



THE OPEN WINDOW Fr. Louis Hohman

Q. Some months ago I wrote asking about Adam and Eve and Original Sin. Now your answer was very interesting but I didn't mean to question so much concerning Adam and Eve as I did about original sin. I understand about the first people on earth, etc. but am still wondering about when the Church started teaching the doctrine of Original Sin.

I think it would be legitimate to say that the doctrine of original sin goes back to St. Paul, Romans 5:17: "If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ." Paul's meaning is death came through Adam, life through Christ. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) synthesized the traditional doctrine as you learned it in your catechism.

Today the majority of theologians find insurmountable difficulties in the traditional concept of one man, Adam, representing the whole human race and losing grace by a single act not only for himself but for the whole human race. Obviously I cannot recount all of these but I would recommend to you Christ and Original Sin by Father Peter DeRosa, published by Bruce 1967.

Among the difficulties are these. Why should sin be handed on? Why should all mankind be affected by the sin of one man? How exactly was Adam the first man? In the light of the findings of evolution, how could Adam and Eve have been immortal, perfect in knowledge, free from pain, indestructible? How was sin transmitted?

I know that some of my readers

will respond that these things must be taken on faith and are mysteries. But, I answer, mysteries can go beyond reason, but not contradict it; religion and science cannot be at odds. They both are truth.

An impressive number of impressive theologians are taking the view that Genesis was teaching us the very important truth that men are one by reason of a common origin, a common destiny and common iniquity.

What is meant by original sin is that from the very beginning human beings deviated from the plan which God had for them and that since every man in involved in the sin of every other man (affected by them), each of us, from our very beginning, grow up in a climate of sin. Added to this is the fact that it is required that we have a Saviour to enable us to rise above ourselves, that is, to raise our passions and appetites to the freedom of the sons of God.

When the Bible speaks of Adam and Eve being perfect in knowledge and freedom as well as immune to death, it is speaking of the condition toward which we are heading through Jesus Christ our Lord, according to these theologians.

To me this offers a much more reasonable explanation of the human condition without sacrificing one iota of the Bible's truth or integrity. Most of us have gone well beyond demanding a literal interpretation of the first three chapters of Genesis. If you feel more comfortable with the literal interpretation, just remember that we still both believe the same basic doctrine and are not really at odds except in manner or mode of interpretation.

Bergen Meeting Sets 3 Catholics

Three Roman Catholics will preach at this year's Bergen Week of Renewal, to be held July 16-22 in Tent Village.

Father Francis MacNutt, OP, one of the leaders in the current Pentecostal movement will preach Thursday, July 19, at 10:30 a.m. in the Methodist Church and again at 8 p.m. in the tent.

Larry and Margaret Tomczak will preach at the Methodist Church at 11 a.m. on Sunday, July 22, and again at 7:30 p.m. in the tent.

Pentecostal Prayer Groups

The following is a list of Masses and prayer meetings held by Catholic Pentecostal groups in the Rochester Area.

Masses are said at St. Lawrence, at 8 p.m. on the First Friday of the month; St. Augustine, 7 p.m. on June 17 and 24; St. Charles Borromeo, 7:30 p.m. on the last Thursday of the month.

Weekly prayer meetings are held at St. Peter and Paul at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and at St. Theodore at 8 p.m. on Mondays.

Prayer groups also hold meetings at the following private homes: Mr. and Mrs. William Buechel, 3681 Lake Ave.; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dunning, 159 Chestnut Ridge Road, Chili Center; Mr. and Mrs. John Donnelly, 9 Ellicott St.; Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Hauser, 1570 Culver Road; Mr. and Mrs. James Reid, Amity St., Spencerport; and Mr. and Mrs. Donald Wollschleger, 350 Winton Road North; Mr. and Mrs. Klaus Schulz, 156 N. Greece Road, Hilton.

For inclusion in this list call June Borreggine at (716) 458-5365.



THE SLOT MAN Carmen Viglucci

The promoters of "The Living Bible" have called our attention to the fact that Watergate has a precedent of sorts in Old Testament history.

The Bible tells about the weeping and confession of national sins at Jerusalem's water gate some 2,500 years ago!

It's all in Nehemias, Chapters 8 and 9.

For instance, "And the seventh month came and the children of Israel were in their cities. And all the people were gathered together as one man to the street which is before the water gate, and they spoke to Esdras, the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses.

"Then Esdras the priest brought the law before the multitude of men and women, and all those that could understand, in the first day of the seventh month.

"And he read it plainly in the street that was before the water gate, from the morning until midday, and the men, and the women, and all those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive.

"... And he read in the book of the law of God day by day,

from the first day till the last, and they kept the solemnity seven days, and in the eighth day, a solemn assembly according to the manner.

"And in the four and twentieth day of the month the children of Israel came together with fasting and with sackcloth, and earth upon them.

"And the seed of the children of Israel separated themselves from every stranger, and they stood, and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.

"And they rose up to stand: and they read in the book of the law of the Lord their God, four times in the day, and four times they confessed, and adored the Lord their God."

This amounted to the confessing of national sins in public and the participants were high government officials.

Then a national reform was decided on, and agreement reached by everyone, leaders and followers alike, to obey all God's laws thereafter.

Let's pray that our modern day Watergate produce a like effect.

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