

Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 25, 2021
Year of the Eucharist and Parish (Sermon #15)

“God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.”
(Genesis 1:27)

*“The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life,
and so man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7)*

Last weekend I spoke of reading Sacred Scripture as a Divine Profession of Love from God to mankind. Another way we could understand this, centers upon the word “Covenant.” God desires a covenant relationship with mankind, and Sacred Scripture was written to emphasize this, while also showing how mankind will repeatedly turn away from this offer. Let us now return to the beginning and examine what God intended and offered, and how we (mankind) managed to turn our back upon this offer.

The first two chapters of the Book of Genesis teach us many things. For our reflection today, let us focus upon the two lines I have provided at the top of this lesson. We have been created by the hand of God in His image and His likeness. What our English translations fail to convey to us is that when God breathed His Spirit into man (Adam), He gave us two unique levels of existence. He gave mankind (1) *Bios* - natural life or physical life, and (2) *Zoe* - spiritual life, divine life. We can examine these two “lives” in this fashion. We all agree a tree has natural life (*Bios*). At the same time, I believe we can also agree a tree does not have a spiritual life (*Zoe*). We would base this conclusion upon the very real fact that trees have no means for self-reflection, leading to personal expression and improvement. There are no tree bookstores selling tree self-help books. In God’s Divine Plan, He chose to give man a part of Himself, His Spirit. Man would now be able to live and interact as both a physical and spiritual being. This meant mankind could live both a natural life and a supernatural life.

Dr. Scott Hahn, in his book “Hope to Die, the Christian Meaning of Death and the Resurrection of the Body, dedicates some time to instruct the reader that God intended to have mankind live united with Him in a family relationship. He affirmed this desire by providing mankind with the first of a series of covenants/relationships. This first one, Dr. Hahn points out to be the Sabbath: the “Seventh Day” or “Day of Rest.” As families, despite individual schedules, must spend quality time together to become the best version of their family, God gave us a whole day to spend with Him. We would have a whole day to deepen our relationship with Him. All we had to do to succeed, like any earthly family, was for the children to obey the family rules, His rules - “Do not eat the fruit from this tree, lest you die.”

Did Adam and Eve die when they broke the rules of God’s family? Yes and no. No, they did not die physically (*Bios*), but yes, they did die spiritually (*Zoe*). The family relationship is now torn asunder by the disobedient child. This breaking of the rules now not only affects man’s relationship with God, it affects man’s relationship with the rest of creation (nature, others, self). However, we know this is not the end of the story. Sacred Scripture does not end after Genesis chapter three. God will now go on to form new covenants with man, which will gradually lead to His Son, Repairer of the Breach, Savior of the Family.