

SEX FROM THE BEGINNING

A Genesis Study of the Meaning of Sexuality

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PROLOGUE

Karol Wojtyla, before becoming Pope John Paul II, wrote, "A non-Catholic philosopher once said to me, 'You know – I just can't stop myself reading and re-reading and thinking over the first three chapters of Genesis.' And it seems to me that unless one does so reflect upon that fundamental ensemble of facts and situations it becomes extremely difficult – if not impossible – to understand man and the world." (Sign of Contradiction, p. 23-24) From that point on, John Paul himself reflected mightily on those chapters as we will see.

In fact, books about the meaning of man and woman have been blowing down from publishing heaven like snowflakes. Uncounted numbers are secular; many are religious. Of these some recent ones, stimulated by the sexual revolution and its deleterious effects, go back to reexamine the Bible's view of sexuality. Needless to say, Adam and Eve are in. Just type those words into Amazon's book listings and be amazed.

But most significant for the future is the work of our late pope. From an early interest in the sexual truths packed into the two creation stories of Genesis, Karl Wojtyla, far from creating a snowflake through his pontificate has built a Mount Everest. His biographer George Weigel, echoed by many others, believes this mountain is "a theological time bomb, something that would explode. . . with tremendous effect, reshaping the way Catholics think about our embodiedness as male and female, our sexuality, our relationships with each other, our relationship with God – even God himself."

Working from the Bible, John Paul II wrote extensively about sexuality beginning even before his pontificate. His many works on the subject delve deeply into the phenomenological philosophy of the human male and female. This interest and prayerful study resulted in his expository of the meaning of sexuality in 129 weekly addresses which he named The Theology of the Body. This Spirit-inspired insight has already begun its seismic rumbling. Led by Professor Christopher West, and finding outlets in discussions of sexuality in articles and books, the steaming stream has begun its flow – check through almost any Catholic publication. Just this morning at Mass the newly ordained young priest in a five minute homily cracked open a nutshell packed with, of all things, *The Theology of the Body* (TB).

If this is an indication of the orientation of our new crop of priests, and I believe it is, we are to be witnesses of a revolution that will expose the falsity of what has commanded a place in

Catholic thought and life for nearly forty years – feminist ideology and the revolt against *Humanae Vitae*, which are united at the navel.

Feminist ideology, even its so-called theology centered in the meaning of sexual difference, has been fermenting since before the turn of the Twentieth Century, but instead of ripening into fine wine it has turned mostly to vinegar. The straight draught of political feminism when imbibed has caused many to have a serious religious disorientation. By going back to the Genesis stories and especially their exposition by John Paul we will analyze what spore was in the mix at the beginning that brought the feminist enterprise to such sourness. Furthermore, we will see that it is important to keep that contaminant out of the Church so that true Holy Spirit vintage may eventually develop. We Catholics love to be inebriated with truth, and TB promises that.

For many Catholics the word "feminism" itself, linked so often with "reproductive rights," is rejected as being wholly unfitting for the Church. However, Pope John Paul II and St. Edith Stein both accept the word "feminism" in their writings, but the feminism of their stripe will be a step forward for followers of Jesus, a true development of doctrine, and will be seen so in light of TB. In this regard, I have examined carefully *Mulieris Dignitatem*, the Holy Father's Apostolic Letter (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women, 1988) that he considers "a meditation." It relies heavily on what was then developing as TB. I find that it both substantiates the line of thinking I've followed for many years, and also raises a few questions that may cast shadows across what I am submitting here.

What is the obligation and responsibility of a faithful Catholic concerning the Holy Father's meditation on woman's dignity and role in the divine economy? Ought we not to absorb the teaching of the Holy Father and as closely as possible to promulgate it in further commentary on the themes it presents? It troubles me, therefore, that there are any shadows however small. Yet, this writing of his is not doctrinal; it is theological, which is meant to inspire and open our minds. To say that at times John Paul II's exegesis seems unnecessarily complex and that it overlooks a wondrous simplicity that clarifies the relationship created by God of man and woman in His image seems an expression of hubris, especially in one with so shallow an educated understanding as mine. It's rather like a minnow at home in a small pond questioning the navigational expertise of a whale that easily traverses between the Aleutians and South American waters. He so easily swallows up such as me. Nevertheless, God does use the weak, if not to shame the strong, at least to call attention of the strong to the small things the weak are apt to notice. I find my place in this unsettling, yet I go forward with this study that has been such a joy to me. In the text I will call attention to the questions raised by *Mulieris* so as not to lead the unsuspecting down a path which they should know from the start is my speculation.

First, in his [Theology of the Body, Explained](#), and it must be explained for those of us who stumble through John Paul's thicket of phenomenological thinking, Christopher West makes this

statement; "For good reason, John Paul never defines how the fruitful communion of man and woman images the Trinity in terms of who might represent whom. While it may be a legitimate quest for speculative theology, lining up spouses and their offspring with specific persons of the Trinity must be approached cautiously lest we move too continuously from the gendered creation to the Uncreated (and ungendered) God. (p. 120)

We must be reminded continuously that "the sign (of sexuality) in no way exhausts the mystery; it is not a complete or adequate image. . .we must be careful never to reduce the spiritual and divine mystery to its physical and human sign. This would involve a dangerous and heretical blurring between Creator and creature. Nevertheless, with that understood, the body is an efficacious sign and in a real way communicates the divine mystery it symbolizes." (p. 326)

That said, it is not only psychologists, teachers, ministers, rabbis, a saint and the pope who are thinking about woman and her meaning (the other sex, too). Some of us common folk who have lived through this big sea-change in regard to sexuality have some observations about that "efficacious sign." One knows that the real thinkers like John Paul and his expositors have the advantage, but living through it, a woman in the midst of society, a woman in the Church, a woman in the heart of a family, a woman in union with a man, has something experiential to contribute. Along with others, the Genesis profundities have captured my imagination because of the way they cast light on my life. Snagged by the first three chapters of Genesis into forty or more years of meditation, I have gradually worked into the rest of the book and have found in the lives of the mothers of Israel further understanding about God's plan for woman.

But never fear; from the first I accept patriarchal authority as God's own. I clarify that because were I to come upon such a statement early in a book - something lauding matriarchy, I would aim it quickly for the discard pile. I am profoundly disturbed by the attempt of feminism to label patriarchy a sin, and am puzzled when some priests, even bishops, express embarrassment about their exclusively male calling.

In thinking about how to lay out this little book, I could only open it with what the Bible tells us about God before the beginning. The Trinity, *before the beginning*, (which we will explain) holds the origins of sexuality. On this Pope John Paul is uncompromising and clear; we, man and woman, are created in the image of God. He goes back to the beginning, because Jesus, when discussing marriage with the Pharisees (Matthew 19:4-8), said that the divorce Moses allowed was "not so in the beginning." The Pope goes on from there to examine the relationship of Adam and Eve at the beginning before the Fall and the miseries of sin. Chapter two will contemplate that cataclysm and the mind-set of its progenitor.

In contemplating Genesis 1:26, the Elohist account of creation, is it possible to look back *before* the beginning engaging in what is called *katalogy* which views from the top down rather than using *analogy* that views from the bottom up? That is, is it possible to take what has been

revealed in Scripture and Tradition about *the interior* life of the Divine Persons of the Trinity and attempt to view the creation of man and woman from that lens? Knowing anything of that *interior life* of the Trinity begins and ends with Jesus unveiling His divine personhood and communion of love with the Father in/with the unity of the Holy Spirit. Can we really do this – view man and woman's creation from that lens keeping in mind the warning that God is totally *other* than his creation?

Only because of the revelation of the Word of God can the words "before the beginning" make sense, or do we dare to go on with our attempt at katalogy. Otherwise we start this journey riding a huge oxymoron, which I understand is the offspring of an ox and a - well, two things that don't go together. *Before* the beginning? Even without such a beast, I am in trouble enough because I am about to write about theology and scripture without a credential to my name . . . except love of God and His Church.

At this point it is necessary to introduce the writer of this commentary. She has kept in mind Cardinal Ouellet's warning that any Trinitarian perspective must "avoid over simplification." (p.18) Yet, Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman is encouraging in this kind of endeavor. He writes that the belief of the faithful "is a testimony to apostolic dogma; it has come as a sort of instinct from deep within the bosom of the mystical body of Christ, at the direction of the Holy Spirit and in answer to its prayer, and has grown with a jealousy toward error, which it feels as a scandal." This communal spirit of the Church describes my felt motivation.

C. S. Lewis also is encouraging when he writes to the effect that the uninitiated in theology and philosophy, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, may sometimes speak to the common person more directly and more understandably than those who have that training. I am aware that my use of language and religious terms may be a stumbling block to the theological specialist, but it is the man and woman like myself to whom I address what follows. Along the same lines, I've opted to minimize the use of references, bibliographies, or footnotes. In an extensive series of writing, I've done that elsewhere. At the heart of it, through studying much of what others have given us on this important truth of the meaning of sexuality especially John Paul II and St. Benedicta (Edith Stein), and lately Archbishop Cardinal Ouellet and theologian, Fr. Donald Keefe SJ, I do think I am offering something otherwise underdeveloped and perhaps in danger of being thought individualistic. Individualism is something that all good Catholics are rightly warned about. We have experienced the destruction that is wreaked by personalist theological interpretations and private judgment.

But, there is good guidance in Newman's quote above. He is often used; yes, "used" is the right word, to authenticate peculiar positions as being *sensus fidelium*, or the sense of truth arising in the faithful, when they are no such thing. To be a true development of doctrine that rises from

the roots concurrently in the hearts and minds of the people of God, every criterion in his explication needs to be fully present. Because many women and some men in the Church have been swept up with feminism's credo no more makes this a true development of *sensus fidelium* than the sweep of Arianism across the Christian world in the fourth and fifth centuries made that pesky heresy a true development of doctrine. What these controversies do well is to thrust communal understanding forward by a process of distinguishing this from that. Maritain noted the great need in the Church of "distinguishing in order to unite." If my effort proves to be aberrant, then I sincerely hope it brings out more clearly the truths that it may unwittingly misrepresent.

Present in any development of doctrine, apostolic dogma must be apparent. The word dogma has fallen into disrepute among moderns, when it simply means, "legitimate, authentic teachings of the Church." St. Paul warned that this true dogma, the teaching that had already been laid down by him and the apostles, could not be challenged or changed - not revised by him or even by angels. Without this grounding there can be no truth to promulgate. The claim of Truth, also in disrepute today because of its irritating and irrefutable superiority over vain human opinion, must be assumed in order to make any sense of the world or of human life. Many are the books written on this subject – the exemplar being John Paul II's *Veritatis Splendor*.

I begin by accepting the foundational necessity of the truth of dogma. As a convert to the Church, the lack of surety of truth is one factor that propelled me away from Protestantism. From there I visualize the development of our Catholic faith as a series of dots on a linear projection that begins with God's revelation to Abraham and Moses, then through apostolic preaching and teaching of Jesus both in the New Testament record and in Sacred Tradition faithfully handed on by the Church.

Others have visualized it as the growth of an organism. The buds in a pre-birth embryo will become arms; the arms of a youngster will develop the muscles of the mature man. These will wither as the man ages. But an arm is an arm from pre-birth embryo to old man and never morphs into an eye, a toe or any other part of the body, and it certainly never becomes a tree branch, unless you are engaging in cartoons. The analogy to doctrine development tells us that when the dot lies far outside the linear projection, or the arm changes into a tree branch, we have departed from faithful development. Something distorting to truth and to humanity is attempting to take truth's place. Such has happened with feminism's conclusions about the role of women in God's plan.

At this moment in the Church, the instinct that Newman says comes from deep within the bosom of the Church, the instinct that is an outgrowth of faith and prayer is slowly arising. It takes time. It is formed, as far as I can see, as much in reply to error, a kind of dialectic, as by unchallenged, quiet contemplation. When something jars and is sensed to be amiss, I go back to the Bible and Church Tradition to find out if it is my error or theirs. This takes considerable time,

years in this case, because neither source gives itself to scanning, especially the Bible. Its depths yield their riches only to slow digging, and not slow digging in just one spot. The whole ground of the Bible is so vast that no one can claim to have dug into it all - I don't. But over the thirty plus years of my being Catholic, when the claims of feminism have been their strongest, I have intensified this study under the canopy of the Church. I believe that what I am about to present to my readers is a dot on the linear projection from the apostles about the role and meaning of woman in God's plan. Not that I am planting this dot like a first flag on Mt. Everest. Many others have climbed and are climbing this height; there are big footsteps, big dots, to follow. I have heeded the writings on the subject by John Paul II, specifically Mulieris Dignatatem, to which, as I have explained, I will address some questions while incorporating much of value from *The Theology of the Body*. I am indebted to Father Donald Keefe SJ who has poured out his lifetime study in Covenant Theology which is intimately enmeshed in nuptial, sexuality truth, and Archbishop Ouellet who furthers the discussion in his 2006 book Divine Likeness: Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family.

All of my study does not appear in this little book. I have concentrated here on the book of Genesis. Sometimes it has been tempting to go further. But for now this is enough.

I would explain to my reader that the Catholic religious environment is totally necessary for opening a true understanding of God's Word. I hope these plain words will not seem to contradict ecumenism, for which I earnestly pray. I hear Our Lord's plea that we all be one, and support fully the Holy Fathers', both John Paul II and Benedict XVI's, openness to dialogue with other faiths. We converts, however, didn't painfully leave family, work and friends to merely drift into the Church for no reason. When I was a Baptist I thought like a Baptist, but when I became a Catholic, I put good Baptist things into their complete context. The churches attended in between had their small segments of the Truth of the Bible, each one emphasizing some discovery that they thought they alone had made and making much of it. The One Church, I found, had it all and more.

Where are the giants of apologetics these days? We are blessed with a good number who are walking in the footsteps of St. Robert Bellarmine and the other great apologists of the past. May the efforts of Scott and Kimberly Hahn, Jesse Romero, Rosalyn Moss, Carl Keating, Jeff Cavins and others be magnified (and kept in solidarity.) The revelation we will attempt to view will be in the Catholic environment, the same environment in which it was first given.

My topic is sex. At seventy plus years, I still stand agape at the sexual relationship of man and woman. Personally speaking, it is incomprehensible, this union in "one flesh" of Mars and Venus. This is baring my soul at the first. I was reared in a positive, warm family, but in some ways innocent, though not repressed. Of course, I knew the facts of life, but somehow they seemed to belong to Neverland. When I married, I found that if sex was Neverland, it was very

much where I now lived. I have shared life happily for over half a century with a man who has never considered sex other than wonderfully ordained. Tinkerbelle would not have enough pixie dust to make him think otherwise. If she tried to sprinkle it, I'd hold her hand, but I still look at a man and a woman together and think, "how strange." Though biological mother of eight and adoptive mother of four more, I doubt that I have ever *wholly* adjusted, which may be the reason that trying to grasp something of God's plan in sex has been so compelling. And now amazingly in my time, after thousands of years of Godly reflection, the Church is arriving at an astounding theology of the human body. Man and woman from primordial time, we see more and more clearly, were created in their bodies to be prophetic of Christ and the Church and the final Consummation.

In this writing, as you see, I make use of personal experience. This is merely to bring ideas into the concrete sphere, not to pretend that my experiences have any particular theological weight. Reality does not need my affirmation. One of the errors of our time is to claim authenticity of ideas based only on personal experience or feeling. But back to Newman - he does write of the "illative sense." I understand this to mean that when personal experience matches or fits an aspect of apostolic dogma, it is possible to generalize from it, and assume that it is true for more than me personally.

Christopher West writes (*A Theology of the Body, Explained*, p. 42), "A willingness to accept that reality exists independent of me is of course the first step. But this is not enough. If knowledge passively accepts objective truth, consciousness actively works to give it a subjective context and meaning in one's own life. This is extremely important. . . . To be at peace with himself and the world, he must not only know the truth, he must interiorize it, feel it, experience it, and freely embrace it as his own. To do so, he must trust the truth wholeheartedly, have an impassioned love for the objective good and abandon himself to it fearlessly. This is only possible if truth is perfect love which is only possible if truth itself is a perfect person. Truth is. Truth's name is Jesus Christ."

I hope these illustrations from my life will aid the reader in what follows. My prayer is that persevering will bring a blessing and further glory to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter One - BEFORE THE BEGINNING

An attempt to gaze behind time and into Before-the-Beginning depends wholly on Revelation. Webster defines "revelation" as "*The act of revealing; the disclosing to others of what was before unknown to them; often a striking disclosure.*" The primary and only sure source for revelation is the Bible, especially in the words and actions recorded there of Jesus Christ.

The revealing Word of God is described as a dramatic drawing-back of an utterly opaque curtain that discloses a scene so awe-inspiring that without this apocalyptic hand of God human imagination would be totally incapable of projecting it. What emerges is that astounding. The striking effects of God's disclosures in His Word stun the human mind right off the common plane into a new dimension - a mental flight to Pluto! Our space odyssey in the quest to find man and woman as sexual beings begins in the striking disclosure God has revealed *about Himself*. To do that, I invite you to peer with me into what God's Word reveals about "before the beginning." By this I mean before the Creation, before time, where God alone IS. But first, what does science say about the beginning itself? Creation, too, reveals the mind of the Creator who IS prior to all, and who accounts for all that is.

Science cannot go back of the time curtain. It must begin with time already in place with that Big Bang. Not akin to revelation, science has worked step by laborious step to place another picture before us of the beginnings of this planet and of the nature we now see around us culminating in human nature. Often these steps have had to be retraced in order to present a different scene, or to add a parallel possibility of why things look and act the way they do. Science has not always lived up to the faultless reputation that enhances the word "scientific" as though that settles everything; it is still changing and prides itself on changing its mind.

Yet, when my husband Bob and I walk the northern beach of Lake Michigan among the proliferation of Silurian Age fossils with the joy of placing them in the creative process 400 million years ago, I am grateful to those who have diligently, if imperfectly, put together the ages and stages of nature's bringing forth. Overlooking the conclusions some scientists jump to about the origin of things doesn't hamper acceptance of and gratitude for the hard work of investigation and classification they have done.

Science practitioners often present this as a mindless process; how then to account for its stunning beauty in its awesome randomness? Such prodigal abundance! Who can doubt a Great Mind having Great Fun without any of the restrictions that we time-bound creatures must experience. I tell my grandchildren that our collection of fossils is impossible to explain other than that God devised a way of preserving otherwise unpreservable, gooey creatures that should have

decayed without a trace, just so we could sit with their evidence in our hands, saying with awed voices, "Four hundred million years ago He was at work, the Proto-genius He is, trying out all these different things to bring about what would eventually work best for us." Such a wonderful time He was having; you can tell by the profusion, and He didn't even care that so many would not lead anywhere in particular. He foresaw all, but He let it all be. What Great Fun!

Why such beauty? The other day a cedar waxwing, usually dipping and diving with his brothers and sisters over our wetland picking off bugs, got off course and hit the window. At that deceptive moment the glass must have been reflecting flights of midges. The impact killed the lovely thing. Holding it still warm in my reluctant hand, I marveled. Such wanton beauty! The startling black mask and proud cockade, the subtle shading of the smoothest tiny feathers merging into soft golden hues suddenly accented by perfect, understated bars of glowing red outlined by white - a masterstroke. And all of this totally unnecessary except for stirring in us an emotional impact of praise at its excruciating loveliness. "Look at this," I said to Bob, "just look at this!" A mechanical, mindless evolution would have made a coarse thing, only shaped and colored enough to do its job. We know what a mere flying bug machine would look like.

For beginners seeking God, beauty has always been a starting point. It is apparent that the response to great beauty is awe, and with awe comes consciousness of an awe-full Creator. Think of our reaction to the magnificent sunset or the starry heavens in the pictures sent down by Hubble. "Awe" hardly expresses our wonderment. On the beams across our Greatroom - a room given over to our children's vacationing families - are the words, *Seek Beauty, Goodness, Truth and Unity*. I have hope that the import of these words drifts down, soaking into the minds of children and grandchildren (now great-grands) who recreate below. It seems to me these realities make slow progress in our lives moving from beauty through goodness to truth and later to unity, from the apparent - beauty and goodness, to the demanding - truth and unity. Only later in the spiritual journey do we recognize that together they constitute God's engulfing Love in the person of Jesus Christ through whom ALL things were made.

It doesn't take philosophy or religion to tell us that looking closely at the created object tells us a very great deal about the creator of the object. Is the object blindingly intricate? I think of antique Chinese ivory carvings. Then we marvel at a great intelligence expressed through a superhuman patience. Is the object fascinating, but beyond experience or imagination? Then the creator of the object is an offbeat soul living on some psychological or spiritual frontier. Is the object wonderful in form and color, satisfying to look upon, stirring to the human emotion of thanksgiving, given to the praise of beauty and goodness? Then the creator has these qualities because they occur in his work as a self-expression. There is something of a love of beauty in the heart of the creator. A creator expresses his own being. On the other hand, is the created thing meaningless to ordinary humans, or useless or offensive? Then the creator was gaining notoriety

by overstepping boundaries, trying to shock in order to make himself seem mystifying and important. That brings to mind the self-revelation of the artist who used elephant dung and female genitalia to decorate his painting of the Virgin Mary. His inner self stands exposed. One of my sons would put a brown paper bag on his head for the rest of the day after I cut his hair - he didn't like his image in the mirror. To cover his inner dissolution this man should wear one for the rest of his life.

The glorious creation that surrounds us tells of the Almighty Creator. St. Paul echoing Wisdom 13's "Author of beauty," says we have no excuse for not knowing God because what He has created has told us about Him (Romans 1). We would have to say, "Beauty beyond Beauty, Generous beyond Generosity, Genius beyond Genius, Power beyond Power, Reason beyond Reason, Intelligence beyond Intelligence, Goodness beyond Goodness, and in dumbfounding unity, Chaos and Order. It does take further revelation to show the purpose for all this, and when the purpose of the One behind it emerges, to name it dazzling Love. For that understanding, with sunglasses adjusted, we go to the Holy Bible that is given to us through the One Church for its revelation of God.

It took *revelation* for us to know that an Omnipotent Person (more revelation is necessary to comprehend a Trinity) preceded the formation of the universe. Significant science is even coming to that acceptance these days. The ancient religions without revealed knowledge didn't start with that. The drama began for them, as C. S. Lewis notes somewhere, with the gods marching across a stage already set. No one ever asked, "Where did the stage come from? Who set it up before these gods emerged from the earth and sea, or down from the clouds." It didn't occur to these human minds that there was One who brought everything including the stage into being. This revelation of the Judeo-Christian tradition set mankind free from superstition, separating creation from its Creator, and encouraging the inquiring human spirit - the scientific spirit. Bible revelation accepted by Jews and Christians is then the impetus for science itself. The Creator-God of the universe, far over and beyond His creation, which was merely His creature-servant, gave it to Man to fill, to subdue, and over it all to exercise dominion.

To view the One who has revealed Himself *magnopere*, we begin carefully, small bits at a time, with our sunglasses triple strength. For this we go "before the beginning." The Creator has pulled back the impenetrable curtain itself, and we are given a knockout view. I know why poor Daniel reeled and fell when the Man Clothed in White confronted him. Behind closed lids we try to slowly reconstruct what has been shown us. It has taken the collective "we" ages to do it, and we are still doing our faltering best to assimilate that vision . . . HE has revealed Himself!

In this day and age it is necessary to explain the big HE. I have been in groups where even the Lord's Prayer was manipulated to avoid any masculine reference to God -no "Father." May I

ask that the answer to this question be postponed? It is not that I am unaware of this sensitivity; I do have a reason. It is meshed into what follows. That is why I ask forbearance.

Not only is what we experience of creation piercingly glorious, in beauty and design (we are in the season of blazing leaves); not only is its immensity in every conceivable measure beyond human comprehension; not only is every detail dovetailed to every other; not only does it pit chaos against order and succeed in undoing neither; but the Word of God tells us that its culmination appears in dazzling gem-like *icons of the One* who made it. Yes, plural . . . icons, of the singular. . . One.

Early in the account of Biblical creation arises the important concept of *icon*. This is to be differentiated from those on the computer screen; we refer to the original meaning of icon, which has also come to describe very special religious pictures holding something of the eternal spirit of the Trinity, the Virgin Mary or a saint.

On the human plane, the maker of an icon takes the elements that go into it, the wood and the egg tempera, to a priest for a blessing; then the maker prays and fasts, and before beginning his work seeks forgiveness of his sins through the sacraments. Each stroke of the brush, each choice of a color, is a response to prayer. What he is calling forth through the Holy Spirit is an image or icon that holds something of *the essence* of the saint to be installed upon the wood. This is to be more than a representation; it is to be a *presence*. When we bow to an icon, it is not idolatry, we are bowing to Holiness whose source is God. Therefore the creator must consider himself only a medium through which the image comes by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. You do not look at an icon as a decorative object; rather, the saint's presence looks at you! I have tried to paint icons, merely copying special ones; my marred, unresolved self shows through as a blot on these efforts. From the one overlooking my desk the Blessed Mother seems to gaze down on me with a skeptical eye and well she may.

I'm told that the Greek Septuagint for the 26th verse of the first chapter of Genesis uses the word "icon" for the English "image." Webster's third definition of the word, called "rare" comes close then to the truth of the Biblical usage, "a symbol hardly distinguishable from the object symbolized." We tend to gloss over that deep meaning when reading, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image (icon), after our likeness; and let him/them (in Hebrew the same pronoun is used for both) have dominion . . . So God created man in his own image (icon), in the image (icon) of God he created him; male and female he created them.'" (The distortions of these verses in the "new," inclusive language editions are not helpful.) Man in the unified oneness of human nature is created a *him*; man and woman together in their separate forms of this unity are created as *them*; therefore, in closer analysis of this original imaging man and woman are *icons* of the One God, which immediately puts a question mark over what that Oneness can be. I understand that

the Hebrew pronoun may be used either way, him or them, which make it the ideal word for this circumstance.

The fifth chapter of Genesis makes this likeness of the icon that is *nearly indistinguishable* from its progenitor even clearer.

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness after his image (icon) and named him Seth.

If Seth is the icon of Adam, how closely *like* the father is the son in this likeness? In this case Seth inherits no genes but Adam's, no DNA but Adam's, because his mother was made from Adam's side. Are we not meant to realize that this is how closely imaging God Man is created to be? Pure spiritual quintessence is now presented in material form. (I like the way the Revised Standard Version capitalizes Man to mean mankind in this passage - so simple and understandable that the male and female are unified in Man. I like it so much that is the way I will refer to mankind in this writing - Man, meaning male and female, man referencing the male.) This, we must remember is before the upheaval that is coming. Man in Perfection is the *icon* of God keeping in mind that admonition "the sign (of sexuality) in no way exhausts the mystery; it is not a complete or adequate image. . .we must be careful never to reduce the spiritual and divine mystery to its physical and human sign. This would involve a dangerous and heretical blurring between Creator and creature."

There is something else decisive to the understanding of Man that until John Paul II and other 20th Century theologians was often overlooked in this familiar 26th verse of chapter one: "Then God said, 'Let us make Man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion . . . So God created Man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.'"

The Hebrews who passed on this inspired story and the Hebrew who first recorded it held a firm idea of the revealed God that was incontrovertible. "*The Lord your God is One.*" To separate out this people chosen for his special task from all the multiplication of pagan gods and goddesses that surrounded them was essential for God's salvific work in history. There must not be any confusion about the singular nature of God. If room were given for anything other than Almighty Oneness, around the corner peeked all kinds of inhuman eyes looking lustfully upon Man. No! God is One! Be gone all you fallen spirits masquerading as gods! So why this terrible slip-up? "God said, 'Let us make man in our image . . .'" Those are plural pronouns, are they not?

The Jerome Bible Commentary has a lame word or two that does not explain this enigma. God, it says, is imagined conferring with the heavenly court. What? He is sitting there with a

heavenly court, angels I suppose, and saying that he is making Man in their image? I hear even my teenage grandchildren's loud response, "NOT!" to that.

I know that among some Bible scholars, there is a reluctance to inform the sacred writer of anything beyond what they assume he knew. They seem to believe that to translate the words he wrote they must be true to the limitations of his assumed knowledge. We know because of further revelation that The Lord Our God is One *in Three Persons*, but that must not be imposed upon the sacred writer who had no idea of such a thing? To my mind this is a denial that the Holy Spirit is the true author of Scripture. He did, after all, know the whole story that he was writing for all time, and he it was who slipped the plural pronouns onto the tellers' tongues, and onto our author's pen or stylus, quite beyond either's personal understanding. (Those Hebrews may have been thinking of a heavenly court, or even the way potentates have of speaking of "we" when they mean "I.") The Holy Spirit is the true author of Scripture and though he respects human understanding to get his work done, he is always, yes always, revealing more than the human author knew or thought. That is why Scripture cannot be approached in a fundamentalist fashion, and only in the whole and holy context of the Church where it was born.

In this otherwise strange wording, the Holy Spirit is inserting in the very first chapter of His Holy Word that God is Three Persons, one God, a truth that will only be made clear after long progress in salvation history. (It has been pointed out that in the very first verses of scripture God the Father - First Person, Father, creates, "Let there be . ." through His Word - Second Person, Son, while the Third Person, Holy Spirit, broods over the waters.) This reality must be stated at the first in order for Man to be understood. For Man is not created in the image of a monolithic God, but in the image of a unity of Persons, a unity of *equal* free Persons. Pope John Paul II in an aside tucked into his early encyclical on the Holy Spirit (*Dominum et Vivificantem*) asks, "Can one hold that the plural which the Creator uses here (GN 1:24) in speaking of himself already in some way suggests the Trinitarian mystery, the presence of the Trinity in the work of the creation of man?" He takes this up again with *Mulieris* and *TB* but does not address the Trinitarian katagory in the creation of man and woman, but merely writes of "the *likeness* of the *unity of the two*" to the "*divine communion*." Throughout all his writing he avoids moving from the ungendered Persons of the Trinity to the gendered persons, which I will propose is a legitimate quest that may be undertaken. When Holy Scripture opens the door to the very Being of God, as it does in this verse (Genesis 1:24), we must be careful about barging in, but are we not to look in? Why would we ignore the invitation? To take it up illuminates the beautiful dimensions of human nature so specific to the male and to the female, and teaches us, man and woman, how to live as icons of God. For it is Trinitarian Love that creates Man in God's image as male and female. In this insight

that God gives of the us and we of His One being, through the creatures, them and him, in their one being, God has revealed His very Trinitarian Being "before the beginning."

The Trinitarian configuration of Man at the beginning, though perceptible in the Holy Spirit's work of uniting opposites, was mostly overlooked until being brought forward in our day by some theologians, notably Donald Keefe, SJ in Covenantal Theology, Marc Cardinal Ouellet in Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family, John Paul II in The Theology of the Body, and Joseph Ratzinger in "Collaboration of Man and Woman" written as Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith before becoming Pope Benedict XVI. I am dependent on this Trinitarian understanding in viewing the creation of Man though none of these sources are responsible for my possible speculative errors.

If we assume, as I believe we must, that these plural pronouns, *us* and *we*, are designed to relate to further revelation about the being of God, One in Three Persons, we must bring to the fore what we know *from revelation* about the nature of the Persons and about their unique relationship - *before the beginning*.

I believe that this will take a while. The only reason to be patient and press on is the understanding that it will give us about the true meaning and role of the sexes - man and woman. That is something that is very close to our skin these days, and something that rubs us the wrong way no matter which side of the controversy we take. Tell me that the confusions about male and female don't rub you the wrong way! My feathers are ruffled constantly by what people assume about sexuality, especially when confronted by a hymn written (rewritten?) by a religious sister, or more seriously, the attempt to foist upon the world a treaty through the UN. Have you read the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)? Or the determined pressures to redefine marriage to include male with male and female with female. Or the deliberate perversions of the truth of sexuality's meaning by the ubiquitous "Feminist Studies" in colleges and universities.

When I write "First Person" whom do you think of immediately? Of course, God the Father. I have yet to ask a class of Bible students that question and receive a different answer. Likewise "Second Person" and "Third Person." Students are well versed in the connections of these designations to Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When these numerical designations are used they do not imply that the Persons are abstract as these numbers are abstract. The Persons are anything but abstract, and the numbering is only to make clear that in the Trinity there is an irrevocable order. Asking for the attributes of the Father First Person, the replies are a little more hesitant, but they may include, "author, originator, creator, initiator," occasionally "bestower." I try to reserve "creator" for a further look, the others I let stand.

What does the Son/Second Person bring to mind in the way of attributes? This is a tougher question and a group is often stymied. Someone may say, "Jesus," while others murmur that he

only becomes man when conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Father Keefe is in the forefront of theologians who based on Colossians 1:15-17, and reasserting the Council of Chalcedon approve the answer "Jesus." Jesus is the "first born of all creation, through whom all things are made." Jesus is therefore primordial. This is not what most of us have absorbed in our catechesis over the years. We have been taught to see Jesus as the human babe conceived in the womb of Mary, and not till then a human being but an immaterial Second Person of the Trinity. Father Keefe says this concept is untenable even in light of the creed; Jesus is "*eternally* begotten of the Father." So from the beginning we consider the Second Person of the Trinity to be Jesus. When we in time (which you and I can never shed: the hours, minutes, seconds that constrict and construct our days) try to think of timelessness before time - we can't and perhaps we shouldn't.

This morning in the Prayer of the Church I was struck by what St. Augustine wrote about this conundrum. "Since we can as yet form no conception of his (Jesus') generation by the Father before the daystar, let us keep the festival of his birth of a virgin in the hours of the night. Since it is still beyond our understanding that *his name endures for ever and existed before the sun*, let us at least recognize his dwelling that he has placed *beneath the sun*. We cannot yet behold him as the only Son, abiding forever in his Father, so let us recall *his coming forth like a bridegroom from his chamber*. We are not yet ready for the banquet of our Father, so let us contemplate the manger of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Yes, St. Augustine and Father Keefe, yet, it seems inescapable to consider that the Son/Second Person *before time, before creation*, as for all the divine Persons, is Spirit. Can we say a Spirit Person with the imprint of Man who is to be? With creation and time the Second Person is a human man, Jesus, with all the attributes of God, the Second Person. I can be told that philosophically God cannot change; the Second Person is eternally Jesus and Man, but I cannot understand it, nor can I understand at all the transaction in the womb of Mary. The very word *incarnation* means "embodied in human form" which we celebrate on March 25th. and again on December 25th.

At one time theologians used the Latin words "*ad intra*" when little human minds attempted to view the WITHIN of the Trinity, but someone told me that those words have been abandoned because of the hubris of thinking that anyone can say anything about the WITHIN of God especially before time. Now I read about the *immanent* Trinity which means the same thing. The Holy Father John Paul II writes that the "inscrutable mystery of God's inner life" is revealed in the New Testament ". . . the communion of love that is in God, through which the Three Persons love each other in intimate mystery of one divine life." That should clear the way to consider the attributes of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity *ad intra*, as they are before the beginning, should it not?

I recall testing some of these ideas on a respected priest, and he brushed the whole thing off in this way: "Within the Trinity don't all the Persons of the Blessed Trinity have all the same attributes? They equally are God. God is One."

Right! But we must make finer distinctions. The Son is dependent on the Father - he is eternally "begotten." The Father subsists and is not begotten, though begottenness in this case is eternal as subsistence. The Son is consubstantial with the Father and is the self-expression of the Father - He is the Father's *Word*. The Father has eternally expressed His Being through His Word. The Son is the matrix of all creation: "*through* him all things were made." The Father initiates not unilaterally all that is, but "in" or "through" the Son. In that great Colossians paean of praise we just referred to, St. Paul writes of the Second Person, Jesus, "for in him all things were created." Our creed says,

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten not made, one in Being with the
Father. *Through him all things were made.*

For this reason when students name as an attribute "creator" for God the Father there is an addendum. Father and Son both have a specified role in creation. The Holy Spirit also is The Lord and Giver of Life - though even here the Father is Initiator. For the Father has absolute authority not just over the world He created and redeemed, but within the Trinity itself. Each of the Persons has his role in creation; they are all "creator," but each in his own way. And each way is distinguishable from the others while retaining perfect equality and freedom for each.

Each is "Person." Writes Fr. Keefe, "Person is a term used so that we may speak at all of what is three in the Triune God." (p.386) And the catechism states further, (this term) is used "to signify an ineffable mystery, 'infinitely beyond all that we can humanly understand.'" (251) Yet, as with our common usage it signifies for us a being with intelligence, will and emotion - in God all three are expressions of wholly unspeakable love.

Cardinal Ouillet writes, "The Father is Love based on the fact that he is Gift-Source, the original and inscrutable Mystery. The Son is Love by virtue of the fact that he is the "yes" to the Father, in infinite gratitude and absolute readiness to love as the Father loves. The Holy Spirit is Love as fruit of that eternal accord, personal exuberant fruit, infinite and shared joy." I believe it is Augustine who simplified magnificently this truth into Father:Lover, Son:Beloved, Holy Spirit:Love.

The Son is sent. The Father is never sent. This is a great distinction between the Persons. The Father sends; the Son is sent. Inherent in sending and being sent are two subsistent principles - initiation and response, or authority and obedience. (The catechism warns that with the Persons resides one principle of creation, *however*, the Father *from* whom all things come is initiator/lover,

the Son *through* whom all things come is responder/beloved, and the Spirit *in* whom all things come is love.)

Sending is a serious business in Hebrew thought and language (which is the thought and language God uniquely formed to carry his specific self-revealing). The one who *sends* fully authorizes the person *sent* to carry his eminence and imminence to those to whom the *sent one* goes. The One Sent is bearer of everything that the Sender is. He carries, then, not an authored note, nor a signed letter, nor even a great missive with his seal, he carries fully the Author himself. "Whoever receives me receives not me but him who sent me." (Mk 9:37) At the base then the sent one and the sender are indistinguishable in nature or essence, they are one, except for primacy of initiation and primacy of response in their stance toward each other. Wholly one, and equal, their roles are not the same.

Do I hear a question? "What has this to do with God's revelation about man and woman? What about sex? You had my interest there for a second, but this is beside the point - too theological." (Sometimes I think my teenaged grandchildren are all speaking in my ears - these are the things they are saying.)

This has everything to do with sexuality. This is the explanation of sex. Man and woman are about to be created in this image.

"Yes. Sure." (Isn't youth cynical, though?)

Well, dear ones, what distinguishes male and female?

Some snickering, "You're kidding!" (Their designations of what I will describe here are crude - why do they revel in crudity? Even my three-year-old great-grandchild can shock me.)

The male body is made for *initiation*, the female body for *reception* of the male. Though this is not the end of the story, it is a preeminent point. We recognize how the physical form speaks of the action that the body is meant for. In amplification of TB's language, Christopher West writes of the woman as "embodying the receptivity of the gift," and of the man as "embodying the initiation of the gift." p.161 (I'm tempted to be sidetracked by feminism's angry reactions to this, like Simone de Beauvoir reviling the female posture of receiving. But she and her company are simply present day expressions of the upheaval first begun in Eden.) It is necessary to remember that we are attempting to go back to the time of Perfection in the Garden of Eden to discern God's perfect plan and purpose for man and woman.

The First Person, Father, through the Second Person, Son has created a first person of a new trinity, the male, animated by the Spirit. The Author has breathed Spirit into the elements of the universe and created an author - an icon of himself.

We humans recognize "creation through" (the Father creates through the Son) because we have babies born around us everyday by a father through a mother. The male "creates" a being through the female. Without her seed and her womb his initiative brings forth nothing. The Father

God through the Son creates a human father, Adam, in the likeness and image of himself; the Father God through the Son creates a human mother, Eve, in the likeness and image of the Son. The "We" and "Us" of the Creator are indelibly scribed into the bodily form and function of the "we" and "us" of Man. (The role of the Holy Spirit is yet to come.)

John Paul in Mulieris says, "The image and likeness of God in man, created as man and woman (in the analogy that can be presumed between Creator and creature), thus also expresses the 'unity of the two' in a common humanity. . . This likeness is a quality of the personal being of both man and woman, and is also a call and a task." Perhaps what I am doing here is to amplify the "call" and the "task" of the personal being of man and of woman, and carry a katalogy down from the distinctive "tasks" that have been revealed to be distinguishing marks of the Divine Persons.

I think the only reason that this is so rarely explicated is that it has been hard to accept the idea that within the Holy Trinity the Son is the prototype, archetype, or principle of Godhead that we humans name "feminine." It demands more of us than we can usually muster to equate these two designations, "Son" and "feminine." However, to come to truly understand woman, it seems to me this identification is imperative. Though if this is really so, why is it not Father, Daughter and Holy Spirit? Why was the Second Person not sent as a woman? Or as Christopher West states, ". . . the Trinity has not revealed itself as Husband, Wife, and Child, but as Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

This could flummox my speculative excursions along with those others who seek the feminine in Godhead. I never have found a compatriot; commonly, the attempt has been to settle on the Holy Spirit as the feminine prototype; however this grievously ignores the Spirit's impregnation of Mary, hardly to be perceived a feminine act. I believe St. Maximilian Kolbe came to this odd conclusion. But the Son as the feminine prototype or archetype Person of the Trinity? How so?

It is clear by now, is it not, that when speaking of the Godhead the terms "masculine" and "feminine" must be wholly dissociated from the terms "male" and "female"? The Holy Father goes further than I can with this. He writes concerning the *mystery of the eternal generating* which belongs to the inner life of God, "Nevertheless, in itself this 'generating' has neither 'masculine' nor 'feminine' qualities. It is by nature totally divine. It is spiritual in the most perfect way, since 'God is spirit' and possesses no property typical of the body, neither 'feminine' nor 'masculine'." (MD III.8)

True indeed, there is *no* physicality in Godhead, but as we have seen there are prior principles of act and potential that designate and differentiate Father and Son. In their creation of Man these principles are enfleshed in the physical forms of male and female. Because male and female must exemplify principles (or tasks or calls) found *ad intra* the Holy Trinity, when these are

discovered in analogical or katalogical comparison, we name the principles masculine and feminine, but by no means are we saying that implies *any physicality* in the Godhead. It does not! The origin of these principles that we label masculine and feminine lie exceedingly far behind, above, below and ahead of male/female creation. So though " 'God is spirit' and possesses no property typical of the body," certainly not maleness or femaleness, in him originates principles, tasks or calls we name masculine and feminine because of our inevitable association of these principles with male and female physical bodies – our first and primary sense experience of them. (In accord with this concept, C.S. Lewis states about God in *That Hideous Strength*, "What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it." This insight will also come into play later on.) But why then is yet another male designation – "Son"- given for what I am presenting as the Person originating *the feminine principle* in Godhead?

Before tackling that problem, and adjacent to it we do find that the revelation of the feminine *within* the Trinity lies in the Bible's wonderful odes to Wisdom.

"She (wisdom) is a breath of the power of God and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty."

The Old Testament writers who thus describe her do not have the full picture because of the rightful adherence in their time to the primary concept of the monolithic God, yet their extolling of HER fits beautifully the archetypal feminine *ad intra* who is the Second Person of the Trinity.

From this scriptural source about Wisdom in the Fourth Century St. Athanasius identifies Word (Jesus) with Wisdom but changes the She of Wisdom to the He of Word in order to match the face of Godhead that the Trinity shows to his creatures - *never other than a masculine face* – as Lewis, too, acknowledges in the above quote.

The masculine (not male) single face of the Holy Trinity shown to us as God's face throughout Scripture is the compelling truth why Daughter or Mother cannot be one of the divine names and why the Second Person could not be sent incarnate in a female body.

This is what happens when we try to assimilate revelation. We are tested for patience because our small minds nearly drown in the revelatory ocean, and they simply must learn to tread water for a very long time before being nudged into standable depth. Better, we must grow very tall in order to touch bottom. (While writing this I stare out at wild Lake Michigan. Groping for something solid under my feet, I find the depths terrifying. Besides, knowledgeable critics may so easily push my head under.)

What are the parallels of the created Man and the transcendent Original God that make Man the icon of God? First, for both it is two Persons/persons sharing the self-same nature who stand ob-positioned. The first initiates the second responds. This may sound like Yin and Yang, but it is far, far greater than anything Chinese philosophy without Revelation depicts in its intertwining

commas. We stay away from "active" and "passive" to describe these attributes because the connotations of these two words have become misleading.

If you don't believe, that though man and woman share exactly the same human nature with all the very same attributes they are ob-positioned, you haven't been married more than a week, or you haven't been married at all and are only seventeen years old suffering adolescent hormones. I just told granddaughter number four she should go off to college for some years and leave Boyfriend in order to get a clearer perspective of the meaning of womanhood than is possible through those stars that obliterate her vision. (Of course, college alone won't do it, in fact learning there may be detrimental; it is time on a spiritual journey that is demanded.) This ob-position means that they hold down *opposite poles on the continuum of human nature* - she doesn't understand this any more than the common feminist.

I watch the small ones in the family on a teeter-totter: chunky Tommy on one end, wisp of Rachel on the other. At the first the board is balanced on the fulcrum so that both ends are the same distance from the center. She must bounce to get the board back down to the ground; his weight is more than she can elevate, so he gives a push with his feet to get his end up and to bring her down. To make it easier for the children, Dad comes and lifts the board off the fulcrum that is designed for this adjustment, shortening his end and lengthening hers, then the two can enjoy the fly up and the fly down.

Using this figure of a teeter-totter may seem outlandish. Inept at theology, but into family and children, I use whatever my experience allows. I am looking for a figure that brings good associations - children playing, laughing, enjoying a good time. The use I will make of this figure may seem to minimize the most important relationship of male and female in the one flesh of sexual love and intimacy, but again I ask for forbearance. No metaphor is adequate, and I will try to correct the deficiency later.

With man and woman, the teeter-totter board on which they are positioned is human nature. They both share exactly the same human nature with all the same attributes, though some are more to be said of her and some are more to be said of him. She is thinner in some of the attributes and needs a longer board, he is heavier and needs a shorter length (she is heavier in others, and he is the thinner). They are equals - not meaning the same in all regards, but equal in worth and value. Though they wholly claim the same human nature, sexuality places them irrevocably at the ends of the board; the necessary adjustment makes it impossible for them to change ends without serious disruption to the way the thing works. This is what ob-positioned means. Ob is a prefix that means "facing." I may have fashioned this word myself trying to avoid either "complementary" or "opposite" neither of which is helpful. Something of "position" is needed in the word, yet "opposition" carries an antagonistic element that is not acceptable. One at one end, one at the other depicts facing positions. Polarity is inherent to sexuality, and the poles

cannot be exchanged. Polarity implies roles. Tommy may not take Rachel's place; Rachel may not take Tommy's or the fun stops because the laws have been broken that govern teeter-totters. It won't go up and down. The long end has him sitting on the ground (poor fellow, there he is - grounded), the short end has her up in the air (ah, yes, hitting her head on the glass ceiling).

This absoluteness begins with the Holy Trinity in whose image and likeness Man is made. The Father and the Son are ob-positioned. They share all the same attributes, though some are more to be said of the one than of the other. The early Athanasian Creed is helpful in this regard:

We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity,
neither confounding the persons nor dividing the
substance. For there is one person of the Father,
another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but
the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the
Holy Ghost is all one.

Again we reserve discussion of the Holy Spirit and concentrate on the First and Second Persons *ad intra*. We must not "confound them." That is, we cannot confuse one with the other. They have their positions and these positions they eternally maintain as non-exchangeable. Can we call their positions tasks, calls or roles? The Father sends, the Son is sent. The Father authorizes, the Son is dependent on the Father's authority. Never is the authority of the First Person to send exchanged with the Second Person who is sent (secondarily, the Son with the Father sends the Spirit), never does the Son authorize the Father. The reference is to I Corinthians 11:3, "The head of Christ is God." Headship will be considered fully in what it is and what it is not when we consider the woman's responsive role to headship that is discussed in this chapter. This eternal positioning amongst the divine Persons, however, must not in our understanding divide the substance of their one nature nor diminish their *equality*. The position does not inhibit in any way total freedom of Person. They each have the very same full essence called Godhead! "We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance."

It is precisely because of the irrevocable positioning of the First and Second Persons on the Divine Teeter-totter of Godhead that, with a gasp, we recognize the role of the Third Person. To be ob-positioned, forever facing each other on either end of the continuum of God-nature, calls for another, the Person of Unity. To be true to Reality in worshipping the Trinity, we will be filling our imagination with the Central Person of Love, in whom the ob-positioned Persons are embraced - the Holy Spirit. St. Bernard said it: "The Holy Spirit is the kiss between the Father and the Son." It works better if we remember that with no hint of sexuality, the Father is the principle (masculine) of the man, and the Son the principle (feminine) of the woman. What an amazing Person is this Person of the Holy Spirit, the divine Third Person! It seems to me that he, Love/Unity, is the whole teeter-totter board upon which the Persons are positioned, and Love is

the fulcrum upon which they are balanced and united. He is Everything supra-essential to the Being of Godhead, sustaining, embracing and engulfing the Two. (You see how Yin and Yang are weakly insufficient, to say the least?) Mulieris says, "In the intimate life of God, the Holy Spirit is the personal hypostasis of love." I translate that as "the principle or essential nature" of love which unites the ob-positioned. We can do no better than to state again – Lover:Love:Beloved! In that order.

At this point my reader may be recoiling from my clumsy attempt to penetrate the mysteries of the Holy Trinity. The longer I live the more I have the sense that he wants us to come to know him, as much as we are able. I get the overwhelming conviction every time I receive Holy Communion how foolish and unworthy I am, and how merciful he is, and also how through my denseness he keeps inviting me by grace to know him – to know in the most intimate sense. The gift of himself in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity is to know him. Who would dare to take him so, Body and Blood, unless he commanded it? He does. It is a lived *experience* of love that overcomes any mere thinking. When therefore, in submission to the Church, I try to exercise Henri Poirot's "little gray cells" in regard to him, he alone knows how far this comes from really knowing anything – a mere speck of dust in the universe, but he keeps beckoning and encouraging. I beg God that I never hear Him say to me, "depart from me, I never knew you!"

There was a time in my younger life when I was enamored by Carl Jung. He pondered the question of the opposites especially in regard to man and woman whom he declared were as opposite as opposite could be. Cold and hot, east and west, up and down - that man and that woman embodied all oppositeness. And this did not exclude "opposed." From there he worked on the problem of unity of the opposites. He went into alchemy looking for the psychological lapis lazuli - all of that. He came to see that the Holy Spirit was somehow the answer, though his concept never included bowing the knee to Jesus Christ, so I don't get it. He had a grasp of the problem of man and woman and an insufficient idea of the Holy Spirit, however he conceived of him. On a somewhat parallel course, he was, however, important degrees divergent. We know that a few degrees off course can lead to an ultimate divergence of infinite proportions.

He also raised what was to him an important question, "Where was the feminine in Christianity?" There was a grave deficiency there. A Darth Vader stalked the consciousness of woman because she had no divine archetype. Protestantism was unrelievedly male; Catholic faith at least had the Blessed Virgin Mary as an archetype for woman, but she did not have god status. Poor women were, therefore, without any archetypal grounding in God. He proposed that the "unstable" Trinity be changed to a Quaternary to make it whole, and to have the Quattro be Mary. This exposes his absorption of fallen values; his incomprehension of Christian things. Liberation Theology's Leonardo Boff entertained the same error.

In the fifth decade of the Glorious Mysteries we meditate on the Crowning of Mary in Heaven. As our Mother and the Second Eve I understand her to be a stand-in for all the Redeemed, men and women, who form the Bride of Christ. Though "divine" she is forever human, never God. She holds a nuptial place for us as Spouse until the consummation of the final marriage in heaven. We will be divine – like her the spouse of God, oh yes, but not God and only divine by Gift and not by nature. But when Genesis is quoted judging Man as "very good" the disfigurement of that icon, the breakup that ended Eden, is minimized.

At this point in Mulieris, Pope John Paul assesses the ravages of the Fall by using the word "diminishment." He declares that the order of love is not destroyed and continues to use "very good" for man and woman throughout the Theology of the Body. To my understanding, this cannot be the "very good" of *in the beginning*. The nature of Man has taken a mighty wallop that will take a tremendous sacrifice to set right, only, however as John Paul says, because the order of *love is not destroyed* with the Fall. That the undiminished love of God is the bedrock of the universe and is never abrogated is of first importance. It is love poured out in that tremendous sacrifice that makes restoration of the divine image possible. Further examination of the before and after of the Fall and its effect on human nature we will examine in due course.

The painful problems we know in the ob-position of male and female on the continuum of human nature were never present in the perfection of the Garden of Eden - which is simply the name given to that idyllic time before the intrusion of Envy. The ob-position of the two, one who authored, one who responded, united in the embrace of the Third, could be nothing but fitting for each person. When something fits it is suitable, comfortable, natural, congenial - happy. There is no rankle, no irritation, no impatience. There is no envy. Contentment with one's being allows no room for wanting something someone else has. The psyche is serene and complete. The prospects for fulfillment of personal meaning lie ahead without shadow as the persons think God's thoughts after him and embrace his holy Will. The Spirit of God penetrates each and holds them in Divine Love, for the gift of his own Spirit makes this created being a union of three persons in the image of The Subsistent Persons. Now appears resplendent in human flesh the very principles that animate the Creator.

St. Edith Stein writes:

The first man was created perfect, that means that his nature was not designated for development but was already fully developed in all things of which human nature is capable. . . He was destined to transmit pure nature to his descendants not as a fully developed state, but in essence, whose perfection would be attained through the course of their lives. Thus the nature Adam was endowed with meant for them the goal of development. Integral nature, that is original nature, meant: the body's perfect strength, health and beauty, the perfect functioning of all its organs and its perfect obedience to the mind – which is to say, to the will as enlightened by reason. The perfect functioning of the bodily organs depends on flawless sensory functions and infallible sensory perceptions. The perfect mental state depends on the creature's unerring rational grasp of other creatures and of the Creator; a perfect harmony of reason and will; the unswerving focusing of the will on the highest good, and the willing submission of the lower instincts to these higher and highest aspirations. (Woman p.184)

The Trinity's joy in Adam and Eve was imbedded in their beautiful and meaningful bodies which wholly expressed the love of Father and Son in the Spirit now in a marital, nuptial communion of flesh. The Theology of the Body reiterates how these male and female bodies make visible the invisible divine mystery of Love and Communion, the exchange of which reflects the eternal exchange between the Father and the Son. "The Catechism states that God 'impressed his own form on the flesh . . . in such a way that even what was visible might bear the divine form.'" (n.704)¹

I want to go back to the statement, "united in the embrace of the Third." When man and wife come together in sexual union, in order that this love is in the image of the union of Persons in the Holy Trinity, a Third Person must be invited. The Catholic faith has preserved this important truth through the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony when the bond between the man and woman is a gift of the LOVE Person of the Holy Spirit. This makes the analogy of the teeter-totter more acceptable; otherwise being ob-positioned at two ends on the face of it seems to be seriously flawed because the all-important sexual union is not apparent. Yet, were the two not so essentially ob-positioned their ecstatic union would lack holy joy and fruitfulness. We will see that the inspired stories in Genesis of the marriage unions of the patriarchs bring out again and again the necessity of acknowledging this three-in-oneness: husband and wife united in God. Jesus will reaffirm this absolute, "What *God* has joined together, let no man put asunder." In godly marriage it takes three to be one.

In his description of the union of male and female John Paul continually writes of the "unity of the two" as spousal or nuptial love. My question is why not, as imaging our divine

¹ Father Keefe objects to any attempt to imaginatively construct a pre-fallen condition of Man. He begins with the sin, the free refusal of integral creation by Adam 's immediate refusal of headship. With this sundering of the human community, human freedom and human unity are at odds – from the first moment. He insists we cannot reconstruct the original situation prior to the Fall and any attempt to do so enters into "original insolence." I plead guilty, without doubt. Yet, the first two chapters of Genesis seem to draw us toward a glimpse of a pre-fallen condition. I have never found this position before, not in John Paul, not in St. Edith Stein, not in Jesus who said, "in the *beginning it was not so . . .*"

prototype, "the unity of the three?" The section III-8 in Mulieris stands to be considered with this in mind – especially the "anthropomorphism of Biblical language" but this is to be a brief book, and that section should be covered line by line.

Why bring this strange creature, an amalgam of flesh and spirit into being in the first place? There is no answer for why except that insight revealed slowly in the Bible. God desired a marriage for himself! Yes, really! And he patiently designed a suitable bride. This amazing conclusion is based on a series of prophetic utterances in Holy Scripture and IB makes it a central theme. It is something so strange that no one would have thought of it without this startling flash emitted by and sustained in human thought by God. Though it is not as explicit in the Old Testament as it is in the New, it is there if more often in the negative. In the Old Testament the beloved Bride proves to be unfaithful, even becoming a harlot who breaks the Groom's heart. Writes John Paul II, "It is precisely this love which explains the Covenant, a Covenant often presented as a marriage covenant which God always renews with his Chosen People. On the part of God the Covenant is a lasting 'commitment'; he remains faithful to his spousal love even if the bride often shows herself to be unfaithful."

Covenant throughout scripture from its first appearance in the story of Noah to Jesus lifting the cup and proclaiming, "This is the New Covenant in my blood," writes Father Keefe, "is in fact the concrete revelation of the Triune God." The Covenant reality unites God and His people, Christ and the Church, and male and female. Each of these unions' or covenants' primal analogate is the Holy Trinity. "This is the fundamental way in which God chose to reveal his own covenant of life and love to world – by creating in such a way (as male and female) that we could image this covenant and participate in it." (West p 16)

The descendants of deviant Ham, Noah's problem son, also came up with the idea of sexual union for the Baals they worshipped. So then what's so revelatory about that? Satan stands ready to exploit the most elemental and powerful aspects of human nature, but because of his underlying rebellion, he always misunderstands and contorts the essence. His idea of unity is one gobbling up the other. Gold-headed Baal, a multiple image of Baals, was lascivious; he copulated freely with Astarte the goddess consort who was herself so lustful for human blood that she demanded human babies - lots of human babies. For his part, Baal exulted in prostitutes who served as stand-ins for Astarte in the pagan temples where his advocates came to consummate his and their carnal appetites as a form of petitions.

I can't avoid recalling - I'd like to, but it still bothers - how a religious sister and editor of a once faithful Catholic magazine under the same deceptive deviancy of Ham, wrote a prominent article extolling the pagan goddess religions as being more gentle and agreeable to the human condition than the militant, masculine, authoritarian God of the Hebrews. The God of the

Hebrews - an impossible, lord-it-over, small g god? That's what the snake implied (the imp lied) in the Garden of Eden. God, he said, was jealous of his place and was determined that his authoritarian prestige and power never be threatened by this little man Adam who might try to unseat him. Thus Satan destroyed the idea of "fatherhood" in Man's understanding, says West. "Conceiving God instead as a jealous tyrant goads man to do battle against him so as not to be enslaved. Thus, man turns his back on Love, casting 'the Father' out of his heart." p.141

But back to Astarte. Astarte and her ilk are gentle? Even those who worshipped her depicted her as a fanged lioness. Abortion is only preliminary to what worship of her demanded - heaving live babies from mothers' arms to priest and from priest into flames in the belly of her consort idol! Her Lord Baal's sperm fertilized the earth so that harvests would be good; the farmer went to Astarte's understudy, his cult prostitute, for orgies just to make sure. Yes, we miss those gentle goddess religions, all right.

The Holy Trinity's revelation of himself is that there is no goddess in heaven with whom he consorts, it is Mankind he created to be his holy Bride! Holding her place until the Consummation is her exemplar, the Blessed Mother of Our Lord, Mary the Second Eve.

Reviewing. Though the Three Divine Persons exemplify within their Being the analogate of male and female ob-positions bonded in Love/Unity, taken together Godhead in relation to Man they stand as masculine to Man's feminine stance. That is, *ad intra* we discern a masculine and feminine principle animating the Father and the Son, their roles ob-positional, united in the Holy Spirit of Love. *Ad extra*, from outside, God's relationship to Man is always masculine to feminine.

Have we answered the question of why masculine pronouns and masculine names alone are appropriate for Godhead? Though pure spirit and with no sexuality in himself, He has revealed himself inherently to manifest the spiritual principle which the male in all of his masculinity he created to express. That is, the Holy Trinity, Godhead, is Author, Primary Initiator. From Mulieris, "In the Church every human being – male and female – is the 'Bride', in that he or she accepts the gift of the love of Christ the Redeemer, and seeks to respond to it with the gift of his or her own person." This summation is dependent on the fifth chapter of Ephesians where St. Paul ponders the union of man and woman in one flesh, "This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church." Therefore "bride" is an analogical concept divorced from actual sexuality. Man and woman are treated as one being, Christ's Bride, his receptive "other." John Paul makes much of this chapter of Ephesians in TB and Mulieris, which West explains thoroughly.

The Holy Triune God is Husband; the Pure Man, (Man-male and female), is spouse. The Holy Trinity initiates, humankind responds, receives and is fruitful. There is no reversing this equation. From the time he is born helpless, the human being has not the capability to initiate anything. Even with all his technology and science - all the wondrous things the human has assembled and in some secondary sense created - in the beginning and in the end he is thoroughly

dependent upon what truly IS. As feminine to masculine, mankind provides with his hands and brain a kind of womb through which things are made, but the Initiator is God alone. "*Without me you can do nothing.*"

What have we here but another and even more wondrous teeter-totter? All By God, all For God, all In God, we have pictured another continuum of Being. The Holy Trinity of Persons, GOD, holds one end; his spouse, a supernaturally endowed Mankind, a trinity also, holds the other. And this is the amazing truth; they are EQUALS. Before you quake over this assertion, recall - what I am describing is before the events described in Psalm 82, "they have neither knowledge or understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken." This is before the lights went out and the ground of Man's being sank into this wretched fallen realm ruled over by an enemy ("*The ruler of this world comes, he would have no power over me, but...*" said Jesus in JN 14:30).

I recognize that my Baptist training was erroneous in calling fallen Man depraved, which simply is not sustainable. Father Keefe writes, "The Good Creation, which is good because it is created, and is created only by reason of the immanence in it of the Christ in whom it is created, is therefore never the realm of "the total corruption" which the Reformation proclaimed. . ." (p.16).

But is not the loss of integrity and supernatural gifts in the Fall severe enough to be called devastating, not merely diminished? I believe that this makes a difference in the conclusions we make about man and woman's call before and after the Fall. In the attempt to understand an aspect of "diminishment" however, the truth is that God's love has never for a moment wavered for his creature Man, and that from the beginning a plan of love was in place for his return to full bridal union.

God in creating Man gave him more than human nature. There was a time, I'm told, before Enneagram and Labyrinths, when Catholics were taught about the supernatural and preternatural gifts. (I am baffled when Catholic truth seems so boring and trite that all of this more "interesting" entertainment fluff takes its place). Adam and Eve were perfect humans and more. To make them equals to God He gave them additional qualities enabling them to be his friends! Friends look at each other face to face; one does not do obeisance to the other. Now Man was totally dependent on God for his high station and for these gifts, and he knew it. To maintain his gifted equality he must freely will to remain ob-positioned - facing his Maker, freely exercising his own deep desire to think God's thoughts after him and to obey his holy Will. Man had been given the tremendous capability and capacity to do this. Remember, he was as like God as Seth was like Adam. (Though there is truth in this, the Holy Father would have us remember that there is no greater difference than that of creature and Creator. We cannot think God *is* Man, or Man *is* God. No, never! Also, despite their close identity, Adam was not Seth, nor was Seth Adam).

Must I say again to us, *poor us*, whose consciousness has been "raised", that "Adam," and "Man," are collective nouns embodying in themselves male and female? And that this no more denigrates woman than the word "God" or "Father" denigrates the Christ who is incorporated into those communal names. He does not demand that his name be stated with each mention of God. Let's think that over, "brothers and sisters." You may have forgotten by now in our genderized liturgy that St. Paul also used a collective to address us as a unity, "Brethren." Personally, I prefer the unity of "Brethren" to the isolated, even confrontational, feel of "Brothers and sisters." Of course, the reverse, "Sisters and brothers" is a protest against headship, a headship that is essential for the free unity of the persons. Headship was denied in the Garden of Eden first by Adam who was no protector, and then by Eve who turned away, accepting another head. On the face of the earth only the Catholic Church and the observant Christian family exemplify the *headship of Covenant* patterned on the Holy Trinity and established by God. Therefore, it is "Brothers and sisters," if a division there must be stated.

Slow-learning ex-Protestant that I am, the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar has come to me late. Yet, I am learning that my true prayer group is that quietly adoring, Rosary praying group of men and women who gather in the church each Wednesday. Prayer groups otherwise have been hard on me. Today, right in the middle of this effort to write, I took with me to Adoration my old friend and spiritual director, Dom Eugene Boylan. Not in person, of course, he has been with the Lord for many decades now, but I sat with his heart that still beats in a well-worn book, [This Tremendous Lover](#). I've made a new cover for it; some pages are loose, in the margins over the descriptions of the Eucharist are the first Catholic words I ever wrote, "OHH," "AHH," and "groan!" It was this book that pushed me over the edge into a new world I hardly could believe existed. It made me understand that "Catholic" is far more inclusive of true faith than "Christian." I had always been Christian, but this! This brought me to the edge of an ocean, where the ship named Church awaited to bear me on adventures in faith not to end on this earth.

I felt today that Father Boylan was again with me, as personal as could be, when in opening the book to early pages I came across this:

One could write pages and still leave the meaning of grace a mystery; here we are merely summarizing. Let it be said, then, that love either finds equality or makes equality. For the proper love of friendship between two beings, some equality of nature is necessary. In order that man could be His friend and lover, God deigned to give him such a participation in the divine nature so that in some mysterious way, man has something corresponding to God's own power of knowing and loving God. In some extraordinary way man was destined to share - in a finite way, of course- in the life of the Blessed Trinity, and this sharing began even here on earth.

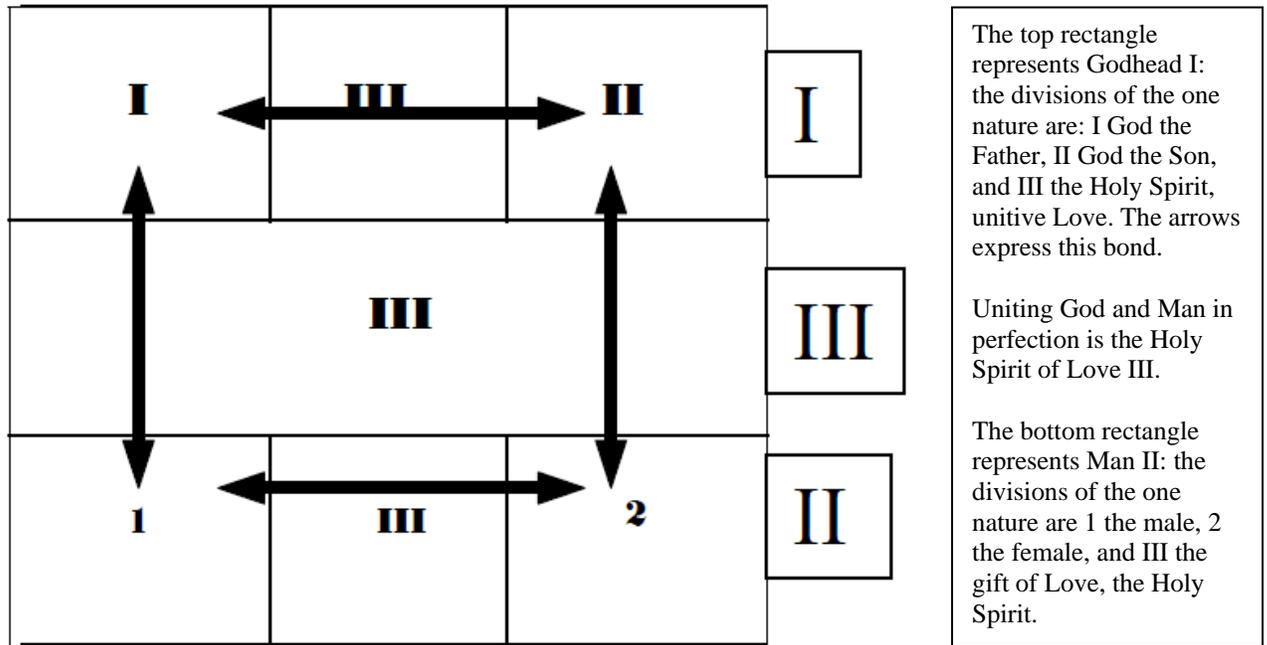
I had no
about the equality of Man and God before the Fall. Father Boylan's spiritual direction wonderfully continues.

When God told Moses his Name, that Name is his alone. *YHWH*. I AM. BEING. He alone IS. Man has no control over his coming into being, nor will he have control of the moment when he ceases to walk this earth. Man and God, contrary to new-age wishful thinking, are eternally ob-positioned; one cannot take the other's place. Of course, since the Fall, Man is not even on the Divine teeter-totter (unless and until he is born again by Baptism into the Redeemed Order).

"Good grief!" says Charlie Brown when faced with something surprising, we have *three* teeter-totters before the Fall. Father and Son united in the Holy Spirit: Man and woman united in the Holy Spirit: and most astounding of all, The Triune God and triune Man united in the Holy Spirit. This is REVELATION from Scripture and Tradition!

I hope that my reader won't mind a digression, but this insight was an Eureka! moment for me. I clearly recall the place - not a bathtub. I had been thinking about this objection of Jung's that a triangle as a symbol of the Trinity is unstable, that a square or cube would be a preferred symbol for completeness, a quaternary then rather than a trinity; and thinking also about the wondrous parallel relationships culminating in the final Trinity of God and Man united in the Holy Spirit. Sitting on a footstool, using the seat of a chair as a writing surface for my paper and pencil, suddenly the quaternity (if there is such a word) that Jung (because he was not a Christian) had missed fell into place. When a square is divided into nine equal spaces, three lines of three cubes, and the divisions of the second line are erased, a diagram presents these trinities all together. The top line depicts Godhead: the Father at the left cube, the Son at the right, the Holy Spirit in the center. Skipping the second line for a moment, the third line depicts Man (in God's image): the man at the left, the woman at the right, and the Holy Spirit in the center. Using the pencil to intensify the rectangle of the top line, I mark out Godhead, the ultimate FIRST PERSON. Intensifying the sides of the bottom line of cubes, I have a rectangle marking out perfect Man, the SECOND PERSON. In between, uniting these two rectangles is the open rectangle of the Holy Spirit, the THIRD PERSON who unites Godhead to Man. The Holy Spirit is the Unity in all three relationships so depicted. Three trinities in Perfection form the Quaternary that Jung felt must be the symbol of wholeness.

When I saw this, I ran downstairs and nabbed a couple of teenage daughters in the kitchen. We had talked about these things; they had a certain level of interest. We put our heads together over a kitchen counter while I drew this diagram on a paper napkin. They got it! They really got it! (I felt like Henry Higgins exulting over Liza's perfect diction.) What happiness it has been to have these daughters with me in grasping this over the many years in between, and each in her own way living it out in her marriage.



(Not to confuse things, Jesus is at the Father's "right hand," and woman stands at her husband's right hand. Placing them in this position would be more accurate, but also initially more confusing. More confusion we do not need.)

The only view we have of the life of perfection is in these brief two and a half chapters of Genesis. Carried in two simple stories that don't parallel each other, the first, known as the Elohist, comprising chapter one, and the second, known as the Yahwist, chapters 2 and 3. Each has a different truth to tell. It may seem that they contradict each other. They don't. One is simply a close-up view of what the other looks at from afar. One tells the details that the other doesn't delineate because of our primary need for a big picture. John Paul puts the two stories together writing, "that the text of Gen 2:18-25 helps us to understand better what we find in the concise passage of Gen 1:27-28. At the same time, if it is read together with the latter, it *helps us to understand even more profoundly* the fundamental *truth* which it contains concerning man created as man and woman in the image and likeness of God."

In all that precedes we have considered the big picture of the first story, GN 1:26. Male and female are created as Man in one creative act. As I have said, I understand the pronoun attached to Man in that verse to be the same Hebrew word whether translated "him" or "them." Male and female he created him, male and female he created them." Together they are first one - him . . . or two - male and female. There is no "time" when the male existed and the female did not. He gave both dominion over all nature. Commanding them to be fruitful and multiply, they are to "fill the earth and subdue it." Commentators mull over what "subduing the earth" implies.

(In this day and age you can be sure the environmentalists are up in arms about God's seeming lack of concern that Man would do it carefully.)

We must not forget the fact that in their very physical differentiation God has spoken definitively about the way each will fulfill that command. Breasts and womb designate the woman to be mother – matrix and nourisher. Forget dominion for a moment, motherhood is her first and primary call; working with brain and hands to subdue the earth's stubborn possibilities her second. Every mother will tell you that she does plenty of that. The man's initiation of new life in her is a momentary shared ecstasy – the reality of divine love, says IB. With the body God gave him, the man's primary calling is to subdue the earth by brain and hand in order to provide for and protect the woman and the child he will beget. First order of business for him is the effort needed to make a place, a safe home for her and for her children, and figure out how he will use the earth, or nature, to implement his plan in order to provide for them. There may not have been thorns and thistles from the first, loss of earth's cooperation and frustration coming only after the Fall, but the word "subdue" that God commands even in Eden, doesn't call forth the image of a continual beer-and-hammock life.

With this in place, and the final critical appraisal of the Almighty that He finds it all "very good," God rests. The first story of the beginnings of creation has ended.

The capabilities of computer technology would be a great help with this effort of mine. We have become a people who depend on the vividly pictorial. Television commercials have succeeded in making the visual a physical assault on the senses. I thought in the struggle of writing this, how the animation expert could take the three teeter-totters and cause us to see the three somehow all engaged, colorfully, with fantastic swoops and swirls, two through and intertwined in the big One, something like the "alchemy" animation on the Windows Media Player. They are all dependent upon the One - such Power, Dynamism, and Perfection! Now I would like the same computer animation to zoom in from that far star from which we watched the first Big story of Genesis develop with its few, strong rudimentary lines. The virtual reality lens would bring into focus the details missing from the first view. We may even get a close-up that may seem to contradict what we saw so clearly earlier.

True enough, we may think we see that. But this cannot be true of Sacred Scripture and Revelation. The two stories may not contradict each other. Stories have limitations, and we are to experience through these simple ones something immense at the heart of Being, which stretches the capability of any story, no matter how inspired. If the first story laid down the principle that Man was created whole, male and female, *him* (unity) or *them* (singularity) in the same creative act, there may need to be amplification of that for a specific purpose that the first story does not tell. But, we must not let that negate the truth of the first story.

In Genesis chapter two, the second creation story names "Adam", and then describes the later emergence of the female from his rib. But this can no more imply a time sequence when the male was and the female was not, than in the Trinity the name Father tells of a time when the Son was not.

In human experience the father always precedes the son by years. For the Trinity, we shelve that common understanding for the exceptional - the co-existence of Father and Son. We are faced here again with the human problem of attempting to think beyond the limits of time. Ugly time. In fact, in the second story there is quite a lapse of time when Adam (at this point, I suppose you could say that Adam is both he and she?) looks for something to complete him. In trying to find the right complement, he names the animals breed by breed, all in vain. Then, God puts him to sleep in order to bring out of himself and into his life, "flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone." The Holy Spirit is teaching us about *the relationship* of man and woman, not about some disjointed, time afflicted, creation process. He intends for us to keep firmly in place the first truth - man and woman are one, not existing without the other.

It thrilled me to find that early on the Church Fathers saw in the sleep of Adam the prefigurement of the second Adam, Jesus' sleep of death. In this "sleep" God brought forth from his side, his new bride Eve, the Church. Jesus' side, too, was pierced and from his heart she emerged in water (her Baptism of new-life), and in blood (to be her Eucharistic food). Doesn't this mean that she, too, when she grows up, is meant for a gift of *equality* with Him? The second Adam, Jesus Christ, here morphs into the Eternal Three-in-One who is the subsistent Groom. It is only through the primordial Jesus, the self-revelation of his historic self and the gospel preaching of the apostles, that the Holy Spirit brings light and understanding to any of this story.

The first Eve, the Second Eve, the Church - how in a story is it possible to picture so perfectly her dependence upon him, the first Adam, the Second Adam, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and her total identification with him, her complete sharing everything he is, than with the image of his amplified rib "from under his arm and close to his heart"? When "he brought her to the man", see the happiness in his eyes as he looks upon his equal and ob-positioned other, amazed at the promise of ecstasy and fecundity in union - two necessary expressions of his being that images the Holy God. For her, too. (The union of Divine Persons is all Ecstasy and Creation.) How to do this in a simple story? Only the Holy Spirit could in a few simple phrases accomplish it perfectly. It is with this perfect story that John Paul begins his profound exposition of the meaning of solitude and nakedness in the Theology of the Body.

Though created in the same act, co-existing with all the same attributes, she is dependent upon him, she is his expression, she is his helpmate, and through her new beings will come. Without her, he is unfulfilled; without him she will not be complete. (For celibate priests and religious, a holy "other" is given, jumping over human marriage in order to prophesy the eternal

marital union of heaven. Also those not favored for marriage). If she wonders about who she is, what she is meant for, how she is to be, she looks for her divine Prototype, the Son/Second Person of the Holy Trinity and His responsive “yes” to the Father/First Person. For within the unity of the Trinity, the Son/Second Person is equal, co-existent, dependent, is the Father's expression, and is the one sent – which makes him the primary God-Helpmate. Yet, this in no way diminishes his full equality to the Father/First Person; it does not diminish hers to share the same configuration to the man as Jesus’ to the Father. As St. Peter will write in his first letter, she is created in her very being to be *adaptable to him*.

Mulieris, sensitive to today's demand for equity, tries to ameliorate the helpmate role of the woman, by asserting that the man, too, helps her. He has brought to the fore “*mutual submission,*” or “*mutual subjection.*” Yes, of course, but it remains her primary call and task in marriage to help, to support, to encourage, and to further him in his endeavors so that he is *able* to help her. St. Edith Stein in Woman describes her strong role.

. . .she will primarily fulfill her vocation as spouse in making his concerns her own. . .In the first place, it will be her duty to shape their home life so that it does not hinder, but rather furthers, his professional work. . . also to the procurement of his family's livelihood – the “battle for existence.” In this respect, the wife primarily acts as helpmate in prudent housekeeping. . .the heart of the family and the soul of the home . . .must always remain her essential duty. Pages 109-110

The light from the New Adam, Jesus, and the New Eve, Mary, must illuminate the text of Genesis for Catholics. In it lies the secret of both the maleness, of the Sent-Son, but then, ad-intra the Trinity, the principle of response he expresses which we name feminine. (We must continually remind our reader to keep at the forefront that each Person of the Trinity has fully all the qualities of Godhead; it is only the “more to be said of one than the other” that we emphasize here for the clarification it makes of these *calls* that are under attack and the confusion it has made in our human walk as male and female). Though His role on the Godhead Teeter-totter exemplifies the feminine principle, the Son comes into the earth-scene carrying full Godhead; sent by the Father he carries the Father's imminence and eminence - He is God. He comes for His Bride the Church; she comes into being through Him, she is dependent upon Him, she is His expression, she is His helpmate. He will make her fruitful and fulfill her meaning. Perhaps in some inscrutable sense, she co-exists with Him from the beginning - there are hints in Ephesians, and if His resurrected life begins with hers . . .well, I am in over my head.

It must be, yes it must, God is eternally masculine to our human feminine. We used the Latin term *ad extra* earlier with little explanation. When we view relationship within the Trinity, *ad intra*, for the principles animating the Father and Son of the Holy Trinity we discern the origin of sexuality, male and female. However, our normative and only position to the Trinity of God

Persons is *ad extra*. That is, *from outside*. We are not, cannot be God. We relate to God from the *other* position. We are the created human *other* of the Good Creation, and there is no room *ever* for our addressing Him *ad extra* by a feminine designation or name. He has revealed it. It is what sexuality is all about. God has revealed Himself to be *the* Initiator, the Author, which we understand only because of sex. He has revealed that Man is his Bride-Receiver. That is what sexuality is all about; it is analogical so as to reveal God. It is the sexual analogy that reveals the relationship of Persons within the Trinity, and the true relationship between God and Man just as TB emphasizes.

Yet, in reverse fashion, man and woman must learn from the revelation God has given of how the divine Persons interrelate, that is using katalogy (from the top down), in order to understand and live out his/her meaning. To try to reverse the meaning of human persons in their masculinity and femininity turns the created order upside-down and inside-out, as Satan did at the beginning. Those who are at work to do this whether knowingly or unknowingly are doing the work of Satan. (Some statements in the Catechism and made by John Paul that God may be considered feminine in some regard can be carefully dissected to show that this is *not* the side they're on). Of course, the source of all wholesome relationship is in God and the *ad intra* relationship of persons. Motherhood, fatherhood - each receives its meaning from the relationship of the Triune Persons among themselves.

The heart to discern this masculine identification of God *ad extra* seems to me to separate the sheep from the goats. That is, we must not confuse, or negate one iota the masculine-to-feminine relationship of God to Man, something Lewis made so plain. This is the only context to understand what the Holy Father writes in a section explaining the anthropological language concerning God. One must carefully distinguish how the Bible does this, because the Bible under the inspiration of the careful Holy Spirit, does it so very carefully. He writes, ". . . in different passages of Sacred Scripture (especially in the Old Testament) we find comparisons of the truth that both man and woman were created in the image and likeness of God. If there is a likeness between Creator and creatures, it is understandable that the Bible would refer to God using expressions that attribute to him both 'masculine' and 'feminine' qualities."

Here we have a difference in concepts about masculine and feminine. From the point of view I am presenting here masculine and feminine are words descriptive of basic principles animating the Divine Persons. Though they are non-exclusive principles, for the Three Persons hold all principles equally, yet they are not so blended as to make the Persons indistinguishable, for as we saw the demand and wording of the early creed, "not confounding the persons." Though the Father is the origin of all principles, on the continuum we would name "masculine/feminine" the masculine principle of initiation is *more to be said* of the Father than the

Son; in the same way, the principle of reception we would name "feminine" is *more to said* of the Son than the Father.

John Paul treats masculine and feminine as though connected only to sexuality and with this accepted premise his conclusions stand without problem. However, for my purposes, I consider principles of act and potency that transcend and precede sex, calling them masculine and feminine and *dissociate them from physicality*. Therefore, where he sees God using both qualities to describe his relationship to Israel, we must go carefully. Yes, God does speak of his attitude toward Israel as that of a mother to a child, *but always as a simile and never as analogy*. This is important. When he writes, "In many passages God's love is presented as the 'masculine' love of the bridegroom and father, but also sometimes as the 'feminine' love of a mother," the careful distinguishing that all the Bible passages make we must heed. The passages of scripture cannot all be analyzed here (I have done it other places) and in every case where the simile about mothering is made, it is *a simile*. In the establishment of Jerusalem to be Mother (prior to the Church being the New Jerusalem), God tells of nourishing her (Jerusalem's) children at her abundant breasts, and "as one whom his mother comforts so will I comfort you, you shall be comforted in Jerusalem." (Isaiah 66:10-11)

What must be noted is that God does not present himself as Mother, but declares that he will establish Jerusalem to be Mother, as with the New Covenant he has established the New Jerusalem, the Catholic Church to be Mother. Again all these passages point to the obvious fact that all wholesome, holy relationship emanates from the Godhead, but in no single place does God say I am She, or I am your Mother, or I am the Bride, or I am the beloved, which is quite the contrary about God's outright statements about his masculine face to us. God says everywhere, I am He, I am your Father, I am the Groom, I am your Lover. He cannot be addressed as Mother! He does not present himself as Mother. I stated earlier, we have a mother in heaven but she is not God.

Just this past Sunday at our church's Intergenerational Instruction taught by our priest, I found myself inadvertently shaking my head, "no, no!" (What an arrogant thing to do as a learner in a group!) The topic was "Becoming a Holy Family." Father began with the triangle often used to represent the Triune Persons of Godhead, and proceeded to name them, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or Father, Son and *Mother*. Oh, help! I have just written that we can never say "mother" to any Person of the Trinity. First referring to Sophia as the feminine Holy Spirit, he used the Isaiah 49 reference to justify the Holy Spirit as mother, "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold I have graven you on the palms of my hands . . ."

Because I believe that the Bible must be taken seriously in every regard, I ask that we look again at what these words really convey. Does God say that he is the woman, the mother? No, he

says that even if a woman can forget. . . (yes, women have forgotten their children) he cannot forget; greater than a mother's love, he has engraved our names into his hands.

Every reference that is used to justify a feminine mother face on God needs to be carefully analyzed.

John Paul also makes clear the masculine/feminine dicotomy in Section VII of Mulieris, *The Church – The Bride of Christ*. By delving into the Letter to the Ephesians expounding the relationship of the Church as Bride and Christ as Bridegroom, he notes that this analogy comes into the New Testament from the Old where God speaks to his People, "your Maker is your Husband." "It is this love which explains the Covenant, a Covenant often presented as a marriage covenant which God always renews with his Chosen People." Again, God is the masculine, or the male analogue; the saved human family, the Church, is His bride.

With this quote from Father Keefe I have written a note to myself: *Very Important*.

In understanding this marital covenant to be the image of God, it must be borne in mind that it is an image of the divine substance, and that it is only an image, and . . . permits us to speak of the divine substance, and to use of God such terms as Tri-Personal, Tri-relational, and Triune. However, it permits us to assign "one-on-one" correspondences between subsistent relations which are intrinsic to the divine and by way of analogy also to the human substance only insofar as it is an analogously unique . . . relation of origin that is in view.

In the language I use which is far from that of his, I must be careful! I hear, "Don't carry this analogy further than an analogy of an image can go. We are after all dealing with the inscrutable Almighty!"

This leaves us yet to wonder why the attributes of femininity are both so exalted and so hated. If there ever was a debilitating schizophrenia it lies in the brain and heart, what's left of either, of political feminism. God cannot be addressed with He because She is slighted. Yet She will not submit to her nature, though response is inherent in her nature. She hates the thought! Burn the bra! Take the pill! Have a hysterectomy! She loves what he has – authority (the penis, Freud yet?), and despises what she has. Her *desire* (in Genesis 3 "desire" means her desperate scratching after) is for her husband's or any man's authority and what she calls "power." She hates all that the feminine is, fruitfulness and all that is dependent on . . . *reception*. (We will look again at the word "submission" or "subjection" used by St. Paul in Ephesians and elsewhere, because it is a word that has developed serious implications in light of its meaning in Islam, but also in its abuse in our western culture. So we will come back to a more complete examination of "submission" and avoid the word in the meantime). In light of this hatred of the feminine why do feminists insist that God must be She equally with He? Hasn't She dethroned herself in disgrace by feminism itself? All of this waits for an understanding of THE FALL!

Chapter Two - Destroyed

It is a Divine Play-yard - I hadn't thought of this before, but a playland like MacDonald's isn't a bad metaphor for the Garden of Eden before the Fall since Eden means Delight. With all those perfectly happy, loving beings/Beings reveling in each other on their teeter-totters it is a divine play-yard. But what has happened?

Earth is lovely, we think, but compared to Eden it is a blasted place tormented by decay and Death. With this dramatic contrast in mind, St. Paul projects the final restoration in Christ for which "creation awaits with eager longing . . . set free from its bondage to decay..." I don't want to quibble about this, but "bondage to decay" presents a stronger image than "diminishment."

No, this isn't Eden; it is the place where the figures of man and woman have blown, stripped of their supernatural gifts - far down, down and out. As they look back, Adam and Eve stand condemned by their sin to this place of no return. Fierce-faced, fiery angels make sure that restoration on human terms is forever inaccessible. The glory of the Trinity has withdrawn, though God will forever sustain his creation. I know that following my authorities I have stated that "God's love has never for a moment wavered for his creature Man, and that from the beginning a plan of love was in place for his return to full bridal union."

Yet, God cannot *unite* sin - utter disregard of his Will and the disordered result - to his Holy self. The intimacy of these unions held in the Love/Spirit from Man's side has dissolved to estrangement. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God who unifies in love the ob-positioned has departed though his ultimate plan of love remains in place. "The Good Creation is not wholly rejected, because the free refusal of the offer of created existence in Christ issues not in annihilation but in substantial diminution of being that is falleness." (Keefe, p.218) Left are mere humans without the gifts that enabled them to be friends of God as they were originally endowed to be. . . "hence a refusal of human and personal unity, goodness and truth - which is to say, a refusal of plenitude of covenantal existence that is life in Christ, *plena gratia*." (Keefe 219)

From the abject open sincerity of nakedness, they have fallen to the alienation and separation of shame with the hiding and covering up it entails. John Paul presents an

extended teaching on nakedness and shame in the before and after of the Fall. All the special endowments of life-eternal have been withdrawn. Around planet earth is a shroud of darkness and silence. Ultimately, no amount of education or social justice will lift it. What C.S. Lewis describes as The Silent Planet in the first book of his science fiction trilogy is also the Dark Planet.

For the epochs of Salvation History, Saint Benedicta (Edith Stein) in Woman uses common designations that when unheeded lead to the muddle that marks us moderns' misunderstanding of sexuality. Recalling the time when Creation was whole and holy, she designates it "The Original Order"; the time we are opening now is "The Fallen Order"; and the time of the reign of Christ through His Church, "The Redemptive Order". West in his exposition of The Theology of the Body uses John Paul's divisions which correspond to St. Edith's, "Original Man, Historical Man and Eschatological Man. In TB each of these epochs' presentation of sexuality indicates either its nearness of iconship to God as in the first and third epoch, or its twisted state as in the second epoch. Edith Stein explains the significance of her three orders to sexual roles in a similar way and states; "the vocation of man and woman is not exactly the same in the original order, the order of fallen nature, and the redemptive order." How helpful it would be if Christians could get these *orders* (or in TB's case, *epochs*) in mind so that when reading scripture or when making discernment about the human condition they would be looking through the appropriate order like looking through a particular color of eyeglasses.

It's a big problem that these orders are commonly scrambled in people's frame of reference. To apply them sorts out much confusion. Nonsense made of much scriptural teaching about man and woman and their relationship can be eliminated. If a woman's vocation changes with the order but the expectations framed in one are imposed upon another, no little confusion results. Confusion blossoms into anger. Feminism wrestling within the Fallen Order with fallen tools to institute another fallen arrangement is totally frustrated in the attempt to establish its (fallen) idea of the feminine ideal. The truly whole, free woman, hardly akin to the feminist ideal, is only to be found in the Redeemed Order.

How does the inspired story of Genesis explain the Fall? There is much disagreement about it. This even extends to the note in the Revised Standard Version (which version I favor hands down over the less reliable New American Bible). Says this note: ". . . the tree of the knowledge of good and evil confers wisdom." Nonsense!

Worse yet was the incomprehensible conclusion of one of our priest-teachers of Bob's diaconate classes. These good fellows (and some of us wives), studying to be deacons (but not deaconesses), with the eagerness and naivete of puppies, who knew almost nothing about the Bible or theology and who nearly worshipped any teacher who would tell us anything, lapped up this poison - that the Fall was a Rise! Afterward, confused and trying to understand, I stammered that his exposition reminded me of what Lewis wrote in Perelandra. He was pleased, "Yes, yes - of course." "But," said I, heedless of caution, "Lewis put it into the mouth of Satan's emissary."

Nothing could be more to Satan's gain than to promote the Fall as a Rise - a rise in consciousness, they say. Jung has this interpretation, too. Such an argument negates what the Church has always taught about the state of consciousness of Adam and Eve in Eden, super-endowed as they were with the supernatural and preternatural gifts of the Spirit. They had full knowledge, they had full wisdom with the capability given them to think God's thoughts after him. Just think of that as for scope of conscious mind! They did not gain in consciousness by exercising their wills contrary to God's will! They FELL. They lost consciousness of who they were and who God is. They lost every gift enabling them to be friends of God. (Attending one of those ubiquitous introductions to Centering Prayer, I was disturbed by the assumption that even with absence of commitment to the Savior Christ Jesus the assembled could contact God in their inner selves just like that! No doubt something numinous may be contacted, but what or who exactly?)

The vast unconscious mind discovered by the psychoanalysts of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century is described as a violent, fathomless reservoir, an inner world of lost consciousness. It is far from our conscious control. The turbulent outer world permeated by evils and devastation all wreaked by disobedience, is far from our control. A bitter recall of the evils of the Twentieth Century just past, surpassing in perniciousness and death all previous evil, should cure even a numbskull of believing that that initial act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden was a rise "because God's children grew up to think for themselves." Such peculiar conclusions fueled that foxy fellow's Original Blessing that has scrambled the belief of so many religious and others who continue to proudly scoff at any suggestion of original sin.

Back to that mysterious Psalm 82, "They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken." Going on, the psalmist hears God speaking darkly about the result, "I say, 'You are gods, sons of

the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like men, and fall like any prince." We are gods, made in the image of God, meant to live eternally. . .but now, now as the very foundations of the earth shake, we will die as mere men and fall . . . down, down, down. Jesus (John 10:34-35) quotes, "Ye are gods," calling his opponents back to this origin so that they consider how high is the realm from which they fell and what mark on them demands their return. How was this destruction of the Perfect effected? Why did God allow it?

Father Keefe writes, "The mystery of iniquity within the Good Creation is radically incapable of being understood." (p. 219) But it is approachable by understanding that the offer of a covenantal life with God must be "freely taken up to be freely lived . . . it is impossible , even for God, to create a free creature who is not freely free." The Fall was done, we will see, by exploiting the ob-position of man and woman inherent in their free sexuality.

And who was the Exploiter? Satan.

And what was his tool? Envy.

Why did God allow it?

Welcome to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Yes, as strange as it seems that Tree is well-come! That is, it is a blessing as long as its meaning is clear and its prohibition obeyed. God told Adam that of all the juicy, dangling fruits within easy grasp there was a fruit of one tree they must not even touch. "In the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Why was it in the Garden of Eden? Was it there merely for temptation - a kind of cruel joke? But even further, if they were as whole and holy as human beings could be with the strength of character and the insight of intellect that only God and archangels held greater than they, why would they even be tempted? Of course, this tree is the perfect mythic symbol of freedom just as Eden is the ultimate mythic symbol of Perfection. It is a symbol for the most important gift God gave Adam and Eve. Without this, Eden would have been as stifling as a world with insufficient oxygen. Those who shy at artistic depictions of Adam and Eve's nudity? Well, they would have been clothed all right - in strait jackets. The tree depicts their utter and complete Freedom. The tree stands there to give them an alternative so that their free will may be exercised. Their freedom is immediate to them and is analogous to the freedom of the Triune Persons.

In a Bible study, I asked the women to imagine that their children were immobile and speechless until they slipped in a cassette that would play liltily, "I love you, Mommy," and move them positively every time they were asked to do anything. (One mother thought it sounded pretty good.) But, of course, there would be little happiness for either parent or child with such unspontaneous, unwilled responses. The child could be a little genius with a readiness to anticipate his parents every wish, and rush off to do it; but if it were programmed, and not an action of the child's will, there would be no joy, no delight, nothing to tell their friends. It is because they can so readily act like little devils that any angelic response is so gratifying. Inheriting our fallen natures the inclination is strong toward self-will so that their own choice of a sweet, obedient response can be breathtaking.

My Baptist minister grandfather, RIP, before I had had a theological thought, looked at our first born and commented that her original sin was apparent. I was shocked. That sweet little thumb-sucker was a sinner? Grandpa! But of course, he was right. The question then was why wait until an age of discretion to baptize the little one? I was baptized with my cousin in Granddad's church at age twelve in a large tank below a painting of an idyllic garden through which the Jordan flowed. I recall no inner call, only a familial expectation. Why not invite the Holy Spirit to work from the first to overcome the weakness, frailty, and sheer willfulness of original sin? Grandpa did not believe that any Holy Spirit transaction happened to those he initiated into the faith, merely that it was an external expression to the community of the inner acceptance of Jesus as personal savior, and further obedience to the gospel to baptize in the name of the Triune God.

A tape series on family life by an evangelical preacher is a gift from one of our sons. Taking up responsibility for a wife and little ones in a second marriage he is determined to find the successful way to family wholeness. The tapes are excellent in many ways, but ignorance of the Holy Spirit's power in the Sacraments is damaging to the argument. This is especially evident in the evangelical idea that children come into the world depraved and that depravity will rule unless they are physically punished.

The Catholic Church baptizes babies so that their new birth in the Holy Spirit makes it possible to overcome the effects of the Fall in their growing up years. This is vital. It does not make discipline less important. Parents are to discipline with firmness and love, but they need not apply the rod in the relentless way this evangelical teacher insists. He does not believe in baptism of infants.

So we wrote to our son:

Dear Jim; The Church in its breadth of compassion for its children and its own tender mothering, believes that a child's self-centeredness from the first is for survival. Catholics believe that the child is not born depraved. The demands a baby make are in the service of life. Basically good, but flawed with original sin, each baby is made new in Christ with baptism. You and Elaine will work with this wonderful potential to bring Bethany and Daniel to a conscious understanding of salvation as they grow up. It is so much more hopeful and positive to know that in parenting you are working with the Holy Spirit to change the direction of self-centeredness in the child, not merely struggling against his depravity and the Devil. Think of the supernatural asset of Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist in these children's growth! The parent has many greater resources than mere discipline. Of course, you need conscious awareness of this supernatural help in order to find ways to bring each child into this knowledge as he and she slowly mature. In other words, you must be practicing your faith and understanding it in order to guide your children. Jim and Elaine, obedient to the Church in bringing children into the world, two babies fifteen months apart, you are on the right track! And the Spirit will infuse and magnify your efforts.

The Church puts a positive interpretation on human beings and their behavior as much as possible while gently motivating her children toward living daily the loving selflessness of their Savior. "Motivating" because they will continue to exercise freedom to choose either God's will or the Tree of Knowledge. Quoting Lewsi again, he said somewhere that in the end there are two kinds of people, those who say to God, "Your will be done," and those to whom God says, "Your will be done." This striking contrast between heaven and hell shows the infinite distance between choosing to obey God's will or choosing the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

As much as the word "choice" has been dragged into the muck and mire, these two, Adam and Eve, had to have a choice when it came to loving and obeying God. As they held their end of the divine teeter-totter, equal to God in wholeness and holiness, made in the image and likeness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and experiencing the ecstasy and creativity themselves and with God, it was Joy only because it engaged their full, free willingness. They were *choosing* to adore Him. Open to them at every moment they had the other choice - the Tree. That meant getting off the teeter-totter, forgetting God's thoughts, merely presuming on his friendship, and walking off to decide for themselves what was good and evil, in other words, what was expedient. (Anyone who has had a child grow up understands this.) As long as they chose God's will, they had no need of the knowledge of good and bad, because in response to him everything was the

Good Creation. To hold this free, obedient position was the greatest Wisdom. John Paul writes, "Creating man and woman in his own image and likeness, God wills for them the fullness of good, or supernatural happiness, which flows from sharing in his own life. *By committing sin man rejects this gift* and at the same time wills to become 'as God, knowing good and evil (Gen 3:5)', that is to say, deciding what is good and what is evil independently of God, his Creator."

Because of their completeness in body, mind and spirit (their perfection and happiness), convincing them that the choice of forbidden fruit would be a greater good would take a monstrous effort. We speak of invincible ignorance; well, continually choosing God, they had invincible wisdom. Added to it was the strict warning God had given of what would happen if in exercising their freedom they chose away from Him. Death was not unknown to them. Life processes ended in death around them - just look at the fossil record, but death was not meant for them.

(Have some speculated that Eden was not on this planet, but in some other material place traveling at the speed of light, and therefore not subject to time, decay or death? String theory with its eleven dimensions and parallel universes may someday open a whole series of other doors to our understanding here – or it may not. Going back to St. Paul, he reads as though creation were not always subject to futility. Romans 8:20).

Unless they turned to their own knowledge of good and evil, they were eternal beings. If they should turn to their own judgment finding it preferable to any constant orientation to God, evil would be there to choose, and evil often would be their choice despite, perhaps because of their "knowledge." Immediately, just by turning, their judgment would be open to error and failure. A choice of the forbidden was a choice of mortality. God warned them carefully about their options, but could never revoke the freedom that was essential for the dignity of their personhood.

But not them exactly, more like him. God warned Adam, the male. It seems that Eve was not created at that time in our inspired myth. *Mulieris* makes a passing reference to this, "The biblical description of original sin in the third chapter of Genesis in a certain way 'distinguishes the roles' which the woman and man had in it." But it goes on to minimize these roles in favor of . . . "the first sin is the sin of man, created by God as male and female. It is also the sin of the first parents. . ." Reading the inspired words carefully we can distinguish the roles, which for our purpose is enlightening. Adam received the word from God, and it was Adam's work of headship to warn Eve and to protect her.

Father Keefe in his Covenant Theology states baldly, "The Fall is headship refused." (239) Obviously Eve, after being thoroughly informed by Adam – she can tell the snake what her husband/head had told her – refused Adam's headship and did her own thing. But wait a minute – where is Adam when this seduction is going on? Where is her head who is meant to protect her from this bitter tempter? Isn't he, too, refusing headship - his own responsibility to be her head? Though Eve will be the one to turn aside, Adam, throughout the New Testament, will be the one who carries full responsibility for the Fall. Eve is not blamed. Some of the early Church Fathers never saw this clearly and blamed her mightily. The Scriptures do not. St. Paul, ignorantly pestered as being a misogynist, says she was deceived, and lets her off, while Adam who was not deceived is made responsible. However, if you have followed the argument, of the two her position, actually her sexuality, made her the logical target for deception by the one who already had been consumed by envy.

Who was this Satan who masterminded the most diabolical of all terrorist plots? I have found this question difficult to answer, and simply fall back on the collective thinking of the Church over the ages, which is based on the clear declarations of Jesus. God allows Satan, the ultimate enemy, to rule the world with his henchmen with some important limitations. The fact that other created beings exist with other attributes, even those with greater intelligence than Man, fits into the created scene.

Even with the same freedom given to his other creatures, it is hard to understand, though, how this brilliant angel, chief among Archangels, could presume that rebelling against God would gain him anything. I want to ask how - how could indescribably bitter envy develop in such a one whose holiness was complete? That question won't be answered until. . . please God, with holy help. . . in heaven it is illuminated. It wouldn't surprise me if Aquinas had taken care of it, but I don't know it. Other than that unanswerable question, the story is wholly suitable to what we find on earth right now, and also suits *the way* this fallen archangel we know as Satan precipitates the Fall. In our divine myth, he has a mythological form - a serpent, which seems perfect ideologically.

He slips his way into Eden with a weight of Envy to deposit. (We like this image of him, but he actually seems to have walked in on two feet. It is after depositing his death-dealing lies that God condemns him to slither. For what it's worth, a scientific report a few years back said that snakes originally had legs.) Looking around, intent on an object for this envy where it will do the most harm to God, how will he choose? It

almost seems, but I'm unsure about this, that in light of the book of Job, Satan made a pact with God that if he could successfully win the allegiance of Adam and Eve away from God, he could rule them. If this is the way it is, it would only be that God knew that in the End the outcome would be more PERFECT than the Perfection of the beginning. It was so with Job. Isn't this what the Easter vigil song, Exultet, means by the words, "O, happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!"?

Why was Eve chosen as a target? Edith Stein writes, "not that the woman was more easily induced to evil . . . but because the nature of the temptation was in itself of greater significance to her." Though she doesn't amplify this statement, it is insightful and right. Again, the early Fathers despite all their contributions to the faith didn't think straight about this. (I wouldn't want to quote Tertullian. Some aging nuns, I've witnessed, drag out of their satchels tattered copies of his and other Church Fathers' statements to shock women in "consciousness-raising" groups. The spreading of envy still works.)

"The nature of the temptation was in itself of greater significance to her." Of all the person/Person relationships in Perfection, whose stance is the most susceptible to the implantation of envy? Whose receptive role in maintaining this perfect happiness could be reinterpreted in a thoroughly disgruntled way?

My first, yes, totally facetious response is the Holy Spirit. His role and meaning in all three trinities is least acknowledged and least understood. From our fallen point of view, hampered as it is by that log in our eye, he is the most slighted. In all three trinities He is Third. He, sent by the other Two, seeming to be the Servant of all. Subsistent God, He is untouchable by evil. First, Second and Third are role designations in all three trinities. These designations in each are simply those of equals in divine order. I find that in understanding the roles of man and woman these designations are not only useful but true.

One of the few homilies that has stuck in my memory in detail was preached by the then bishop of Eastern South Dakota, Bishop Paul Dudley, now by all earthly judgment a saint in heaven. The phrase "I am Third" has haunted me ever since. He related how arriving at a retreat center he read this puzzling phrase above the entrance. His meditation led us to realize that in every faith-filled life God is first, others are second, and "I am third." This is, of course, the secret to peace in all our relationships, but how

difficult it is to accept "I am third." Our natural proclivity is, "I am first!" And our culture pounds this into us.

Personal experiences don't count for much in the realm of Truth. We can so readily be deceived by our own sinful pride. So though it may not count for much, the Holy Spirit who totally is Third has become immense in my prayer experience.

The most significant thing, the thing that impresses me overwhelmingly is the abject servant-hood of the Third Person, of his explicit subjection to Father and Son, of His own self-abnegation that may even exceed that of the Second Person. Speaking of the Spirit, Jesus says, "He will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak. . . He will glorify me for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

He is Third. The Holy Spirit even condescends to each person baptized in the Spirit and in a sense becomes subject to that person. "The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet." I realize my fallen view and the distortions that warp it. I still think of value rather than order when naming first, second and third. Yet the Holy Spirit by all the criteria of God Himself seems to be the Apex of Godhead. I wonder if Jesus were not speaking even to the ordering of Godhead when he said that the first would be last and the last first. It has come to that for me while trying not to believe that first or last is a matter of inequality, but only a matter of order and role.

We may eliminate Holy Spirit/Third from any susceptibility to envy about a Third position of order in the human trinity. So we go with Satan's twisted logic to Second. In the unity of perfection, the only other possibility for the success of his virulent propaganda is the woman, the *second person* in the human trinity. She is the one whose orientation first to the man, and then to the Trinity, holds no primary authority. Her wholly responsive body and soul, though exercising secondarily all the attributes of dominion, first and foremost exemplify the open-armed acceptance of the other/Other. This stance or orientation is absolutely essential for the continuation of perfection, and it is obviously the most open to reinterpretation by Satan/Envy who only values first. He has changed *first* from a description of *order* to a description of *value*; from a description of service to a description of power. This is the heart of Envy to this day. Those who think this way can have no understanding of Christian things.

Look at the progression of the questions Eve is asked by the snake. We have only this powerful story, but how long did the real process take to bring her into his plot? Assuredly the elements are historical. This moral failure happened. With her integrity, I

am sure it took a long, long time to wear her down to susceptibility. I remember that Lewis in Perelandra has it take eons, and all the time with her consort out of the picture.

The big question remains, where is Adam through all this? He was given the authority to take care that this didn't happen. So if fault must be found for the Fall, find him. Is he over there bewitched, watching football on a celestial sized screen? Perhaps Satan *had* gotten to him first? Anyway his headship responsibility was not in his mind. So in this, he had rejected his headship, leading the way for her rejection of his headship. West writes, "Using nuptial imagery, it can be said that original sin consists of the rejection of the Bride's (Man's) receptivity in relation to the Bridegroom (God)." (141) Adam in disregarding headship, disregarded the Head of Creation, Jesus, ". . .the Headship whose headship is manifest in the Lord of the New Covenant: there is no other Head in history, nor has there ever been." (Keefe, p. 226)

The question to Eve is, "Did God say, ' You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'" The first phrase is the important part. Eve *did not hear* God say it. It was handed on to her by Adam who did hear it. With that awareness and its implication, and with the piercing glint in the eye of the snake, which with mesmerizing power permeates her mind, the first uneasiness is planted - why? Were you not worthy, Eve, to have God tell you directly of the prohibition? (Order becomes value.) How come you got your information second-hand? (The one who takes orders is last in the chain of importance.) "Those two are in cahoots; you come into the picture only as an after-thought." (Second is only second-best.) "Besides, my dear, how can you be sure, if you did not hear God say, that your *over-lord* got the message right?" (Over-lords are self-absorbed; they warp everything to favor themselves and subject others.) "And that fellow, distracted as he is, he's not apt to get things straight." Eve must have said, "Gee, I never thought of that! But you are right!"

The Fall was happening inch by inch before any decision to move to the Tree. (Or it had already happened because Adam had refused headship.) Powerfully, the same rationalizations continue in the minds of women to this very hour. Who continues to be their source?

To answer Satan's question, Eve repeats Adam's instructions to her. She has the message without error right down to the bottom line of death. But with all his intrusive implications - doubt about the underlying motive, then uncertainty about her value in the overall plan of God - it is not difficult to plant suspicion about the message itself. Did you

hear? Then that knowing laugh, "Ha, ha, ha. You will not die"? Already her Satan-aided, personal judgment is taking precedence over God's word. There is no Head to listen to.

A creature of the Fall myself, I am too familiar with mental processes that intrude to supercede God's word. Mine do it every day, and more than a few times a day. Just take the one, "Think of others more highly than yourself." I do away with that one in an eye-blink! Eve had to come to a place of being able to think that it was highly unlikely that God would punish with death anything as obviously innocuous as choosing to have insight. Her Satan-aided, personal judgment - she was no longer thinking God's thoughts after him - was wearing away the loving obedience of her perfect nature. To bring integral Eve to this point must have had that cold-blooded serpent in a sweat. But with the persistent push of Satan toward personal, seeming unaided, judgment, it apparently was more to be trusted than God's word, and the rest was easier. What earlier had been only a thin flute-like theme implying God's jealousy of his prerogatives, now becomes an atonal din, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Pow!

"So that's the scheme! Of course, it makes perfect sense; the Over-lord doesn't want waves disrupting his unchallenged rule. Like dupes we follow his thoughts after him, just accepting that all is Good. We can do a better job of this for ourselves. Where's Adam? I'm supposed to be checking things out with him, but why that? The two of them - First Person/first person, indeed! I don't need to play second fiddle (value not order) to either one of them. Good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desired to make me wise, what's wrong with any of that?"

"Snake, bring me the fruit!" (I hear Moonstruck's Ronnie Cammareri demanding with the same assurance that nothing really bad would happen, "Chrissey, bring me the knife!") Eve's eyes have turned green, rivaling the eyes of him whom she has just made her over-lord. To have this over-lord one must first accept the twisted, fallen system that establishes hierarchy as value and worth rather than divine order. The place of authority in divinely ordered hierarchy (in the Original Order and in the Redeemed Order) is *always* a position of service. Jesus made that very clear. (Matthew 20:24-28)

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

Being first of all means being servant to all.

Adam where are you? Where have you been? What have you been doing? Being the first person in service you might have saved her from this deception; however, even if you had been by her side, if she had heard this lingo she might have fallen for it. She had the freedom to choose. (You see where we get that expression, "falling for it.") But, big and strong, couldn't you have chased that legged snake right out of Eden, or stomped on his head? There is negligence here; so, first person, you must carry the blame. Then, alas, you take the fruit from her hand and eat it. (Again, Ronnie Cammareri, after another failure with temptation cries, "What did you do?") They passed the blame. Adam did it knowingly; he was not deceived. St. Paul writes (I Timothy 2:14): "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."

I repeat. He did it knowingly. Bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; he loved her. He saw those eyes change from trust to envy; he saw the whole scene, including him who stood behind her - her master now – Satan mocking him. He may have been negligent of his role, a critical part of the Fall, but he would not abandon her to this. With all the misery that he foresaw by turning away from God toward death, he chose to go with her because God had made them one.

We can be sure that the Church Fathers did not neglect this poignant scene, readily comprehending the deeper meaning that so early foreshadowed the Second Adam. The primordial Son/Second Person, complete Godhead, taking human flesh came after his fallen Bride, because he loved her. He was not deceived about the terrible cost awaiting him of wresting her from her captor, nor that he, accepting her sin as his own, was choosing suffering and death, which was the condemnation of eating of the forbidden Tree. Because of this Tree, the Law of Moses will state that anyone who hangs on a tree is cursed. He took the curse wholly upon himself. God's Son, carrying full Godhead, will nullify the curse of the Tree forever and rescue his Bride. Keefe writes (254), "In the Eucharistic sacrifice the glory of the Second Eve (the Church and Mary) is hers again, restored in the actuality of its sacramental representation *viz*, in the Church's sacrifice of praise, in the "Fiat" by which her free offering is accepted and

transubstantiated and the primordial Second Adam is made *sarx*, to be her Son and her Eucharistic Lord in a one flesh union proleptic of that *mia sarx* instituted on the Cross." (*sarx* –fallen flesh; *mia sarx* "this is my body. . .") Parentheses are mine.

Do I need to clarify the feminine gender of the Bride who is Man, male and female? To do so I remind the reader of the three teeter-totters. Man is the second person, the feminine entity, in the Trinity of God, Man and Holy Spirit. In covenantal union Man is God's spouse. The Bible reiterates this Husband-Wife relationship of God and Man over and over because it replicates relationship in the Holy Trinity. All humans, man and woman, are feminine to the eternal Masculine of Godhead. Referenced before, the full quote of Lewis in That Hideous Strength, spoken to a young woman, is:

The male you could have escaped, for it exists only on the biological level. But the masculine none of us can escape. What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it.

When the gates clanged shut and the angelic guard was posted, gone was Adam's conscious genius that had been his the moment before he accepted the forbidden fruit. His consciousness sank away almost completely. Only one thing remained clear in his mind: judgment was laid on both of them and on Satan by God. Those curses were to weigh down through the ages from telling to telling until finally they were put into the written record - our third chapter of Genesis. The snake form used by Satan lost its legs to slither in the dirt. Enmity between Satan and woman will not cease. But . . . woman's seed! Therein lay the promise.

This does not mean that woman will have a fear of snakes, and snakes a fear of woman. Rather it has to do with the response and obedience that mark woman's inherent stance, her very being. Satan and woman are intertwined in conflict from the very beginning, and will be to the very end. The principles of Satan, to be in power and commanding death, and the principles of woman, to be receptive and obedient, yielding to fruitful life, are in total conflict. One is the sign of DEATH, the other the sign of LIFE. Today the powers of death are intent on winning woman over – but ultimately it cannot be.

We have avoided describing the responsive second person stance with the words, "submission" and "obedience," because Satan's evaluation of them is so firmly entrenched in human minds that the very words are potent red-herrings. A whiff of these words

inflames folks to anger. Even we who are among the redeemed cannot face "submission" without some disgust. Satan, declaring war from the first on anything smacking of submission or obedience, which he had repudiated - notably their enfleshment in woman, will work to suppress any semblance of their truthful forms from emerging.

Pope Benedict XVI perceptively writes that submission is conversion, the turning from self to obedience to Truth.² A straightened understanding of submission soaked in freedom and dignity is necessary. Reception is indelibly written in woman's flesh; her very morphology speaks of reception. Woman's meaning, her "receiving" position, so loathed by feminists, will be the target of his enmity as long as human life on this planet shall last.

Look at our culture as it ceaselessly tries to impose a new sexual standard embodied in that aggressive, insatiable female! The beautiful oriental actress in the later production of Flower Drum Song was asked if she, like the sweet leading lady of the original version, was "submissive". She rolled her eyes and snorted, "Me, submissive? Never!" It was akin to asking if she were a terrorist.

A further thought about that ugly word that to Christians should be beautiful - it consists of two Latin roots. "*Missus*" is acceptable enough and we know its meaning. One is sent on a mission either by a legitimate outer authority or by one's inner authority, the compulsion of conscience. A mission is honorable because it carries the full authority of the sender. That prefix is the problem -*sub*, meaning under. A submarine is a vehicle that goes under but is specially equipped for such a mission. If submission is a stance given primarily (that is, first, but not exclusively) to women, we must consider whether the Sender-God has not specially equipped the sent-woman, for a mission which is *under*, which is to say below the surface. When God sent his Son *under*, he was equipped.

The submerged mission for women goes deep into the fabric of family and society, but like Jesus' mission is incomprehensible to the secular world because of original sin. For that reason we have books out by the dozens deploring woman's role, even of ways "to kill" the "house-angel" who is thought to be a woman who serves in the home. That incomprehensibility is even infiltrating the Church. There is no washing the "sub" out of the woman's mission however secular efforts work at scrubbing it. (Oh, I can hear the anger, the complaints, the groans. I have made them myself.) Body and soul submission marks woman. The emblem for woman is a little circle with a cross exuding from it -

² Benedictus, January 26, taken from *The Nature and Mission of Theology*

strangely appropriate. All her days she may try to mutilate it to look like the male circle with its assertive arrow, but in the end the circle with the cross, though bent a bit, resists and remains.

With the subjection demanded in Islam to a god who is contradictory, a god who is above reason and can demand immoral things because he is god – like killing innocent civilians and suicide - the concept of submission has taken another blow. What Christ does on the Cross is true submission. It is rooted in love which is *divine reason and wisdom*; it fulfills a plan that has been in place from the beginning, the implications of the event that is the crux of love may be unraveled forever without coming to the end of its satisfying truth, wholly satisfying to intellect and emotion. Woman and man are called to walk in the light of this truth, to learn true submission. “If you love me, obey.” But woman’s call is so very immediate that it becomes a sign for the whole Christian community, as we will see. It is wholly other than the Muslim view of subjection to a capricious overlord resulting in the images we see of shrouded women who may be beaten and subjected to indignity. Islam without knowledge of a Trinity cannot therefore conceive of what freedom and equality of persons are about. Islam has no place for either reality and therefore considers being second a matter of value. Men are superior beings, women inferior beings. He is number one and then, she, poor thing, is condemned by fate to be sub-humanly number two.

I think of my friend Marie and our conversations over the years. Perhaps it takes a couple of seventy-year-old women looking back over the struggles in their lives with husbands and children (21 between us) to realize this statement about that emblem for us women, a circle exuding a cross: *the cross remains*. And why should we want to erase it? A translation of I Peter 3:1 that I have often resented because it so painfully hits the nail on the head, reads: (from the Amplified Bible with my comments as parentheses)

In like manner (*"the manner" refers to Jesus on the cross*)
 you married women, be submissive to your own husbands –
 subordinate yourselves as being secondary to (*the receptive, second person*)
 and dependent on them (*like the Son to the Father*)
 and adapt yourselves to them.

For those of us who are married, our mission seems clear - to *adapt* to our husbands. I wasted a lot of time in my youth trying to get him to adapt to me. When sent on a mission one is given the equipment by the Sender to accomplish the mission. In

contemplating the women of Genesis who were successful in fruitfulness, therefore in their mission, I observe how well God equipped them to adapt to their husbands, and the overall happiness it must have given both husband and wife. When it happens today, it still does.

But beware, Satan, you who loathe that cross, woman's seed will be fructified, and though you may injure him, the fruit of woman's womb will eventually stomp on your head! What Adam failed to do, the Second Adam will do. And then embedded in this powerful prophecy is a beautiful elevation of the woman. "Don't be beaten by guilt and despair, my dear Eve, I will give you and your daughters alone the honor of bringing forth the Savior of this broken world. Your seed alone, Eve. When the time comes, it will take no man. So, lift up your head, keep this promise in your heart, and against the odds, fulfill your destiny with verve." And woman will. The women of Genesis, one by one, will show us how. Then woman's destiny will be fulfilled in the new Eve, a daughter of the matriarchs. Eve, "mother of the living," brought *death to the immortal* human race; Mary, the new Eve, given as mother to his family by Jesus, brings *life eternal to the mortal* human race. How the Fathers of the Church loved this juxtaposition. John Cardinal Newman wrote a whole book about it.³

The prophecies of the third chapter of Genesis frame the understanding of the rest of the Bible. Every word is crucial. Throughout the Genesis creation story, *zera* is not *offspring* (NAB), it is *seed* (RSV). The words God speaks to the Evil One are:

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

It is seed, not offspring, when the trees bearing fruit are described. It is named *zera* or seed when the female ovum is fertilized by a sperm. Only then is the potential of the ovum realized and can be called "woman's seed." But the possessive case, *woman's* seed, is important. Ovum can be fertilized or not fertilized, it is merely a potential seed. And in Genesis 3:15, it is *woman's* seed that will overcome the fall and the effects of the fall. The notes with the Ignatius RSV state, "regarding these words, "This victory (over

³ Here we must digress because of the weak, often distracting, translation of the New American Bible that many of my Catholic readers will be using. I have long abandoned it for class use. I encourage students to find an original Revised Standard Version. For now, that is found in secondhand shops' book section or ordered from Ignatius Press. Watch for Ignatius Press to put out a RSV Study Bible. Also, I counsel to avoid the "new" translations of all versions, fraught as they are with "divisive" language which makes uneven and confusing changes meant to be "inclusive."

evil) will, of course, be gained through the work of the Messiah who is *par excellence* the seed of the woman."

Sometimes her *ovum* is infertile, only to be readied for insemination by a miracle. There is, of course, sperm of a man who is normally essential for insemination, but it is to be the woman and *her seed* that remain significant – that is, her contribution of the ovum. Because of this primal prophecy, the woman of the sacred Word embraces her contribution to fruitfulness spiritually and physically, praying that its potential be actualized. Only when her ovum is fertilized becoming seed can it develop its potential and be said to be offspring.

With the words of judgment on man, woman and Satan, the Original Order is ended with the fiery swords of angels. The Fallen Order now begins with its own ground rules. So there is further Word we must lay to heart. There is a price to pay - three prices to pay. St. Edith has told us that the role of man and woman is not the same in the three orders. We are left to interpret the curses that mark the Fallen Order: first, childbearing will not be easy; and you, woman, are made to bring forth children. God now instigates the progression of generations to form a history. The purpose of this history will be salvation for all in the "fullness" of time. The Savior cannot come until the earth and its peoples are made ready for him. This will take the founding of a family, of course descended from Adam – how many thousand years will do it? Because of the Fall, you, Eve, and your daughters will pay for this necessary preparation in pain and . . . death. It is not God's perfect will from which you have turned away, but your new master demands it. He stands before God demanding that the just sentence against you be carried out - you see, he was a liar from the beginning. Worse than a liar; he denied would happen what he intended to demand. A lying betrayer. So there it is – every life ending in death and not a little pain at the inception of every life.

Continuing with the second curse: this attitude, Eve, you have embraced will color your life - those envious eyes you will turn on your husband. Sharply critical of everything he does, you will want the power and authority to do it. Your hungry desire will be to rule which you misunderstand as the exercise of authority. You will be bitterly envious of his authority, a disease you have contracted from your new master, which according to Satan's reckoning has become prestige. Of high value, his authority no longer is in the service of a peaceful ordering. Now authority has become raw power; many times you will grab for it. You would impregnate yourself if it were possible. (The words above, "it

will take no man" do not mean that you can impregnate yourself.) That's the desire that will eat at your digestion – " your *desire* shall be for your husband." (Gn 3:16) God will warn your son Cain, who imbibed envy with your milk, of the same hideous desire found couching at his door. "sin is couching at your door, its *desire* is for you, but you must master it. (Gn 4:7)"The same Hebrew word used only in these two verses communicates an *envious* desire.

Third, because this desire easily motivates you, woman, to stomp off by yourself (the need of your own space, I think they call it), convinced that you can be alone and sufficient, you will be set under your husband's heavy-handed rule. By every law that begins now with the Fall, you are bound to him. Even if you succeed in getting away through no-fault divorce, you will find yourself bound to him. He will be unsympathetic; he will grind down on you and thwart your desire. In many cultures of the world you will be little more than a slave. John Paul writes in *Mulieris*, "But this threat is more serious for the woman, since domination takes the place of 'being a sincere gift' and therefore living 'for' the other: 'he shall rule over you. . .' While the violation of this equality which is both a gift and a right deriving from God the Creator, involves an element to the disadvantage of the woman, at the same time it also diminishes the true dignity of the man."

This, I repeat, is not God's perfect will; He allows it in order to bring ultimate Good - Jesus and Salvation - out of it. The good for now will be in fruitfulness - the sons and daughters who will bring joy to the woman's heart.

Thus is the Fallen Order delineated. Until the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit, there is no other order; and unless the Redeemed Order is embraced, the Fallen Order continues to mark daily life to this day. It is what is meant by warnings about "the world, the flesh, and the devil" in the New Testament. John Paul uses 1 John 2:16 concerning a *threefold concupiscence*, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. The history in the Old Testament tells of the patience of God in preparing to return Man to the perfection of the Garden of Eden. But, better than the original garden the consummation will be a lovely gardenesque City with fruit trees lining a flowing stream, a home for uncounted millions of saints - all of that. Hallelujah!

With all of the preceding we have gone no further than the first three chapters of Genesis. It has laid the foundation for understanding everything that concerns us. In a retreat given for Pope Paul VI by Karol Wojtyla before he was Pope John Paul II, and

later written up in book form as The Sign of Contradiction, is the following. I used it to begin this book:

"A non-Catholic philosopher once said to me, 'You know, I just can't stop myself reading and rereading and thinking over the first three chapters of Genesis.' And indeed it seems to me that unless one does so reflect upon that fundamental ensemble of facts and situations it becomes extremely difficult - if not impossible - to understand men and the world. These are key to understanding the world today."

"A key to understanding the world today"- these are heavily laden words - words that as Pope he will profoundly contemplate in what is becoming known as The Theology of the Body. Where is confusion more rampant than over the meaning of male and female? From what has preceded in our exposition, is it not clear that this is the plinth of problems? Lust for power begins with Satan's overturning the meaning of authority from one of service to one of value - the origin of all the world's problems. And woman is *key* to the acceptance of either the lie or the truth. More than ever these words must be comprehended in order to understand the world today. Among the last words of Jesus, given midst bruise, blood, and sweat on the Via Dolorosa, were these prophetic ones to women,

"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Take up any daily newspaper or website. How many references are directly supportive or indirectly sympathetic to condoms, abortion, contraception, women postponing childbearing, legislation to ensure access to "family planning," homosexual unions, teenage school "health" clinics, equal sports access, and further distortions and denials of the meaning of sexuality? Conception begins in petri dishes; a living fetus is merely "a product" that is disposable; human beings are cloned for spare parts. Says our society, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!" Woman's meaning is made a curse, while laud goes to everything that negates her. Satan's hate engulfs her while she, oblivious of why she has more breast

cancer, reproductive cancer, deteriorating bones and mental disintegration in old age, continues to court him and embrace his ways.

Has there ever been such a time in history when death was worshipped like this? Individuals have sinned along these lines from the beginning, but now we have a mass effort to overthrow the very meaning of sex while exploiting it as entitled prurience, complete with ostracization and punishment of those who dare to oppose these efforts. American law enforcement has been used to brutalize those who dare peacefully, non-violently, prayerfully, to block the entrance to an abortion clinic; people have been incarcerated for long periods for merely disrupting the instruments used to dismember infants in the womb.

"Mountains fall on us, hills cover us." Are we in the dry days of conflagration that Jesus used here as a figure for the last days? The tragedy of those flaming, falling towers with over two thousand innocents inside did bring America back to its godly senses, at least for some months. I remember thinking that those horrid sit-coms and offensive advertisements would now be so obviously obscene that no one would ever again want to watch their pitiful concepts of what life is all about. Alas, it did not last. Miserere, Miserere, Miserere.

These chapters of Genesis profoundly prepare us for an examination of Man and the world. Once we absorb even a little of their meaning we are able to discern the situations in the world that we are unable to see into before. They deserve, as the quote above suggests, to be read, reread, and thought about deeply. We are poised to enter the fourth chapter of Genesis where we will continue to trace, now in the fallen world of the patriarchs, the significance of sexuality. Here God will lay down a foundation for the building of a people, the Hebrews, who will prepare for and be instruments of the coming of the second Adam. To do this God must reinstate in fallen minds the principles underlying sex that were nearly obliterated in the Fall. The building blocks are there, but they have been scattered, broken, and buried in the dirt. They must be gathered, cleansed and repaired before final reassembling. It is a task fit for the merciful, patient God alone.

Chapter Three - A Course of Rough-hewn Stone

Using time language, the only language we have, God begins to rebuild at once. The end will exceed the glory of Eden. What has he to work with? Rough building stones that are broken man and woman. "They are alien to each other by reason of their alienation from God. And the world . . . is alien to them, resistant to their labor and indifferent to their pain. . . in the absence of the integrity of the Good Creation man and his world are spontaneously at odds." (Keefe 214)

Their fallen consciousness exudes only a small fraction of conscious mind. Inverse of cream coming to the top, it is more like a thin milk wetting the top of a thicker cream. Until homogenized by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the rest of that great resource is lost to Man (but under limited circumstances is useful to the lord of darkness.)

Sometimes the collectibles we purchase for our grandchildren have price tags that are resistant to every solvent; I think that the tag of God on man and woman is resistant all devilish solvents. The tag is there even before conversion and salvation. It points to the great vacancy that only God can fill. When a man or a woman's soul is in-filled by the Holy Spirit, the tag "Made by God" becomes a banner of love apparent to all - "the banner over me is Love. " (Song of Songs 2:4)

There is a "place" in the unconscious that God declares off-limits; it is reserved, tagged "for God alone." Nothing Satan has to offer will fit it. The Holy Trinity alone will suffice. Without him, that emptiness will be a call, an aching cry that will echo hollowly in every person. A painful, inner destitution will motivate even the most distracted to find solace. Often any answer that will even suggest relief, any cessation of the cry, will be embraced as a savior. And despite Satan's multiplication of substitutes, one after another, each will be wholly insufficient in itself, but will act, because of the painful counter-effects, as a propellant to the Way. Does Satan not know that the results he wants are improbable; that again, as in the story of Job, he is driving his victim toward the only peace there is all along, thus insuring God's final victory? Yet, he and hell are real and not to be mocked! Who knows if death will come right in the middle of

succumbing to a false god? A final acquiescence to evil is possible. The door to the heavenly banquet can be shut even to some who cry, "Lord, Lord." This is such bafflement - probably finally wrapped up in those mystifying words "free will." Writes Archbishop Ouillet gloomily: (p. 211)

We watch helplessly as the aberrations unfold: the growing violence, the attempts to snuff out life at its beginning and its end, added to postmodern relativism, ever more subtle and pervasive forms of manipulation, the war of the sexes, and legislation contradicting the values of the family, and so forth. We are watching a collapse that is not only moral but anthropological, the effect of the eclipse of God in secularized societies. Contemporary man no longer knows who he is; he no longer knows that he is, according to the Judeo-Christian tradition, the partner of God and the subject of his Word. Hence the absence of reference points for the defense of his dignity and the loss of access to his own spiritual identity. Hence, too, the temptation to lose himself in distractions, consumerism and drugs. The human being of the "culture of death" looks more and more like a floating wreck.

Upon every human being, however, there remains that stamp or tag which, as long as he wills it, is indelible. It is a stamp that says, "Made by God." Satan believes he can finally conquer this person and claim him thus making the stamp erasable. Whether it is or not is up to the person himself – his free will. But the redemption of the one whose stamp it is, Jesus Christ, permeates this fallen world and he offers it freely." Fallen history is still salvific history – his promises endure: he will make all things new." (Keefe 214)

Because of the difficulty of this rebuilding, the early work of God in Genesis is like a course of rough-hewn stone. He will not obstruct the freedom of Man, which is the inviolable free will, so he must use what little Man can offer while he is still a servant of the evil one. For his part Satan, if once allowed, cares not a fig about violating free will. I have seen people struggling, bound tight by his addictions. Sometimes this is nothing from outside, but only an inner determination of "I will rule; I will not serve." This is Satan's credo echoed loudly by some persons you, Reader, and I have met. I have seen them wrestled by God's love right down to the ground, nearly out of their minds, but still demanding their own way as though possessed.

In the Bible account Satan holds his necessary place in the oral tradition eventually to be written as the third chapter of Genesis, but he will not openly enter the picture again for many thousands of years. God must have ordered his further efforts to be behind the scenes. He is not to manifest himself again in Jewish history except in the

book of Job and fleetingly in Zechariah's prophecy, though he cannot be denied his bailiwick throughout. He cares not at all for this restriction, for he will rule, and unless they turn back to God, man and woman will be his servants.

Many are offended by the Old Testament bloodshed and violence, not realizing who it is who bends every effort to thwart God's rebuilding, and how necessary these physical battles are if salvation is ever to be established on this fallen globe. Despite the continued oral tradition of the enemy's work in the Fall, God's chosen people are not reminded of Satan's role; they have plenty to do to take responsibility for their choices. Until their own consciousness and acknowledgment of personal sin is firmly in place, they may not complain, "The devil made me do it." God does not allow the fallen arch-angelic enemy to be consciously confronted again until the time of David, and then only in passing. After Zechariah and Job, it is Jesus who brings the full picture of the one who contends for the very souls of God's people. With Christ's God-presence on earth, this knowledge will not frighten or defeat. Jesus in conquering on the cross will infuse each believer with the victorious power of the Holy Spirit over all evil. In John Paul II's watchwords, "Be Not Afraid" - because in Christ there is nothing to be afraid of.

God must teach his chosen people how to fight against evil. Evil will be the hallmark of Satan in the world of fallen men - in the dictatorial regimes of corruption and murder that he will motivate, in the armies that he will raise up to attempt to annihilate the people of God, in the false religions he will inspire to trap them, in the sexual and other physical excesses he will stimulate to ensnare through the cultures around them. Though personally innocent because of ignorance, these pagans will personify Satan and be manipulated by him well enough; wars will be necessary to stay free of their efforts, which are his efforts, to obliterate God's people, the Jews and later the Christians. (Though hardly ignorant nor innocent, this goes on right up to and including Saddam Hussein and the cohorts of AlQueda and violent Islam.)

To have come upon an Old Testament post-battle scene would have been bloody awful; but to those to whom it was the end, it was an immediate, merciful death, as death goes. God in his mercy will have the enemies put to the sword - *herem* - which means consecrated to God; their souls descending to Sheol will be in good hands. Wasn't it C.S. Lewis who shockingly reminded us that in catastrophic events no more died than would die anyway, and possibly in greater agony? Is the ultimate salvation of the whole

wide world, which retroactively includes these pagans, worth these deaths? That is the question to be answered. They are a sub-kind of unknowing martyr, and Sheol itself is a place of waiting. Waiting for what? For Holy Saturday when Jesus descends into hell and preaches to the souls who wait (wait sounds like a passage of time, which it is not) to make a final enlightened decision for God.

I can't imagine our children ever allowing our grandchildren to get by with the excuse "the devil made me do it." Even in the knowledge that Satan is a tempter and a liar, each parent demands that the child take responsibility for his choices. It is the only path to a strong, whole adulthood. Mom or Dad teaches the littlest one how to choose the right and shun the wrong. The appropriate punishment is applied when deliberate wrong is done. That is, if the parent can figure out just who it was who whacked off the edges off the piano keys while Johnny cries, "not me . . . him." There is much to teach these children; think how much when God stooped to teach his own fallen and now barely conscious children.

From the fourth through the eleventh chapters of Genesis, we gaze with fascination and wonder at the foundation laid before the beginning of true history. Bumping up out of the distant past like so many mist-shrouded rocks are these hazy remnants of the efforts of the master Builder. Genealogies holding amazing life spans appear like archaic bridges from era to era, and fragments of wrongful sexual liaisons seem to result in lesser humans, while ziggurats topped by pagan temples affront the very throne of God. Everything falls off into more and more sin. Lines of families go astray; only one line is worthy in God's eye, the line of Adam's son Seth. It is his lineage that leads to the worthy man, Noah.

Bill Cosby's hilarious rendition of the ark-building may capture the snickering of his neighbors as poor Noah builds his monster boat in the driveway with not a drop of water to float it for miles, but the reality is sobering. Sin has proliferated; virtue is near extinction. It is Noah's obedience to God that saves his three sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth with their wives so that chosen progeny will continue God's careful work of restoration. Two of these sons will further the good, one will be the protagonist that furthers the good by being bad.

Again, I hear those young voices in my head - "BAD." How the young kids love the word bad. Aping our culture, which has turned goodness and badness on their heads, they use it to mean good. When something is really "bad," it means it is COOL! They would write this last sentence, "two of these sons are "BAD" (rolling the A along the tongue) and the other one is, with a shrug . . . "whatever" - not worth mentioning. Upside-down values filter down into the mouths of children. Does it mark our times as being near the end according to Jesus' apocalyptic word that an abomination will stand in the holy place? (which means BAD in the ultimate place of GOOD?)

I would suggest, or at least it has occurred to me, that this could mean women priests at the altar, who in many offshoot communions from Catholicism are already there. *Careful, careful* - not because women are an abomination or bad. Not at all, but that their ignorant presumption of priestly authority negates the vital sign of reception/obedience that God gave into their safe-keeping as women. The assumption that the other sign of authority is superior and to be grasped manifests the selfsame rebellion that overturned God's Original Order. It is the result of that craven *desire*. Good has become bad and bad good in an ultimate sense, and this at the apex of holiness - the sacred altar. It is a final assault with the same template as the first assault on Eden's holiness and according to the prophetic words of God given then.

Back to Noah's sons. The ancient prophecies for the three (Genesis 9) have proven timeless. Young Ham, whose contempt for his father's authority leads to mockery of his nude drunkenness, shames him in the eyes of his family. This is an all-time sin of detraction or calumny but more importantly the mockery of the God-given headship of his father for which he is condemned to be an outsider looking in for the rest of his genetic life. His children will be slaves beyond the pale of true community life. Shem, however, will be blessed by God and Japheth will learn in the tents of Shem. Fathers, as the three were assumed to be, of the great peoples known to the ancients - Ham, the southern/eastern group of ethnicity, importantly Egypt and Canaan; Shem, the Semitic tribes including the Hebrews; and Japheth, the Indo-European groups - this prophecy both guides and marks their relationships. Surely we Gentiles of Indo-European heritage (Japhethites) have learned our faith in the tents of Shem. That faith is based on Covenantal freedom and equality of persons, endemic in God's chosen people. And though in Isaiah's prophecy the ban was lifted, and in Christ nullified, the Hamitic peoples

long bore the curse of their forbearer, and as we will see, the perversion of headship into authoritarian overlordship plagues their descendants, the Muslims. Hamitic influence throughout OT history is a trap to be strictly avoided by Abraham's founding Family.

As true history dawns, the lineage of Shem is to bring forth its most important person, Abraham. Prior to his life-changing encounter with God, his name was Abram. After this dramatic theophany, God added the H from his holy name, YHWH (the Hebrew language being vowel-free). He will do the same for Abraham's wife; from Sara to Sarah. A name change among the Hebrews marked a God encounter - theophany. Prior to Abraham, scholars, unable to pin down the times and places of the Genesis record, consider these Bible fragments to be pre-historic. But with Abraham and his family, place and time come into historical focus. The familiar Fertile Crescent of elementary geography pops out of the record with place names still recognizable; research and the deciphering of thousands of clay records find names familiar to the Abramic family appearing along with other cultural signs which indicate a time 1900 years before Christ. Importantly, with this family begins a conscious record of the woman - conscious because recorded, though, as a matter of fact, it is read over *unconsciously*, and to this day is glazed by continued neglect.

A discussion of *patriarchy* is in order. The storm clouds of our feministic milieu have continued to zap lightning at the word and its that-ness. Patriarchy is the order necessarily imposed upon disordered man and woman after the Fall. It is clearly stated in the third chapter of Genesis where the laws governing man and woman in the fallen order given by God. "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Yes, in a fallen milieu patriarchy is a fallen institution marred by all the assumptions of the Fall - "service is degrading, authority is prestige." But wait! It is also as *close to the Original Order as is possible under fallen conditions*.

Before the necessary re-ordering after the Fall, Man, male and female, have separate roles of headship and obedience on the divine teeter-totter. Held in love and union by the Third Person, the male exercises divine authority; the female is his freely, responsive helpmate; held in the love of the Holy Spirit, the three (amazing, the condescension of the Holy Spirit) are *wholly free, and equal, and worthy*. As we have seen, headship and response also mark the Persons of Godhead. Though patriarchy will

have the ugly stain of prestige and power-over as fallen values coating its headship, it still must re-order Man as appropriate to the Original Order. An essential remnant of the Original Order, it will reappear, cleansed of its false accretions, in the Redeemed Order. Patriarchy is not a sin; on the contrary, it is God-ordained. In a redeemed understanding, it needs to be reaffirmed by the faithful whenever and wherever the feminist coterie malign and undermine it. Our bishops, our priests, and our husbands and fathers need to find security in their cleansed patriarchy, founded of old and reestablished by Christ, but now suffering a daily trashing.

When the Holy Father writes, "Consequently, even the rightful opposition of women to what is expressed in the biblical words "He shall rule over you" (Gn 3:16) must not under any condition lead to the masculinization of women," his assumption that the opposition to "rule over" is rightful, needs further clarification. Of course, domination is contrary to Christ and His free covenantal lordship, and domination is what feminism is striving to be free from. Freedom from domination is only for those who have accepted the salvation of the Cross, and they don't strive to be free – they are free. The outcome for those who don't know this salvation simply must be masculinization - the use of the world's tactics to take control. Hating control, they become controlling. It is falling off a horse and getting back on only to fall off on the other side which I understand was Luther's metaphor.

Abraham retains the honor of "father" to the world's three great religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. In this fallen world, patterned after the values of its diabolic master, where hierarchy too often denotes prestige, not divine order, we must take care to differentiate between authority rightly ordered and the authoritarianism that is mere oppression. Because of the rightful significance of patriarchy overall, little or no recognition of the importance of the mother is given in the Abraham story. Perhaps that understanding awaited feminism. It is an ill wind that blows no good. Yet, from the first, it is *not fatherhood, but motherhood* - mother Sarah, not mother Hagar - that separates Judaism and Christianity from Islam. Abraham indiscriminately fathered two sons by two different women, one his true wife, the other his concubine. Only the son of the true wife can be the son of his lineage who will carry the heritage that God has promised him. Therefore, it is the woman who makes the difference of legitimate sonship of the two, not the father.

The prophecy over the Egyptian Hagar's son has rung true through the ages - "he will be a wild ass of a man whose hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." The denial of the Trinity by Islam explains the place of woman in its doctrine - from Hagar on, she counts for little, is easily replaced in the patriarch's affection, and is to be seen in heaven only as one of a pulchritudinous harem.

It is the Christian revelation of the Holy Trinity of Godhead that comprehends the equality of the roles of male headship and female response to which believers in a authoritarian, monolithic God have no access. This goes for others who deny the Trinitarian revelation, i.e., the Jews, and inferiorly, the Jehovah Witnesses, etc. These days the Jewish sense of female and male roles is closer to equality because of the pervasive effect of the original Covenant. This is somewhat from the witness of the Old Testament scriptures which call for covenant and all its implications of free equality, but more, it would seem, from the absorption of secular democratic values which though beginning in equality of man and woman, assume that equality means "the same as in all regards." In Reformed and Conservative circles the roles have become misunderstood to mean "the same as" - witness female rabbis. Trinitarian theology corrects this error.

Recognition is a troublesome thing for the spiritual life. Women going around within the Church, like so many Rodney Dangerfields chronically moaning, "I get no respect," are pitiable. I do not propose that woman be *recognized* in the Church, in fact recognition can be detrimental to her significance, which is to emblem the life of Mary, the hidden life of service. She is the first to heed, "let not your right hand know what your left hand is doing." Yet, it is the woman who makes all the difference. It is our thesis, taken from the Bible, that the woman and her obedient stance is the key to salvation. A key, essential as it is, is small and can be completely hidden in a pocket. Yet a key opens the door to He who comes.

Though highly important as patriarch, Abraham is not the primary figure for salvation history. He has, after all, many progeny besides Laughter-blessing-Isaac. Keturah, a second wife, is mother to twelve Arab tribes - he has fathered them all. The slave woman, Hagar, an Egyptian marked by the curse of Ham, mothers Ishmael for Abraham. (Trouble, trouble. Islam is coming!) The chosen people who carry salvation in their DNA are none of these. It is not father Abraham who determines the People of God; no, it is mother Sarah. (Sarah and Abraham are half-brother and sister. They share

the DNA of Shem, passing it on without Hamitic adulteration.) Again and again, God protects Sarah from Abraham's obtuseness as her husband puts her into first this harem and then that to protect his own skin. God does not expect Abraham to understand woman's key role in Salvation; he knows the fog that has befallen male consciousness. Yet, as Master Teacher he will continue to reinstate principles of the original order whenever the teaching opportunity presents itself. God retrieves Sarah and protects her high place in his regard which Abraham obviously doesn't understand.

But what of Sarah's barrenness? It is precisely her barrenness that flags her as *the chosen woman*. God's promise to woman, indelible in the memories of the patriarch's wives, will be underscored again and again. It is *woman's seed* who will bring forth the blessed lineage that will crush Satan's head. The woman whom God chooses to be the archetypal mother of his chosen family is barren. As in the Original Order a union of man and woman is not a duality, it is a trinity. God is the essential Third Person in bringing forth his family. The significant seed is not the male seed; it is the seed of the woman. If that ovum remains impotent with intercourse, and if a child should, nevertheless, be miraculously conceived, it is clear to all that God is the Third Person enlivening her seed to fruitfulness. To point up this fact, after *ninety* fruitless years this particular barren woman is, then, deliberately and carefully selected to be mother of the Chosen family of God.

The little baby boy, Isaac, born to Abraham and Sarah, is subject to circumcision. This mark upon the foreskin of all males in Abraham's lineage is the mark God requires on the family he is forming. First, it is covenantal. God establishes a covenant with Abraham undergirded with three eternal promises. Even the New Covenant in Christ's blood will not negate these promises. First, Abraham's progeny will become a great nation, second, they will be given a land, and third, all the nations on earth will be blessed by this nation. This covenant will be subject to a new interpretation in the revelation of its founder Jesus Christ, but it will never cease to be. The Israel of Abraham will become the New Israel of his son according to the flesh, Jesus; the land of Israel will become Christendom a land without boundaries over the face of the earth, and the blessing of the Jews upon all nations will become the blessing of the Church upon the whole world for "salvation is from the Jews." The mark of circumcision upon the males of Abraham's lineage becomes the mark of baptism upon the family of the Church. (Colossians 2:11). It is important also

to note that Abraham was not circumcised, was not the coequal in Covenant with God when Ishmael was conceived by the Hamitic slave woman. Ishmael was conceived outside of the Covenantal promises, though God did make promises to his mother about his future progeny becoming a great nation. Ishmael was circumcised only after the promise that Sarah would conceive the son of the promises in her old age.

“Every time a male descendant of Abraham consummated his marriage, he and his wife would be reminded of God’s promise of fruitful nuptial love. Circumcision speaks in some way of the mystery of fatherhood and the price required of men if they are to image God’s fatherhood in the world. . . . Participation in God’s generous love involves the shedding of blood and the sacrifice of one’s own flesh.” (Theology of the Body Explained, John Paul quoted by West, p. 17) Later we will see that the Church Fathers have regarded the Cross as the marriage bed of the consummation of the marriage of Jesus and the Church. In all of this we are reminded again and again of how Satan profanes what is most sacred, and why my grandchildren have picked up the smirks and winks at anything referring to the sexual act chiefly from their encounter with its depiction on TV.

In case we don’t get it. And after nearly 4000 years, we still don’t, the next two God-chosen wives of the patriarchs Isaac and Jacob are barren women - Rebekah and Rachel. Isaac, who actually adds little to the story, follows his father as patriarch, receives the recurring theophany experience of God along with the promises given first to his father Abraham, and has the important role of headship of the family and covenant keeper, but it is Rebekah who is the key. Abraham, now realizing that no woman of Ham will again bear his progeny, but only his own family stock, sends back to the family line of Seth for a wife for Isaac. Again, reading the story carefully, we see that from the first God significantly singles out Rebekah. The important flag of barrenness flies again. And again her husband would dump her in fear for his own safety. God must rescue her as he did Sarah, saying in his action, “This is not just any woman, this is the woman chosen to be the mother.”

Though his prayer for her conception is creditable, Isaac’s seed is not the first factor; it is *her* seed, and to make that evident God *chooses* her. It takes a chosen woman’s ovum, infertile as a sign, pointing to God’s action to make obvious that three are necessary for the continuation of the People of God. God is undertaking to teach his

family the trinitarian principles of the Original Order, knowing full well that the record of this attempt will be ignored into the 21st century AD. I sometimes read a speculation that the trinity of marriage is man, woman and child. St. Augustine refuted this and on that basis never saw into the trinity that was truly there. This is not the trinity of Man that is apparent from the beginning. Man, woman and God are the original human trinity remaining the created analogy of the Holy Trinity. Again, " They are therefore, not two but one. What therefore *God has joined* together, let no man put asunder." (Matthew 19:6

Rebekah seeks divine help to understand the inner struggle of the children she has conceived. Where will she go? Down the way under a tree sits an oracular medium - of what pagan religion? Brushing aside Satan, God is stooping to meet his people in their condition. I liken it to the way our son Alan, a rational computer specialist and non-believer in fairies, promotes the tooth fairy in order to get five-year old Dale to allow him to pull a tooth. God speaks to Rebekah's need through this oracle, as he will do later for Israel through the soothsayer Balaam. Though Rebekah's oracle and the later Balaam are both pagans, the prophetic word they both speak is God's. A wondrous condescension on God's part marks these small steps of his family toward the fullness of time. In obedience to the words she receives from God through this utterance, she will favor and further her crafty second son Jacob over her firstborn Esau. With a mother's insight she must also know that this firstborn is a deficient human being, wholly engrossed in the gross.

Isaac, to his credit, understands as his father did, that Canaanite women are not fit to mother the lineage. These Hamitic women are snares. Like a helpless rabbit in a trap, their husbands will be carried off from the truths that God is investing in so heavily. (Men are easily molded spiritually by a woman. For this reason St. Peter writes as he does, "Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives." I Peter 3:1f)

Mothering is such a formative power it must be a woman of malleable consciousness - malleable to the theophanic vision given to Abraham and Isaac, a woman of like genetic background and a descendant of Seth-Shem - who is found to be the mother. So back to the family roots Jacob is sent for a wife. He meets an uncle there who is as wily as himself. After fourteen arduous but productive years working for the

man, he has two wives who are of his own stock, a burgeoning family, and wealth besides. And who is the marked woman, the woman flagged for the special action of God in conception? It is the barren Rachel. She bears but two sons for Jacob, and dies in childbirth with the last. Over-against her sister's prolific mothering, what can be Rachel's special significance?

I use the word "significance." The importance of the word is obvious in its root, SIGN. Throughout the Bible besides being a key, woman is a sign. Both may seem incidental. However without woman's essential role, God's key and God's sign, his plan is locked out and if once opened has no sense of direction. A key opens the door, a sign points the way. For stress I have said that from Genesis 3:15 on *she* is the most important sign. A sign bears essential information if we are not to get lost. When the sign itself has had an accident - perhaps hit by the garbage truck, it gives false information. It may point in the wrong direction, or put the wrong name on a street. Everyone that looks at it will be confused.

Today the woman as she is presented through all the media has been hit by a truck. Reeling and disorientated, she has become an inverse sign, one that points the wrong way, and most of society has trod off the way she points. Such is the immense societal and family influence of woman because of her basic spiritual significance. *Mulieris* recognizes "if they take this path, women will not 'reach fulfillment', but instead will deform and lose what constitutes their essential richness." With that loss, we would add, is the fathomless loss of the good life of family and society. We experience it daily. Satan is having a heyday.

A sign is also a symbol. "In our culture's violent attack on God's plan for the body and sexuality, we see a great clash between the "symbolic" and the "diabolic" . . . symbolism means to bring together, gather up, unite. Diabolism means to scatter, break-apart, rupture. God's eternal plan as symbolized through the body is union, communion, marriage - this bring life. The deceiver's counter plan is separation, fracture, divorce - that brings death." Just as I am attempting to do further with woman's meaning as a sign, John Paul is "integrating the spiritual and the material."

Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel, with the assistance of the Third Person, will bear a favorite son whose life's journey, point by point, will be a parable of and preamble to

understanding another favorite Son. From meditation on these beloved women, women loved specially by both the patriarch and God, the revealing light shines on Mary, the mother of Jesus.

About that besmirching myth concerning the mothers of the people of God that they were chattel, mere objects who might as well be slaves of the patriarchs, nothing could be more false. Though the men might be dense and not aware of how important this woman was, these wives were loved; and when they were not, as poor Leah, they expected love as their due, and did not slavishly accept disregard. How Leah worked to gain it! They were intelligent, resourceful, and respected. They were asked to provide their insight and even their yes or no concerning the destiny of themselves and their families. Look again at the story of brave, teen-aged Rebekah whom her parents *asked* if she would willingly go far away from home with Abraham's servant to the arms of an unknown husband. Look again at Rachel and Leah in the field conversing with their husband about whether he should leave Laban, and how. See Rachel steal the household gods that gave her inheritance rights to Laban's properties. I try to be quiet and smile when the falsities about Biblical women are repeated ad nauseam; I try, but I rarely succeed.

Dear Rachel, the barren one, desires valiantly to conceive. What agony barrenness was to her and to many of the infertile. I have an intimate friend who died before we became acquainted, which you will understand is an unusual friendship. Our friendship began when I inherited her Breviary. I use "inherit" because it seemed specially waiting for me, almost jumping into my hands at a St. Vincent de Paul store for fifty cents. I began using it unconscious of its former owner except for little clippings and prayer cards, which in its two thousand pages were effectively cloistered. I just left them tucked in to their prayers. Then one day straightening out a rumped page behind the loose cover, I found a pasted slip with LYDIA in fancy script. Now I knew the name of the woman whose notes and cross-outs through the text had made me curious. Why did Lydia dislike certain psalms to the point of pencilling out phrases? After this prayer: "*Our very existence is a gift from you,*" she wrote, exclamation mark included, "but I don't appreciate it!" Where God declares that his people would no longer suffer shame or disgrace, she scratched it out and impatiently wrote in the margin, "don't let me get mad at you." Why, devout Lydia, why do you feel disgraced? In another psalm extolling the

fruitful wife whose husband's quiver is full of sons like arrows, a heavy line deletes "arrows" and she substitutes, "good deeds."

Finally, the secret of Lydia's distress emerges. Two heavy protective pages cut back just inside the cover, had always adhered tightly together. I had never opened them. When I did, taped inside was a tiny, yellowed, newspaper obituary of Dr. Robert G. Hinckley, 75, of White Bear Lake. His survivors? There was but one - his wife, Lydia.

Barrenness was a disgrace to Lydia as it was to Rachel. God had not favored either with the fulfillment of children. It is not mere instinct that informed them that woman's seed in the end would be the telling seed. Lydia now knows in the larger plan why God chose her for barrenness. I, at least, am indebted to her suffering. But Rachel is a sign to this day. She could not see what we see, that all posterity would need her sign of barrenness-made-fruitful-by-God in order to comprehend the Holy Trinity, the *three-someness* of being, and the fruitfulness of the Virgin Mary. The Church teaches that this kind of suffering is what makes the world grow better and closer to God, and I can tell Rachel now that her suffering did this work. The dear son she miraculously gave to Jacob was a savior to his brothers, and a *sign* in himself of a greater Son to come. That her desire for fruitfulness for the Lord in the gift of a second son was met by death turns her desire for fruitfulness into sacrifice, a sacrifice her sister Mary made in a greater way.

All our sons and daughters acquired by marriage (called in-laws, but more than that to Bob and me) are worthy of note. In this context, however, it is Angela's story that opens with the question, "Does God still miraculously answer the barren woman's prayers for fruitfulness?" When so many seem to trust only futuristic medical procedures, which often contradict nature and whose moral rightness in the eyes of the Church is, therefore, problematic, Angela's prayer and faith continue to shine. After three courageous bouts with Hodgkins cancer, enduring surgery, chemo and radiation, the doctors informed her at age twenty-one that she would be unable to conceive a baby. They had tried to preserve her reproductive capability, but three courses of radiation, the removal of her lymph system, and the indiscriminate chemo of the 70's made it highly unlikely. Exhibiting early menopause, she suffered all the debilitating aftermath of the drastic medical intervention that, nevertheless, had saved her life. A person whose thin body overflows with a huge loving spirit anchored in God she would not take this medical "no" for an answer, even though a pregnancy would put a heavy demand on her

heart, lungs, and other organs already severely stressed. She prayed and asked everyone who was a prayer to pray. Bob and I took her prayer need with us to Israel.

During our dig time there –we were amateur archeologists for a few weeks - we had occasion to visit the site of Shiloh where the Ark rested in the time of Samuel. After the Philistines captured the Ark and totally destroyed the city, the site was never rebuilt. Since that catastrophe three thousand years ago, it has remained a pristine and primitive place, untouched except by the beating of rain, sun and wind on the rough rock remnants. We walked around it on a Sabbath evening when the setting sun turned the hillsides golden, and cross-country breezes from the Mediterranean carried in the sweet smells of the land. It suddenly occurred to us that, in fact, Samuel's barren mother Hannah conceived Samuel right here when God honored her tears in the sanctuary at Shiloh! We knew why we were there. Scribbling on a small piece of paper, we humbly asked God to honor all the many prayers that had been offered for a miracle of conception, and placed the request under one of those ancient stones. Had that particular one been part of the sanctuary harboring the Ark?

At home, though menopause continued to threaten, Angela's health slowly edged away from precarious to stable; a son was conceived. Samuel was born, and seventeen months later, twin sons, Philip and Steven! Our son Dan suggested we stop praying! Now eighteen and seventeen years old, these robust grandsons, steeped in the sacrifice and faith of their parents, have an unknown mission they'll fulfill someday like Samuel of old.

Does God bless the barren, does he make them a sign? King David's great-grandmother, Ruth, was Hannah's contemporary. Ruth had chosen, what seemed to her a childless future, in order to be close to Yahweh - read the text of this small book. For her faithfulness, against all odds, God blessed her with a baby boy. Barren Hannah's son, Samuel, whom she dedicated to God from the womb, would anoint Ruth's great-grandson, David, to be King of Israel. Ruth and Hannah prefigured two others, Mary and Elizabeth. Mary, like Ruth, had chosen a life of childlessness in order to be wholly God's. Elizabeth, like Hannah was childless, and well into old age, but she was blessed with a boy also dedicated from the womb. Elizabeth's son John baptized Mary's son Jesus and saw him anointed with the Holy Spirit, King Forever. These sisters of the Mother Mary are wonderful signs. Yet the greater sign is she who was called by her son, "Woman" and "Mother" for us to contemplate why he did.

Back in Genesis the patriarch Jacob, through Leah and Rachel, and their slave girls, Zilpah and Bilhah, fathered the sons who will in turn father the twelve tribes of Israel. With the special attention paid to the offspring of the barren, Joseph will emerge as savior of all the brothers, but what of his lineage? His name will not go on as a tribal name; rather his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim will head tribes. Why does God then relax his restrictions on who is fit to mother his People? He allows these sons of Joseph to be born to an *Egyptian daughter of a priest of On*, a very embodiment of cursed Ham.

I found this a troubling fact until the obvious dawned. They were not to be carriers of the lineage of importance, the lineage that would result in the prophesied Messiah. Only one son would be that progenitor, Judah; only his choice of wife would need to be guarded against the contaminating influence of Ham. How illuminating this insight was on what was otherwise a very peculiar interruption in the scriptural account. The Genesis story of Judah's family is smack in the middle of the story of Joseph as if to say, "Remember, as important as Joseph is as savior of his brothers, it not the *sons* of Joseph who matter in the long run, it is the *sons of Judah*."

Leah, the first and legal wife of Jacob, gave him six sons and a daughter. The first three of these sons were disqualified from being progenitors of the royal lineage to David, and from David to David's Greater Son, the Messiah. Reuben was ineligible because he made love to his father's concubine; Simeon and Levi were ineligible because they ruthlessly avenged their sister Dinah's rape by killing all the males in Shechem. The prize headship over all the tribes would go to the fourth son, Judah. Jacob's blessing over all of his sons at the end of his life set up this order, projecting the Messianic role Judah would have in time to come.

Judah is a Lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you
have gone up. . . .
The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's
staff from between his feet,
Until it comes to whom it belongs;
And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. . .
RSV GN 50:9-10

So what did Jacob and Leah think of Judah's important choice of a bride? We have no inkling of what they thought, but more importantly we know what God thought. God's thoughts were made explicit in his deeds. Judah had married a Canaanite, a daughter of Ham, her name is lost, other than being called the Canaanite

Shua's daughter, and in time she brought into the world three sons. Were these to be the carriers of the prophesied lineage, these sons of a Hamitic mother? Their mother could not instill in them the receptivity to the divine plan that was necessary. God did not find them to his liking. When the first, Er, married a legitimate non-Canaanite woman Tamar, before he could bring a child into the world through her, God slew him for his Hamitic wickedness. Father Judah, dutiful to the law, gave her to his second son. But Onan would go down in history as selfishly spilling his semen on the ground rather than bearing a son for Er - God was displeased, probably as much by the prospect of his ever being a father of Tamar's children, as his selfish act, and killed him. (How directly the Hebrews understood God to be the ultimate cause of everything.) Tamar was again thwarted in her desire for fruitfulness. Would her seed not be legitimately realized? Judah was more than a little unsure of her; two dead sons - did she carry some kind of a demon? So he hesitated when the third son was old enough for marriage. Tamar recognized that it was now or never. She seduced her father-in-law, now a widower, in a well thought out and effective way. Twin sons were conceived and the messianic line goes forward. The second of the twins, chosen by God over his brother, is a legitimate inheritor of Abraham's promises, unadulterated by Ham. (A good story, it is found in the 38th chapter of Genesis.)

"Pagan melancholy has no place in Judaism . . . rather the covenanted people will be united to him in irrevocable union of which Canticle of Canticles has sung and which Hosea, Ezekiel, and third Isaiah have prophesied. . . Fallen history is still salvific history - his promises perdure: he will make all things new." (Keefe, 214) So even the sins and mistakes of his chosen people are woven into the forward progress of the promises of salvation.

Somewhere in the New Testament it says that God overlooked a great deal in times past. Tamar's desire for fruitfulness for God is more elemental than the Ten Commandments. God honored it by bringing about the necessary union for the continuation of the Messianic lineage - the union of a true daughter of Shem and the true patriarch Judah to bring forth the next true generation. For the first four generations of the patriarchs of Israel, the women are descendants of Shem and barren. Tamar flies the flag of barrenness, not by biological lack, but by force of circumstance, which she womanfully overcomes.

Though Tamar's genealogy is not given, under the circumstances and in its time frame we must believe she is a true Shemite. She appears with just four other women in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew chapter one. It is true enough that the rule of Shemite lineage is later to be supplanted: Ruth of Moab is of Lot's lineage, and Rahab of Jericho is perhaps a Canaanite. In God's school, after first lessons are in place, there are always other lessons to learn, but they must build upon and not negate the first lessons. There will be recognized conditions of the heart that will make women of otherwise unacceptable racial backgrounds into acceptable spiritual Shemites. We Gentiles take heart from this. God will lovingly expand and inclusivize this foundation of Salvation History but according to the strict understandings gained from the first.

The founding fathers and mothers of Israel, in reestablishing the principles of the Original Order upon which Salvation History must continue, carry other lights amidst the gloom of the Fallen Order. These lights will never go out, even in the darkest times, because they will, like the virgins' lamps, continue to be refreshed with God's oil in continuing generations of men and women. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *the* patriarchs, have the external experiences of Man with God. In theophanies that appear external to themselves - appearances of strange fire-pots, of ladders of angels, and even of the Trinity who visits Abraham - they are given promises, covenants, prophecies, and are in turn allowed to give input to God's plan. God works with them, we could say, man to man, establishing with them codes, laws, and solemn, covenant agreements that will govern and guide His growing family.

John Paul in *Mulieris* makes note of this, "However, to make his Covenant with humanity, he addressed himself only to men: Noah, Abraham, and Moses." But then follows a confusing statement, "at the beginning of the New Covenant, which is to be eternal and irrevocable, there is a woman: The Virgin of Nazareth. It is a sign that points to the fact . . ."

But, of course, the New Covenant itself was made with and by, not a woman, not Mary, but the man Jesus. This is not then as he goes on to write, "a sign that in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female" (Gal 3:28)." The following, though true, "In Christ the mutual opposition between man and woman - which is the inheritance of original sin - is essentially overcome," does not mean that the roles of man and woman are no longer differentiated which is the sense I get from this paragraph in *Mulieris*. In

fact the sexual roles are strengthened in both Mary and Jesus and throughout St. Paul's writings just as we would expect. A further look at Galatians 3:28 upon which John Paul bases this reflection and to which he refers often, I will come to in our last chapter.

But how do these promises and prophecies external to the patriarchs come to pass? They depend on progeny who will carry the family forward in time. And who are the mothers of these children to come? Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Tamar, the barren women. For the patriarch's external dealings with God to come to fruition, first they yield their bodies to their husbands, and then a hidden miracle takes place. The woman's experience of God is in a personal submission, internal in the most real sense. In the beginning of Salvation History this is a wholly physical phenomena, so like the building that God does - real, real, real - totally fitting to us earthbound, physical beings, "integrating the spiritual and the material." As time goes by and early lessons are assimilated (incorporated is a better word), though still rooted in the concrete, they can be raised to less physical ties. With the Redeemed Order they have become spiritual understandings: the man is given the authority to receive the plan and promise from God, and to externally order both the nuclear Christian family and the Church; the woman is gifted with an internal miracle - receiving and responding with docile faith and supernatural trust. Yielded to authority, she quietly works in faith and prayer to bring the miracle of the promise to pass. She is the sign pointing the Way for the whole People, man and woman, who are making their bridal preparations for the Great Wedding.

Some pundits tell us that the thinking faculty is more developed in the male as he deals naturally with exterior nature. The feeling faculty with its intimate human connections are more true of the female - so says the book Women are from Venus, Men are from Mars. Perhaps that is the secular expression of this inborn reality, but for the Christian family and the Church it is an essential spiritual truth for the fruitful, evangelical mission of both. Edith Stein's surprising evaluation of the male and female "inner form" is that they are so different that the two comprise two different species! The secular heresy that men and women are interchangeable, and anything less is a denial of basic rights has nearly expurgated this truth from our consciousness. Women soldiers? Women fire-fighters? Women policemen? Yes, women have proven to be star basketball players and long distance runners, but when normal menstruation stops, fertility impeded and premature osteoporosis develops in these youthful bodies, what is nature's verdict?

"A fallen world is a world of . . . estrangement between divinity and humanity; heaven and earth; soul and body; spirituality and sexuality; sacredness and sensuality; masculinity and femininity . . . such alienation leads to death . . . a society of 'a culture of death.'" (TB p. 225)

St. Edith continues with special insights along these lines. She writes, "*What does our age demand of women?*" (They are summoned) "as wives and mothers to contribute to the moral recovery of the people . . . they pave the way to heaven. That means, it requires women who have a knowledge of life, prudence, and practical ability; women who are morally steadfast, women whose lives are imperturbably rooted in God." . . . "*What does the soul need for its development?* As we have seen, only that soul that receives internally can become integrally part of it so that we can speak of growth and formation; that which is received by senses and intellect remains an exterior possession. "

St. Edith also sees woman as the key and the sign "of the *necessity of interiority, and of the miracle of spiritual fruitfulness.*" The Second Eve, The Blessed Mother Mary epitomizes woman's primary role first laid down in Genesis and is the model for every woman – the key and sign of the necessity of interiority, and the miracle of spiritual fruitfulness. Father Keefe writes a beautiful synopsis of her meaning to Christians (204), "Finally, having shared in the agony of his cross, she shares also in his Resurrection; by the gift of the Spirit she also is risen, assumed into the Kingdom where her risen Son is Lord and where she, *plena gratia* and alone of all humanity risen with him, also reigns with him." She will help each woman understand her own need to model interiority and spiritual fruitfulness for the good of herself, and all those around her, and for the good of the Church of God.

With Genesis the first course of rough hewn stone is laid for Salvation History to build upon.

Chapter Four - Sexuality in the Redeemed Order

My reader attempts to live a life of obedience and love in the Redeemed Order established by the New Covenant in Christ's blood. Under this New Covenant, praise God, "Jesus restores mankind's relationship with God and neighbor and eradicates sinners' separation from God." He repairs the "destruction of the conjugal relationship," which is manifest as a "state and condition of living without relationship to God." (Ouillet p. 135)

Am I asked, "What difference does all this make to me? How can the principles about sex and sexual roles taken from Genesis shed any light on my life in the Redeemed Order or make any difference to my daily life and to my happiness? "

Looking over my life today, I say, "all the difference in the world." Looking over the lives of our children and grandchildren, I say, "all the difference in the world." I would suppose that our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren numbering more than eighty, exemplify most of the points between life lived in an ordered way and life lived in a haphazard way. One granddaughter is on the verge of going all the way – beginning life as a religious sister. We mourn several divorces, and "living with significant other" situations with unbaptized babies.

Gaining insights from Genesis, if we are truly to live in the Redeemed Order as Christians are called to do, we begin to understand the critical necessity for right order in our sexual relationships. Jesus came into a disordered world to right the overturn of God's order that occurred in Eden, and we have seen that order to be directly related to our sexuality. Righting disorder inevitably runs into stiff resistance - look what happened to Jesus himself.

We live in a time in which we imbibe individual autonomy with our mother's milk (or bottle of soy), scarcely noting that it is this autonomy that has undermined "the ideals of unity, fruitfulness and indissolubility in marriage." Without noticing, we take our inspiration from the culture rather than the Word of God and therefore tacitly accept that "the technical mastery of fertility and love freed from every institutional restraint" is quite the way we want it. (quotes from Ouillet p. 57)

Confronted with such a wrenching change that living in the Redeemed Order demands, many seem to prefer the Fallen Order, forgetting "if you love me, *obey*," and

accepting the Savior only in a preliminary, even superficial, way. An interesting survey via the internet on the beliefs of “religious teens” came just the other day. “. . . only 9% of self-described born-again teens believe that moral truth is absolute.” Only nine percent believe that God has commanded (for the good of his family) a way to live! This may simply reflect the relativism of their “religious” parents and teachers. However, the undermining effect of the media on all religious values cannot be minimized; demeaning Christianity is the unstated but obvious first priority from the soaps to the talk shows to the evening news, not to mention MTV and company. The media itself would not tolerate derision of any other culture or religion, which they often lionize (example: Kwanzaa). It is just as Jesus said - his followers would be hated - especially for the belief that his truth is absolute.

I note that among Christians, both those who were born into the faith and those who have had a later conversion to Christ, the quantum leap into a redeemed sexual order, which for us sinners is anything but incidental, is rarely taken. As with all progress on the spiritual journey, it does take thought, reform of life and determination; it does not just happen, yet nothing is more basic to the Redeemed life. As with Eve and Mary it begins with woman.

In the Church I often run across the argument for an undifferentiated, uni-sex view based on St. Paul's declaration in the letter to the Galatians that there is no male or female in Christ. We need to look at this closely. It is odd that this reference is resorted to by those who press for priestly ordination in direct contradiction to all that St. Paul said otherwise about the role of the sexes, statements that the same people unflinchingly disregard or even despise. I have been interested in Pope John Paul's frequent use of this verse in *Mulieris*, sometimes, I think, in an obtuse way.

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

The context of this teaching in Galatians is clear. It is Baptism. Baptism confers the same forgiveness of sin and new life in Christ to all without regard to distinctions of race, sex, or condition of servitude. Baptism washes away original sin from everybody, but it does not wash away the sexual distinctions in regard to roles in the Body of Christ. It does not change the Body member that the person is. To use St. Paul's analogy, it does

not change a finger into a toe, or men and women into unisex beings. In the Church the distinct and separate roles based on sex St. Paul remains emphatic about. Women do not teach men, they are not to take headship. He is so intense about it that one easily senses he was facing in his time the same stubborn arguments against the God-giveness of sexual roles that we face in ours – the same stubborn arguments that were inseminated and hatched in the Garden of Eden. This is not because of his Jewish orthodoxy - not at all. Though he sometimes has difficulty explaining it, tripped up by, even entangled in, veils and hair length (see I Cor. 11), he understands it perfectly. "I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." When a woman assumes headship, the Fall manifests itself again, and the Enemy is the boss. This takes a straightened understanding of headship and its exercise in equality and freedom.

With a little finagling with the language, but without violence to the concept, the three teeter-totters I have proposed emerge from this Pauline statement – the three Triune/triune unities. Mankind's head is God/Christ or Godhead. Within the Trinity the head of the Second Person is the First Person (the head of Christ is God); and in the trinity of Man, the head of the woman is her husband. His reference for the pattern of the Church is then the basic orientation of the Persons of the Holy Trinity – the only pattern that can be – covenantal order. Right order begins with personal obedience to the dictates of God concerning our gender. These God-given dictates are found in the Bible and taught by the Catholic Church. In this chapter we will look carefully at what headship in the triune unities means and what it does not mean. The ob-positioned roles in those trinities are, after all, irrevocable .

Watching Oprah the other day, I was grieved. Knowing that the stream was full of rocks, sunken logs, and even dangerous rapids, I was seeing young engaged couples being sent off in frail skiffs accompanied by the audience's approving applause. The true and only way to happiness, had someone been there to point it out, would have been quite a different direction, but that would have been greeted with incredulity and scorn. The Bible's insistence on headship is ignored today, even worse, it is mocked.

The audience approved an engaged couple's decision to reach financial security before having a baby. Their wedding was to cost \$40,000 - a substantial pre-marriage security for most people. The audience's heads bobbed in agreement with a woman's decision to keep her career, which was "very important" to her, rather than to consider

her future husband's hope that she would stay at home with their children. All this slipped easily along on the fast-flowing current of secular approval.

Probably some of these young people had been raised in a church, but doubtless never were taught anything about the Bible's direction for their sexual roles. If they had they wouldn't be on an Oprah program about the woman's role. (At times she can be quite good. I would love the Church to present her spiritual treasures to folks with something as interesting. Mother Angelica has tried valiantly. The secular media is where it cries to be heard, but the obstacles to that ever happening are obvious.)

The Bible is a very sexy book from beginning to end. It opens with a bride and bridegroom, it ends with a Bride and Bridegroom. In its very center, and not by chance, is an ardent sexual love poem, The Song of Songs. Procreation is a primary occupation of both men and women; the text is filled with begats. The sign of the Old Testament covenant is circumcision, a permanent mark on the male procreative organ; women and men beg God for fertility. The Savior of mankind manifests himself at a wedding feast, and calls himself Bridegroom.

A popular recent novel, The Red Tent, though loose in adherence to the Bible text, is true to this passionate sexuality in retelling the story of Jacob, his two wives and two concubines. One of the sexiest and most true-to-the-text pictures ever painted is Rembrandt's of the aged patriarch Abraham reclining in bed, with his aged wife Sarah putting shy, blooming, bare-breasted Hagar's hand in his. (Whose painting is this? I recall it clearly. Searching all of Rembrandt's paintings, I do not find it.)

Supportive of our thesis that sexual identity, male and female, is the primary expression of the principles animating the Persons of the Trinity, the Bible is consistently leavened with sex from beginning to end. The Hebrews did not use abstract terms; their very language made concepts concrete and physical. Throughout the Old Testament the Hebrew verb translated "to know" - that is, *to know God*, is the word for sexual intercourse, *yada*; and the favored word for "love," as in love of God for his People and their love for him, is *aheg* meaning the passionate love of man and woman. God inspired the Hebrew concepts that came out in words like *yada* and *aheg* describing the intimate relationship with him he desired.

When Jesus was announced by John the Baptist as the Bridegroom, and called himself "Bridegroom," no one in Israel wondered what that meant. They knew that God had designated himself in those terms from the earliest time, and they were incensed by

this man Jesus' unseemly audacity to assume God's prerogatives. Not overlooked in "bridegroom" was what was first in mind of every bridegroom – sexual union with his beloved. God seeks whole-soul/body union with his beloved.

When I was a Protestant, the Catholic Church seemed embarrassingly concerned with sex. I went to a mission with a Catholic friend and came home fuming, "What right have celibate men to tell folks how to regulate their sex lives?" "Fruit of thy womb," and all that! (We Protestants never used the word womb. I was aware that sex was put in the backseat in my church and that could be taken two ways. But more like in a small trailer that was often left behind. I never heard a breath uttered about it, and assumed from my youth that sex was either too nasty to talk about, or too delightful to be anything but sin. Kept under the covers it was certainly not anything to do with Christian faith and life.) True to the Bible, the Catholic Church emphasizes that the marriage relationship is re-covenanted in each sexual act, an act open to the conception of new life. She is never reluctant to talk about sex, sexuality and its exercise, and for that reason she was first on the barricades when Roe v Wade was imposed on our country.

"Each of the spouses, giving his or her love and expressing it in his or her bodiliness is a mediator of Christ's love for the other." (Ouillet p. 197) The Archbishop quotes another source (p.63), "To love another in the total and exclusive language of the body means 'you alone, you for always! With you, only with you, I wish to have the whole of my future and the whole of yours.'" This is to be total attitude of each conjugal act. Stated beautifully in the same vein West writes (TB p.103), "'I give myself totally to you, all that I am without reservation. Sincerely. Freely. Forever. And I receive the gift of yourself that you give to me. I bless you. I affirm you and all that you are without reservation, forever.' If sexual union does not say this, it is not an expression of love but only a cheap counterfeit."

In the marriage preparation classes they must attend, Catholic men and women are carefully instructed in the purpose and ordering of their sexual relationship (though silence reigns on headship). Whether they heed what they are taught is the question. Statistics make it clear that few do. If they knew that this instruction is based on Biblical principles, would it make any difference? Would they want to be obedient to the word of God, that is, THE WORD OF GOD coming, as it does, from both the Bible and the Church? What is it that will wake them up? Perhaps a teaching on the exciting possibilities

of the roles of man and woman in the context of The Theology of the Body. I believe it is coming.

Except for three or so of our eleven families this important Church teaching is ignored because it denies the use of contraception or sterilization to a couple. This may seem unreal to most of my grandchildren. Yet, the four girls of one family, when they marry, will surely embrace it. They have been brought up to wholeheartedly and knowingly love the faith, which includes the place of their female sex in marriage. (The youngest while in High School wrote a pamphlet for teens called, Sex? Why Wait?) Will each of the four then present us with a grandchild for every fertile year of their lives? No, they will use Natural Family Planning, strengthened by the Creighton Method, to space their children the way nature, and therefore, God, allows. Though the thorough explanation and defense of NFP can be sought elsewhere, two examples come from my experience.

On a plane I found myself seated next to a young woman who for some reason brought up this subject. I don't start conversations with seatmates, but perhaps I was reading something that stimulated the question. She complained that she found all the methods she had used of birth control eventually frightening in their health consequences. Lately, she'd realized how manipulated she was as a woman when her health and well-being were to be forfeited for her man's convenience. She was not Catholic, she informed me, but would like to know how to find out more about the Catholic idea of fertility, its protection and control. She helped me see more clearly that contraception was a manipulation of the woman that encouraged a man's sexual irresponsibility. I hadn't looked at it from that perspective. I was able to give her the names of some resources.

The second example I only read about but found intriguing. In an evangelical Protestant seminary where both she and her husband were taking courses to become ministers of the Gospel, Kimberly Hahn, (the wife of soon-to-be-Catholic apologist Dr. Scott Hahn), chose to write a paper on contraception. In the course of research for the paper, she surprised herself and shocked her husband with the inevitable conclusion that contraception was not God's will and should not be practiced by Christians! It was a shove for the two onto the slow downhill slide. At that time they both thought Catholicism to be the pits! Scott and Kimberly fresh from evangelical Protestantism have

become numbered among the Church's primary defenders and promoters of the holy use of sex. (See Rome Sweet Home by the Hahns)

Of course, open sexual availability of husband and wife to each other is a Bible teaching. It is therefore essential to Church teaching. St. Paul allowed abstinence to be practiced for "a season of prayer." (1 Corinthians 7) But he counseled that the couple should then come together again.

In John Paul's teaching, Jesus is the source of his work on sexuality. In a discussion with the Pharisees about God's plan for marriage, Jesus take a sex question to *the beginning* – Matthew 19; Jesus teaches about lust and adultery in the heart *in the now* – Matthew 5; and Jesus in a discussion with the Sadducees looks at marriage in *the resurrected state* – Matthew 22. Beginning. . . now . . . and at the end. In all his teaching John Paul concludes that conjugal love is the personal total self-gift of each one to the other, and is irreconcilable with contraception which speaks instead, "I do not give my whole self to you forever (with all that will come with our self-giving), but only that part of me by which right now I gain pleasure." What kind of love is this? It is not the love of Christ who pours himself out in total self-giving for his Bride the Church and who calls each man and woman to imitate him, thus forming his family.

The bodies, the *sexual* bodies, of the man and the woman are given by God to reveal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and total self-giving love of which intercourse is the perpetual sign. Remember? Father:Holy Spirit:Son translates to Lover:Love:Beloved! Can those called to be the bride of Christ, men and women, like some modern brides and bridegrooms, "opt for a sterile, narcissistic self-focus?" (TB p.45)

In the Church woman is the *sign* of the bride, the Church. She turns things around in her relationship to her husband by submission to the meaning of her sexuality, and together by their new self-understanding they turn things around in their church community by a new submission to the authority of Jesus in the Church – the New Covenant. And how does Man experience this call to the original covenant? "God stamped it in his body, by creating man as male and female and calling them to be a nuptial gift to one another." (TB p.95) "This is the meaning with which sex enters the Theology of the Body." (TB p.96)

Do we wonder at the high divorce rate? The breakdown of the family begins with contraception – the non-love of sexual practice, and the refusal to accept the Holy Spirit as the sacramental bond of God's intended trinity in the covenant of marriage. (Read the

entire book referred to in these pages, Marc Cardinal Ouellet's Divine Likeness: Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family.)

Through the years I have met women of all ages who have ceased to have interest in sex, and who have refused any further sexual union with their husbands. What disintegration it augurs of health, of happiness, and of family solidarity! It often progresses from separate beds to separate bedrooms to total separation in separate houses. When this problem surfaces in the advice columns, the word is, "Get counseling." *Interest* in sex, it seems to me, doesn't matter, and I doubt that counseling can change it anyway. I have looked up an old reference in an out-of-print book by Solange Hertz:

This indifference is fatal for a wife, not just because it's poor psychology on her part. It's a sin of spiritual pride. Because women are the spiritual sex, they fall easily into spiritual sins. They feel superior at the drop of a hat, and especially superior to sensual men . . .

In case this seems psychologically ignorant, Christian psychiatrist, Paul Tournier, said something similar in The Healing of Persons. Writes West (p.85), "Spiritual love cannot be and must not be divorced from the body. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. The most profound words of the spirit - words of love, of giving, of fidelity – demand an adequate language of the body."

On the other hand, thinking back over the women who preceded me in the family tree, some whom I have known personally, I have been helped to understand, if not approve, the fierce defense of contraception. In pre-contraception days our family genealogy on both sides is instructive. Our grandmothers back for generations had a baby every two years for all their fertile years. Many babies they buried. Youthful wives died in childbirth while the man goes on to a second wife and more children. I realize the heavy burden the women often bore because of the sexual expectations and often exploitation by their husbands. It is the Fallen Order; "he shall reign over you," and he did! Even while living most generous and unselfish lives, these women often felt bound by pregnancy and child rearing. I know because I have been friends with Catholic women who raised families before the 1950's. Dutifully accepting her place, she made the best of it, but questioned God more than a little. Of course, if asked what child she would have preferred not to have, the questioner should duck! She loves her children, every one, with sacrificial love.

When scientific understanding of reproduction came to the point of relieving women of continuous pregnancy, it meshed beautifully with Catholic doctrine. Natural Family Planning is a development of true doctrine based firmly on Scripture, and the Creighton method takes NFP to a higher scientific plane. It is a new point on the linear progression of holy male/female sexual relationship. It demands that both husband and wife reach an intimate, prayerful agreement coinciding with the woman's natural fertility rhythm. They will not thwart or impede artificially God's purpose for their sexuality; they will work lovingly with it to determine what God intends for their procreative powers. They will remain open to life, but also cognizant of the limitations of each other's energy and their common finances, yet never with lack of trust in God's providence. A strong spiritual life supported by the sacraments of the Church is the only way such a marriage can be.

If women understood what NFP offered them, they would cease their tiger-like defense of abortion which most shamefully concede is murder of a person - a "necessary" death in order "to be free as women." Their wretched defense is motivated by the fear of being bound again without choice by their reproductive function and the unceasing demands of the man. This they believe ties down their lives to nothing more than pregnancy and child rearing. They think that an abortion choice, a backup to failed contraception, is the only way to have freedom, not being aware of the fathomless spiritual toll, the physiological damage and often psychological slavery it really entails. It is sin!

They do not know *that in Christ and for God* a man can come to a thoughtful and loving respect of his wife's reproductive cycle, and that he can agree to curtail his sexual impulse to meet their common need. What a revelation that would be to the abortion-rights woman who has never thought of such a thing. I realize that the hitch is "in Christ and for God." Ignorance or rejection of salvation is such a lock on the door that opens to true freedom. What a treasure the Church has! How can we make it known? Each couple who embraces the truth is a powerful witness.

At my first confession in preparation to being received into the Church, I acknowledged allowing a tubal ligation after our eighth baby. After a fourth C-section the doctor forbade me to come to his office pregnant again. By what authority did he order me to have this procedure following the last baby's delivery? In our naiveté we supposed that doctors knew everything, so we agreed. As Protestants there was not a question

raised by this decision, neither in my minister-husband's mind, nor in mine. But looking back after becoming Catholic, I saw both the wisdom of the Church and its God-direction, and was willing to have the procedure reversed. My confessor advised that this was not necessary; ignorant of God's ways when I had allowed it, it was forgiven. Besides, God had already overruled our inhospitable ignorance of his will in a deliberate and wonderful way.

Four years before our conversion to Catholicism, a young couple in our church was killed in a car crash. Their four children, though injured, survived. We accepted the four little ones right from the hospital, ages 3, 4, 5, and 7, and later adopted them. Because our youngest at the time was 6, none of the ages of the melded group of children overlapped. Nine months lay between every child. Could God have spoken any clearer about openness to life? He knew that someday we would regret saying no to our fertility, and he took care of the coming change of heart in advance. Yet, I think of the enhancement of intimacy it would have been if Bob and I had been aware of my fertility cycle and had observed together both its permissions and its restrictions. I hasten to add, not one of our natural seven (one infant died) would we ever have wished to restrict! Large families are . . . no word suffices for the wealth of graces such families enjoy. On a visit to America, Pope John Paul II stated a simple truth: "what children need is not more things, but more siblings." Truer words about children's needs have not been spoken.

Anyone unfamiliar with Pope Paul VI's encyclical Humane Vitae, or has heard of it only in the negative will experience profound insights when they read it. Every year that goes by makes more evident his prophetic understanding of sexuality and the result of its misuse. Those committed to truth, even early feminists before this encyclical, knew the inevitable connection between contraception and abortion, but could they have foreseen the other evils in the train that would attack human life? Euthanasia, infanticide, cloning and mass destruction of embryos?

This encyclical has proved to be the Great Divide for Catholics in the United States. The waters of dissent flow in one direction from it, the waters of assent flow the other. It is not happenstance that the Great Divide is the use or abuse of sexuality. When I think of this encyclical, I think of Jesus' picture of separating sheep from goats in the Final Judgment.

Goats are grating creatures. At the San Diego zoo one grabbed a little bag of souvenirs out of my hand and ate it. Sheep on the other hand are docile and obedient -

some say stupid, but at least they know enough to follow the shepherd who the Chief Shepherd has anointed: Pope Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. (Have you seen the T-shirt, "I love my German shepherd?) All three have been staunch upholders of life in an historic period that has seen more violent death than any other. With them, Mother Teresa has pointed out that the world cannot wonder at the continued, widespread violence (children shot in schools, parents dropping babies off of bridges) when the innocent child in the womb can be torn limb from limb. The abortion mill, engined by fear, desperation, selfishness, moral sin and ignorance, spawns deadly violence throughout society.

Modern-day false shepherds dispensing feminist hype (believe me, they guide huge flocks of the immature) have been declaring that age no longer needs to curtail a woman's fertility. Women want to become mothers, but because of pressure to succeed in a career, willingly postpone till "later" that baby who will be an acknowledged interference with success. In a 60 Minutes segment the premise that the biological clock for women's fertility has been reset by modern technology was carefully examined. The medical conclusion is - women have been misled. "By 37, fertility is dropping steeply, and even with the most advanced medical techniques, virtually no woman over the age of 44 is able to have a baby using her own eggs."

Masculinized by power when they arrive at their professional goal and often already divorced, not only are these women no longer attractive to most men, but their desire for a family, should they find an intrepid man, will not be met in the normal course. The National Organization for Women's put up tough opposition to an ad campaign meant to educate young women about these risks of delaying a family, and caused its withdrawal. NOW doesn't want women to know the truth; it is a force in the Culture of Death.

In those collected writings, Woman, Edith Stein upholds the Bible's view of woman with a keen analysis. However she expresses a certain skepticism about St. Paul's teaching about redeemed woman, which I could imagine conversing with her in a heavenly symposium (*if* and *when*). Her well-ordered thoughts about the modern woman's fulfillment of her life beyond child-bearing and rearing are fitting and satisfying. Her emphasis -*beyond*- is for the well being of woman and child.

For the benefit of child and mother, St. Edith believes that it is imperative that a mother be an at-home-mom throughout her youngsters growing years. Her view is

substantiated today in all non-feminist, reasonable studies. After the children are grown it is different. It is not selfishness to want more than the obvious fulfillment of family - children do grow up and often grow away. A mother's love and concern will always be her children, no doubt about that, followed closely by her grandchildren and greats. How many nights will she lay awake prayerfully nursing this concern? But she must not try to live her life through them, and few want a post child-care life that consists only of games of Free Cell, Bridge, crossword puzzles and visits to casinos?

As St. Edith points out, a woman has many skills that are developed in the home, and when the children are gone, these are to be poured out for suffering society in an inclusive, extended mothering. She strongly urges a young woman to prepare for the empty nest by education that will channel her natural compassion and relationship gifts into a rigorous, not merely emotional, formation useful to the wider society. This further work can, I suppose, be considered a career, but it is not to be for mere self-aggrandizement. Almost any profession is suitable if it does not negate true femininity and has as its goal the common good, especially good for the People of God. Much preparation can be done at home during child-rearing years, especially when college classrooms are now completely computer accessible. Then, when family responsibilities lessen, the time is right for taking God's love to the wider community. But even with this there is a caution. Love for the wider community is not all action. Prayer remains first.

My dear spiritual director, whom I have mentioned before, Father Eugene Boylan, ([This Tremendous Lover](#), p.364) has these words to say:

There is an order in fraternal charity (good works for others); it begins at home, and we must not give away what is not ours to give. There is a tendency to express our fraternal zeal in the corporal works of mercy, and this is but the age-old Christian tradition. But we must remember that our chief duty to our neighbor is a spiritual one. The supernatural must come before the natural, and the supernatural works are only done by supernatural means. Therefore our first and best service to our neighbor is to sanctify ourself, by a life of loving union with Christ.

With no idea of why it was important, while the children were young I organized my home duties so that a half-day once a week was free. By noon on Wednesday, the cleaning of our sixteen-room house was up to snuff, the meals were planned for the week, and the afternoon was mine for immersion in a current study. I had no thought

that I would ever write. Now, I realize that the Holy Spirit was preparing me to have another vocation when the children were grown. My first vocation is to be a supportive, loving wife to my deacon husband, thoughtful mother to my children and grandchildren, but now, beyond that, I sit here to write and write and write, also to teach a little. Such a joy! It is not the writing I love, but the gathering together of scripture and other sources, and refining expression of ideas that have been floating around in my head and have been spiritually nourishing to me for so many years. Having some articles published has been icing on the cake, but icing is not necessary when the cake is so thoroughly satisfying. (Besides such icing can make you spiritually fat).

The proposition that women today can follow such a pattern does involve a huge assumption. That is, that the wife and mother is able to stay at home with the children, which in turn assumes that the husband and father is able to support his family on one income. Is one income sufficient in the 21st century? From my perch looking over the modern milieu, I hesitate to add another grandmother's grumble about excess, but to my mind it seems possible, not for all, but for many.

A young nurse of my acquaintance, working a forty hour week, and trying to balance a family, told me, "I have to work." But then in a spurt of honesty added, "Of course, we could get by without my salary, but we want so many things."

Appealing to Christian sensibilities: modesty, simplicity, frugality and orderliness, isn't it evident to everyone that the opposites of these qualities: excessiveness, negligence, keeping up to the dictates of fashion and fad, and the chaos of many things have no power to bring happiness? A mother efficiently and thoughtfully minding the home each day is like a growing savings account. Is a litany of how we did things with the eleven children on a social worker-minister's modest salary to follow? Spare the groans; I won't do it.

The main ingredient of our financial stability has been, however, something that is worth explaining. God's Word is very explicit in its direction about providential living. "Give and you will receive like-measure pressed down and overflowing into your lap." "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be yours as well."

As head of the family, Bob took these directives seriously, and we have experienced divine providence day by day. Attempting to seek God first in our lives, we have practiced tithing. As a result, in God's mysterious way, there has always been a

good car, and with the enlarged family, two good, not new, cars. A wonderful house fairly fell into our path when the family increase demanded it. The children were clothed acceptably; they had musical instruments, lessons and other cultural advantages. We were able to provide special education when the need arose. When we became Catholic, sending the children to a good Catholic school seemed important enough to make further sacrifices. Those who wanted a college education had our help. There were no frills, but everything necessary, and more, was poured into our laps.

Those words on the beams of our Great Room, "Seek Beauty, Goodness, Truth and Unity" are based on the belief that under-girding our existence there is a God-given order which means rules. Order, says the dictionary, means "a regular relation, established succession or harmonious relation, method, or system." Things must be aligned to the principles of God and then there will be a harmonious life.

The ennui and depression of our times is laid at the feet of the agnosticism and creeping atheism of our culture in which is imbedded political feminism. One of my favorite books is Victor Frankl's, "Man's Search for Meaning." What he learned in his desperate concentration camp experience made clear that when a person is disconnected from the Transcendent and Transcendent Meaning which for Catholics is Jesus in His Church, he has truly lost the way to fulfilling happiness on earth, to say nothing of the eternal prospect for his immortal soul. He slowly atrophies into a semi or sub-human being. However, when he is connected to God and His will, no circumstance, no matter how dreadful, can overcome his spirit.

To fully delineate the role of woman in God's plan, we see her in her relationship to man as the image of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity in his relationship to his Father. In everything she is to be a sign of obedience, of submission in its real meaning. If she captures this, she in herself is a dynamo of truth that has the power (while being essentially powerless) to bring the Church to its perfection as the spotless Bride awaiting the return of the Bridegroom. Can you believe that? It is true - woman must take up her place with intelligence and courage in order to prepare the family of God, the Church, for her ultimate wedding to Jesus. It asks an obedient response like that of Jesus to His Father.

John's Gospel reveals in his own words, Jesus' unvarying orientation to his head, his heavenly Father: "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise"

5:19; "I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me;" 5:30 "I have come in my Father's name. . ."5:43 "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me; if any man's will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority;"7:16 "I have not come of my own accord." 7:28; "I go to him who sent me." 7:33; I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father has taught me, and he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him." 8:28-29; "I came not of my own accord, but he sent me;" 8:42 "He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. . .I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak." 12:49; "the words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works." 14:10; "I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father." 14:31; "I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love"15:10; and in speaking to his Father, "I glorified thee on earth having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do"17:4.

In reviewing these words, do we think to ourselves, "Poor Jesus, what a slave, always denying his own will. Did he have no self-respect? Why was he was so abject in his submissive obedience?" Of course not! We understand that these words are the noblest expression of sonship and of equality with his father. It has been declared heresy to believe that his deliberate submission to his Father was any sign of inequality - the Arian heresy.

It is instructive to consider how the Church resolved the issue of submission to authority clarifying for all time that it did not mean the abjectness of the one and superiority of the other. This belief was at the heart of the Arian heresy. Was Jesus only a kind of sub-god ? To those committed to the belief that obedience was degrading, we can see why they believed this. But the answer came loud and clear, though it took two centuries to finally quell the heresy, that his obedience to his Father was declared to be in total equality and freedom; Father and Son were one. One was not above the other in some hierarchy of worth. Father Keefe writes (p.248), "The doctrinal development of the 4th and 5th C, particularly as against the Arian heresy, certifies that to have a "head" and thus a source, does not imply the inferiority of such a person to the source, the relation cannot be understood as between an absolute and a relative reality. Rather it is between

persons whose reality is actual or manifest in their relation to each other, even when one of these realities is divine, the Son of God, and the other merely human, merely a creature, the Church." So Keefe conflates the three Trinities in this statement – Father and Son, the Father is the head and the source; the man and his wife, the man is the head and the source; and the Son of God and the Church, the Son of God is the head and the source. This is the bulwark of Christian Truth against Islam who has no grounding for such an understanding, but can only understand authority to be absolute and those who must submit to a head or a source inferior.

So then, can an obedient stance taken by a woman toward her husband's headship ever be considered miserably degrading? I will look into this more closely later – we do live in a sinful world which must be taken into account.

Woman is the sign of true obedience to headship for the whole Church to imitate. Our Mother Mary shows the way. Twice Jesus addressed her "woman," surely to alert us to pure womanhood and its redeemed manifestation after the fall of mother Eve. The first time was publicly at the marriage of Cana when she motivated him to begin, the second publicly at the Cross when her motivation had culminated not in water to wine, but wine to blood. That we not misunderstand this motivational intervention of the mother to be an exercise of authority, he tells her clearly and even rudely, that he is the one who makes the decision - though he will answer her petition fully, "Woman, what have you to do with me?" So she stands first at the beginning of his ministry, and at the end as a strong, self-reliant, God-hearing woman of full worth with her Son, but with the differentiation we have pointed to all along. She sorts out for us the difference between obedience and inferiority, so necessary for all under headship to fully understand.

At the cross Jesus again addresses her "woman." The fulfillment of the promise to the first woman, Eve, that woman's seed would crush Satan's head, is accomplished before all eyes. It is made with the another rebuff, another piece of the cross, for in his place Mary's glorious son Jesus gives her a lesser son, John, who stands there holding the place for all of us sinners.

Contemplating the four attributes of God: Beauty, Goodness, Truth and Unity, I will focus on woman in examining her appropriation of beauty, goodness, truth and unity, for she is the sign from the beginning with Eve, to the culmination in Mary.

Of these spiritual realities woman is the exemplar of beauty and seeks Beauty. God made the feminine beautiful - beautiful Eve, beautiful Mary, and despite our physical

imperfections, beautiful woman, you and me. If only we could believe it – that God’s love in us is beautiful and shines out of our countenance regardless of factors we deplore – aging for instance. But don’t look at what the world calls beauty, it isn’t the real thing. When one encounters the real thing, we know that what the world is calling beautiful is ugly. It is harmony, or inner resolution, that makes up beauty.

Look around - beauty is exhibited in our world and in our universe in “an expansive, regular relation, a harmonious relation” of nature from the tiniest passive flower to the frightening, explosive volcano. I was thrilled to read lately a statement by a leading particle physicist in defense of a scientific theory. He wrote about particle physics, "I don't think I've succeeded in conveying to you its wonder, incredible consistency, remarkable elegance and beauty." Another lecturing mathematician was quoted, ". . .in our knowledge of physical nature we have penetrated so far that we can obtain a vision of the flawless harmony which is in conformity with sublime reason." String theory is called "elegant," over and over again by scientists and mathematicians unused to such superfluous or laudatory adjectives.

With the disorder of sin came decay and death - the disintegration of “original regular relation, method or system.” Yet, were the whole realm of nature subject to disorder, there could be no life on earth, not to speak of beauty. God spared earth wholesale disorder in the Fall, and left Beauty to point us back to him who is Creator. He held ugliness at bay because he was bringing his children back to him and beauty points the way. There is such beauty in creation, especially in persons, that it causes reflection on just how determinative the Fall is. It is only in imagining how Perfection makes our beauty but a shadow of true Beauty that the word “devastation” can be used.

Without salvation beauty can also disintegrate to bestiality – look at the repulsiveness served by beautiful bodies in the media; there is a negative power at work. Lust is ugly. “The man desires to appropriate the woman and gratify himself – the woman recoils since she knows she is never meant to be used.” (West p.161) It is the absence of God’s love, the same as hell. (West p.181) With the beauty God meant for feminine sexuality from the beginning, we must recover the lost “purity of heart” so that real beauty can shine in and out of our marriages.

Doesn't St. Peter believe that the woman is the one who can right what is wrong? "(husbands) may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, when they see your reverent and chaste behavior. . . the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit. . . (I Peter 3: 1-2) John Paul teaches the importance of purity of heart and West explains how man looks at woman's nakedness with purity, and woman looks at man's nakedness with purity and how essential this is to the joy of their union. Purity is beautiful. "The whole universe is affected when we live, or fail to live, according to the truth of our bodies." (West p.211)

Man's respect for creation and deep wonder at himself crystallize, finally, in the peace of the original naked gaze of man and woman at each other. This gaze, this look, not only reveals that they know each other's worth, dignity, and goodness. It also reveals the deepest intention of their hearts with regard to existence. Their naked bodies witnessed to the truth that all of creation was a gift, and that Love was the source of that giving (see§17). This is what they saw when they "looked" at each other. Love, then, meant offering themselves – their bodies – to God and to each other in thanksgiving for so great a gift. West p. 173

A reporter informed John Paul when he was pope and attempted to explain this, "he may not be familiar with the role lust plays in the American family . . .From the time American reach adolescence, lust is the life force." (West 180) How unfortunate that this may be true and it is ugly.

There is beauty in holiness. In the ugly Protestant churches I was brought up in, there was that murmur of criticism about the "ornate waste displayed in Catholic churches – all those expensive and sinful images, candles, excessive ornamentation, richly embroidered robes and liturgical bric-a-brac." When I first visited one of these "elaborately sinful" places, I wanted to fall on my face overwhelmed by the beauty of holiness.

Wasn't it Judas who complained about the waste of perfumed nard that the sinful woman poured over Jesus' feet? And what did Jesus say? "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing for me. For you always have the poor with you, you do not always have me." God speaks in Isaiah of "beautifying the place of my sanctuary." (Is. 60:13) When he is now with us in the Eucharist, we express our love by adorning the place of worship with the best of our material world. Should we not do the very most beautiful thing we have it in our power to do? In making the place of holiness beautiful, the poor will have no less .

But what of the family who comes to his house to worship him – in sweatshirts and jeans? The Old Testament speaks of “festal garments” meant to give honor to God. “ Do you remember the Saturday nights when a row of children’s Sunday shoes were polished, pants pressed, dresses laid out for the family’s morning preparation? Do we think now that was excessive? Well, perhaps the white gloves and paten leather carried things too far. But the attempt to look beautiful for God did not. It spoke of how grateful we were that God provides for His People, how grateful we were that he delights in His People.

I know persons who are dear to me who in their material lives have made little progress with beauty. The culprit is chronic disorder, that is, poor home making with its inevitable mess. It does not make for a happy home; therefore, it does not make for a truly Christian one. Regularized routines, cleanliness, and good order (do you remember the adage, “A place for everything and everything in its place.”?) are not oppressive, they are freeing. They are not optional; they are essential. “Cleanliness is next to godliness” is not a foolish saying. Family life can be lived peacefully and creatively against a background of beauty. What freedom it is when the socks are in the right drawer and not to be found under the couch or even in a morass of laundry pulled from the dryer. “I’m late! Where’s my socks!”

Germaine Greer, noted early feminist, finally came to the conclusion that what matters most in the end is (not feminist political action, but) “the light in the room and the good food on the table.” Who is it that brings this loveliness and nourishment? The wife and mother whose full attention centers in her home.

One of my favorite TV shows is Design Remix with Karen McAloon. Though HGTV as a steady diet is oppressively materialistic, this show with its budget of \$50 is more my style, if dependence on Goodwill and Salvation Army and the sewing machine can be called a style. There is a joy in coming up with a beautiful home that has not left even a dent on the budget.

I note that with “emancipation” that sent women into the work-force, the creative works of beauty women always brought inexpensively to their homes are lacking. There is no time for such things. Time is rarer than money. Even those with an eye to beauty, which not all seem to have, have substituted true homemaking for outlays at Pier One or Wal-Mart. The result is a kind of tired imprint without distinction pressed on one home after another: the same prints on the wall, the same pillows on the sofa, the

same Corelle on the table. Gone are the lovely hand-worked details that made homes original and beautiful. Where are the pieced quilts or the hand-painted china? Oh, yes, they're on the Antique Road Show. Sad is the loss of great perennial beds of flowers now replaced by a few plastic urns of red geraniums and a hanging basket of petunias.

This Christmas, Clara, a dear friend, who has had to sell the home she lived in for most of her 93 years, sent me a loving gift from the break-up. In my lap lay two snow-white pillowcases wrapped in tissue with the loveliest deep lace I had ever seen. A note in her careful handwriting had two words. "Hairpin lace." I spread my hands beneath the delicate design. How much skill, time and love went into making this with only a hairpin and thread? Into her nineties Clara was still tending her perennial garden, fighting the South Dakota plains with their winds and extremes of temperatures to provide altar flowers for her church, and fresh bouquets for her home. The simple beauty in her home extended to the table where homemade breads, soups, hot dishes, and home canned vegetables from the garden kept life and limb together on such limited means that moderns cannot imagine. Such happiness she had in her homemaking! Women are "liberated." Are they happy? I read that they are more frustrated and in the grip of deeper guilt feelings than ever. Times change, but not always for the better.

All of these thoughts about beauty link directly to woman, even to the beauty of our place of worship, although the whole Church contributes. Yet, the decorators for our great festivals, Christmas and Easter, are women who adore Jesus by applying their gifts of making beauty for him. Beauty is the concern of the woman in her home, in the dressing and physical care of her children, in encouraging good grooming and presentable clothing for her husband, and in her own becoming appearance. None of this calls for expense, none of this calls for pride of the eyes or any other kind of pride. Both St. Paul and St. Peter tell women to adorn themselves modestly, but humility is not offended by beauty; while at the same time humility is very beautiful. It is simply that beauty reflects the goodness of God and gives him glory. John Paul "knows woman's distinctive beauty and dignity and he stands in awe of the mystery of God's creative love revealed in her." (TB p.121)

In seeking God, the second attribute for woman to appropriate is Goodness. The dictionary's first definition of "good" is *"sufficient or satisfactory for its purpose."* Why did God pronounce over Man "very good" except that before the Fall from grace man and

woman were gifted with everything they would need to live according to God's will and purpose. To regain that lost status demands humble acceptance of the sacrifice of God's Son for sin, and dependence upon the seven sacraments, which are extensions of the very body, blood, soul and divinity of Our loving Lord whose *very self* radiates out through all time and space to *intimately* touch every believer with restored "Very Good"-ness. Only God can do this for us compromised women! Such an amazing miracle is held by and manifested in the Church day by day! Only with this help can a woman begin to know she is created with a purpose. Too often we lose the thread of meaning and become miserable. Prayer and contemplation, especially prayer to Mary, causes us to arise and go to our heavenly Father. "No matter how deep our wounds and distortions go, the cross of Christ goes deeper, and John Paul continually insists that real power flows from the Christ's death and resurrection to restore in us the purity that was lost through sin." (West p.169)

Over the years I have kept a small notebook, which when I take it into the confessional, causes my priest to smile. But I am forgetful of everything once that door closes behind me – I need to read that notation beside my sins, "help me, Jesus ," written often through my daily prayer. How wonderful it is to receive again my lost goodness from God. Then I can again strive in daily life to fulfill God's will for me with all the gifts I can muster, always ready to return to the touchstone and cry, "help."

In a puzzling episode, when Jesus was called "good master", he replied, "Why do you call me good? God alone is good." Weird, I'd say, until it is held in mind for a while, then the answer appears patent. He was testing the young man: "Why do you call me good? Are you calling me good merely because you see virtue in me? Or are you calling me good because you are seeing God? The second is the reason I am looking for. Indeed, you are seeing God!"

If disorder in any particular is present in a person's life, that person is not thoroughly Good. In the sense of Jesus' Goodness, godliness will not totally define us in this life. Yet, we are on our way to Goodness, which builds on our natural goodness because of the transforming power of the sacraments. We do not start out on the spiritual ascent depraved as some Christians believe. We start out with small g goodness - damaged goods. It is the Holy Spirit's work through the sacraments to bring us, who are not yet thoroughly virtuous or godly, to very-Goodness which is every Catholic's goal - to be pure and holy as man and woman were in the beginning. Before eating of the Tree of

the Knowledge of good (it should be small g) and evil, all in Eden was Good because all was of God. After that disobedience all human good is tainted. That is implied in Jesus' question, "Why do you call me good?" and in the underlying truth that he was Good because he was God.

Holiness depends on a restoration of right order that is attentive to God's original plan for personal life, and for family. Father Keefe writes, "The symbolic content of all profanations of the holiness of sexuality is always a denial of the significance, of the intrinsic value of masculinity and femininity, of the sexual differentiation upon which the sacrament of marriage rests." (p. 28) Man and woman to be good, to be Godly, must recover the truth about their sexuality's meaning, of its significance in God's plan and live it out in the midst of the Church community. We are surrounded with profanation of the holiness of sexuality because of the ignorance of the value of male and female and their respective God-given roles. And it depends on woman to reestablish that right order by embracing her husband's headship. It is evident that it must be she who in freedom and with understanding, willingly takes this responsive role.

Of course, a man cannot be slothful either about developing his God-given abilities or for assuming godly headship of his family, which means carrying out God's command to provide for his family, and secondarily, to aid others with needs who live within his orbit. Writes Archbishop Ouillet, "Sloth, sadness and a distaste for action oppose the enthusiasm of love." (p.146) True Goodness, which is godliness, is not possible without regeneration in Christ. And acknowledging Christ, but bogged in laziness how can Goodness be achieved? It takes moral muscle to right things that are out of whack. (From personal experience I have seen that the most serious consequence of using drugs and alcohol is the disintegration of moral muscle. These addictions disease the spirit and wreck havoc on family life. They can only be called demonic.)

"Sin makes love sterile and wretchedly destroys spouses' community of life." (Ouillet p. 148) But "every confession reconstructs unity and humility of a true communion with the Lord." Again, what a gift Catholics have with the very presence of Jesus in the confessional to cleanse from destructive sin and restore again God's plan for living a good life.

Truth is the third attribute of God we women seek. A great barrier to the fullness of life in the Redeemed Order is ignorance. Though I must constantly struggle against the massive darkness in my own understanding, what causes this lack of seeking among those I love baffles me.

A movement of God most must have experienced sometime in their young lives occurred for me when sitting on a sand dune at age twelve or so. I looked out toward the Manitou Islands on a glorious summer day with the great white caps of Lake Michigan breaking below me, and suddenly it seemed predetermined that all I really sought in life was to know God. On a clear day, the song says, you can see forever. Though that resolve was covered over in a thousand trivial pursuits and lost time and again, somehow it continued to motivate me at crucial times. Ideas, I came to realize, that is, spiritual insights, were the most exciting things in the world. Now old, I come around again to that early resolve every day with anticipation. God's Light shed on Life, its meaning and goal, and how my little life relates, is found only in Truth. In this day when to some the answer to every question is another question, the very idea of truth is in disrepute. Scoffers deny that there is such a thing. Darkness seems to be preferred. There is nothing more glorious than to discover God's truth as John Paul II has made evident with Christian clarity in "The Splendor of Truth."

Some of the happiest moments in my life have been when I have come across another who is a truth-seeker. Besides Bob and some wonderful others in the family, there are many warm friends met along the way in this life who have shared that happiness. Others, unmet except in written things, thrill my heart, and with this great company I continue to leap up joyfully toward eternity. As to my Catholicism – "the unbounded mystery of the faith is offered to us as the truth itself, as freedom, as life. To seek these elsewhere is to starve. Only the freedom of the New Covenant in its Eucharistic actuality can sustain that free inquiry into a truth which is not the barren reflex of our own emptiness, but the Image to which we are made." (Keefe 19) I love it!

Full Goodness is in God alone – "why do you call me good?" "Because, dear Jesus, you are God!" Full Truth is declared upon this earth by Jesus. He not only declares it; he IS TRUTH. The truth about sexuality he IS, both in his order in the Trinity, where the Son/Second Person exemplifies the non-physical feminine principle made manifest in the flesh by the female sex, and in his coming as a male representative of total Godhead, -

the eternal masculine to Man's eternal feminine. About the sexual relationship, he stated (Matthew 19:3-9):

"Have you not read that he made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and two shall become one'? So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and put her away?" He said to them, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

St. Paul was building on this with its all its multi-facets when he wrote about the sexes. His profound understanding of Jesus' teaching on sexuality is another arena of truth iced-over in many Christian churches by that Zamboni of creeping secular feminism, but not yet frozen up, despite feminist attempts, in the Catholic Church. The same teaching of Jesus goes on to lay the ground for the celibate, male priesthood, an understanding these days subject to many attempts to permanently deep-freeze.

Here in Jesus' jewel on marriage, and in St. Paul's exposition of all that it contains, is held the first chapter of this writing. In the beginning is the union of three equals in the sexual, marriage relationship. God is the unity between man and woman. The three are made one, even in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity. This model appears in the beginning and must reappear in the Redeemed Order in the lives of the man and woman. That is, when a Christian man and Christian woman are united in the Holy Spirit in matrimony, they each embrace a role to become a sign of a Greater Unity. The man submits to the demands of an authority assigned to him, which is in service (this is not easy); this woman, his helpmeet, is responsive to his headship (this is not easy), and together they live an ordered life that will bring them to Beauty, Goodness, Truth and Unity.

"When we refuse to appropriate our covenantal being . . . we refuse the world its own inherent *unity and truth and beauty*, suborning it to ends which it is not made, which violate its dignity." (Italics added, Keefe 18)

In our Catholic faith, the human condition is not papered over with a premature and therefore phony piety. We live in a fallen world; we human beings, even though we strive for holiness, are still a hodge-podge of sins – refusing, too often, our covenantal

being. In honest moments I feel that gumbo bubbling up deep from within. We may try with all our might to live ideally, but the ideal eludes us. This husband with all his immaturities cannot always be looked to as a wholesome authority; his word is not always to be trusted. This woman is not predisposed to holy response; her tongue is not naturally sweetened with sanctifying, obedient words.

When, as a Protestant, I first discovered headship, I went overboard. It was the best thing since thermostats in Minnesota. To be pitied were those I instructed in the ways of the submitted woman during those years. If any one has read the frothy book, Fascinating Womanhood, or Mirabel Morgan's, Total Woman I was somewhere in that orbit with a heavy religious overlay. What I have learned through the years of the nitty-gritty grinds of real marriage, is not to throw out headship and obedience, any one who has read this far knows that, but it is to face the reality of Bob's and my partial ability to live up to the goal of sanctity. Not always will his headship be rightly exercised; sometimes I'll find myself nudging him aside. Not always will my response be willing; I may even refuse. Sometimes things will be utterly backwards. So what is the solution?

I have found the solution to be quite simple. All that really matters is that in my heart I accept Godly order for what it is declared to be - God has placed the man to be the head of the wife, the woman is his helpmeet, and both are given the grace to be submissive to their roles. If I have no quarrel with that, it is all that's necessary. If I quarrel with it, then I am struggling against the will of God. When my whole desire is to be in conformity with God's will, then though I fail, and though Bob fails, we still desire to fulfill the divine command and we are praying for the grace to do it. God has promised to complete the work he has begun in us; we must be patient with ourselves as God is.

I loved what the Lord said to St. Mechtilde, reported by my spiritual director, Dom Boylan. She was lamenting her sins and lack of good works, and deploring the negligence with which she had squandered the gifts of God. Our Lord comforted her, saying: "Even if thou wert perfectly faithful to Me thou shouldst infinitely prefer that My love should repair thy negligence rather than thou shouldst do it so that My love may have all the honor and glory." Oh yes, Jesus, repair my sin and take all the glory!

A recent commentary on sexuality by Francis Canavan, S.J., professor emeritus of political science at Fordham University, has given me some new words about loving the truth even when unable to act it out. He was writing about the aberrant understanding

of sexuality in our day and to the Church teaching which is “perfectly clear and rational, and hangs together very well.” He quotes Dr. Leon Kass, the University of Chicago professor who chairs President Bush’s Council on Bioethics, “Thanks to the sexual revolution, we are able to deny in practice, and increasingly in thought, the inherent procreative teleology of sexuality itself.”

Fr. Canavan comments, “The key phrase in that statement is ‘in thought.’ What we do is certainly important, but our understanding of what we are doing is even more basic. *That is why the Catholic Church has insisted more stringently on orthodoxy (right belief) than on orthopraxis (right conduct). Sin is evil, but not understanding that it is sin is a social disaster.*” (italics are mine)

We couples, man and wife, who believe that headship in the family is God’s plan, fall short of being exemplars of his holy Will. We are sinners. But we *understand the principles* and believe them with all our heart, and in that we take courage that we are not contributing to the social disaster that is all around us.

Because of our fallen milieu, there are guidelines in scripture and in Church law that safeguard the one called to submit to headship from any evil or misguided intent in off-base authority. We are never to submit to evil authority, but that must be left for another time.

Divorce is the outcome of the original sin that alienated man from woman and set her under him. This state of affairs began according to Satan’s valuing of authority as power and prestige, and Satan’s devaluing of service or submission as wholly degrading, thus labeling good “bad”, and bad “good” for all time. With their acceptance of this overturn of reality, and its attendant disobedience, God sadly says to man and woman, “Your will be done.”

But again, Holy Mother Church realizes that her children are immature in holiness. That is why she makes a way for a thorough reconsideration of the vow of matrimony. Was the Third Person, the Holy Spirit truly invited by the two to be their sacramental bond? Perhaps some other “third” usurped God’s place. That third would be a hidden commitment, perhaps alcohol or another addiction or psychological aberration that had no intention of making room for Almighty God. The annulment process is in place for discernment of the bond, the oath, to determine if in God’s eyes it was defective. A true marriage of the two in the Third is unbreakable. What *God has joined* let not man divide. The two have become one flesh.

At this point it is tempting to take up a defense of St. Paul's writings on sexuality. Every word he wrote on sex is appropriate to this writing, but it must be for another time. He reorders the meaning of gender and the sexual relationship to fit life in the Redeemed Order. Each of his instructions can be shown to be in accord with holy Man created in the image of the Trinity. These true principles are as follows:

1. God's Church is marked by a male authority structure.
2. In God's Church the help-meet-needs role is woman's arena, but not exclusively woman's arena, because in the Church, the faithful, men along with women are feminine to God, meant to be the Bride of Christ. This helpmeet role takes many important forms but never assumes more than a limited, designated authority.
3. There will be an acknowledgement in word and deed that authority is a service role and that those responsive to that authority are equals and must be heard. Prestige will never be connected with either role. First, second and third are not values, they are indicators of God's order.
4. All will watch for intrusion of fallen values concerning sexuality, that they not penetrate the Redeemed Order. ". . .equality, meaning '“the same as’ in sexuality is a radical apostasy.” (Keefe p.29)
5. Fruitfulness in body, mind and spirit are marks of submission to God's order in His Church.
6. Sexual submission of each to each is central in the marriage relationship.

Would that these important understandings were being upheld in the local church. Our new priest is just four years into his ordination. He is "as conservative as conservative can be" and thinks so because he was trained in a well-known liberal seminary. Regardless, he is a devoted priest who loves the Church, is my spiritual head, and is rightful father of the family of my church, who provides for us the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus and the other sacraments. I am delighted he is here for us. I see Jesus in him when he preaches and when he stands at the altar offering the Lamb of God in sacrifice.

Within this year, he did a solid teaching on the Eucharist for the Intergenerational Study. Parts of the program were tableaus from scripture about the Eucharist presented by youngsters in the various grades. At this program out came a girl in a white garment. She

spoke Jesus' words and fed the five thousand; her disciples spread through the group giving out bread and "fish," then gathering up the twelve baskets of leftovers. In a second tableau, a young boy was Jesus and he led the twelve apostles through the Last Supper. The twelve were mostly girls. Afterward I asked a good friend who taught one of these groups if gender mattered in selecting Jesus and the apostles. She looked puzzled and replied slowly, "Oh, no, I don't think so." And then added, "We chose her (meaning Jesus) because she has a strong voice." Later over a breakfast snack at the local fast food place, I asked Father, "Did it concern you at all that gender was ignored, and that we had a female Jesus and female apostles?" Brief answer, "No."

When the salt of sound principles has lost its savor, how can its saltiness be restored? How can we expect the next generation to adhere to the holy significance of gender, and specifically the significance of the gender of Jesus and the apostles, the progenitors of our priests and bishops, if sexual difference, under the sway of secular culture, has no meaning at all to their teachers or their priest? Father Keefe writes, "If the nuptial covenant symbolism is taken seriously, the priest offering the One Sacrifice in the person of the Head must act as Bridegroom; for this representation masculinity enters ineluctably into the sacramental sign itself and is indispensable to it; the ordination of women is then an ontological impossibility. . . ." Let's not be confusing the issue; it is serious.

The pinnacle to seek of all God-attributes is Unity. If you thought the pinnacle is "love," unity is the result of true love and is therefore its ultimate manifestation.

In this morning's prayer of the Church, the reading was from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians where unity between opposites is described:

But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end.

Yes, he is describing the hostility between Jew and Gentile and its alleviation in Christ, but the principle he writes about is the same principle that brings into unity all dispirit persons, notably male and female who so readily fall into hostility. Though

through this writing I have seemed to lay down *a law* about their function and relationship, when it comes to unity, to peace, it is only possible through the creation of one out of two in the Third who is Love. He creates in Himself one person in place of the two, thereby bringing hostility to an end.

It takes submission of will in both husband and wife for this to happen, submission to Jesus Christ. They must lay down their wills, first for Him and then for each other. Willfulness is stubborn. Stubborn will begins all the trouble, first in the Garden of Eden and now each moment in our lives. Later on in this same letter, St. Paul begins his finest instruction to husbands and wives with the words, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." It is amply discussed in *Mulieris*.

Again the conclusions reached in the *Mulieris* reflection seem to underestimate the importance of the headship role of the husband, perhaps in sympathy for the woman, as though submission were an evil for her.

Quoting John Paul as he writes about this significant passage in Ephesians, "The author knows that this way of speaking, so profoundly rooted in the customs and religious tradition of the time, is to be understood and carried out in a new way: as a "*mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ*" (cf. Eph 5:21) this is especially true because the husband is called the 'head' of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church; he is so in order to give 'himself up for her' (Eph 5:25), and giving himself up for her means giving up even his own life. However, *whereas in the relationship between Christ and the Church the subjection is only on the part of the Church*, in the relationship between husband and wife the 'subjection' is not one-sided but mutual."

But John Paul has just written that Christ subjected himself totally for the well being of the Church and he renews this at every Eucharist. He continues to give himself up for her. There is mutual subjection on the part of Christ and the Church.

Jesus has two distinct roles on this earth, God and Man. The first – he comes with full authority of the Father, of the total Godhead. He is God. For that, as bearer of all authority he comes as a male exemplar of the masculine principle wholly inherent in Godhead. Secondly, he comes as perfect Man. He shows mankind its stance of obedience before the Father. He displays a perfect submission and obedience to the Father, which all mankind is to emulate. Here he manifests the feminine principle of the Second Person, which is the stance of all mankind, the Bride, before the eternal masculine. But I have another question.

First, it may be the translation that is the problem, but “subjection” is not the translation of the Greek that I favor. Sub-ject means to throw under. There is a violence inherent in “subjection” which puts the subjected down hard. In translating the Greek, if “submission” is used instead, we replace “being thrown” with “being sent.” The Greek *hupotasso* is translated both ways. In this passage the King James uses “submission,” the RSV uses “subject,” and the NAB “subordinate.” However, the use of “submission”, as exemplified in Jesus Christ, speaks of a willing undertaking, a mission to go under.

As I will expand further, the woman is especially equipped for this mission. When she is in Christ she understands it as a special power and undertakes it enthusiastically. The submission on her part is not akin to the submission asked of him, and therefore the last part of the Holy Father’s quotation leads in a problematic direction as it changes the sense of the scripture. Quite other than is asserted there, her submission to her husband is exactly equivalent to the Church’s submission to Christ. It is to godly headship exemplified by both her husband and Christ.

So don't misunderstand this. Their submission to each other is not of the same stripe, nor does it imply that they take turns at headship, which is sometimes said. The husband submits to his headship role, which is demanding and certainly never prestigious. The wife submits to his headship, which is to his authority. As so many have noted, this is not difficult when the man loves his wife as his own body. If he loves her "as Christ loves the Church, giving his life up for her," what woman could resist his direction?

A small commercial sticker from the skin of a pear sticks to the shelf over my kitchen sink. It reads, "Ripe when yields to gentle pressure." When resisting the latest request of Bob, I am apt to look at it. Ripe means sweet and ready. That's maturity. Though far from maturity, my orthopraxis far behind my orthodoxy, but I do seek yieldness to gentle pressure.

In yieldness or submission lies all unity. Unity is dependent on the submitted will following an authorized will. Upon this understanding do we Catholics adhere to each other all around the world and through all time. God left us an authority in his name, the seat of Peter, who claims the obedience of our otherwise divergent wills and through this obedience or submission comes holy unity. This does not mean that we all hold the same political, even religious, convictions, but we understand (orthodoxy) that we will gladly submit to godly authority (orthopraxis) when it is required. Those who will not or cannot should not continue to call themselves Catholic.

The Church with other Christian churches just went through the prayers of a week for Christian unity. In reading the saints one notes their keenly felt anguish over the lack of unity among Christians. I share that anguish. Though it happened many years ago, I still recall clearly one Sunday afternoon when sitting on our porch I began to cry. Bob has rarely seen me cry. He was immediately concerned and said a most amazing thing, "Are you longing for Mother Church?" We had worshipped that day in a Lutheran church in the Twin Cities that was renowned for its music ministry. It was part of our continuing attempt to find a church home after Bob's work in alcoholism treatment moved us from Michigan to Minnesota. I had begun to share with my good husband my leanings toward Catholicism, but for his part he had just reaffirmed his Presbyterian ministry by becoming involved in the local Presbytery.

Although a religious sister had encouraged me to follow my heart in this attraction to Rome, I knew it could never happen. My husband was a solid Protestant minister. But, she assured me, that shouldn't matter. But, how could the most important pledge of unity I had ever made be broken in order to make another pledge of unity? Unity still seems to me to be a peak on the heights. That is why of the four searches, Beauty, Goodness, Truth, and Unity, the latter is the hardest to attain, and is rarely sought. It demands ripeness - yielding my will to a gentle touch.

The yielding that Bob was soon to do still amazes me. At an Ignatian retreat he was given Isaiah 55 for meditation material.

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters:
and he who has no money
come buy wine and milk without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Hearken diligently to me, and eat what is good.
And delight yourselves in fatness.

He heard God speak to him in those cryptic words. A conviction came upon him that he was to become Catholic. He told the retreat director and then an astounded wife. Could such a miracle really happen? That week he had his name "erased" (their term) from the roles of Presbytery effectively cutting off twenty-five years of his educational and professional connections with friends and associates. He led his whole family into the Church Christmas Eve of 1971 when many of the children were in their middle and late teens and could have resisted. They questioned, were satisfied, and

received instruction with the rest of the family. He had no idea that any ministry awaited him in Catholicism.

However, in God's providence, the next year the Archdiocese of Minneapolis/ St. Paul opened classes to prepare their first group of deacons, a diaconate he had never heard of, and he was admitted. Yielding brings the greatest blessings in the Christian's life. Gratitude is a small word to express the heart's response we have felt through all these years.

When the demands of unity are recognized, it all boils down to one word, that hated word, submission. The Protestant ethic or "genius," as I have heard it called, is "free thinking" or "private judgment." Obvious as it should be, this ethic or genius will never bring unity. Viewing the formation of 34,000 different denominations, it is not the Spirit of Unity who motivates such proliferation. It is private judgment. No one dares to use the word "heresy" anymore concerning private judgment, though Chesterton was not afraid to do it.

When my evangelical friend who floats from church to church remonstrates with me, declaring that we have unity between the two of us in Christ, I can only wonder what unity means to her. To me it means submission of will to the Higher Will, to his designated headship, so that we might each put aside our isolated free thinking in order to think God's thoughts after him and obey his holy will united with all the others through the ages who do. To her it means something nebulous and frothy, a kind of fuzzy togetherness in Christ which does not demand any submission of will, allowing all kinds of vagaries of belief. It makes me wonder who the Jesus is that she loves? Maybe just a part of the Jesus who IS. Not the significant part - he who laid out a hierarchy - "thou art Peter and upon this rock" . . . and a form for worship . . . "do this in remembrance of me." Surely, there is grace in her life. God loves her. Yet, St. Paul does write in Philippians, "complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind."

Love, of course, deserves notice, but *mind* here receives the most emphasis. Being of full accord and of *one mind* is never achieved with free thinking, which is akin to the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. (At one point, at my alarm about her interest in Edgar Casey, my friend said to me, "I like to keep an open mind.") Being of one accord depends upon submission of will to a God-given hierarchical authority for our own

safety. Certainly there is sufficiency of wealth under that authority to satisfy all intellectual searching for an eternity.

The words of Scripture that have come closer to my heart than any, words that have given me tearful insight into who Our Lord Jesus is in his essence, follow the above quote from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians (2:5-11). In such beautiful simplicity we see the heart of Jesus and why submission of will is the course that each who loves him must follow.

Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, 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. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ in Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Submission is the very heart of Jesus. He freely submitted his Godhead to become Man, and as a man exemplified a submitted will throughout his earthly life. Unity of husband and wife demands a like freely given, freely understood submission. First the Will of God that both submit to - to be the head of the wife that Scripture prescribes, the husband must heed the Will of God. When that is in place, and he is as heedful to God as he can be (which means obedient to Scripture and to the teaching Magisterium), his further submission is to the difficult and demanding role of headship. Forming his judgment he listens carefully to his wife whom he must love as his own body. The wife's submission is simpler and in some ways easier, she is to with full free will and full understanding submit to the godly headship of her husband. It is a tragedy that receptivity, woman's greatest blessing is regarded as a curse, and initiative as a tyrant will-to-rule. The woman rejects the feminine receptivity in favor of being her own masculine end as "will-to--power." (see West's paragraph,p. 154) Again, deception makes good evil and evil good.

While Adam was scolded for listening to the voice of his wife, Abraham was told by God to listen to the voice of his wife. The response of the two was different. After listening, there must be discernment by the man of his wife's insights, but that is a gift he has been given - judgment, which is not a front-line gift of his wife. There is yielding here. The man submits when he listens (very difficult for many men to do, because often she

will have the decisive insight, which may be hard for him to acknowledge, unless he is humble), then the wife yields her will to the decision made. Out of this humility of both comes a blessed unity expressed in their physical oneness.

When I misunderstood the submission message, I shared the misunderstanding that turns off most women. I thought it meant becoming like those stereotypical nuns, head bowed, mouths unused except for a little bread and soup. A wife's mouth is meant to express her insights, in order to give her husband's decisions her thoughtful guidance. Together they agree that the decisions are finally his, but not until he has carefully considered all she has to tell him. For her part, she relinquishes concern and worry once the input has been given. It is not that she ultimately trusts her husband, though she develops trust in him, but she trusts the Third Person in their union – God! It is in such a marriage that “covenantal order and harmony of the One Flesh, of the holy society that we belong to God, begins to pervade the world.” (Keefe p. 255)

The model for this, need I say again, is the Blessed Trinity? Jesus, the Son and Second Person, speaks to his Father, and is heard, says Hebrews, because of his godly fear, that is, his obedience. In his final prayer Jesus prays, *“That they all be one, Father, as you and I are one.”* (John 17:11) How are the Father and the Son one? They are united in the Third Person, and they are united because the Son submits wholeheartedly to the Father, making the Father's will, his will.

Based on sexuality, this is the model for family; it is also the model of Christ's Church. It is for this reason that headship was established in the household of God by Jesus who self-consciously instituted the same hierarchy for his kingdom that had first been established in the Davidic Kingdom. Giving Peter the keys is a replay of the action in Isaiah 22:22 where the steward appointed by David for his Kingdom is given and carries the keys that open and close his treasure rooms. Peter and his successors are the appointed stewards of Jesus' Kingdom. Jesus, David's Greater Son, conscious of his predecessor, significantly gives his keys for Peter to open and close the treasure rooms of his Kingdom that is eternal.

But that does not mean that the faithful who accept Peter's headship are voiceless. Those who have godly authority must heed carefully the input of those they order. This has sometimes been a failure of the hierarchy, even in these last years. The recognition of the *equality of worth* in the roles of authority and obedience in the

groom/bride relationship of clergy and faithful - that the role of authority is *service* to the faithful on too many occasions has been sadly forgotten.

Sexuality was ordained *before the beginning*. The principles to be made flesh were indicative of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Creator. Sexuality thus formed the human family in an image of the Trinity. Sex is, therefore, the underlying theme of all scripture, and upon the principles of sex is formed the Great Family, the Church. The scene of the final act of this age is a marriage feast at which the Bride without spot or wrinkle, a perfect Bride, goes in with her risen Perfect Bridegroom who has so magnificently died for her. Pray that we all may be ready for such a blessed eternity, and that no one hear those dreaded words, "Depart from me, I never knew (yada) you." The marriage chamber is readied and the Consummation is at hand.

Quoting John Paul II (Ouillet p.176)

Very beloved brothers and sisters, you live in the heart of the sacrament of the Covenant, nourishing your marriage with the Eucharist and illuminating the Eucharist with your sacrament of marriage; it is not simply a worldly reality. Despite your limitations and weaknesses, your light humbly and at the same time boldly shines among men . . . seeing the way you live, may they catch a glimpse of the Lord's enthusiastic 'yes' to authentic love!"