

Pastoral Perspective

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

God's Doing — Man's Undoing

This column is written with the hope that it will cause all of us to pause to reflect on the beauty of God's creation which mirrors His love and wisdom. We who have been called to preside over the work of His hands are being strongly reminded of our careless neglect in our reverence for creation — with the growing evidence of pollution of air and water and our merciless destruction of life — even of human life, the crowning glory of God's work. The inspiration for this theme came from a recent priests' retreat conducted by Father George Maloney, S.J. I shall present the material in parallel columns to emphasize the contrast between the GENESIS ACCOUNT of creation and REVERSE CREATION.



CREATION STORY (Genesis I and II 1-4)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit hovered over the water.

God said, 'LET THERE BE LIGHT', and there was light. GOD SAW THAT LIGHT WAS GOOD, and God divided light from darkness. God called light 'day', and darkness he called 'night'. Evening came and morning came: the first day.

God said, 'Let there be a vault in the waters to divide the waters in two'. And so it was. God made the vault, and it divided the waters above the vault from the waters under the vault. God called the vault 'heaven'. Evening came and morning came: the second day.

God said, 'Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass, and let dry land appear'. And so it was. God called the dry land 'earth' and the mass of waters 'seas', and GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

God said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and fruit trees bearing fruit with their seed inside, on the earth'. And so it was. The earth produced vegetation: plants bearing seed in their several kinds, and trees bearing fruit with their seed inside in their several kinds. GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD. Evening came and morning came: the third day.

God said, 'Let there be lights in the vault of heaven to divide day from night, and let them indicate festivals, days and years. Let them be lights in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth.' And so it was. God made the two great lights: the greater light to govern the day, the smaller light to govern the night, and the stars. God set them in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth, to govern the day and the night and to divide light from darkness. GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD. Evening came and morning came: the fourth day.

God said, 'Let the waters team with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth within the vault of heaven'. And so it was. God created great sea-serpents and every kind of living creature with which the waters team, and every kind of winged creature. GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD. God blessed them: saying, 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds multiply upon the earth'. Evening came and morning came: the fifth day.

God said, 'Let the earth produce every kind of living creature: cattle, reptiles, and every kind of wild beast'. And so it was. God made every kind of wild beast, every kind of cattle, and every kind of land reptile. GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts, and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth'.

God created man in the image of himself,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living animals on the earth.' God said, 'See, I give you all the seed-bearing plants that are upon the whole earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this shall be your food. To all wild beasts, all birds of heaven and all living reptiles on the earth I give all the foliage of plants for food. And so it was. GOD SAW ALL HE HAD MADE, AND INDEED IT WAS VERY GOOD. Evening came and morning came: the sixth day.

Thus heaven and earth were completed with all their array. On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he had rested after all his work of creating.

SUCH WERE THE ORIGINS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH WHEN THEY WERE CREATED.

REVERSE CREATION (Anonymous)

In the end, man destroyed the heaven that was called earth. The earth had been beautiful until the spirit of man moved over it and destroyed all things.

And man said.....

LET THERE BE DARKNESS.....and there was darkness. And man liked the darkness; so he called the darkness "security". And he divided himself into races and religions and classes of society. And there was no evening and no morning on the seventh day before the end.

And man said.....

Let there be a strong government to control us in our darkness. Let there be armies to control our bodies, so that we may learn to kill one another neatly and efficiently in our darkness. And there was no evening and no morning on the sixth day before the end.

And man said.....

Let there be rockets and bombs to kill faster and easier. Let there be gas chambers and furnaces to be more thorough. And there was no evening and no morning on the fifth day before the end.

And man said.....

Let there be drugs and other forms of escape, for there is this constant annoyance — reality — which is disturbing our comfort. And there was no morning and no evening on the fourth day before the end.

And man said.....

Let there be division among the nations, so that we may know who is our common enemy. And there was no morning and no evening on the third day before the end.

And finally man said.....

LET US CREATE GOD IN OUR IMAGE. Let some other god compete with us. Let us say that God thinks — as we think; hates — as we hate; and kills — as we kill. And there was no morning and no evening on the second day before the end.

On the LAST day there was a great noise on the face of the earth. Fire consumed the beautiful globe, and there was — SILENCE.

The blackened earth now rested to worship the one true God. And God saw all that man had done and in the silence over the smoldering ruins HE WEPT.