

# GOD'S IMAGE AND THE GOD HE IMAGES

MANKIND AND THE SON OF MAN (Nos. 355–455)



## **SESSION OBJECTIVES**

This session unfolds in three parts: man, the Fall and how we are fallen, and how Jesus comes to raise the fallen. After this session, you should understand ...

- What it means to be created in the "image of God" (Genesis 1:27).
- The meaning of *Christian anthropology*.
- That we are created in the image of God, but have lost our likeness to him because of sin.
- That we are a unique combination of matter and spirit, with a body that participates in the divine image.
- That we are subject to concupiscence, which is the inclination to sin.
- That it is our fate to die a bodily death.
- You should also be able to explain the meaning of the name *Jesus* and the primary titles of the Savior: Christ, Son of God, and Lord.

## **PART 1: GETTING YOUR BEARINGS**

Knowing who we are is as important to our journey as knowing where we are going. In the last session, we discussed God as Creator and how he guides all that he has created by his providential care. We also saw that, "The ultimate purpose of creation is that God 'who is the creator of all things may at last become all in all, thus simultaneously assuring his own glory and our beatitude'"<sup>1</sup> (No. 294).

That glimpse, at both the beginning and the end of the story of God's creation, helped to remind us that our journey is one from Blessing to Blessing. At this point, it is important for us to get a better picture of the beginning of the human part of that story. Just as it was important for us to pay close attention to the creation of heaven and earth, it will be important for us to take a closer look at the story of man's creation and fall.

We find in this session that "in the beginning;' God made man in his image and likeness. We learn that human beings are a remarkable meeting between what is visible and invisible, between matter and spirit. We affirm that God made the human race gendered, male and female, and that he created our first parents in a" ... 'state of holiness and justice'"<sup>2</sup> (No. 375). We also are reminded of the vital fact, so often overlooked, that we are fallen. Our first parents sinned and lost their original likeness to God and the gift of original justice God had given them. Unfortunately, we have inherited that fallen state and suffer within ourselves the conflicts that are a result of the loss of that gift.

This sad fact is important because it explains why, as the fathers of the Second Vatican Council declared, the "'whole of man's history has been the story of our combat ...'"<sup>3</sup> (No. 409). This dimension of our journey places us in the context of the larger journey, the whole story of man's historical "struggle to do what is right"<sup>4</sup> (No. 409). We need to know that the immeasurable rewards of the journey come at a cost. We will have to "strive to enter in;' as Jesus exhorted his disciples.

The good news is that, despite the reality of our fallen nature, Jesus has made it possible for us to complete this journey! And so the last part of this session takes up the portion of the Creed that "... speaks of the second divine Person and the mystery of his redemption of men ..."<sup>5</sup> (No. 190). This Jesus, whose very name means "God saves;' is the only reason we can even contemplate making this journey from Blessing to Blessing.

## ***Temptation***

Temptation itself is not sin. Rather, temptation is an attraction or enticement to sin. It can come either from within (due to concupiscence) or from outside of us (the allure of the world or a direct influence of demons). Temptation invites us to act in a manner not in keeping with the laws of God and right reason. It is only when we "give in" or act on a temptation that we sin.

If you are tempted to sin, you are experiencing the pain of concupiscence, that is, the inclination to sin. Concupiscence, you could say, is one of the sad "leftover" effects of original sin. Original sin was removed if you were you baptized, but baptism cannot spare you from concupiscence. That's why we need to develop strong Christian lives grounded in prayer and the graces of the sacraments. Grace helps us in times of trouble and in moments of temptation so that we avoid the near occasions of sin and may turn away from temptations.

The Bible teaches that even Jesus experienced temptation, but he did not sin. Let us cling to Jesus in prayer, remembering the words he taught us to pray: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!"

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### **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

*This week, read Psalm 139. Consider making a few of the verses in that passage the subject of a short prayer each day this week.*

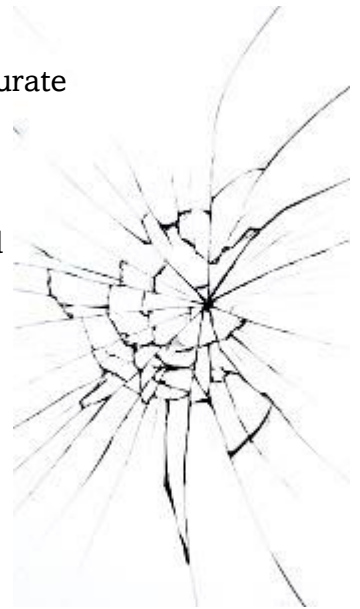
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## MYTH BUSTER

### ***Myth: The devil and God are equal in power.***

Maintaining that God and his goodness are opposite to the devil and evil is accurate insofar as they do oppose one another, but they are not equal in magnitude. Strictly speaking, God has no opposite.

God is the eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, all-powerful Creator. The devil and the demons are merely creatures, fallen angels, who owe their very existence—as do we—to God. The power of the devil and the demons is not infinite; demonic activity cannot thwart the ultimate will and plan of God. The demons' opposition to God may generate great pain, sadness, and destruction in the short run, but the demonic resources are finite. In the long run, they will lose. There is only one almighty God—and his plan rules.



## READING THE C A T E C H I S M

The presentation for Session Six will cover *Catechism* Nos. 355-455. If your time is limited, you might want to begin with the essential paragraphs for this session: 356-360, 362, 364, 366, 368, 369, 372, 373-379, 385, 387, 389-391, 395, 397, 399, 400, 402, 404, 407, 408, 410, 413, 418, 420, 425, 426, 430, 436, 441, 442, 446 and 450.

## GLOSSARY TERMS

### **Communion**

This term means "to be one with;" to have fellowship and union, especially with Jesus and other baptized Christians. *Communion* also refers to the union with God and each other that God's grace makes possible for us, especially in the celebration and reception of the Eucharist. The Church is often referred to as the communion of saints, including the Body of Christ here on earth (the Church militant); those enduring the final stages of purification (the Church suffering); and the saints in heaven (the Church triumphant).

### **Concupiscence**

Human appetites or desires that remain disordered due to the consequences of original sin. Concupiscence is the tendency we have to sin because our passions or emotions are not immediately obedient to what clear reason and a good will would require. Even after we are baptized, we often desire things that the moral teaching of the Church forbids, and we often dislike doing things that the Church commends or even requires. The life of grace can help us, over time, to reorder our passions to desire the good eagerly and to reject evil forcefully.

## **Dominion**

Authority, especially over lower orders of creatures. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve were given a kind of royal authority over the rest of creation as a reflection of their place at the top of the material world. This was part of the total harmony that they enjoyed within and between themselves, as well as the harmony that they enjoyed with God in the exercise of his dominion over their lives. This dominion over other creatures is expressed in the second chapter of Genesis in Adam's naming of the animals.

## **Integrity**

This component of the original harmony (or original justice) of Adam and Eve is that inner harmony of their powers of sense, emotion (or passion), intellect, and will that would have made them entirely righteous before God and at peace within themselves.

## **Original Justice**

The *Catechism* describes original justice as the whole complement of gifts that our first parents received at their creation: friendship with God, inner harmony (integrity), mutual harmony (communion), and harmony with creation (dominion).

## **Original Sin**

This term is used to refer to the first sin committed by Adam and Eve, and, by way of analogy, to the fallen nature of their descendants. The original sin of Adam and Eve left both them and us (who have inherited our fallen human nature from them) deprived of the holiness and justice in which they had been created, and have left us subject to ignorance, suffering, death, and an inclination to sin. Although we are wounded and weakened by original sin, we are not entirely ruined and so retain our capacity for reason and freedom of will, as well as a desire for things that appear to us to be good.

## ***Proto-evangelium***

This Latin phrase, which roughly means "first good news" or "first gospel;" is used to refer to the mysterious phrase from Genesis 3:15 in which God says to the serpent tempter of Adam and Eve that the descendant of the woman will "bruise your head." The traditional spiritual interpretation has been that Satan's head would be crushed by some future saving human figure (the "seed of the woman"). Christian tradition has always read it as referring prophetically to Christ's victory over sin and death and has also seen in it the importance of "the woman;" the Blessed Virgin Mary and the new Eve, whose Son would redeem all men from the sin of the first Eve.

From the *Catechism* Nos. 385-421

4. In the words of the tempter to our first parents, what can we surmise about the nature of the sin of the fallen angels? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What three elements of disharmony are introduced as a result of Adam and Eve's sin?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. The *Catechism* describes this sin as "... sin' only in an analogical sense ..."  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. "God did not make \_\_\_\_\_, and he does not delight in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the living. It was through the devil's envy that \_\_\_\_\_ entered the world:"

From the *Catechism* Nos. 422-455

8. Who or what is to be "at the heart of catechesis"? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What does *Jesus* mean in Hebrew? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What does the word *Christ* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What does *Maranatha* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

## I. **Man Before the Fall**

- A. Man is a meeting of heaven and earth in himself; between spirit and matter (see No. 360)
- B. Man created in the image and likeness of God-the image of the Son (see Nos. 356-357)
  - 1. Our dignity consists in our ability to know and love our Creator; we are capable of freely responding to God
  - 2. We have been created for ourselves alone-everything else created for us (see No. 358)
  - 3. Adam and Eve given dominion over creation; Adam names the animals, which signifies that he "knows" what they are (see No. 371-373)
- C. The importance of body and soul in man
  - 1. The body is part of how we image God (No. 364)
  - 2. "Trinity" of body, soul, spirit (see No. 367)
    - a. St. Paul-distinction between soul and spirit, with spirit being the highest part of the soul
    - b. Spirit-particularly to human beings, consists of intellect and will
    - c. Body-source of gender; we are "made for matrimony;" i.e., ordered toward love
  - 3. The family-father, mother, child-is a faint reflection of the Trinity
    - a. God is a being in whom there is a procession of Persons; from father and mother "proceeds" a child (see No. 373)
    - b. Man is the only creature who is both personal and capable of generation (angels are persons but cannot generate; animals generate but are not persons)
    - c. We image God's generative life
- D. Man made "in the image and likeness of God" (Genesis 1:26)
- E. Man in Paradise: "... the state called 'original justice' ..." (No. 376)

F. A three-fold harmony between God and man in the Garden (see Nos. 376-377)

1. Integrity-"harmony of the human person;" right ordering of the internal powers (No. 376)
2. Dominion-"harmony between the first couple and all creation" (No. 376)
  - a. Preternatural gifts: infused knowledge, impassibility (i.e., freedom from suffering), and immortality
  - b. Communion-"harmony between man and woman"<sup>1</sup> (No. 376)

**II. The Fall (see No. 385)**

A. We can know naturally that we are fallen

1. Prevalence of sin in the world indicates this; we are "not quite right"
2. Recognition of original sin is key to understanding the need for a Savior (see No. 389)
3. Original sin = an essential truth of the Faith
4. Fallacy of man's natural perfectibility; denial of reality of original sin
5. The Old Testament as a chronicle of sin: points to need for a Savior (see No. 388)

B. Scriptural account of the Fall (Genesis 3)

1. Highly symbolic, but it affirms a "primeval event" (No. 390)
2. The Fall is an historical event; *not* mythological
3. Fall of man preceded by fall of the angels (see Nos. 391-393)
4. Satan gains a certain dominion over *us* due to original sin (see Nos. 394-395)
5. Original Sin: an assertion of self in pride (see Nos. 396-401)

C. Consequences of original sin (see Nos. 402-406)

1. Man possesses a fallen human nature (see No. 404)
2. A weakened will and a darkened intellect

3. Concupiscence= an inclination to sin (see No. 405)
  4. Threefold original harmony yields a threefold fall
    - a. Integrity becomes concupiscence
    - b. Dominion becomes travail or "groaning" (see Romans 8:22)
    - c. Communion becomes strife
  5. Triple concupiscence (see No. 377)-quoting 1 John 2:15-17
    - a. Lust of the body (passions)
    - b. Lust of the eyes (covetousness)
    - c. Pride of life (spirit)
- D. *Protoevangelium* ("first Gospel") in Genesis 3 = announcement that God promises victory over sin (see Nos. 410-411).
- E. God did not abandon us to power of death (see No. 410)

### **III. Jesus Comes to Raise the Fallen**

- A. "At the heart of catechesis: Christ" (No. 426)
1. Jesus Christ, the full disclosure of God's eternal plan
  2. The *Catechism* begins with the Incarnate Word's name and titles.
    - a. *Jesus-Yeshua* (Hebrew), "God saves" (No. 430)
    - b. *Christ-Christos* (Greek), from Hebrew *Messiah*, "anointed" (see No. 436)
    - c. Son of God-profession of divine Sonship and dignity as Messianic king (see Nos. 439, 441)
    - d. *Lord-Kyrios* (Greek) used of Hebrew name *YHWH* in the Old Testament (see No. 446)
  3. Christ is "the key, the center, and the purpose of the whole of man's history"<sup>2</sup> (No. 450)



## **PART 4: GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Because of the dignity of the human body, we are warned against despising bodily life, for the whole person"... is intended to become ... a temple of the Spirit"<sup>1</sup> (No. 364). How is the dignity of the body denied or neglected in today's society? How might you uphold that dignity in your own life?
2. We often think of ourselves as masters of our own fate. However, the *Catechism* says that we have been both *created* and *willed* by God (see No. 369). How would our attitudes and journey of faith change if we recognized our radical dependence upon God, seeing all that happens to *us* as part of his plan of love for us?
3. Because of the effects of original sin, our nature is wounded, though not totally corrupted (see No. 405). Consequently, we are "... subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death;' and inclined to sin; therefore, we must"... struggle to do what is right, and at great cost ..." <sup>2</sup> (No. 409) to ourselves. Can you relate an experience in which you or someone close to you struggled to overcome ignorance, sin, or suffering?
4. The *Catechism* indicates that, "Catechesis aims at putting 'people ... in communion ... with Jesus Christ ...'" <sup>3</sup> (No. 426). "In catechesis 'Christ ... is taught-everything else is taught with reference to him ...'" <sup>4</sup> (No. 427). What are your earliest memories of Jesus in catechesis? How did (or do) you introduce your own children to Christ?
5. How was the title "Son of God" understood by the Jews (see No. 441), and how did the revelation of Jesus Christ and his passion, death, and resurrection change that understanding (see No. 442-445)? What does it mean for us, when we confess Jesus to be the "only-begotten Son" <sup>5</sup> (See No. 460)?
6. The *Catechism* emphasizes that we should not entirely surrender our freedom"... to any earthly power, only to God" (No. 450). Are you ever tempted to place the expectations of Jesus Christ and his Church below the demands of your job, family, peers, political affiliation, personal desires, or other "earthly powers"?

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### **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Let us pray to our heavenly Father as Christ the Lord taught us: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

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