

CREATION ✠ FALL ✠ REDEMPTION

Creation — Out of wisdom and love God alone created the universe freely, directly, and without any help. (CCC317)

Nothing exists that does not owe its existence to God the Creator. The world began when God's word drew it out of nothingness; all existent beings, all of nature, and all human history are rooted in this primordial event, the very genesis by which the world was constituted and time begun. (CCC338)

God created the world to show forth and communicate his glory. That his creatures should share in his truth, goodness, and beauty—this is the glory for which God created them. (CCC319)

The profession of faith of the 4th Lateran Council (1215) affirms that God “from the beginning of time made at once (simul) out of nothing both orders of creatures, the spiritual and the corporeal, that is, the angelic and the earthly, and then (deinde) the human creature, who as it were shares in both orders, being composed of spirit and body.” (CCC327)

The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls “angels” is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition. (CCC328)

Angels are spiritual creatures who glorify God without ceasing and who serve his saving plans for other creatures: “The angels work together for the benefit of us all” (St. Thomas Aquinas, STh I, 114, 3, ad 3). (CCC350)

The Church venerates the angels who help her on her earthly pilgrimage and protect every human being. (CCC352)

The Feast of Guardian Angels is October 2nd

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27) Man occupies a unique place in creation: (CCC355)

(I) he is “in the image of God”; Of all visible creatures only man is “able to know and love his creator” (CCC356) Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. (CCC357) God created everything for man, but man in turn was created to serve and love God and to offer all creation back to God... (CCC358)

(II) in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; “Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity” (GS 14§1). The doctrine of faith affirms that the spiritual and immortal soul is created immediately by God. (CCC382) In Sacred Scripture the term “Soul” refers to human *life* or the entire human *person*. But “soul” also refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God's image: “soul” signifies the *spiritual principle* in man. (CCC363) The soul does not perish when it separates from the body at death, and it will be reunited with the body at the final Resurrection. (CCC366)

(III) he is created “male and female”: “God did not create man a solitary being. From the beginning, ‘male and female he created them’ This partnership of man and woman constitutes the first form of communion between persons. (CCC383)

(IV) God established him in his friendship. Revelation makes known to us the state of original holiness and justice of man and woman before sin: from their friendship with God flowed the happiness of their existence in paradise. (CCC384)

Principle for laws inscribed in creation and the relations which derive from the nature of things is a principle of wisdom and a foundation for morality. (CCC354)

The Fall / Original Sin

Satan or the devil and the other demons are fallen angels who have freely refused to serve God and his plan. Their choice against God is definitive. (irrevocable) They try to associate man in their revolt against God. (CCC414)

"It was through the devil's envy that death entered the world" Wisdom 1: 13; 2: 24

The devil "has sinned from the beginning"; he is "a liar and the father of lies." I John 3: 8; John 8: 44

Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents (Adam & Eve) lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy. Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called "Satan" or the "devil." (John 8:44; Revelation 12: 9) The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: "The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing." (CCC391)

The account of the fall in *Genesis* 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place *at the beginning of the history of man.* (GS 13 §1) Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents. (CCC390)

Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness. (CCC397)

In that sin man *preferred* himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good. Created in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully "divinized" by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to "be like God," but "without God, before God, and not in accordance with God." (CCC398)

The presence of sin in human history cannot be ignored. If we reject the Revelation of God we are tempted to explain sin as merely a developmental flaw, a psychological weakness, a mistake, or the necessary consequence of an inadequate social structure, etc. The mystery of evil only makes sense if seen in the context of the relationship between God and his human creatures. The original sin was humanity's rejection of God and opposition to God. Sin is an abuse of the freedom that God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving him and loving one another.

Consequences of Original Sin

- ⊗ Loss of original holiness.
- ⊗ Fear of God based on a distorted image of God — that of a God jealous of his prerogatives.
- ⊗ Loss of harmony between persons and peoples.
- ⊗ The control of the soul's spiritual faculties over the body is shattered
- ⊗ The union of man and woman becomes subject to tensions, their relations henceforth marked by lust and domination.
- ⊗ Harmony with creation is broken: visible creation has become alien and hostile to man. Because of man, creation is now subject "to its bondage to decay." Romans 8:21
- ⊗ Death makes its entrance into human history. Romans 5:12

By his (original) sin Adam, as the first man, lost the original holiness and justice he had received from God, not only for himself but for all human beings. (CCC416)

Adam and Eve transmitted to their descendants human nature wounded by their own first sin and hence deprived of original holiness and justice; this deprivation is called "**original sin.**" (CCC417)

Consequences of sin continued...

As a result of original sin, human nature is weakened in its powers; (wounded in the natural powers proper to it), subject to ignorance, suffering, and the domination of death; and inclined to (personal) sin. This inclination to sin is called "**concupiscence**". (CCC418)

...Original sin is transmitted (passed on to others) with human nature, 'by propagation (at the moment of conception), not by imitation' and that it is proper to each' (person). (CCC419)

How did the sin of Adam and Eve become the sin of all his descendants?

The transmission of original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand. But we do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature. By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a *personal sin*, but this sin affected the *human nature* that they would then transmit *in a fallen state*. (CCC404)

Ignorance of the fact that humanity has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action, and morals. (CCC407)

Because of this certainty of faith, (the state of original sin is passed on at conception), the Church baptizes for the remission of sins even tiny infants who have not committed personal sin. (CCC403)

Redemption — After his fall, man was not abandoned by God. On the contrary, God calls him and in a mysterious way heralds the coming victory over evil and his restoration from his fall. The passage in Genesis 3: 9, 15 is called the *Protoevangelium* ("first gospel"): the first announcement of the Messiah and Redeemer, of a battle between the serpent and the Woman, and of the final victory of a descendent of her. (CCC410)

Christians see in this passage an announcement of the "New Adam" who, because he "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross," (I Corinthians 15: 21-22; 45; Philippians 2: 8; Romans 5: 19-20) makes amends superabundantly for the disobedience of Adam. Furthermore many Fathers and Doctors of the Church have seen the woman announced in the *Protoevangelium* as Mary, the mother of Christ, the "new Eve." Mary benefited first of all and uniquely from Christ's victory over sin: she was preserved from all stain of original sin and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life. (CCC412)

But why did God not prevent the first man from sinning? St. Leo the Great responds, "Christ's inexpressible grace gave us blessings better than those the demon's envy had taken away." And St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, "There is nothing to prevent human nature's being raised up to something greater, even after sin; God permits evil in order to draw forth some greater good. Thus St. Paul says in Romans 5: 20, 'Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more'; and the Exsultet (the great hymn sung to the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil Mass) sings, 'O happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!'" (CCC412)

The sacrament of Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a person back toward God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil (concupiscence), persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle. (CCC405)

Glossary of Terms

Salvation History – The Story of God’s Plan to save the world from sin and death.

Original Sin – First sin of Adam that lost the original holiness and justice he had received from God that is transmitted to all their descendants.

Concupiscence – Inclination to sin remains even after baptism washes away sin.

Redemption – The payment of a ransom to liberate someone held in captivity.

Divine Providence – Consists in the dispositions with which God leads his creatures toward their ultimate end. God is the Sovereign Master of his own plan. To carry it out, however, he also makes use of the cooperation of his creatures. For God grants his creatures the dignity of acting on their own and of being causes for each other. (Compendium of Catechism #55)

Typology – The study of persons, places, events, and institutions in the Bible that foreshadow later, and greater realities made known by God in history.

CCC 116 The *literal sense* is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: "All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal."⁸³

CCC 117 The *spiritual sense*. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs.

1. The *allegorical sense*. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and also of Christian Baptism.⁸⁴

2. The *moral sense*. The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction".⁸⁵

3. The *anagogical sense* (Greek: *anagoge*, "leading"). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem.⁸⁶

For the Wages of Sin is Death, but the free gift of God is eternal Life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

-Romans 6:23