

The Institute for Catechesis and Formation ICF 101 – Christian Anthropology

Week 2: Sin, The Fall, and God's Plan for Healing

ICA pp. 116-122

What is Sin and how does it enter the world?

(Genesis 3)

Sin – temptation of the serpent (CCC 404, 1850)

Unfortunately we have God's freedom, but a weak human will.

Satan is the Father of Lies...no one is better, so we should not become involved in any discussion or debate with the Evil One. And let us not forget that the greatest lie is the one that appears reasonable and true. (Briefly share story of the Psychomachia and the transformation of Greed into Thrift.

Human person mistrusts God and the Gift

Original sin is not a personal fault but a deprivation of holiness and justice (CCC 405-406)

I would like to clarify that it is more accurately expressed as the loss of original holiness and justice.

Consequences of sin (CCC 402-406)

- Subject to ignorance

We see the truth dimly...we're kind of stupid and work hard at defending our ignorance.

- Suffering

For me this stems from the lack of direct communication with the Trinity. If we were to ask whether or not Adam and Eve would still have died had they not eaten from the tree (this has not been definitively declared), it is likely the answer

is yes. But the sorrow that stems from the separation would not have been based on our ignorance or fear.

- Dominion of death
- Concupiscence – the inclination toward sin. 1 John 2: 16-17 describes the three-fold concupiscence:

“For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world. Yet the world and its enticement are passing away. But whoever does the will of God remains forever.”

Sensual lust: an inordinate desire for physical gratification

Lust of the eyes: greed or covetousness

Pride of life – arrogance or ostentation in lifestyle that reflects a willful independence from God and others

Appetite – a tendency or inclination. Our appetites are not simply bad – but they must be informed by virtue. Two types of appetites: irascible and concupiscible. (CCC 37)

Concupiscible appetites: love and hatred, desire and aversion, joy and sadness. These are good, useful and pleasurable.

Irascible appetites: hope and despair, courage, fear and anger. Here we witness those which are difficult and are found in the process of overcoming obstacles.

I would like to say two things here that comes up quite often pastorally. Why are we all to suffer because of the sins of one man? For the same reason we are all granted salvation because of the sacrifice of one Man. Also, it seems such a steep price to pay for simply eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But the penalty is determined by the greatness and authority of the person wronged. (Illustrate the difference between two students fighting, a student and a teacher, a civilian and a police officer, a politician, the president?) The penalty then against an infinite greatness must likewise be infinite.

Mortal Sin (CCC 1855)

We all know the three factors here..grave matter, full intention and full knowledge. I mortal sin, we walk out of relation with God; it separates us from His love and life.

Venial Sin (CCC 1863)

Venial sin wounds, does not sever! Venial sins are not cumulative, though the continued practice can and likely will lead to a more serious sin.

Grace (God's free self-offering) is necessary to overcome sin and the tendency toward sin.

Grace is life in Christ. It is abiding in His love, it is being in friendship with Him. It is supernatural life given from God to man.

Shame becomes a boundary experience: fear of the other and protection of self

But shame is a true Christian virtue, and even human ... the ability to be ashamed: I do not know if there is a similar saying in Italian, but in our country to those who are never ashamed are called "sin vergüenza": this means 'the unashamed', because they are people who do not have the ability to be ashamed and to be ashamed is a virtue of the humble, of the man and the woman who are humble." Pope Francis, Homily 4/29/13

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2013/04/29/pope:_shame_is_a_true_christian_virtue/en1-687330

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. I listed contrasts of the world's version of being made *imago Dei*. Can you give some examples of those 'ways of the world?'
2. The Latter Day Saints don't agree with any doctrine of original sin. They say it's not fair. What's their point and what might be a response?
3. Suffering, the problem of evil in the world (theodicy) or when bad things happen to good make people skeptical, even turn them away from the Christian faith. What makes Catholic's understanding of suffering, even if it is from the Fall, unique? What are some good responses?

----- 10 MINUTE BREAK -----

Where does sin leave us?

God's healing and restoration begin immediately after sin, but it cannot be done by Man on his own. God Himself must repair the relationships that were damaged (God-Man, Person- Person) and restore order to the chaos sin has created.

This is something we will only mention at the end of this class, but focus more deeply next week. The Fall of Man precipitated a series of covenants...it was basically God wooing man.

Protoevangelium (first gospel) Genesis 3:15

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel.”

This needs to be put into perspective. Consider being wronged, publicly and radically (perhaps a good image would be to find out your spouse was involved in an adulterous affair at a party). Would our first reaction be, “I will heal forgive this sin and begin to heal the division between us?” Not from me...but that is how God responded.

- God fashions clothes for the man and woman (their attempts to cover themselves were inadequate).
- Like a good father, without reducing the consequence of Adam and Eve’s choice, God recognized the fallen state and helps to prepare man accordingly. There was no response akin to, “Well you made your bed, now sleep in it.” This fashioning of clothing was a recognition of the historical state man has entered and an act of compassion; not just for Adam himself or Eve herself, but so that Eve’s dignity may be protected from Adams lustful gaze, and vice versa.
- God prevents them from taking fruit from the Tree of Life in their disordered state.
- Let’s pause a minute and ask this question, “Adam and Eve were allowed to eat the fruit of this tree, but that changed only after they ate of the ‘one’ tree (good and evil) that they were forbidden to eat of.
- We may have another question; “Were Adam and Eve immortal prior to the Fall?” The answer is that we’re not told, but if they were immortal, it would be odd to have a tree that would provide something they already have. So it may be safe to conclude that death was always a natural and intended aspect of the human person, but what changed was the pain of the separation that we all experience when the death of a loved one occurs.
- I think the most interesting observation of this story is that when Adam and Eve were freely given the opportunity for eternal life, they choose to rather go after what was forbidden, i.e., to decide what is good and evil for themselves. Isn’t that our present attitude? God freely offers us eternal life, but we choose to determine what is good or evil for ourselves...it appears not much has changed.
- God promises salvation over time.
- God begins making a series of Covenants with His people in order to restore the relationship that was lost in the Fall
- Adam
- Noah

- Abraham
- David

What I find of value in listing the various covenants (rather than go through them in any detail) are two things..

1. God must be patient and compassionate, because each time He enters into a covenant with man, man fails, and God renews. We can't conclude that each time God failed to make a good or reasonable covenant, with each successive one 'fixing' the previous.
2. Being intentional (at least God having full knowledge that man must be brought back in stages) these covenants are successive, each one building on the previous where the relationship deepens, as does the commitment of God to man and man to God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think God's reaction to human weakness can teach us?
2. What are some situations or scenarios in which man continually desires to choose what is good or evil over eternal life? Be specific!