

Quick review from last week's homily on Genesis 1. I looked at three questions: Why is there something rather than nothing? Because the Good God freely, out of love, chose to create. He intentionally chose to create me and you. Why did God create us? To be divinized. That's our goal and purpose, to share in God's life. What does it mean to be created in God's image and likeness? We will know ourselves fully only in God. We have a share in His Reason, Freedom, we are created for relationship with God -- and through God, with one another.

So now let's look at Genesis chapter 2 (We'll have two homilies on this chapter). Given what we learned last week, the goal for this first homily on Genesis 2 is to answer the question, how do we find real happiness? Who doesn't want to be happy? How many want boring lives? The problem, of course, is: how do I find happiness? But, if we believe that God created us, it's logical to believe that only God can reveal to us how we'll be truly happy.

Let's read Genesis 2:7-9. "The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being. Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and he placed there the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad."

Note again: God loves stuff, matter, what He creates. And we share the basic matter of our bodies with plants and animals. But God treats the Man differently from other life forms. This 'breathing' of life into Man is important. There are only two other places in scripture God does this. One in Ezekiel 37: 1-14 (the dry bones coming to life at God's breathe), the other in John 20. Let's look at John 20:22. The night of the Resurrection Jesus comes through locked doors to the Apostles, and says, "Peace be with you," and then He breathed on them and said,

“Receive the Holy Spirit.” Jesus, looking back to Genesis 2, is creating a new kind of human being through the resurrection and Holy Spirit!

So, let’s go back now to Genesis 2:18 - 20. [READ] “God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone.’” God spent all of Genesis 1 saying how good creation was! And now He says man’s situation is NOT good. So, God says, “I will make a suitable partner for him.” And then He goes on to create the animals and birds, bringing them to Man, but none proved a suitable partner. What’s this about? Doesn’t God know what’s good for the Man? Is He having tryouts for who gets to be Man’s partner? (What about the dog, Adam, Man’s Best Friend? Or the Elephant? Elephants are smart and cool. Penguins? They’re awfully cute – how about a penguin as a partner? Or, what the heck, what about a woman?) No, this isn’t what God’s doing. God makes us aware of our needs – and then intensifies them. That is the nature of human life. We are one big desire looking to be fulfilled.

So why isn't it good for the man to be alone? Why does he need help? Warning, guys, he doesn't need a servant! (Make my dinner, clean up after me!) The Man needs help to be human. On his own he can't be or do that. A human being is made for relationship – for love. I need another, who is not me, to love me so as to become the real, full me. Human beings need to be loved first to be able to give love.

Remember, this is a way we are made in God's image. Who is God?

Let's go back to Gen. 1:26. God is a unity in plurality. The Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is an eternal relationship of absolute love: Lover, Beloved, and the Love uniting them, who is so real He is another Person, the Holy Spirit. It's logical, then, that God, who created us, made us for Love.

The partner God gives Adam, Eve, is not a servant. She is God's answer to his desire for happiness. And God puts the man asleep and takes out his rib, first, because the rib guards the heart, and second, because the man's rib is human stuff. They are one kind. When God

presents Eve to Adam we hear a human voice for the first time in the Bible. “This one, at last, is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” We were made for each other. Genesis 2:24 goes on to say, “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two become one body.” This isn’t just about sexual intercourse – it includes the totality of marriage, two people become one reality. But, then, it isn’t only about marriage. You don’t have to be married to be happy – or I’m in trouble. But it does mean that you must love to be happy. A life without love is ultimately, and literally, meaningless. We are made incomplete. We are each a great, big, living desire seeking completion. Only Love will complete us. Ultimately, that means union with God who is love.

The Chapter ends with 2:25, “The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.” Since the Fall (more in Chapter 3) human sexuality has been filled with abuse, domination, and lust. But Genesis 2 wants to tell us there was a time before all that when there

was no disorder in marriage and sexual love. And (here's a spoiler alert for how the Great Story ends) the Good News is that we can still access that first life of Adam and Eve in the garden – through God's grace and Jesus' redeeming sacrifice for us. I'll talk more about what that means on Wednesday night. And preach more on Genesis 2 next week.