

*Sixth Sunday of Easter*  
*May 9, 2021*  
*Year of the Eucharist and Parish (Sermon #17)*

In any musical composition, the composer uses the music to tell a story. The music will rise and fall; at times reaching a jarring crescendo; at others, taking the listener into darkness, maybe despair. Each movement will build on the ones before, ever moving toward the finale. Each movement may be bridged to the next with a repeated refrain, much like the Responsorial Psalm we read at each Holy Mass.

Over the last two weeks, Fr. Saucier has orchestrated our reflection on the first movement of God's masterpiece; building to a crescendo of light at the creation of humankind; and then becoming calm and serene on the seventh day, the Sabbath, the first full day of man's existence. This day, this Sabbath, was to be the sign of the covenant between God and man, witnessed in the marriage of the first man, Adam, and his wife, Eve. Through the harmony of this marital union, God's grand composition again changes tempo at the birth of Adam's son Cain (see Gen 4:1). Soon followed the second son, Abel.

And then suddenly, God's opus takes yet another turn, becoming dark, foreboding; crashing into darkness due to the sin of Adam and by the murder of Abel at the hands of his own brother. The family that God was beginning to form, was now in jeopardy. The shame of sin not only separates us from God, but invades our relationship with family and friends. We saw this in Adam and Eve's shame before God and in Cain being driven from his family because of his sin. We see this today, when men and women are taken from family and placed in prisons for the sins they have committed. We see this in the many divorces, tearing families apart, that take place all around us.

The descendants of Cain will continue the counter-melody begun by the sin of their father. Evil has taken full reign. Pride, envy and injustice are rampant. No hope of restoring family harmony can be found in the line of Cain (see Gen 6:5). At this point, in order to restore the harmony of His grand composition, God makes a decision: *"And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, 'I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created . . .'"* (Gen 6:6-7).

Right here, right now, God begins the second movement of his masterpiece. From the descendants of Seth, Adam's youngest son, a man of righteousness and true faith, stands out; a man named Noah, a man who *"found favor in the sight of the Lord"* (Gen 6:8). Scott Hahn, in his book **"a Father Who Keeps his Promises,"** provides these words: *"And so he sent a disastrous flood to wipe out the human family, with the exception of one covenant household, the family of Noah. This was to be the righteous remnant through which God would save the world. Even if the Father had to start all over again from scratch, his promises would surely come to pass."*

We must understand that this was not an act of vengeance. God did not bring the rain because He had given up on humankind. The flood happens because of three things: God's great grief at the very wickedness that Adam's sin unleashed; His unflinching mercy and love to restore man to the greatness for which he was intended; His commitment to the Covenant He has made with humanity. Before the second movement of His Grand Composition, we again hear the refrain that began His masterpiece. He adds to what has already been pledged, promising to never let it happen this way again. In this way, He restores His Covenant of Love began in Creation and builds it to an even greater crescendo, bringing us one movement closer to the finale. And, He gave us a most beautiful reminder of His everlasting Covenant; a many-colored rainbow stretching across the sky after the rain has stopped.