - 2. Indwelling of the Trinity
    - 3. Gifts of the Holy Spirit
  - ii. Preternatural gifts (will not be restored until heaven)
    - 1. Qualities or gifts that man possessed that do not come from human nature but rather are above/ outside of human nature
    - 2. Include
      - a. infused knowledge
      - b. Incorruptibility/Immortality
      - c. Integrity
      - d. Impassibility

## 6. Original Sin

- a. Adam and Eve were tempted by a serpent, who was an image of Satan, to eat from the tree from which God told them not to eat
  - i. Their sin was desiring autonomy from God
    - 1. wanting the ability to decide good and evil, wanting to set the bounds of human existence
    - 2. Be independent of God
- b. Punishment for Original Sin
  - i. the loss of the supernatural and preternatural gifts
    - 1. Adam and Eve desired autonomy so their punishment was to give them that autonomy
      - a. the preternatural gifts were given by God to assist Adam and Eve to live holy lives and avoid sin
        - i. man is now autonomous
          - 1. we must keep our passions / sinful desires in check, we suffer, we die, we get sick etc.
- c. All people suffer the effects of original sin
  - i. Adam and Eve had been given a special responsibility to take care of the world and themselves
    - 1. Adam was the head of the human race
  - ii. When Adam sinned he lost the supernatural and preternatural gifts that he had been entrusted with
    - 1. since he could no longer have them, he could no longer pass them on
  - iii. We are born without the supernatural and preternatural gifts
    - 1. this is what we mean when we say we are born in the state of Original Sin

## 7. God's response

- a. God did not abandon Adam and Eve
- b. *Protevangelium*

- i. God cursed the serpent for his role in Adam's sin
- ii. Considered the first Gospel because it foretells of the redemption of humanity
  - a. the woman refers to the Blessed Virgin Mary (the New Eve)
  - b. Her seed refers to Jesus Christ, her Son (the new Adam)
- 2. immediately after the tragic sin of Adam and Eve, God already foretells and puts into motion His plan of salvation and redemption for all of humanity through Jesus Christ

#### 8. Review

- a. Before Creation only God existed
- b. God created the world and everything in it as a free gift to manifest His goodness and glory
- c. Man is the crowning achievement of creation and is the only being made in the image and likeness of God
- d. Adam and Eve were the first humans and enjoyed intimate friendship with God
- e. They chose to rebel against God's command in an act we call original Sin
- f. This sin afflicts all people for all times because the gifts entrusted to Adam were lost and he could not pass them to his children
- g. God did not abandon Adam and Eve, but immediately foretold of future redemption through Jesus Christ

#### 9. Reflection

- a. Although he was made by God in a state of holiness, from the very onset of his history man abused his liberty, at the urging of the Evil One. Man set himself against God and sought to attain his goal apart from God. Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, but their senseless minds were darkened and they served the creature rather than the Creator. What divine revelation makes known to us agrees with experience. Examining his heart, man finds that he has inclinations toward evil too, and is engulfed by manifold ills which cannot come from his good Creator. Often refusing to acknowledge God as his beginning, man has disrupted also his proper relationship to his own ultimate goal as well as his whole relationship toward himself and others and all created things. Therefore man is split within himself. As a result, all of human life, whether individual or collective, shows itself to be a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. Indeed, man finds that by himself he is incapable of battling the assaults of evil successfully, so that everyone feels as though he is bound by chains. But the Lord Himself came to free and strengthen man, renewing him inwardly and casting out that "prince of this world" (John 12:31) who held him in the bondage of sin. For sin has diminished man, blocking his path to fulfillment. The call to grandeur and the depths of misery, both of which are a part of human experience, find their ultimate and simultaneous explanation in the light of this revelation.

- Pope Paul VI, Pastoral Council on the Church in the Modern World  
*Gaudium et Spes*

#### 10. Additional Resources

- a. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. *In the Beginning*. 1995: Eerdmans **ISBN-13**: 978-0802841063
- b. Fr. Peter Fonseca (Podcast) The Catholic Church and Evolution.  
<https://soundcloud.com/user-631584158/the-catholic-church-and-evolution>