

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

Last Sunday Fr. Paul referred to record of creation in the Book of Genesis. (Adam and Eve, the serpent and fruit of the tree of knowledge) I think we all remember the events as they are recorded in the Bible. What we may have forgotten, or perhaps not really considered is what this event teaches us about human nature and the Divine Wisdom.

I know all the painting and the illustrations in our Bibles show Eve handing Adam an apple, and not the computer kind, but the eating kind. What the reality of this event? It is not about eating it is about human nature, our human pride. The sin after all is about wanting to be like God not about tasting some particular fruit.

If I remember correctly pride is one of the seven deadly sins. And the cure for pride is humility. And humility is what the Gospel is about today. Humility is a virtue that every Christian Soul should cultivate and nourish.

Perhaps we should begin by thinking about what we mean by pride and what we mean by humility. Pride is not the feeling of accomplishment that we have after learning a new skill or completing a difficult task. Pride is the self centered attitude that convinces us that we are superior to others, even to God.

Humility is not being a door mat and allowing everyone to take advantage of us or use us to their benefit. Humility is an awareness of the reality of God and our connection with all of God's Children.

The movement of humility is the inspiration for many reflections about the Religious Life. We can in fact identify three distinct and particular attributes of humility that we need to cultivate in our lives. All are found in Sacred Scripture and multiple places.

The first movement is the internal movement of attitude. We are to know who we are and whose child we strive to be and become and we recognize our faults and frailty. In the Book of Revelation we find an ancient hymn of the church, the Song of the Lamb.

A Song to the Lamb *Dignus es*
Revelation 4:11; 5:9-10, 13

Splendor and honor and kingly power are yours by right, O Lord our God, For you created everything that is, and by your will they were created and have their being; And yours by right, O Lamb that was slain, for with your blood you have redeemed for God. From every family, language, people, and nation, a kingdom of priests to serve our God. And so, to him who sits upon the throne, and to Christ the Lamb, Be worship and praise, dominion and splendor, forever and for evermore.

This is the internal attitude of humility that allows us to stand in awe before our God. It is with this attitude that no matter how we have been gifted or how successful we are at using the gifts we have been given, our primary response is gratitude.

If the first movement of humility is internal the second is external. In the first what might become pride is transformed into gratitude. In the second our gratitude becomes concrete as our actions reflect our belief. Our model for this in Sacred Scripture is the ministry of Jesus. (Touching the sick, eating with sinners and tax collectors and sharing our life and death)

The Christological Hymn in the Letter to the Philippians was another ancient hymn of the church. In that we are to remember the nature of Jesus' life with us, ministry and death. That He humbled himself, we are reminded, to share our human life to save us and set us free. When our actions are His actions, when we are kind and loving, we are striving to imitate the Master.

The last movement of Humility is the grace filled moments when our hearts, our minds and our spirits are perfectly attune to the Divine Grace. They are moments of self giving when the needs of others exceed our own needs and wants.

It is the Cross of Christ and His sacrifice that is the model for this final movement of humility. In this movement, by God's Grace what might be pride is transformed into charity. (The Caritas Charity from the heart) It is the giving not to receive, but from the heart, because of the needs of others.

The Pharisee stands proudly worshipping himself. He is reveling in his accomplishments and his false piety.

The Tax Collector, a sinner by virtue of his birth and the nature of his work, stands before God the Father Almighty and beats his breast.

Who do **you** suppose - actually stood in God's Presence and worshipped Him?