

*Twentieth Week of Ordinary Time (English)*  
*Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost (Latin)*  
*August 16, 2026*  
*Year of the Church in History*

*“For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 22:14)*

As we introduced last weekend, Saint Irenaeus of Lyons used his work, Proof of the Apostolic Preaching, to show to others how the New Testament was pre-figured in the writings of the Old Testament. This was not solely his purpose as he wrote this treatise. He would also use those pages to teach early Christians deeper meanings concerning the Biblical stories they were already familiar with. Allow me to offer this example:

*“But the rebel angel, the same who had brought the man into disobedience, and made him a sinner, and been the cause of his being cast out of the Garden, not content with this first evil, brought about in the brothers (here referring to Cain and Abel) a second one; for, filling Cain with his own spirit, he made him a slayer of his brother. And thus Abel died, slain by his brother, a sign for the future, that some would be persecuted and straitened and slain, but the unjust would slay and persecute the just.”*

*(Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, Proof of the Apostolic Preaching).*

Saint Irenaeus begins this teaching concerning human condition AFTER the Fall, with a thoughtful explanation of human condition PRIOR to the Fall. *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;’ . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. . . then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”* (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7). Saint Irenaeus first teaches a principle associated with Christian philosophy: A creature must have its beginning and the origin of the creature must be greater than the creature itself. Saint Thomas would use this fundamental explanation as a proof of the existence of God. The origin of man, and all other created things, must arise from a being who existed before all things being itself uncreated. God, Father, Son and Spirit is this uncreated being for Saint Irenaeus. And God would create man (Adam).

Taking the text of the Book of Genesis as it is written, Saint Irenaeus would point out something rather interesting. When God creates man using the dust of the earth, was that dirt the same dirt as what we find in our yards? He would write: *“But man He fashioned with His own hands, taking of the purest and finest of earth, in measured wise mingling with the earth His own power; for He gave his frame the outline of His own form, that the visible appearance too should be godlike — for it was as an image of God that man was fashioned and set on earth — and that he might come to life, He breathed into his face the breath of life, so that the man became like God in inspiration as well as in frame.”* Therefore, man, in this primal state of innocence, as understood in man’s nakedness without shame, was privileged to be able to walk and converse with God in the Garden. After the Fall of Adam, man is cast out of the Garden, out of God’s presence, for, as Saint Irenaeus would pen, *“the Garden does not admit a sinner.”*

Returning to our initial quote, the rebel angel, the Devil, as we now call him, was not content with JUST robbing man of God's image and likeness. He wanted us to be in his own image. What greater act of rebellion can there be than to take that which God esteemed most like unto Himself and twist it so violently that it no longer bears its original form. Man, weakened by the sin of Adam, now creates others, his children, in his own image and likeness, the image and likeness of fallen Adam. *"When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth"* (Genesis 5:3). And the *"rebel angel, the same who had brought the man into disobedience, and made him a sinner, and been the cause of his being cast out of the Garden, not content with this first evil"* continues to twist and fashion man so that man displays man's own image and likeness in all his thoughts, words and deeds. In the New Testament book bearing his name, Saint Peter would later describe the Devil in this fashion saying, *"Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5:8).

God is fully aware, He made us and knows us fully, that we cannot take on this kind of enemy and be victorious. Only God's Grace can profit us allowing for our survival in this spiritual battle. Therefore, God's coming revelation, His interaction with the heroes of the Old Testament, will be to assist man to return to His Presence (the Garden) by again walking with us. He walks with His chosen people throughout their journey and, not content Himself, would choose to become one of us to walk, talk, teach, be with us as He did in the Garden so long ago.