

## Creation and Our Relationship with God

In the very first chapter of the very first book of the Bible, we read that most fundamental of stories: the first creation account. We know the story pretty much by memory. Each day, God sets out to create the myriad things in the universe and on the earth until on the sixth day, when God creates human beings in the very image of God the creator. On a literal level, it is simple enough. On a mythical level, however, the story is far from simple.

One of the primary lessons to be learned from the story is that God is one who orders the chaos. This ordering of this chaos is systematic, with each day's work building on the previous day's work. The time span of the story, six days, does not correspond with our scientific knowledge of evolution, which spans billions of years. As Catholics, however, we understand that it is a story of the *meaning* of creation as much as it is the story of the *method* of creation. Its meaning for us is clear. Creation takes time. The old saying "Rome wasn't built in a day" holds true. God patiently and carefully builds and nurtures all of the wonders of the universe. We, who are created in God's image, need to take a cue, because we are co-creators with God. Do we carefully build and develop the resources given us? Do we nurture relationships, and reverence the life we find all around us?

Take, for one example, fossil fuels: nature took one million years to produce the amount of fossil fuels we burn on this planet in a year.

What are some implications? There is mounting evidence that humanity is indeed shaping world trends in many ways: climate change, manipulation of ecosystems, energy consumption, resource depletion: the list could go on. As co-creators fashioned in the image of God, our responsibilities are clear. To the extent that we engage in rampant consumerism or if we employ our powers to use and manipulate material things to gain unfair advantages over others, we display our own "fall from grace". To the extent that we create order and harmony in our world, we are acting in the image and likeness of the God who is the author of our lives.

We are created in the image and likeness of God: an awesome, beautiful heritage. Can we live up to this heritage, which is our true calling? It is more a question of *will* we live up to it. Will we realize that creation is an ongoing, complex, often painstakingly slow process? Will we take time to be present to our self-made chaos and re-establish order and harmony?

The answer is found again in the first story, where we read that God repeatedly admires creation as "good". It is this goodness that is our inherent, deepest truth. If we are true to ourselves, then we will walk with our God upon the earth, setting things right, taking this world closer to fulfillment in God's love and eternal life.

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