January 14, 2007
The Second Sunday After Theophany

Father Pat's Pastoral Ponderings

When the New Testament treats of the relation between Christ and Adam, the accent is largely on contrast. We are told, for example, that whereas Adam introduced sin and death into the world, Christ brought justification (Romans 5:12-21. Whereas corruption came from Adam, incorruptibility came from Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20-49). Disobedient Adam succumbed to temptation in the Garden, whereas the obedient Christ submitted to God's will in the garden.

These contrasts would not be possible, however, unless the early Christians had already recognized between Christ and Adam some structure of analogy that prompted them to compare the two. It is not difficult to discern those earlier points of comparison.

Thus, an early story transmitted in Mark, precisely in the context of Jesus' temptations, preserved the tradition of our Lord's companionship with the animals (1:13). This story, of course, puts the reader in mind of Adam in the midst of the animals in Genesis. Jesus' victory over His temptations by Satan thus inaugurates a new state of Paradise, as it were, in which the friendly relations of men and the beasts, disrupted since the Fall, is restored.

In Luke the Adam/Christ analogy is subtler, and we discern it in the way the Lord's genealogy is arranged. We observe two differences between the genealogies in Matthew and Luke.

First, unlike Matthew, Luke traces the Lord's lineage all the way back to Adam, not just to Abraham. This format emphasizes Jesus' relationship to whole human race, and not just the Jews. For this reason, in citing the famous Isaian text that begins the ministry of John the Baptist in all the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2-3; Luke 3:4-6), Luke alone quotes the words, "and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Second, whereas Matthew's genealogy of Jesus comes at the beginning of his Gospel, Luke places it after the Lord's baptism and right before the account of His temptation. This arrangement prompts the reader to make the comparison that Luke has in mind to infer, the temptations of Jesus and the temptations of Adam.

More significantly, perhaps, St. Paul, even as he contrasted Adam and Christ, called Adam "a type of Him who was to come" and went on immediately to speak of "the one Man Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:14-15). That is to say, the perceived analogy between Adam and Christ was the basis for contrasting them. They are both "Adam," wrote Paul: "'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45). And he went on, "The

first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven" (15:47). What Adam and Christ share is the designation "man," *anthropos,* the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *'adam.* This is the foundation of the "type" that Paul perceived in Adam with respect to Christ.

Christ, according to the Apostle, is not only the "second Man," He is also "the last Adam"--*ho eschatos Adam*, "the final Adam," the Adam by whom the world's last age comes to be.

This eschatology pertains to the Incarnation, of which Paul had written earlier, "when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman" (Galatians 4:4). The "fullness of time" is the world's last age. Although all of biblical history was a period of preparation for the Son's assumption of our flesh, that assumption radically altered the direction and destiny of history. Adam was replaced.

Moving from history to cosmology, Paul later adopted another metaphor to express this replacement-Christ as "head." For Paul this expression meant more than Christ's headship over the Church. It included also His headship over all the powers of Creation (Colossians 2:20). Thus, Paul spoke of God's plan to "re-head all things in Christ"--*anakephalaiosasthai ta panta en Christo* (Ephesians 1:10). This rather long verb, which means to sum up or concentrate under one head, is Paul's way to describe Christ's relationship to Creation as a whole. Adam's cosmic dominion (Genesis 1:28), was replaced and enhanced in Christ (Colossians 2:9-10).

In the second century Irenaeus, whose understanding of this subject came directly from the Asian churches founded by Paul, further elaborated Paul's understanding of the Christ/Adam analogy and its particular reference to the re-heading of Creation.

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