On Septuagesima Sunday, I speculated that on the sixth day of creation, creating man to share his own divine life, God constituted Adam not only a source of natural life, but also - as an instrument - a source of supernatural life: i.e., a priest.¹

I further speculated that - God having constituted Adam both the corporal and spiritual head of mankind - Adam sinned against both of these prerogatives, forfeiting his priesthood, but also corrupting his natural power of generation and therefore the human nature passed on to his progeny. Adam, who was to have been a source of life – both natural and supernatural - had become a source of death.

I observed that the Genesis account does not articulate specifically the nature of Adam's sin, but that there are echoes of Creation and the Fall in the later scriptures, which perhaps afford some insight into Adam's fall from grace.

Traditionally, both the Flood and the Exodus are seen as re-creation events recalling the third day of creation when God parted the waters so that dry land appeared.²

In the Flood account, after … God made a wind blow over the earth and the waters subsided … He commanded Noah: Go forth from the Ark … bring forth with you every living thing … that they may breed abundantly on the earth and be fruitful and multiply.³ Noah, and those with him in the Ark, were to be a new source of life. The account continues: Then Noah built an altar to the Lord … and offered burnt offerings on the altar,⁴ the act of a priest.

In the Exodus account, Israel standing on the shore of the Red sea, at God's command … Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind … and made the sea dry land. When Israel then came to Mount Sinai, just as Adam in Eden - on the sixth day - had received God's law: be fruitful and multiply, so Moses on Sinai received from God the law whose sixth commandment was: you shall not commit adultery.

God then gave to Moses detailed instructions for making the Tabernacle, its ornaments, the vestments for Aaron and his sons to serve as priests and the rite of ordination for them.⁵ Echoing the original creation, Moses built the tabernacle in seven phases, each phase being completed … as the Lord had commanded Moses, recalling how God spoke, and it was so. Indeed, just as at the completion of creation … God saw everything which he had made and behold it was very good … Thus the

¹ c.f., Rom 5:14; Heb 2:11; Heb 5:9
² Gen 1:9; c.f., Gen 8:1-3; Ex 14:16, 22-22
³ Gen 8:16-17
⁴ Gen 8:20
⁵ Ex 25-30
heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work ... [and] God blessed the seventh day,⁶ so also after completion of the Tabernacle ... Thus all the work of the tabernacle was finished ... and Moses saw all the work and behold they had done it; as the Lord commanded, so had they done it. And Moses blessed them.⁷

The Flood and the Exodus, then, hearken back to creation and Adam in the garden and afford some insight into what is otherwise a somewhat arcane account.

Having received God's covenant in Eden, Adam fell. So also, having received God's covenant on Sinai, Israel fell: Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.⁸ When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, they gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him: Make us gods ...; as for this Moses ... we do not know what has become of him.⁹ Aaron – the high priest - took gold from the Israelites and fashioned a calf, saying ... These are your gods O Israel. Aaron built an altar and proclaimed a feast. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.¹⁰

St Paul refers to this incident writing to the turbulent Church at Corinth: Now these things are warnings for us, not to desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to dance.” We must not indulge in immorality as some of them did ... ¹¹

God complained to Moses: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them ... ¹² Just like their father Adam. Indeed, when Moses confronted Aaron, his excuse ... you know this people, that they are prone to evil echoed Adam's vain plea before God: [I]t was the woman whom you gave to be my companion.¹³

Israel's Fall on Sinai, echoing Adam's Fall in Eden, foreshadowed Solomon's Fall after building the Temple: Now King Solomon loved many foreign women ... and ... his wives turned away his heart after other Gods. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because ... [he] had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not follow strange gods.¹⁴

Indeed, Solomon's fall was reminiscent of another calamitous episode for Israel while wandering in the desert: While Israel dwelt in Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the

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⁶ Gen 1:31-2:3  
⁷ Ex 39:32, 43  
⁸ Ex 24:18  
⁹ Ex 32:1-2  
¹⁰ Ex 32:6: The Golden Calf probably was fashioned after the Egyptian god Apis which concerned a fertility cult.  
¹¹ 1 Cor 10:7-8  
¹² Ex 32:8  
¹³ Ex 32:22, c.f., Gen 3:12  
¹⁴ 1 Kgs 11:1, 8-10
daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods, an episode recalled by Our Lord in the Book of Revelation: You have some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality.  

Echoes of Adam's fall in Eden, concomitant violations of the sixth and the first commandments – idols and immorality - are a recurrent theme of the scriptures. These episodes are a parody – a mockery - of the creation account and God's designs for Adam and his progeny. On the sixth day God constituted Adam to be not only a source of natural life, but also of supernatural life – a life ordered to the next day, the seventh day, God's rest. Adam became a source of death. Balaam's prompting brought ruin upon all Israel: Satan's prompting brought ruin upon Adam and Eve and all humanity.

The tendency of the corrupted human nature inherited from Adam to throw off God's law – to reject God - in favor of sexual license continues to our day. In more recent times, at the agitation of the state, Christendom was cleaved by the establishment of false religions to sanitize immorality: first divorce, then contraception. After the so-called Enlightenment, mankind has plummeted to new depths, the now atheist secular state - having dispensed with those false religions - lauding all manner of aberrant sexual behavior - crimes against nature, sins crying out to heaven for vengeance.

Disordered tendencies deriving from the wounds to human nature resulting from the Fall – the pride of life and the concupiscence of the flesh, those tendencies to concomitant violations of the sixth and the first commandments - are an ever-present threat if they are not mortified, put to death. The Church's perennial remedy is prayer and fasting.

Because we are corporal creatures, spiritual goods exert a weak influence upon us: the higher the spiritual good, the more effort it demands of us. The capital vice of acedia or sloth, the tendency to abandon cultivating a relationship with God - to violate the first commandment - must be resisted by “remaining in place”, the avoidance of flight, i.e., by a disciplined regimen of prayer.

By contrast, sensual goods exert a strong influence on us. The capital vice of lust, the tendency to indulge in sensuality - to violate the sixth commandment - must be countered by flight from all occasions of sin, but also by works of sensual mortification, to include - but not limited to – fasting.

Lent begins on Wednesday. It is a time of great grace, when those who are well disposed can make much progress in the spiritual life by putting to death the old man with his concupiscences. Let us

15 Num 25:1-2; Rev 2:14
16 Both the Orthodox and the Anglicans/Protestants are guilty here.
17 The Anglicans capitulated at the 1930 Lambeth Conference. It was this which prompted Pope Pius XI's immortal encyclical, Casti Connubi.
18 Gen 18:21-22
all strive to do so, to return to God's intention for man when he created him, when *God saw everything which he had made* and behold it was very good.

*In the name of the Father ...*