

ARTICLE 53

Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

Marriage a gift from God

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Marriage! The Virtue of Purity

Extraordinary Statement

The second chapter of the Book of Genesis ends with an extraordinary statement. It is extraordinary for several reasons. On account of its simplicity, on account of its subject matter, on account of its profundity and, on account of the fact that in today's world it is easily overlooked and misunderstood. Here is that statement.

“And they were both naked: to wit, Adam and his wife: and were not ashamed.” (Genesis 2:25)

So What?

Many will say “so they were in their nudes, what's the big deal?” It is chapter 3 of Genesis, which tells us of the fall of Adam, that will give us the key to understanding this extraordinary statement. The statement itself may be passed over on account of its simplicity. However, the word 'simple' has become a victim of the modern tendency to confuse the meaning of words. Many people confuse the word 'simple' with the word 'easy'. If something is simple, then it is easy to do. But this is not what the word really means. We are told that God is simple, and this means that in God, there is no division. God is one, a unity of three persons, but without division. Simple!

Nakedness is Commonplace

In our modern western culture, nakedness has become commonplace through widespread immodesty in dress, both of men and of women. Nakedness has also become commonplace through advertising in the various forms of media which exploits the human body in order to increase sales, and through a rampant explosion of pornography on television and on the internet which is spread through computers, laptops, tablet and other hand held devices, and through so called smart phones.

The Degradation of the Human Body

This widespread nakedness, which is largely portrayed unashamedly, has contributed to the degradation of the human body in the eyes of many, causing them to lose sight of the fact that man is created in the image and likeness of God. People will say, “there is nothing to be ashamed of in the human body” and while there is truth in such a statement, it is not the whole truth, and contains many dangers on account of this. Since the fall of man there are certain actions, feelings and desires of which we should rightly feel ashamed because they tend to separate us from God. In a God denying world these shameful tendencies tend to be portrayed openly and without shame because sin is first denied before being glorified as a good.

Adam & Eve's Original Innocence

When Genesis tells us that Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed it is telling us several things. First of all it points to purity. Purity of mind, of heart, of body and of soul. At this point in time Adam and Eve did not know sin, they did not have any sinful inclinations or sinful bodily desires. All of their thoughts, words and deeds were close to God and were therefore pure in intent.

Nothing to Hide

Their nakedness also signifies that they had nothing to hide. Nothing to hide from God and nothing to hide from each other. They lived in the simplicity of union with God, although this unity had yet to be put to the test.

Notice also how the statement above from the book of Genesis refers to Eve as Adam's wife. They are husband and wife and they are not ashamed to be naked together in the presence of God. Now let us move forward to Genesis chapter 3 where the true significance of this statement will be revealed with the entrance of the serpent onto the scene.

Enter the serpent, the Arch Enemy of Mankind

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any of the beasts of the earth which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman: Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise?” (Genesis 3:1)

Here we are introduced to the arch enemy of mankind. He is more subtle than any of the beasts of the earth. He has rejected God's plan of creation refusing to willingly serve God and yet, here we see him in the garden unwittingly serving God's purpose which is to put the first man and the first woman to the test so that they may exercise their free will. All creatures are dependent on God but only those with free will can choose how they respond to God's invitation to remain free by becoming holy.

False Understanding of Independence

It seems to me to be in the nature of free will to strive for independence. However there is a false understanding of independence which seeks to separate the creature from the creator. This false notion leads to pride and to anger at our dependence on God as if we cannot be free unless we can be free of God. But we might as well get angry with oxygen because of our dependence on oxygen to breathe. Imagine how foolish the man would be who decides to stop breathing because he resents his dependence on oxygen, rather than using the oxygen to best advantage to attain his hopes and dreams. Such is the foolishness of the serpent whose pride is so great that he believes he can thwart God's plans in relation to man.

The serpent seeks the Fall of Man

The serpent's purpose is to bring about the fall of mankind. He has already travelled this road himself and has brought about his own damnation for all eternity. He knows who God is whom he has rejected therefore, in order to turn man away from God, the serpent must, of necessity, use deceit as the primary means for trying to implement his alternative plan. He is probably not fully aware of God's impending munificence towards mankind and he probably believes that mankind will suffer the exact same fate as he himself has suffered for, having rejected God totally in his own act of absolute defiance, he knows nothing of the Mercy that God is about to offer to mankind. Satan's knowledge of God is limited by his creatureliness but more importantly it is also severely limited by his foolish pride.

The serpent is a Liar

We see this deceitful nature of the serpent in the question that he poses to the woman as the opening gambit in his plan to bring about the fall. Notice too how this most subtle of enemies approaches the woman and not the man. Now some will use this in a way that denigrates women by laying emphasis on the fact that the woman is weaker than the man. This is to miss the main point of this lesson which is to identify the characteristic traits of our enemy such as subtlety, cunning and deceitfulness. Women may be weaker than men in certain aspects of their nature but this weakness is not a sign of inferiority, rather it points us to the complementarity of the sexes. God has assigned different roles to both men and women which are not interchangeable but which, particularly in married life, go together to form a unified whole which is the basis of family life. Women have

their strengths and weaknesses as do men and some of these are as a direct result of the fall as we shall see when we move through this third chapter of the Book of Genesis

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