

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: 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mk. 10:2-16)

The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, "Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" They were testing him. He said to them in reply, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her." But Jesus told them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, *God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.* So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

In the house the disciples again questioned Jesus about this. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.

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.