



To see more clearly what to be “in the image of God” means we have to wait for the second creation story, where the love of God is reflected in human love. The man is lovingly shaped by God the potter and given God’s own breath of life. The man completes God’s work of creation by cultivating the garden and by giving the animals their names, their specific being, appreciating the special properties of each. But he remains not fully satisfied, having no companion for his love, until God undertakes the first surgical operation, carefully anaesthetising the man beforehand and carefully sewing up the wound afterwards. God fashions the woman from a rib, the part nearest the man’s heart. The same love continues even when the human couple has fallen away, for God still misses their friendship and, as they hide away, comes looking for their friendship. Despite the feebleness of their excuses, God still sews them clothes with God’s own hand to comfort them in their shame.

CHOOSING GOD

Why did God then let them fall? Was it to test them? No, it was to enable them to choose God. Without choice there is no love: God could no more create a loving human being without the possibility of falling than square the circle. The best God could do was forgive them, and this God does with the promise that evil will not finally prevail. They are cast out of the garden of innocence, and life will never be the same again. But the relationship is made richer still by the labour and the pain.

If you think this is what happened once, long ago, you have missed the point. It is not a historical story but an analysis of the present. It happens every day to you and me. And every time we embrace God’s forgiveness, the relationship becomes richer, deeper and more comforting.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice;
turn to the Lord and his strength;
constantly seek his face.**

FIRST READING Exodus 22:20-26

PSALM Psalm 17

RESPONSE I love you, Lord, my strength.

1. I love you, Lord, my strength,
my rock, my fortress, my saviour.
My God is the rock where I take refuge;
my shield, my mighty help, my stronghold.
The Lord is worthy of all praise:
when I call I am saved from my foes. **R.**
2. Long life to the Lord, my rock!
Praised be the God who saves me.
He has given great victories to his king
and shown his love for his anointed. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
Open our heart, O Lord,
to accept the words of your Son.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Matthew 22:34-40

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**We will ring out our joy at your saving help
and exult in the name of our God.**

Next Sunday’s Readings:
Apocalypse 7:2-4, 9-14
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12



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SUNDAY BULLETIN

CREATION



As this Year of the Word draws to a close it is valuable to reflect on some of the lessons brought to us by the Holy Spirit in the Bible. This year focusing on the Bible has been given the title “The God who Speaks”, and God speaks in a variety of ways, from each of which we can learn in a different way. Storytelling is always a great way of imparting a lesson, and no culture is more aware of this than Jewish culture. A Jewish teacher will often tell a story and refuse any explanation, leaving the story itself to echo round the minds of listeners as they gradually reflect on aspects of the lesson, for no really rich story has one single lesson.

The whole Bible is set on its way by the story of creation in seven days. Nowadays the scientific background of evolution makes it seem amazing that our forebears ever understood this story to be intended as a historical account. The order makes far more sense if it is taken in some way to be logical: first a framework for visibility (light and darkness); then the principal masses (the heavens, the earth and seas); next, fixed things in land and air (plants and stars – there are no fixed things in the sea), followed by mobiles (sea creatures, birds and land animals); finally, humans. It is not the order that counts, but the relationship to the Creator. All along, the delight of the Creator in the work – “God saw that it was good” – is the salient point, until the delight in humanity bursts out: “indeed it was very good”. No wonder, for this stage in creation was preceded by a little consultation, “Let us make man in our own image”, and breaks out into a little piece of balanced, rhythmical poetry, ending up with “male and female he created them”; and then the celebration of this together on the sabbath day.

The God who speaks



Over the last few weeks of this Year of the Word, Fr Henry Wansbrough OSB reflects on how God speaks to us through the scriptures.

25 OCTOBER 2020

30TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A
DIVINE OFFICE WEEK II