

RCIA: Symbolon Lesson 4

The Story of Salvation: Creation, Fall, and Redemption

† Opening Prayer: (from the Roman Missal, Eucharistic Prayer IV)

“We give you praise Father most holy, for you are great and you have fashioned all your works in wisdom and in love. You formed man in your own image and entrusted the whole world to his care, so that in serving you alone, the Creator, he might have dominion over all creatures. And when through disobedience he had lost your friendship, you did not abandon him to the domain of death...And you so loved the world, Father most holy, that in the fullness of time you sent your Only Begotten Son to be our Savior...To accomplish your plan, he gave himself up to death, and, rising from the dead, he destroyed death and restored life. And that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father, as the first fruits for those who believe, so that, bringing to perfection his work in the world, he might sanctify creation to the full.

- **Song:** For the Fruits of This Creation
- **Catechism references for further reflection:**
 - Created in the Image of God: CCC 356-358
 - Before the Fall: CCC 376-379
 - Original Sin: CCC396-405
 - The gift of Jesus: CCC 457-460
 - The Catholic Church: CCC 830-848
 - Sending of the Holy Spirit: CCC 731-737
 - The Last Judgement: CCC 1038-1041

† **What is “Salvation”?** “Salvation is the forgiveness of sins and restoration of friendship with God, which can be done by God alone.”

- The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** (CCC)

✠ **What is “concupiscence”?** As a result of original sin, human nature is “*wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin.*” Catholics also believe that through the graces of the sacrament of Baptism, original sin is removed and we are filled with God’s life, but concupiscence, the tendency toward sin, remains throughout life. “*Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ’s grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.*” (CCC 405)

- **Questions for Discussion:**

1. What is the “Story of Salvation”? Why did Jesus have to become a man and die in order to redeem us?

2. What is “original sin” and how does it affect us even today? What effect does the Sacrament of Baptism have on original sin and its consequences?

3. What are some ways in which we may choose to follow God or not in our everyday lives in both the big decisions as well as the routine events of our lives?

4. Why did Jesus create the Church and what does He give us through His Church in order to strengthen us in our daily battle with evil and temptation?

- Weekly Gospel Reading: 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt. 20:1-16a)

Jesus told his disciples this parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o'clock, the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just. 'So they went off. And he went out again around noon, and around three o'clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o'clock, the landowner found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard.'

When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the heat.' He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?' Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Lectio Divina

- 1. Lectio:** Read the passage slowly, perhaps several times. Let a phrase or two catch your attention.
- 2. Meditatio:** Reflect on the meaning of the words you have chosen. How is God speaking to you through this reading?
- 3. Oratio:** Raise your mind and heart to God, using the message of this reading.
- 4. Contemplatio:** Rest quietly in the presence of God.
- 5. Actio:** Resolve to change your life in some positive way.

- Closing Prayer.