

“Sister Anne” (Mary K.) Farran -- <https://houseofmaryomd.org>
An improved “chapter” version is in preparation for a book publication.

Good evening everyone!
Greetings to our audio and YouTube listeners!

Last week we continued our meditation on the state of Original Innocence and this evening we will continue to try to imagine what direction the human race should ideally pursue. We made the theological case that Jesus would have become incarnate right there at the beginning of creation for an innocent, obedient couple. We gave some theological reasons to demonstrate that the Incarnation was in God’s Original Plan and not a bonus reward for sin. Then we explained why it would have been more appropriate for Jesus to arrive in the Garden like his parents, in full adulthood. Finally, we imagined Jesus standing at the Tree. “Ecce Homo!” Here is the man! His head is adorned in vines, not thorns, and He is clothed in a robe of human flesh in sheer innocence. On the morning of his resurrection He left his garments in the tomb, and Mary Magdalene recognize the Ben Adam, the Son of Man as “the gardener”! Here He is now, in the Original Garden:

Behold, “the virgin [Eve] will be with child . . . and they will call him Immanuel--which means, God is with us! [cf Mt 1:23, Isa. 7:14]

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father [Jn 1:14].

Behold three persons in the Garden: a trinity in the flesh, the first family of mankind. Christ Jesus, image of the Father, saying “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*” [Jn 14:9]. Then there is Adam the man, the obedient son of God. Between them is Eve the woman, God’s person-gift of love to the man, who uttered her “fiat,” and was anointed by the Spirit.

Before this moment there had been two separate persons longing to become one, and now God has arrived in person to be their Jeshua, to *save* them from their state of incomplete union with one another, and to *save* them from mere immortality. One will reign in that Garden of Innocence, not three separate “wills”.

Rejoice! The kingdom of heaven is at hand! [Mt 10:7]

Then Jesus turned to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil:

*He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you.” And [it] withered away to its roots [Mk 11:14-20]
And He . . . cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak [Mr 1:34]*

Then Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” [Jn 8:12].

Then an angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever [Rev 11:15].

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will!” [Lk 2:13-14]

What music! What melodies! What celestial beauty did Adam and Eve behold as the face of God smiled upon them! Together they set out to walk among the trees as the Rabbi *begun to teach them many things* [Mk 4:2]. Later on Adam and Eve:

said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked to us on the way?” [Lk 24:32]

If Jesus spent three years teaching the Apostles, let us imagine that He stayed in the Garden with the young couple about the same length of time. It’s the Biblical time for a son to stay with his mother before being weaned [cf 2Chr 31:16, 2 Mc

“Sister Anne” (Mary K.) Farran -- <https://houseofmaryomd.org>
An improved “chapter” version is in preparation for a book publication.

7:27]. Let us eavesdrop on their conversation.

Teach us thy way, O Lord, that we may walk in your truth; unite our hearts to fear you Name [Ps 86:11]
Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me [Jn 14:6].
I and the Father are one [Jn 10:30].

God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth [Jn 4:24].

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God [Mt 5:3-9].

I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be liable to the hell of fire [Mt 5:22].

I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart [Mt 5:28].

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them [Jn 13:16-17].

From time to time, across the centuries, there have been isolated cases where the Child Jesus appeared to children as a companion and playmate to prepare them for a special mission or life of sacrifice: in the twelfth century St. Catherine of Siena would grow up to establish peace in Italy which led to the return of the exiled Pope, in the sixteenth century Bl. Anne of St. Bartholomew would become one of the early foundresses in the reform of the Carmelite Order, in the nineteenth century Melanie Calvat would receive the Rule at LaSalette for the Order of the Mother of God, and in the twentieth century Sister Mary Martha Chambon would become a Visitation nun entrusted with special revelations. As innocent children they received *moral* instruction, but in the in the Garden we can imagine Jesus imparting instruction on other topics as did Solomon who instructed the kings of the earth.

Behold, something greater than Solomon is here [Lk 11:31]

God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and largeness of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon’s wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom . . . He uttered three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom [1Kg 4:29-34]

Solomon acknowledged: *it is [God] who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements. . . the alternations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons, the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars, the natures of animals and the tempers of wild beasts . . . the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots [Wis 7:17-20]*

When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Yahweh, she came to test him with hard questions. . . and when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king which he could not explain to her. . . . And she said to the king, “your wisdom . . . surpasses the report which I heard. . . Blessed are these your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your

“Sister Anne” (Mary K.) Farran -- <https://houseofmaryomd.org>
An improved “chapter” version is in preparation for a book publication.

wisdom!” [1Kg 10:1-8]

We can also imagine Jesus like Bezalel and Oholiab who taught fine arts to the Israelites in the days of Moses:

Yahweh filled them with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every craft [Ex 31:3-5].

The Genesis witness mysteriously announced that:

around the whole land of Havilah, there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there [Gn 2:11-12].

Were these rich materials bestowed so that man could imitate his Creator by exercising his creativity as artist and architect, to labor with honor and pride, and take pleasure in giving pleasure to others?

This Genesis text is a bit curious:

God blessed them, and God said to them, “. . . have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” [Gn 1:28].

God had given them dominion over the sea, but the sea was not originally in Eden’s borders.

A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon . . . The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which flows around the whole land of Cush And the name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates [Gn 2:10-14].

As families increase, the boundaries of Eden will need to be pushed back as they settle along the rivers, even to the sea. Animals that can be domesticated are in the Garden, but the wild beasts roam beyond the boundaries.

Yahweh God [had] planted [this] garden in Eden, in the east; and there he [had] put the man whom he had formed. . . to till it and keep it [Gn 2:8,15].

Animals fertilize vegetation, but they must be controlled or they will devour it and devastate it. The garden requires creative “tending” if it will be orderly and beautiful. I lived twenty years on property with several thousand trees. I assure you that a forest left to itself quickly becomes a tangle of vines and limbs, impossible to walk through, unpleasant to look. And when a fence was breached the deer would strip the bark off the trees and bite off every tender green plant. The Sisters enjoyed spending their recreation hours clearing trails, moving ferns to steep places that needed the roots to hold the soil, moving bulbs to places that received more light. Labor in the Garden of Eden was more of an exercise of art and play with the reward of the sheer pleasure of beholding the beauty of the transformation wrought by one’s own handiwork.

The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common [Ac 4:32].

The “Holy Land” is shared out by lot to each family and tribe who take charge of their portion. The concept of property ownership is elevated to that of stewardship. Ultimately:

the earth belongs to Yahweh and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein; for He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers [Ps 24:1-2].

Although protection from inclement weather is unnecessary, families need privacy. Jesus was surely able to offer Adam some tips on carpentry, because the Garden was destined to become a city.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations [Heb 11:8-10].

Cardinal Avery Dulles noted that self-interest or successful businesses have never produced the world’s great architectural

“Sister Anne” (Mary K.) Farran -- <https://houseofmaryomd.org>
An improved “chapter” version is in preparation for a book publication.

monuments.

The most magnificent works of human architecture have been temples and churches, erected for the praise and honor of God. The masterpieces of art which I esteemed were principally religious in character, having as their aim to instruct the faithful, to remind them of their various relationships to God, and to help them to pray rightly to Him and to His saints. When art, in the later Renaissance, became secularized, aesthetic delight having been made supreme, decadence simultaneously set in [*A Testimonial to Grace*, by Avery Dulles, SJ, 1946 p. 42].

I would imagine in the Garden that every home was a domestic church. All the families around would help one another to build gorgeous houses. Every house would be a temple where God was loved and honored. The prophet Zechariah envisioned a time when the most common kitchen utensils would be as sacred as the vessels used for the service of the altar because the people themselves were holy:

And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, “Holy to Yahweh.” And the pots in the house of Yahweh shall be as the bowls before the altar; and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to Yahweh of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the flesh of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of Yahweh of hosts on that day [Zech 14:20-21].

And surely, without any doubt, the royal pass-time in Eden would be that of King David, namely, the composition of hymns of praise. The various families according to their talents and their preferences may sing in choirs or specialize in musical instruments. Every day, the music of men, women and children would mingle with the songs of birds and perhaps the songs of angels.

In the company of Jesus, Adam and Eve listened to Him speak about the future of the Garden and how their children would *advance in wisdom and age and grace before God and men* [Lk 2:52]. The name Eden means “pleasure park” but it’s not an amusement park for idleness and selfishness. It’s a place for a community to develop into a *phila-delphia*, a city of brotherly love [cf Rev 3:7]:

*Every tongue to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father . . .
to work out one’s salvation trembling with reverence;
for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
To do all things without grumbling or disputing;
and [remain] blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach . . .
holding fast to the word of life, for the day of Christ [cf Php 2:11-16]*

The goal was heaven. There would be a day for each person to be led by Christ to the Father. Jesus explained to them why He is the only way to heaven. His Incarnation is the path for created beings to be drawn into the life of the uncreated Trinity. God did not want mere communication with mankind, but communion. The Three Divine Persons did not create the human race to bring them into their divine presence like pets for their amusement. No, they were called as friends to share their inner divine life of endless bliss:

What eye has seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him [1Co 2:9].

This level of union requires intimacy, and intimacy requires a connaturality, the sharing of the same nature. Man did not have the power to become divine, but the divinity had the power to become man. Jesus explained that as God, He had stooped down to lift man up:

Though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, being found in human form [Php 2:6-8].

But how high? This depended on the desire and the cooperation of each individual. The deeper our union with Jesus, the more deeply we’ll be able to participate in the intimate exchange of love that goes on eternally in the blazing vortex of the intimate exchange between the divine Persons. It’s an exchange of Persons, in the ecstasy of self-offering and other-receiving. Marriage would be the natural preparation to help man become accustomed to trust another with his life, and to share

“Sister Anne” (Mary K.) Farran -- <https://houseofmaryomd.org>
An improved “chapter” version is in preparation for a book publication.

together the thrill of the new level of self-gift that is required when a child is born, helpless and in need of everything. The married life of commitment gradually shapes a man or woman into a fuller image of the Divine Persons so that they will be able to participate in the radical, divine, eternal life of the Trinitarian family where selfishness is unknown because *it is more blessed to give than to receive* [Ac 20:35].

Growth in holiness takes time. St. Paul told his friends:

I give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you [Eph 1:16-18].

[a time] *for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* [Eph 4:12-13].

Exercising virtue would seem to be unproblematic in the Garden of Innocence. It is certainly easier to regulate one’s passions when one is not unbalanced by sickness, or stressed by a tight work schedule, or enduring persecution, or afflicted with hunger, or immersed in war or poverty. But, on the other hand, the lack of challenge can be a handicap. How can one flex one’s spiritual muscles if nothing is pushing back? When “everybody’s doing it” (striving for goodness, avoiding evil) it is easier to flow along with the crowd rather than deliberately rebel by swimming against the tide. Man is a social animal and naturally doesn’t want to be rejected or consigned to loneliness.

The sceptre of the wicked will not remain over the land allotted to the righteous, for then the righteous might use their hands to do evil [Ps 125:3].

In an environment of minimum aggravation, it would actually take longer to individually mature than in a world of post-Original Sin. The first families certainly had plenty of time because there was no natural lifespan. Adam and Eve were created immortal. Science itself cannot explain old age and decay in the human body. The aging process, as we know it, has every sign of a disorder or disease instead of a natural process. This physiological mystery generates an ongoing interest among scientists who assiduously study progeria, the rare condition in which children age rapidly. Even after Original Sin, in the era before the first rainfall, when the climate was delightful and crops were watered by natural springs, life was relatively easy. So the fabulous long lifespans might not be fables, like Methuselah, who lived 969 years [Genesis 5:27]. Perhaps God really did allow it in those first generations of humanity because it took longer to achieve full stature in virtue. And this may be why the prophet Isaiah foretells that if society repents:

Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed [Isa 65:20].

Jesus continued instructing the First Parents. It’s important to the Holy Trinity that each person arrive as close as possible to the level of their maximum potential because a person who is plucked before maturity will be forever spiritually dwarfed. The Three Persons can not have the full joy of pouring themselves into a small vessel, but are eternally obliged to hold back. Likewise, this immature individual is too weak to pour himself or herself fully into the Trinitarian exchange.

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full [Jn 15:11].

In my Father’s house are many rooms . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself; that where I am you may be also [Jn 14:2-3].

Does advancing in virtue imply that in the Garden of Innocence one can fail in virtue?

Won’t everyone be perfect in this state of Original Innocence? Everyone is in the state of grace. Isn’t everyone a saint? Well, St. Paul and the other Apostles addressed the early Christians as saints, holy ones, because they had been regenerated in grace through the water of baptism after Jesus, the New Adam, repaired the Fall of man. But they are exhorting these “saints” to stand firm, *to grow to the stature of Christ* [Eph 4:12-13] and not to fall away--as happened to some Israelites who were washed in the Red Sea, but later failed to trust a God who worked great and obvious miracles [cf Heb 11:26-29]

“Sister Anne” (Mary K.) Farran -- <https://houseofmaryomd.org>
An improved “chapter” version is in preparation for a book publication.

Adam and Eve were holy and perfect, but they were capable of falling out of God’s gracious favor by rebelling against Him. They endured testing by the serpent at the tree. Jesus was tempted by Satan at the beginning of his ministry and sorely tested, to the point of sweating blood, on the night before He died. Yet He was far more than a perfect man; He was divine. If people in the Garden are not free to fall into sin, they are not free to fall in love. They are not free to be creative in music and architecture or free to do anything. It’s important to emphasize this fact because there is some confusion about the “fallen nature” of man *after* Original Sin versus the state of man *before* the Fall. The theological terminology for this fallen condition, at least in the Catholic Church, is “concupiscence.”

The whole subject came up for heated discussion at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century because the Catholics needed to understand more clearly certain positions which the Protestants were protesting. Calvin and Luther and others insisted that the nature of man was so badly corrupted by the Fall that he could do absolutely nothing toward his salvation. We won’t get into the whole discussion of salvation by faith alone vs. faith and good works--except to say that the Catholic position insists that faith itself is a work:

[At Caphernaum] they said to Jesus, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God? Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent [Jn 6:28-29].

Actually, many representatives of Protestant denominations have met with Orthodox and Catholic leaders and have satisfactorily resolved the faith verses work discussion. There are formal statements to this effect and I applaud them. However, Church unity has not been resolved because there are other topics that still separate us. Next week I would like to discuss the question of what is meant by “fallen human nature” and the meaning of “concupiscence”.

Thank you!