

Audience 4

According to the Pope, when talking about the “beginning” Christ drew a boundary between the state of original innocence, and the state of sinfulness that started with the fall, and told his listeners to go beyond that boundary. The limits of these two directly opposite states, which influence the inner person in every way, were set by this boundary. By referring to the “beginning” Christ points to the continuity of the two different states or dimensions of man. It did not stop with the fall, it continues today and throughout history.

When man fell, he broke the original covenant between the Creator and the created (man). Sin is what the Pope calls “part of historical man” that we read about with the Pharisees who questioned Jesus, as well as all those questioners in all history including modern man.

The Pope believes that it is impossible to understand historical sinfulness without understanding the state of original innocence which is fundamental to man. This original innocence is the dimension of man being created in the image of God. If sin is the loss of grace, then that grace was the grace of original innocence. We were created in grace (innocence), were meant to live in grace (innocence), but when man fell we lost that grace (innocence).

This doesn't mean that original innocence has been lost. In Genesis 3:15(1) we find the first reference to our salvation, the salvation of original innocence. “I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; it will bruise your head and you will strike its heel.” In this way historical and modern man participate in original sinfulness as it is hereditary (we have all lost original grace) and at the same time we all add our own sins to our lives, and we also participate in salvation as we are eligible to receive it and help create it with God. Paul in The Letter to The Romans tells us ²³ “And not only that: we too, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we are groaning inside ourselves, waiting with eagerness for our bodies to be set free.” ²⁴ In hope, we already have salvation; in hope, not visibly present, or we should not be hoping -- nobody goes on hoping for something which is already visible.”

Since we were created male and female, only the redemption of the body ensures the continuation and unity between sin and original innocence. It is this redemption on which the original covenant between God and His people rests.

It is through the theology of the human body that we can analyze what the “beginning” means as referred to in Genesis, but we must also look at the relationship between revelation and experience. As we mainly see bodily man by experience, we can only experience it back to the fall. We cannot experience it into original innocence since our individual humanity is incapable of experiencing it as it really was. However, our human experience is a legitimate way to interpret the “beginning” as we will see later.