

## 2) *The Created Nature of Humankind*

128 As the Book of Genesis tell us, God created the human being out of the "dust of the earth"—matter—breathing into us the "breath of life," by virtue of which the human being becomes a "living being" (Gn 2:7). Holy Scripture portrays the Creator with the image of a potter, who moulds humankind according to his Image from the clay. This Image (see Gn 1:27) is the incarnate Son of God: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Go! 1:15). Humankind is created in the image of the Son:

*Now God ... modelled [the human being] after his own Son; for by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, the whole human being, and not [merely] a part of it, was made in the likeness of God.... for the perfect human being consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the Spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature that was moulded after the image of God.<sup>110</sup>*

129 The image of God defines the dignity of the human being—already in the bodily state—as being good. The goodness of the body especially consists in the fact that in our relationships, through the body, we are able to express ourselves as persons. We receive this ability as a gift from God. The human body is able to receive into itself the Spirit of God; and so, the apostle Paul refers to the human body as the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6:19). Here lies the mystery of the body and the fullness of its destiny. this is why Christianity regards the human body as a temple, consecrated for the service of God and neighbour.

130 Having created us in his own image, God calls us to holiness: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless" (1 Thes 5:23). Saint Gregory of Nyssa thus states that Saint Paul uses "the word `body' for the nutritive part; denoting the sensitive [part] by the word `soul,' and the intellectual by the word `spirit."<sup>111</sup>

131 For the sanctification of humankind, God gave one commandment. We read: "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Gn 2:17). The fulfilment of this one commandment in Paradise would have permitted humankind to eat of the "tree of life;" it would have allowed them "to receive immortality as reward from [God];"<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, 6, 1: PG 7, 1136, emphasis added.

<sup>111</sup> GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, 8: PG 44, 144.

<sup>112</sup> THEOPHALLUS OF ANTIOCH, *To Autolytus*, 11,24,27: PG 6,1089,1093.

and it would have transfigured them "into one Spirit with the Lord,"<sup>113</sup> into "a spiritual being, who has surrendered the body to the authority of the Spirit."<sup>114</sup>

### 3) *"Man and Woman He Created Them"*

- 132 The image of God is the foundation not only of the personal uniqueness of every human being, but also of the human community: "God said: 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness' ...So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gn 1:26-27). The communion of Persons in the Most Holy Trinity is the prototype for human community. Saint John of Damascus explains how the first human community came to be an icon of the Tr-Personal God. He writes that Adam, who had no created cause for his being and was not begotten, distinct from other human beings, is an image of the uncaused Father-God, the Almighty and Cause of all things. Then, the son born to Adam is an image of the begotten Son and Word of God; and Eve, who came forth from Adam (but was not born from him), signifies the procession of the Person of the Holy Spirit.<sup>115</sup>
- 133 The image of the Most Holy Trinity in human community is the natural unity of human community that exists within the communion of the love between Adam and Eve. Complementing one another physically, psychologically, and spiritually, Adam and Eve are different, but at the same time, equal persons.
- 134 In the wonderful image of Eve's creation from the "rib of Adam" (see Gn 2:21), Holy Scripture describes the equality and the difference between the man and the woman, who form the first community. Adam professes Eve to be his own: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman" (Gn 2:23). Adam embraces Eve as a person, his equal and simultaneously his companion for life (see Gn 2:24).

### 4) *The Freedom and Responsibility of Humankind*

- 135 The Lord called humankind to holiness in freedom and responsibility: "If you choose, you can keep the commandments; and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice" (Sir 15:15). God settled humanity in

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<sup>113</sup> ORIGEN, Homilies on the Gospel of Luke, 35: PG 13, 1888.

<sup>114</sup> ORIGEN, Homilies on the Gospel of Luke, 11: PG 13, 1826,

<sup>115</sup> See JOHN OF DAMASCUS, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, I, 8: PG 94, 898.