



THE OPEN WINDOW Fr. Louis Hohman

Q. In a recent article, you stated that there may not or may be Adam and Eve. That is not really important, you said.

If that is the case, where did original sin come from? As a child I was taught that because of Adam and Eve disobeying God we inherited original sin. Baptism cleanses us of that sin. If we are not to believe in Genesis, we don't have to believe in the birth

of Christ as foretold in Isaias 9:6, 7 or in the suffering and death of Christ also foretold in Isaias 53:7-12.

As a family trying very hard to be children of God, you don't give us much guidance. We would appreciate a reply to this letter, since we are in a mild state of confusion.

A. You make the statement, "If we are not to believe in the Genesis." Yes, we very definitely must believe in the Book of Genesis since we already believe it is a part of the Bible, the word of God. You are making what is a common mistake — confusing the literal interpretation of Genesis with the truth of Genesis.

In interpreting this book, as any book, we must first seek out the author's intention in writing the book and also determine the form he is using. Is he writing prose or poetry; is he being literal or is he using allegory or metaphor?

We must ask the further question: how did the Hebrews of the centuries before Christ really understand history? Did they simply make a factual presentation of what happened or did they tell their history through literary vehicles, stories, which may in themselves have not been factual but which conveyed a deeper more abiding truth. In the case of Genesis the latter seems to have been the case.

Applying this to the doctrine of original sin, we must necessarily conclude that the Book of Genesis teaches the doctrine of original sin. It teaches us that man from his very origins became a traitor to his God, himself and his fellow man by the abuse of his free will. He freely chose to act contrary to nature's laws and the Author of nature. It teaches us that this sin tends to multiply itself until the human race became hopelessly enmeshed in sin. It tells us that we are all infected from the time we are born with the accumulated evil of the human race as well as our own selfish instincts from which we are not emancipated. It teaches us that sin has dreadful consequences for society as well as the individual (Cain and Abel, Tower of Babel) and that it leads to pain, struggle, suffering and death. It teaches us that mankind could never emerge from this slavery except through a Saviour who would rise above sin and bring us once again into union with God. These truths come through loudly and clearly from the Book of Genesis and are not dependent on whether Adam and Eve ate a piece of fruit.

I am personally not prepared to say whether the story of Adam and Eve and the fall in the Garden are literally true but as I said, it is really not important whether it was a factual happening. Original sin is something which is very real and has to be dealt with every day of our lives. I don't know how you feel about it, but I feel a real need for a Saviour and if I don't have him at the center of my life, I've had it.

One other thing. Suppose we were to concede that Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and were ejected from the Garden. Please don't think that God just arbitrarily said, "I'm so angry with this couple I made that I'm going to infect all their children forever with this sin of theirs." I cannot believe in such a God. But if we believe that all human beings from the beginning leaned heavily toward being bad guys and more often than not were (and that's quite a mystery) and God in his infinite love lifted us up (or gave us the possibility) through Jesus Christ; then the whole thing makes very good sense. And the Book of Isaias remains intact and true.

Art Show, Sale To Benefit Seton Branch

An "Evening of Art" to benefit the 70th Seton Branch of St. Mary's Hospital is scheduled from 5 to 8 p.m. June 16 at the Nazareth College Arts Center.

Music, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will provide the atmosphere for the group show and sale by 25 area artists and craftsmen who will feature paintings, prints, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, wood turning and enameling. The 70th Seton Branch will receive commissions on all sales.

More than 1,200 invitations have been issued. Mrs. Henry Rohrer Jr. and Mrs. James Haggerty are co-chairmen. Seton proceeds will be used to aid health care at St. Mary's Hospital.

Participating artists include:

- Ruth Berry, Isobel Boyd, Jean Card, Jeanne Cawley, Douglas Coffey, Ann Edwards, Joan Foss, Donald Franklin, Bernard Gerstner, William Hill, Ray and Linda Hobart, Jean Johnson, John Matott, Bernadette Merkel, Isobel Neuberger, Jeanne Parker, Doris Perry, Tori Reinhard, Patricia Rohrer, Edythe Shedden, G. A. Sheller, Wendell Smith, Kay Stowell, Mary Jean Weld, and Carl Zollo.



HEADS KNIGHTS

Anthony B. Caramela has been elected as the State Deputy to lead New York State's 125,000 members of the Knights of Columbus.

Past grand knight of St. Luke's Council, Caramela is serving his 12th term as financial secretary and is a functional member of practically every committee of his council.

Under the last seven state deputies, Caramela has served as vice chairman and auxiliary chairman of various committees. For the past four years he has been chairman of the Catholic Affairs Committee.

Past chairman of the Manhattan, Bronx and Staten Island Conference, delegate to the Supreme Convention in 1968, he is an active member of Our Lady of Assumption Parish, Bronx.



Photo by Susan McKinney

Tradition Lives On

St. Pius X is one of the few parishes in the diocese where girls still make their first Holy Communion in long white dresses. The group above was the first class to receive Communion in the new parish church. The ceremonies took place Saturday, May 12. Father Donald Murphy is pastor.

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