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**THE SANCTITY OF LIFE**

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## **The Holiness of Life**

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### ***Preface***

Whoever believes the fact that man is created by God must believe that man has his beginning in His deepest being, the heart of God. The existence of this creature in the world must give praise to the glory of God and be a saving light for mankind. Man is not an emanation of God, but is created in God's image in love and truth. Thus, he exists to give observable testimony of God. The holiness of human life is a part of the great plan of creation, in which God expresses Himself with liberal love.

## **1) Reading the scriptures with faith, using clarified criticism**

### 1.1. Neither Myth nor modern observation reports

„The fundamental statements about Christian belief regarding creation can be found in the first pages of the Old Testament in the Priestly report (Gen 1,1-2,4a) and in the older, more anthropomorphic, Yawistic Text“ (Gen 2,4b-3,24) (Scheffczyk, III,59<sup>1</sup>).

The text (Gen 1-11) may not be taken purely literally, as if, modernly put, it were a report given through a hidden camera. It would be just as inaccurate to dismiss it as a myth in the attempt to understand it. It is helpful to keep a grasp on the essential difference between myth and creation narration.

## 1.2. What are myths?

The myth contrasts Bible narration. The enlightenment argues that Gen 1to3 only consists of pieces of mythical origin joined together wanting to illustrate the beginning in a highly imaginative way the inexplicable of the beginning. It would be important to understand here what myths really are. The myth wants to serve as a world explanation , then however, doesn't focus on the relationship of man and God. The myth wants to explain causally in a retro projection particularly the conditions of the world which are experienced by all people, natural and cyclical (like the development and dying of nature and of man himself). This explanation is without any direct influence on the development of the world today. <sup>2</sup>

## 1.3. The literary type of the creation report (faith and creation as the beginning of salvation)

The biblical report, using without difficulty certain illustrative categories, taken from mythical observation however is decidedly anti-mythical.

- The main element is the absolute relationship to God.
- The absolute missing any trace of the struggle between God and nature ,
- The verb " bara " (created) shows God's actions in absolute sovereignty (and God spoke ... and God made ... and was very good ");
- any astral powers primarily are submitted strictly to his actions -- ;
- speaking naturally about the two sexes -- without demonizing or sacralizing
- all things are in their order and truth expression of the creator, disconnected from all sorcery and magic, they have a rational light which can be understood.
- everything is seen in the dependence on God first and then in mutual relationship of creatures;
- it becomes clear that the eleven chapters of the story of Abraham that follow lead to a perspective of a God that is working in the report of the creation as well as demonstrating his almighty power in the story of Abraham. The beginnings are in an analogy to the story of the fathers (Scheffczyk, III, 63) <sup>3</sup>.

## 1.4. The absolute difference: man is more than a creature

In a magnificent description the word „bara“ (created) is used. It is a terminus technicus of the Old Testament exclusively explaining Gods deeds.

In Gen 1-3, and 4 -11, everything is directed to the explanation of the relationship of God to man. Genesis 1-11 is therefore the basis of understanding for the life of each individual person and our history.

## 2. Man, image and likeness of God

### 2.1. Man shall belong only to God

After the monotonous repetition on the first five days "and God said, and it was so, and God made", there is quite a change noticeable in the style of the verses dedicated to the creation of the man: then God said "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness". So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen 1,26-27).

Evidently the highlight of the 6-day creation week lies here. The news which is expressed here is phenomenal and must be understood in two directions. The person to be created comes from the most inner loving center of God: "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness". It is unspeakable that one of the creatures shall result from such a familiarity of God despite the absolute difference between creator and creature, thus must and may carry as the most inner feature the similarity to God. And in the other direction: God takes care for this creature quite particularly. Man, similar to him, must belong to him completely. He is taken in the most inner familiarity with God. The paradise commandment again is an expression and proof of this electing: man who has completely received his existence from God's act of love shall enter into the community with God through a commitment in free love<sup>5</sup>. It is very advisable to read what Pope John Paul II explained in his Wednesday catecheses of 1979 to 1984 about man and woman.

In the account of Creation in the Bible we find both, the realism of risky life experience<sup>6</sup> as well as the *secret of man* and marriage.

The basic sanctity of human life doesn't only refer to the inwardness of the human conscience but to this sanctity belongs also the body and the duality of the sexes as well as passing on life in the family. Belonging completely to God expresses itself best in man being able to give himself to the loving God in a free decision of love. (commandment – obedience – chance for free act of love)

### 2.2. The basic loneliness of man on his way to God

The Pope spoke in his very suggestive analysis of the second chapter of Genesis in October 10. 1979 of a double solitude of man.

Man but stands in a deep connection to all creatures surrounding him. The second chapter of Genesis shows in a supreme picture how man takes over in the midst of all creatures his function as a king of the universe by giving everything his name but he nevertheless remains lonesome in a double sense. The Pope reveals a perspective of rare beauty here.

With all his similarity and his original bond to all creation that surrounds him, from whose "dust" he is formed, man stays anyway in a final and unpronounceable "solitude". It is the loneliness of man as such (man and woman); hence not merely the dissatisfaction produced in a man by the absence of the woman<sup>7</sup>. The Pope insists on a double solitude.

- One of the two comes from his innermost nature being a creature, that is from his being

a creature in reason and love ( clearly in Genesis 2). The lasting need of the creature, to find the creator;

- The other solitude corresponds to the mutual relationship of man and woman.

This solitude in the world is consoled by the relationship of man and woman but at the same points out to the absolute God.

The first form of solitude, the metaphysical, has nothing to do with being an outcast as sinful man. It is the deepest dissatisfaction in himself, being directed in his entire self to someone, that is the creator God. Even if we believingly know that in paradise there was a closeness to God that was full of, this grace presupposes that man always experiences *himself* only as insufficient. Also satisfied by this grace he knows that in himself he always remains in absolute neediness, in infinite thirst for truth, directed to the good, the beautiful, to God himself.

### 2.3. The two sexes as complete expression of the image of God and way to God

It is never enough for him, to be part of the universe. Dealing with the world man learns to ask a question to himself (Gen 2.19). Why is no other creature made comparable to him? Even in the happy relationship to the woman the secret arises again. As man and woman also become complete and enrich themselves very much, neither he nor she can be ever satisfied by a creature. Man and woman are in a mysterious way for each other a mirror of the blessing God, companions in happiness and sorrow and the sign of a living future.

So it is evident again what man actually is in the duality of the sexes and in the mutual relationship of man and woman. While all other creatures are made according to their species, man is made according to a different species. Only God can completely be enough for him. No philosophy has expressed this better. The notion arises that the holiness of a single life is a mission. Because his holiness must become the holiness of the others, in friendship, in marriage, family and in the society. Thus the full dignity and the mission of the duality of the two sexes are accomplished.

The duality of the sexes is neither demonized nor mythologically divinized. Each one must be God's image in grace ( not only but especially in the sexual duality). This shows in incomparable depth how loving your neighbour, especially in the duality of the sexes is an expression of God in love and a way to grow towards God.

A very essential consideration should be made here, namely, asking what is the meaning of virginity and living a consecrated life. Especially this way of life wants to represent the last and definite meaning of all human love anticipatorily. Virginity for the Kingdom's sake becomes for marriage and ever searching humanity in its higher and deeper meaning the example and goal.

It is important to affirm simply and decidedly that both sexes according to Gen 1.27 are entitled to the absolute and equal dignity that counts before God. Whatever the two are in their need and ability for addition (Gen 2), they must be as an equal image of God. "the relationship between man and woman as persons is raised here like in all other cultures to the basic form of human society."<sup>8</sup> Not subordination but polarity on the way to God.

#### 2.4. The friendship with God

Scheffczyk (III, 74) points to the choruslike repetition: " And God saw that it was good." Scripture wants to express that the perfect God gave his highest creatures in pure love before the first sin the seal of immaculate goodness. It doesn't suffice wanting to see primarily the image of God in man in his capability for reasoning or in his sublimity over all creatures or in his upright walk. This is important and constitutive for his being. But something much deeper is meant by the image of God. While all creatures exist only indirectly in relationship to God (namely, as far as man recognizes them and finds in them God's traces), man is the only earthly creature which exists in God in an incomparable, immediate opposite number. Man shall live in the garden of God, in paradise; God devotedly takes care for the loneliness of man. Man is surrounded by God's care and love. The commandment in paradise, the vocation to the probation of man in his liberty as creature, again is the highest call of God on the way of life and the divine fulfillment. All this sacred closeness to God always is connected with the creative act of God. This is the case in a child that has just been conceived, in the embryo and with an adult person? Everybody must be snatched from the power of evil and led in God's community by baptism certainly since the original sin. The abominable crime of abortion (GSp 51.3: "crimen nefandum") offends the act of the creator, for God himself has already called the nascent creature to this divine intimacy.

#### 2.5. Alienation from God

Considering the height and depth of the vocation of man by God, it becomes clear how profound the misfortune of sin is. If God gives him new hope, man only can find his perfection if he doesn't banish himself to solitude in distance to God. He can find fulfillment, eternity, life, love without limits only with God. And every man must lead his neighbor into this divine vocation. Everyone always must be for his neighbor the sign of this orientation, this relating to God. Otherwise man becomes for man a seducer as in his decline in paradise. Thus caring for one's neighbor is included in the heartfelt relationship with the holy God. Without a heartfelt relationship with God humanity sinks into the emptiness of the lack of purpose or is crushed under the burden of exhausting sensuality. But by embracing the neighbor, friendship to God is strengthened and becomes real.

### 3. **Creature of the Trinitarian God**

#### 3.1. Data of the Bible

If not particularly certain in the Old Testament, so it is clear to the Christian anyway that he can be not imaging God, if he is not an image of the Trinitarian God. To decode certain hints of the Old Testament is certainly only possible in the light of the new testament. The "*word of the Lord*" (Lógos) counts as the creative action of God however also as that sacred power that gives the history of Israel direction, strength and aim ( Psalm for 33.6; 1 Sam 9.27; 2 Sam 7.4). This word is also the "*wisdom*" of God (cf. Proverbs 8.27; Ecclesiastes 7.24 ss; 8.1; 8.18) (cf. Scheffczyk III, 115). The expression of this wisdom (sophía) is so strong that the highly learned and deeply religious Hellenistic Jew Philo was moved to recognize a second godly existence (deúteros theós).

It is not necessary to suspect in "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" an express revelation of the third divine Person. In the New Testament the spirit is revealed, often mentioned as spirit sent into the world as an expression of God, and in the end is the sanctifying all redemption mediating personal spirit.

In the Gospel of John the creator role "of the word" is raised to his highest meaning ( Joh 1,1-14; 1 Joh 1.1; Rev 19.13). This also includes, what is expressed in creation has an inner Trinitarian depth and meaning.

### 3.2. Teaching of the church

The IV Lateran council raised it to the dogma that the Trinity... alone is the origin of everything, without the Trinity one cannot find any other " (for DH for 804: (quae . Trinitas sola est universorum principium, praeter quod aliud inveniri non potest, ").

### 3.3. The fullness of our vocation

If God, our goal, is the only bliss, then it becomes understandable that every man in his innermost nature originates from the secret of this Trinitarian God. God takes up nothing "foreign" into himself, but that made from his heart. He, the Absolute, being our origin can only be our complete goal that makes us happy. *The full dignity and goal of mankind is indeed this Trinitarian relationship:* to the spirit who gives us God's peace and the power to enlighten the world and create unity; to the Son who shares with us his divine love welling over which always originates from God and leads to God and already gives us a share of his eternal kingship; to the Father as final cause and giving himself , then, all in all " be for Will (1 Cor 15.28).

## 4. **Created in Christ by Christ and for Christ**

### 4.1. In the gospel of John and the writings of Paul

As just mentioned this Trinitarian truth about man (and about the universe) develops in the prolog of the gospel of John. „ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made (John 1,1-3).

St. Paul gives this thought a dramatic expression. The creator role of Christ is just as well a central point here: " (...) yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. " (1 Cor 8.6)

The Colossian letter 1,15-18a speaks in unsurpassable clarity.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.<sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church;

## 4.2 Protology and Eschatology

Faithfully recognizing the teaching of Jesus and his Easter omnipotence gives us the certainty about the definite meaning of history (Eschatology). The same proofs of God's power in history require radical contemplation of the beginning of the universe, a Protology.- the mystery of the cross and the Easter victory then have reached her full meaning -- , if the same mercy of Easter will have created for us the same victory. `Through him and for him´ is the protological anticipation of what eschatology promises: " 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he has put everything under his feet. Now when it says that everything has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all (1Cor 15,24-28)." Only He by whom everything was created, can redeem and fulfill (cf. Ef 1,10-12).

## 4.3 Cosmic momentousness in the great praise of Christ by the church

Even though this sanctity can be infused completely and without fault, one cannot deny that scripture considers every creature directed to the relationship in Christ to God. (to emphasize again, the relationship to God is nothing external, moral but means the goal lies in the inner, holy and worshiped existence of God) . – Here a comparison may be helpful, namely that all Christians share a certain vocation, that is, to lead their neighbors into this divine determination. A Jewish girl wasn't incorporated as the boys by the curtailment for the people of God. However, by the faithful prayer of the mother and the father every girl belonged to the sacred people. The christian mother, who prays over the child in the womb, gives it back into the eternal and holy order, where " (...) from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. " (1 Cor 8.6)<sup>10</sup>. The prayer of the parents over the preborn child already is celebrating the holy vocation of human life and is like the introitus of baptism (maybe not very near), in which redemption is given completely and without fault.

Life is sacred from its divine determination. In prayer and perfectly in baptism and in the sacraments the curse of original sin is defeated. And every man is able to build this sanctity for himself and others. Particularly the family, mother and father have a sanctifying and divine mediation here.

The church cannot celebrate holy mass, this Song of Songs of the holy liturgy, without including always and every day through pure faith all people in the adoring praise formula (great Doxology):

*Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit; all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, forever and ever. Amen.*