

ARTICLE 52

Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

Marriage a gift from God

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Marriage! Instituted by God

Male and Female He Created Them

We have seen that, in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, God created man in His own likeness and image, with only two genders, male and female, and instituted marriage for the purpose of begetting sons and daughters to become heirs to the Kingdom of God.

The Purpose of Sacred Scripture

The second chapter of the book of Genesis gives us another account of that creation. That these accounts are not in conflict will be understood if we keep in mind the purpose of Sacred Scripture. St Paul tells us that “All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore the purpose of the second account of the creation of Man is to deepen our knowledge both of God and of the nature of Man by revealing different aspects of both to us. So let us look at this second account to see what is revealed.

This chapter begins by telling us that God, having looked at His creation and seeing that it was good, rested on the Sabbath day, blessed it and sanctified it. The chapter then looks again at that creation giving particular attention to the creation of Man.

“And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning: wherein he placed man whom he had formed.” (Genesis 2:7-8)

Man is Composed of Body and Soul

This reveals to us the dual nature of man, body and soul. The soul is the breath of life from God and it is the soul which animates the body. God also created a paradise of pleasure for man to enjoy and we will see in chapter three, that God used to 'walk' in the garden to be with His creation and to converse with the man and the woman. We also have here a foreshadowing of Pentecost when God will breathe forth the Holy Ghost onto the apostles.

Genesis continues, “And the Lord God took man, and put him into the paradise of pleasure, to dress it, and to keep it. And he commanded him, saying: Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death. (Genesis 2:15-17)

The Existence of a Threat

Commenting on this piece of Scripture, Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch in their 'Ignatius Catholic Study Bible explain, “The command to 'keep' the garden may be translated as a command to 'guard' it. In this case, a threat to the order of paradise is implied...”

Man has Free Will

Man has also been given free will. That is, he has been given the freedom to choose what he would like to do, independently of God. Now free will is meaningless, unless there is a choice to be made. If I offer you an apple, and tell you to choose whichever piece of fruit you would like, you will look at me and think that I am joking. For there is no choice of fruit to be made if there is only one apple. However you do still have a choice. You can choose either to take the apple, or not to take the apple. Adam is given the same choice in the garden of Eden. God tells him that he may eat of every tree except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If Adam obeys, he chooses God, if he disobeys, he chooses 'not God' or, he chooses himself. In doing this, he would exalt himself over God and would thereby separate himself from God.

Man Must Freely Choose

The choice for all of us, is to choose either God or to choose Me, to choose to love or to choose to be selfish. This explains to us the nature of true love. Love is a choice, an act of a free will, whereby one chooses to give oneself completely to another without regard for oneself. For love to be complete, the choice must be reciprocated by the other. God gives Himself freely to Adam and to us, and He then leaves us free to reciprocate by giving ourselves back to Him. The act of Love is an act of giving. True love cannot contain itself because its essence is God, therefore it has an infinite character. Love, of its nature, grows and seeks to expand, and so God gives to Man the incredible gift of the power of generation so that he may truly unite himself to God's creative power in the act of pro-creation.

It is Not Good for Man to be Alone

Let us see how Genesis explains this to us. “And the Lord God said: It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself.” (Genesis 2:18) God then brings all the animals to Adam for him to name them but none of them satisfy Adam's need for a helper. “Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one” (Genesis 2:21-24)

We learn that Adam has infused knowledge. He didn't have an earthly father and mother, as yet he has no children, so how does he know about fatherhood and motherhood? Infused knowledge as a gift from God. It is to this last quote from Adam that Christ directs the Pharisees when they try to trap Him over His teachings on marriage and divorce.

The Beautiful Story of the Creation of Woman

Now let us read again the story of the creation of woman, slowly this time.

“Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one” (Genesis 2:21-24)

Drink deeply of this sacred scripture, pause, and then say, “WOW”. In this time of Advent, allow yourself to be amazed, to be overwhelmed at the creation of Woman. She who has been given the capacity to bear children for God. In time, God will use this womanly capacity to bring forth the Christ child from a Virgin clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. Allow yourself to be carried away by the beauty of the nativity. Become a child again in your heart and allow yourself to be filled with wonder and awe at the majesty of God

and at the great blessings He has bestowed on us. Prepare your heart well to receive Jesus as a baby this Christmas and allow Him to disarm you, to soothe your troubled heart in the realisation that with God all things are possible and that all things work unto good to them that love God.

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