

## Living the Spirit The Father Creator

Last time we wrote about God as Father. In this Year of Faith we learned again how our understanding of human fatherhood can help us come to know about God. Jesus told us to call God Our Father when we pray as He taught us. This was an important Revelation about God. We understand God as Father as powerful, as provident, as merciful and as loving. We know that His love is a special love, a fatherly love. Perhaps that is why He is revealed as a Father who sometimes chastises his children because He loves them.

It is not enough for us simply to know about God. We must have a relationship with Him that is meaningful. If we are to grow in the Spirit, we will want to ask ourselves how we are to act in the face of this knowledge of God as our Father. Certainly, we must honor Him, for in doing that we do what we are expected to do for our human father.

Since the Father is seen as the giver of so many gifts, we are called to pray to Him. That is why the great number of our liturgical prayers is addressed at Mass to the Father. We make these prayers to Him through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. For His gifts we give the Father our thanks.

We also learn from the teachings of Jesus that the Father forgives his wayward children. From the Cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." This prayer is to be a model for us as we consider our own sins. So often we must admit we sin, and do so because we really do not appreciate the evil of what we do. Yet, just as the father of the prodigal son in the parable given us in the Gospel, so God our Father deserves our trust, our humble contrition – and from that comes the reward of restoration to a life of grace.

### God the Creator

Let me now turn to the subject of the Father as Creator. It is in this aspect that from the earliest times the Creeds spoke of the Father. "We believe in the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible." Creation is described by way of a story in the very first book of the Bible, Genesis. It describes the operation or work of God outside Himself. There are indeed other works of the Divinity that are operations within that Divinity itself. But we can never fully appreciate or understand what God's intimate life is like. Later I may write about this, and it will be to remind you about the Trinity and what we can know from Revelation about this aspect of God's reality.

We live in a world in which some do not believe in creation. They accept what they call a scientific view of the origins of everything, of all life. In a way they find their answer in a theory of evolution -- which has only the validity of a theory. However believers may think of evolution, they cannot accept the evolution of the soul. It is firm teaching that God creates the soul of every human being. That He does this in the order of the natural laws which He founded does not diminish the truth. Indeed, from this belief we can derive an understanding of the dignity of every human being. From this act of God we come to be truly His children and He is revealed as our true and real (though spiritual) Father.

As I looked to write this theme I went back to my seminary theology. I recalled how important it was to place creation in the right category. From creation it is possible to come to know that there is a God. This was defined in a formal way by Vatican I as the constant teaching of the Church. Most of us cannot help at times admiring some aspect of creation. Perhaps it is beauty – and it is truly in the eyes of the beholder. We also feel affected by the powers of Nature, the fruit of God’s creative act.

There was another source to which I referred as I looked to write about this work of the Father. I know of no better treatment of Creation than that given by Father Sertillanges, the theologian author of *Kinships*, of which I wrote in our last essay. Speaking of how God is manifested in creation he wrote: “How can we help but meet God, when we really think of Him alone, speak of Him alone, walk toward Him alone, impel in His direction, whether we will or not, all the objects of our activity?.....God bursts forth in nature; He flowers therein, fructifies, resounds, unfurls in forms and colors, in varying harmonies and proportions, in movements and rhythms. He shines forth too in souls, in thoughts and images, in wills and actions, in rejections and affections....”

“He appears resplendent in holiness, in graces that grow and are transmitted, in constellations of sanctity recognized or hidden, dazzling or dimly sending forth their ray in the spiritual heavens....” Father Sertillanges goes on to tell how St. Thomas Aquinas said that our reflection (upon creation) leads us to the “‘Treasure of Being,’ the form of forms, the Spirit of spirits, the Beautiful, the Good, the Harmonious, the Perfect abiding in Itself....” Indeed through creation we discover God. “When God is hidden from us, then we are blind, and if He is silent to us, it is because His myriad voices have only beat upon our deafness.”

So, as we examine our faith, let us realize who God really is for us. He is all those things that St. Thomas and Father Sertillanges describe. He is beauty for us; goodness for us; the perfect for us as Father, with all those attributes we may readily discover. But I still hope that most of all we will not forget He is our loving Father, the Abba, and we are His children.

Mindful that this Year of Faith calls us to be evangelizers of the good news, we turn our attention to those for whom God remains hidden in creation. We must pray that they will find faith and so find God. When they assure us that they do not see God in creation “beyond the dust of worlds” and reduce “immense creation to a colossal dust in the eyes, we must know that they are blinded by what they see.” If we fasten only on the here and now, we, too, may miss as they do the hidden God who in creation shows us Himself as Father.

I have read that we are not so much to work to penetrate the mystery of God, but simply to love Him. Faith confirms my belief that this is so.

That is why like the prodigal son (or daughter), we must rise and go to our Father. He always waits for us, as our journey of faith leads us to Himself, the ever-loving Father. Truly God *is* Love!

*God love you always!*  
*Monsignor Morrison*

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