

A reflection on GOD'S MYSTERY OF LOVE (Genesis 1-3)

Where did we come from and where are we going? Two questions that thoughtful people have been asking for centuries.

Genesis is just one of hundreds of attempts by human beings down the ages to try to answer these two questions. *(Our indigenous peoples all over the world have their own creation myths)* The Indigenous people of Australia have their beautiful Dream-Time stories and their creation story has remarkably similar themes to our own. The Genesis version happens to be our story of creation and it is from the Jewish tradition which means it is the Christian version since Christianity sprang from the Jewish religion. As we all know our founder, Jesus, was a Jew, and a very devout one we are told in the Gospel of St Luke, though we can say with certainty He was a bit of a revolutionary as well and we all know what tends to happen to revolutionaries. They usually give their lives up for their cause. Anyway back to the two questions presented which of course gives rise to yet other questions; which of these creation stories is the correct one? Which one should we believe? Well believe it or not they are all correct and all worthy of our attention, yet all are in some way incomplete. There will always be part of the creation story hidden from us but revelation has helped us draw a picture that at least gives us a glimpse of this wonderful mystery of God's loving and creative act. Of course you need not only to open your eyes but also your heart to discover the real treasure hidden beneath these types of stories.

Let's start by remembering that GOD existed from eternity which put simply states GOD has no beginning and has no end. **(Here is Mystery number one)** Our human brains are incapable of coming to any sensible understanding of this truth no more than we can understand the reality of the love triangle between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which we name the Blessed Trinity. **(Here is Mystery number two)** I am sure you remember the story of the Saint Augustine coming across a young boy trying to empty the sea into a hole he had made in the sand using just his little toy bucket. "You are wasting your time trying to fit the entire ocean into that little hole" said the great Saint to the boy. The boy's response was no less profound when he said "Neither will you ever fathom the depths and riches required to understand the truth of three Persons in the one God" Then the story ends with the little boy disappearing from his sight. I am sure it's just a story and oh how we love a good story, but none the less, like the Creation stories themselves, there is a profound truth hidden beneath.

Now the trouble with questions like the ones proposed above, as I have already suggested, is they only too often give rise to yet more questions. Did God need to create us? And if so, Why? **(My answer to this is there is no why, only love)** Firstly we have to presume that God had a plan from the very beginning and the loving act of creation was certainly central to that plan. The Angels were created to "give glory and praise to our God" as the Psalmist says. God's loving act includes also creating man and the different kinds of animals and different kinds of vegetations to serve his every need. We see in Genesis a benevolent loving God who holds back nothing in showering blessings on his beloved **(Our first Parents)** A home was needed and so the first chapter of Genesis tries, through storytelling, to help us understand that the creation of all life on earth is God's handiwork. It is as if God wanted to share His love with someone and could not help but pour out His love in this incredible creative act. God saw what He had accomplished and **"He found it very good"**. It is as if love burst out naturally like the warm rays naturally pour from the Sun giving us warmth and providing us with energy. To put it simply **"creation is the divine action of God's infinite love"** full stop.

Not only did God create a home for Adam **(We call home Earth but the good book calls it Eden)** but He seems to have gone way over board, as it were, for He created a vast unending universe as well. The millions of galaxies and the countless stars and planets of which they are but a part. The mind of man can't even

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fathom the reality of our solar system and how it hangs out there in space or even our galaxy let alone the whole universe. Maybe the Creator God wanted to leave the mystery of His universe as something tangible for us to see as a pointer or a hint of His very existence. (**Mystery number three**) Mind you, in Genesis, the marvellous heavenly Potter formed the human body out of clay and its incredible complexity should be enough, one would have thought, to confound the most stubborn atheist. No argument of chance is going to satisfy those who are willing to open their eyes and see the wonders of the universe which we can but only glimpse at each night in our skies. Telescopes only deepen the mystery even further, as man continually searches for answers to this mystery by inventing bigger and stronger Telescopes.

The story of Genesis suggests that Adam was alone and even though he seems to have had everything provided for his happiness and wellbeing there was something lacking. We call this initial state of man, **Original solitude**. Adam had a very special relationship with his Creator God. Love and harmony were the order of the day, if you like. However, the story says, Adam could not find anyone like himself, and so God, anticipating Adam's every need, creates a soul mate and Adam called her Eve. This wonderful partnership of ideal love we call **Original Union**. A delightful love story between Adam and Eve and of their creator God at least that was the plan in the mind of God since the beginning of time one has to presume. Well what happened to change what seemed to be a perfect existence for these lovers? Obviously, we have to also presume something went terribly wrong which seems to have turned even Gods best laid plans into turmoil? Before this dramatic change occurred there was total contentedness and total harmony with all living things. From Original Solitude and Original Union came, what John Paul II called, **Original Nakedness**. He suggests, as does Genesis, that there was no shame at their nakedness and certainly no knowledge of evil. Only Good existed in God's original plan for mankind and there was no sin in the world at the beginning. "**God saw what He had done and found it very good**" God cannot create anything but good. Evil came from the heart of man and any sin that manifests itself today is manmade.

Now here is the "**biggei**" as I like to call it. God took the big risk of giving our first parents the beautiful gift of "**Free will**" Yes; for the first time Adam and Eves were given the awesome gift of freedom, which simply meant they could choose to love God and obey Him or not obey Him. Even today if we don't get given a choice in everyday life somehow we feel cheated. Well maybe Adam and Eve felt cheated because they did not have the option we call choice. Who knows? Anyway God, in His mighty wisdom, decided that to love freely was the type of love He wanted from our first parents and of course ultimately from us too. He knew that in giving the gift of "**Free will**" chances were they just might choose wrongly. Why God took this risk may well be the whole point of creation in the first place. (**This could be Mystery number four**) we will have to wait and see. It's possible the Angels may well have been given the same gift at this point in creation history as well, and this might just explain where the well known story of the "**fallen angels**" comes from.

Well chapter three of Genesis tries to explain the story of Adam and Eves fall from grace. They were tempted by the serpent; the story tells us, and of course ate the forbidden fruit. Keeping in mind that there must have been hundreds of other trees in the garden and full of all kinds of fruit, heavens knows why they even bothered to take the fruit of the forbidden tree. I guess the fruit is only a symbol of what was basically a choice to obey or not to obey, maybe it was that simple. The man blamed the women and the women blamed the serpent, so even then we seem to have had a bit of a problem admitting our guilt. As soon as the decision to disobey their benevolent Creator was made, from that moment on, sin became part of the human condition. God knew they had made a choice to disobey Him and unfortunately the consequence

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was catastrophic. Adam and his lover lost everything even their innocence and they were driven from the garden of plenty and forced to work for a living and struggle to attain their own happiness by the sweat of their brow for the rest of their lives. They became aware of their nakedness which certainly was not an issue at the beginning and of course many other unpleasant things became part of their lives too. Death was not a part of Gods original plan we are told and suffering would be the common lot of us all. God was still very loving to them, as the good book says; He made cloths for them out of animal skins. He also made a promise to them that He would continue to watch over them and care for them. He would not withdraw His love from them and that love would still be unconditional, but as for the ideal situation they had enjoyed before the fall; well that was lost forever, **or was it?**

Here comes God's final act, and the **Greatest Mystery** of them all, which as it were, saves the day. God put in place a recovery plan "**The Incarnation**" which would involve a Woman, not yet born, crushing the head of the serpent. *(There were of course no apples and no serpent, as you must be aware this is just a story, but somehow I suspect it is more than just a story, as these were symbols, and powerful ones at that, used by the story teller to help explain our human condition as it is today)* Even though this story was written centuries ago this story is for us today and if understood helps us want to **Adore, Praise** and **Thank** our creator God every day of our lives. Yet God asks of us only one thing, when all said and done, and that is to freely love Him in return for His infinite love for us.

This Woman that Genesis refers to is of course **Mary of Nazareth** and in freely cooperating with God, fortunately for us she did, she accepted being a part of the creation story. This meant that she would conceive and bare a Son through the power of the Holy Spirit and in doing so bring forth our Saviour, and this incredible act of divine intervention by none other than the creator God Himself, would return all creation to its original state. "God would send His beloved Son to us to make all things new" and that basically answers the two questions we started with, and that is, in God's Divine plan, we were all meant to return to Him and not even **Original sin**, which is the label we gave to our first act of disobedience, was going to change that. So let me finish by saying that the creation story is a love story and the final act is the greatest love story ever told. "**Greater love than this no man hath than a man lay down his life for a friend**" God sent His own beloved Son down on our little Earth so that we could once more gain His friendship which is to say that our original state of union with God has now been restored. All that is left for us to do is say yes freely to His invitation to come back to Him.

I finish with Mary's summary of the situation when she met her cousin Elizabeth

and I think we could now join her in her moment of celebration by making these words our own:

"My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour"

Till next time - Bro Peter from Hilongos Leyte.