

IN THE SANCTUARY OF EDEN

Jean-Marcel GAUDREAU

We saw in the preceding stage that the perfection and liberty given our first parents at the moment they were formed had brought them an essentially spiritual vision that permitted them to perceive, spontaneously and through His Creation, the loving presence of God, and to grasp the very essence of what He had put into all that made up that Creation. In order to round off our understanding of the sense of what Adam and Eve were called upon to live in Eden, we must now try to form some idea of the eminently spiritual character of the stakes involved in that episode of our history. This stage, moreover, is all the more necessary in that it constitutes the main obstacle we most often come up against when we try to grasp its profound significance. In effect, the faith of contemporary man has become so weak, and man has reached such an advanced state of degradation, that it has become almost impossible for him to have any conception of the spiritual texture, in all its fullness, that went into Creation as of its origin.

THE LIMITATIONS INHERENT IN OUR STATE

The better to understand the causes of these difficulties, let us imagine the children of a very noble king who have received as an inheritance a castle in which to bring up their progeny, a castle complete with servants, the best foods, fine wines, very rich tapestries, luxurious furniture, chandeliers and precious stones, and who have, through an unfortunate choice, decided to enjoy in an ignoble fashion all these choice possessions through organizing orgies and by systematically teaching their children to do the same thing, from generation to generation. We can easily imagine that at the end of several centuries of such decadence there would more than likely emerge from this context a race of particularly loutish and unnatural beings, more animal than human beings. As for the castle in which they lived, it would certainly have become unrecognizable: the chandeliers torn down by the play of uncivilized trapezists with no idea of the proper use of such a thing; walls, floors and tapestries befouled with a disgusting mixture of food, liquor and excrement; the precious stones, works of art and the furniture broken up and scattered everywhere. All of the luxurious possessions, a reflection of the king's extreme refinement, would doubtlessly have extremely deteriorated because there would not have been enough servants to see to their restoration. As for the debased beings responsible for that state of dilapidation, and situated as they would be at the end of such a regression, we can easily understand that it would be wellnigh impossible for them to imagine all the nobleness and all the refinement of the royal court that was at their origin.

Even if the comparison may seem a bit overdone it still holds good for the human species such as it appears today. In effect, in regard to our first parents, obviously represented here by the first children of this king, we are at the end of a spiritual comedown¹ of several millennia such that it makes it difficult for us to imagine all the spiritual refinement and all the perfection of the first beings who were at our origin. Moreover, the extent of difference is graphically described by Jesus:

"I am so superior to you that no manifestation of mine would now be understood

by the world, which has plunged into the most terrible darkness and foolishness. What you think is progress is your regression to the twilight of the early times, when men, having lost God and his Paradise, were only slightly superior to beasts and pushed their corruption to such a point that I decided to exterminate the race, at which I was indignant."²

"Humanity is now nothing but bones, calcined, heavy, dead ruins sinking into the fetid furrows of vices and heresies. The spirit no longer exists. The spirit that is life in flesh and life in eternity. The spirit that is what differentiates man from animals. Man has killed himself in his best part. Is he a machine? Is he a beast? Is he a corpse? Yes, he is all of this.

"A machine, for he goes through his day with the mechanicalness of a device that works because it must work by virtue of its parts set in motion, but does so without comprehending the beauty of what it is doing. Man, too, rises and goes to bed after having eaten, drunk, worked, strolled, and spoken without ever grasping the beauty and ugliness of what he does. Simply because, deprived as he is of spirit, he no longer distinguishes beauty from ugliness or good from evil.

"He is a beast because he contents himself with sleeping, eating, and accumulating fat on his body and reserves in his lair, exactly like a beast that makes these operations its life goal and the joy of its existence, and justifies everything – selfishness and ferocity – through this base and brutal law of the need to plunder so as to be sated.

"He is a corpse because what enables a man to be called 'alive' is the presence of the spirit in the flesh. When he breathes his last, man becomes a corpse. In reality, man at present is a corpse kept upright and in motion by the sorcery of mechanics or the devil. But he is a corpse."³

And those who remain sceptical with regard to this comedown and to the debasement it has engendered, have only – if they still possess the necessary openness of mind – to have a look at its disastrous effects on our environment, the castle (the laws of nature) that the servants are no longer able to restore. Furthermore, the greatest tragedy lies in the fact that, just as the loutish beings of the preceding allegory ended up accustoming themselves to the disorder in their castle – which is, in a way, the image of their interior disorder –, we have ended up by getting used to our advanced state of spiritual degradation, so much so that a number of us have come to the stage where we look upon the current manifestations of our downfall – be it a matter of the debasement of our thinking or of the decay of our milieu – as signs of our evolution.⁴

A CONCEPTION REDUCED TO THE IMAGE OF OURSELVES

And that is why the eminently personal, supernatural and divine character of Creation, as called up in the first book of the Bible, today appears to contemporary man as something highly improbable. On the one hand, his faith and spiritual sensitivity have been so dulled and blunted that he no longer has any sense, as did our first parents, of the supernatural and divine ori-

gin of the life round about him; and on the other hand, he has strayed so far from God that he finds it inconceivable that the Creator could have manifested Himself to the human being in such a direct manner and in such proximity to him as is related in the second account of Creation in Genesis.⁵ Finally, having, in the logical sequence of these failings, become totally incredulous in regard to all forms of supernatural manifestations, contemporary man considers it as unthinkable that the Creation of the first man and the first woman could have been effected in such a direct and immediate fashion, preferring to opt for the chain of development of living forms such as is propounded by evolutionism which seems to him more "realistic" even if this latter has in no way been corroborated by scientific data.⁶ Furthermore, as we have already amply pointed out and as Jesus makes quite clear in a number of His dictations:

"Of course the Powerful and Infinite One had no need to obtain man from the evolution of quadrupeds over centuries. The quadruman was such from the moment he was created and made his first jests in the trees of the earthly paradise.⁷ Man was such from the moment God created him from the mud and – something which was not done with any other creature – breathed the spirit into his face."⁸

And thus it is that, unable to elevate themselves in order to conceive of and understand at one and the same time the origin and spiritual loftiness of our first parents, the human beings of recent centuries have, as it were, dragged them down to their own level by building of them a brutish, animalized image that, in the end, makes of them the mere descendants of a line of monkeys.

It is for these reasons that, when we try to represent to ourselves Adam and Eve, as well as their life in Eden, we have to be careful to give them the attributes of an *authentic* superiority, and not those that flow from the falsified image of superiority that we are led to construct spontaneously about ourselves because of our own downfall.

PEACE, HARMONY, BEAUTY AND PURITY

To counter this tendency and to try to get back, if only in our thinking, to those stages of a superior order, the existence of which we today have been denying, let us try to imagine for a few moments the atmosphere that reigned in Eden, doing so by making ours the impressions of Marie-Paule as she recounted them following one of her "visits":

"The memory of the 'Garden of flowers' has become so cruel that I weep. How explain this? These completely unexpected graces – what a torture! It is not easy to live in the 'Garden of Mysteries' while dwelling on earth. Would the elect be able to dwell upon our planet? No, they would suffocate. After having tasted the charm of the 'Garden of Mysteries,' where all is perfect harmony, beauty, purity, in total detachment, it would be impossible for them to accept the ambiance of earth with its egoism, hatred, meanness and all manner of ugliness.

"But the 'Garden of Mysteries' conceals treasures to which I am not accustomed. And sometimes I am afraid, I refuse.

"When I accept, when I repeat my 'Fiat' in total detachment, I taste certain good things of the 'Garden of Mysteries'. They are beyond description! Humanity could never have any inkling of the happiness and delight that were reserved for our first parents and their descendants. We have lost treasures of which no one in the world can have any idea, unless of course they are admitted, most secretly, into it after they have by great trial and generosity "reconquered" it through a special privilege of God....

"I wake up during the night, and there in a great light I 'see' again the man and the woman created without concupiscence. What the angel taught me returns to my mind and I admire the Work of God. What harmony in everything! The man and the woman without concupiscence are a marvel of harmony, purity, sweetness, peace and light. I understand everything. What beauty! I remain in contemplation for a long time; then I fall asleep...

"The moment I open my eyes, I 'see' in a great light a new part of the 'GARDEN OF MYSTERIES'. To the left, a little in the background, I 'see' again the glass dwelling and the large, short trees with the liana drooping down to the immaculate grass. For the first time, I am myself present, totally luminous and white in this setting."⁹

The first impressions left by such descriptions are chiefly of the beauty, harmony and purity emitted by such a place that, from all evidence, would seem to surpass by far anything that could be imagined beginning with the most magnificently beautiful spots we know.

RICHES TO BE SUBLIMED

But let us go further, for we know that Eden was, beyond all question, a place of beauty and delights:

"God had arrange all things so that man might be well served... everything had been conceived so that everything might be a delight to him."¹⁰

Now, over the centuries, men have often imagined such places of happiness in which the human being would attain his fulness. The ancients spoke of Olympus where the gods, possessing strength and multiple powers, drank and feasted in a sumptuous setting. And, closer to our times, a number of our contemporaries have begun to maintain that we could have come from an extraterrestrial civilization that would be more advanced technologically and capable of performing feats that permit it to meet all of its needs on the plan of the material.¹¹

But here again we have to be on our guard against distortions arising from our own limitations,¹² for Eden was not a place for the enjoyment of material things. As a matter of fact, contrary to the thoughts inspired by the atmosphere of sensuality and materialism that currently prevails over the earth, the beauty and delights it contained were not ends in themselves. Like the riches of our allegory's castle, they but constituted a reflection of the king's love, as well as being at the same time the witness to and support of those goods of a higher order which He has destined for us as His children. In effect, the acquisition of the goods of a superior order generally involves the consecration to Him of the riches of the inferior order. And the maintenance or respect of these goods imposes the obligation of respecting the virginity of those riches which have, in a way, been sacrificed to Him.

For example, on one who has ceased contemplating it in all its splendid unity, a rose can certainly exert the attraction of a richness of a secondary order, but only a clod would dream of crumpling it in order

to feel the softness of the petals on his skin, or would crush it in order to accentuate its perfume. Similarly, only a lowbrow would think of destroying a finely cut jewel of great value in order to get the gold in its raw state.¹³ Consequently, all the beauty and refinement that was in Eden had not been placed at man's disposal in order that he might misuse it for some vulgar entertainment or greedy exploitation. Rather, they were destined to be sublimed in order to form the receptacle of the spiritual beauties that God wished to bring forth through Creation.

In like manner, the bodies of Adam and Eve were of unrivalled beauty and great refinement,¹⁴ but neither did these bodies constitute ends in themselves, contrary to what is affirmed by certain of our contemporaries who justify their lechery by saying that it was willed by God since He made it possible through the constitution of the human body. But the purpose of these bodies was, rather, to bear witness to the dignity of the soul, of which they were the receptacle, and to promote its elevation.

True enough, inspired by a quite earthly type of logic, we could ask ourselves of what use it was to thus place so many riches at the disposal of the human being if these riches were liable to incite him to commit sin.¹⁵ But then what monarch would choose a setting of hideous material in which to place a pearl of the highest quality, or what king desiring the welfare of his children would choose to bring them up in a garbage dump? We must not forget that all the forms that exist, be it a matter of a single grain of sand or of the complex apparatuses that stock our cities, play an important role by bearing witness, through their appearance and function, to a state of mind. They are thus, in a certain manner, bearers of a message and possess, as a consequence, a spiritual connotation, whether this latter is in keeping with God's plan or runs contrary to it. That is why all the riches that had been placed in Eden were not destined to be the objects of a simple appreciation of the first level, but, on the contrary, were intended to be part of the divine atmosphere of peace, harmony and purity that reigned in Eden and of which Marie-Paule speaks to us. Having been perfectly harmonized with the divine plan, they were thus called upon, were it only in the capacity of a manifestation of God's love, to be grasped by the soul so that this latter might be able to nourish itself upon it and raise itself towards its Creator in divinizing itself.

A DIVINE TEMPLE

In short, it is important to bear in mind that the Garden of Eden was not a simple "natural castle" of great beauty, but that it was, above all, a place of convergence where the natural life was destined to blend with the supernatural life, its purpose being, as a consequence, essentially spiritual. In effect, it formed the first enclosure within which God chose to place His children, the issue of the maternal earth and fecundated by His breath, in order to *elevate* them and divinize them by progressively familiarizing them with His Presence.¹⁶ Moreover, in its role as the place where man was destined to meet God in order to develop his intimacy with Him, it constituted, in a certain manner, the first temple in the history of humanity. And that first church – or better still, that first sanctuary – was all the more pure, all the more majestic and magnificent, in that it had not been built with human artifacts, but, indeed, with divine materials – totally natural materials with the purpose of giving birth to the supernatural life, and fitted together in a Work free of any imperfec-

tion because it was produced through the agency of that matrix of which we have spoken previously and which, operating through the Life of the Immaculate, was entirely fused with the will of the Creator.

In addition – and this in a fashion interesting and contrary to current practices regarding existing temples –, it was not necessary for the inhabitants of the Garden of Eden to shut themselves up, as is done today, in an artificial place and isolate themselves from secular life in order to meet with God, for, in that place that emanated an atmosphere of supernatural life totally impregnated with the divine presence, all life was in God. Adam, Eve and their descendants were thus destined, so to speak, to live in the very temple that God Himself had built for them, and, if it had not been for their Fall, all the events of their life, right up to their assumption, would have borne a sacred character, since they would have been totally lived out in the presence and according to the will of their Creator. Consequently the whole of the world would thus have become a living and holy temple reflecting the initial peace, harmony and beauty of the Terrestrial Paradise.¹⁷

"A garden which might have been but little inferior to the heavenly one, if from the earthly Paradise, the children of Adam, the children of God, had spread about, like sweet bees from a beehive, to populate the earth with holiness destined entirely for Heaven."

Obviously, the Sin, whereby man demanded his inheritance and, as it were, expelled himself from the sacred temple God had built for him, upset this plan, with the result that today he has to build within this profane atmosphere he has generated for himself, other temples, put together this time by his own hands, in order to meet with God, and in which he strives to re-create, more or less consciously, the sacred atmosphere and the grandeur of the lost Eden.

Nevertheless, over and above these efforts of reconstruction that, though commanded by God, have produced only minor results, the preparation of a *second Living Temple of divine origin* has been going on, a temple which will permit the *true re-creation of Life within the fallen Creation*. This has to do with Mary, the second Eve, but also with the second Eden, that welcomed the incarnate Word, as had been foreseen for the first Creation, and permitted the development of the Living Assembly of the Church of which Eden was also the prefiguration. But I hope that we may be able to develop this point later on.

Jean-Marcel Gaudreault

References

1. Moreover, this comedown is represented in an impressive manner by Jesus in one of His dictations with the aid of a diagram in which the present level of the spirit in the world is graphically illustrated by a precise point situated at the antipodes of the Terrestrial Paradise and close by hell. Cf. Valtorta, M., *The Notebooks 1945-1950*, Isola del Liri, Centro Editoriale Valtortiano, 2002, pp. 122-123.
2. Valtorta, M., *The Notebooks 1944*, Isola del Liri, Centro Editoriale Valtortiano, 1998, p. 236.
3. Valtorta, M., *The Notebooks 1945-1950*, Isola del Liri, Centro Editoriale Valtortiano, 2002, p. 62.
4. In fact, just as our sense of smell often ends up getting used to a nauseating odor, many have ended up acclimatizing themselves to the effluvia of vice and moral decay. We might point out additionally that, often enough, even if quite a few today still speak of the spiritual life, it is so impoverished that it often no longer causes to resonate in these

- people all the harmonics that ought normally to accompany it. As the Lord points out: "You would like to receive only what caresses the senses from Religion, God, and his Word. For you have come so low that you have made even the spirit sensual. You thus want to give it entirely human sensations and thrills. You resemble those madmen in other religions who with suitable ceremonies provoke an abnormal psychic state to enjoy the false ecstasies of their paradises." In Valtorta, M. *The Notebooks 1945-1950*, Isola del Liri, Centro Editoriale Valtortiano, 2002, p. 47.
5. Furthermore, the same scepticism is manifested in regard to the great manifestations of God to His prophets, as related in the Old Testament.
 6. To be more precise, and as we have mentioned previously, we ought to add that this chain of development of living forms is proving to be, rather, quite clearly invalidated, for scientists have been searching, ever so long, for intermediate forms, and the multitude of animal species existing on earth supposes such a great number of them that, if such had been their manner of formation, then, in all logic, we ought to have discovered a very large number of them a very long time ago.
 7. Let it be noted that the Lord is always coherent in what He affirms, and that this remark, according to which the first bounding the monkey did was in the trees of the Terrestrial Paradise, confirms once again the fact that we must exclude any form of evolution, prerequisite or of an anterior state, that could have contributed to the forming of the monkey or any other forms of animals before they entered the Terrestrial Paradise.
 8. Valtorta, M. *The Notebooks 1944*, Isola

- del Liri, Centro Editoriale Valtortiano, 1998, p. 435.
9. Marie-Paule, *Life of Love*, vol. XII, Quebec, 1979-1984, pp. 114, 121.
 10. Valtorta, M., *Leçons sur l'épître de Saint Paul aux Romains*, Isola del Liri, Centro Editoriale Valtortiano, 1999, p. 139.
 11. We might note in passing that among such persons there are scientists who thus reveal, in spite of themselves, the ineffectualness of evolutionism to explain the origins of life on earth.
 12. There is no doubt that life was brought forth by a force of a superior order, but that the characteristics we attribute to it should be centered on a technological or scientific superiority instead of bringing out a quality of being speaks volumes on how far we have strayed. In a way, we could affirm: "Tell me what the characteristics are of that which you consider to be the superior being, and I'll tell you who you are."
 13. In fact, only a form of barbarism could render us impervious to the idea of sublimating all these riches, and, instead, cause us to be lured by the pleasure of pillaging them in order basely to draw profit from them, as is proven by all the logic of commerce that has gripped the generality of the planet today and is held as justification for this looting. In effect, we are currently faced with a new form of barbarian invasion: this one is characterized, not by the conquest of new territories but by the taking over of men's hearts and thoughts, by brutality, disorder and vice, an invasion of the soul that, deceitfully dressed up in a false progress and a false liberty, has, in reality, the effect of demolishing the wealth of morals and the spiritual values that our ancestors had succeeded in putting together. It is this barbarism of the soul

- savaged by onslaughts of primitivity, that, for example, prevents certain people from appreciating, as we did in other times, all the merit of a virginity consecrated to God or preserved with a view to a future union. Similarly, that is the reason why many, incapable of understanding the spiritual ardor that drove men of old to put great treasures in their churches and cathedrals, now see in the riches of the Church nothing more than a shameful waste of funds that could be put to better use, just as Judas was scandalized by Mary Magdalen's pouring out of the expensive perfume on Christ's head.
14. Consuelo, *Marie, trône de la Sagesse, Révélation faite à Consuelo*, Barcelone, Éd. Résiac, 2000, pp. 61, 69.
 15. This thinly veiled reproach of not having given us monstrous bodies and environment in order to avoid sin would, moreover, hide a base attitude, namely, that of blaming God for not having given us the opportunity to be able to decline it in order to avoid having to fully assume the splendid gift of liberty He made us, and of thus casting back on Him our responsibility, even though He had endowed us with all that was necessary for us to act with wisdom and avoid sin.
 16. Up until the time when these children, once divinized, would be able to rejoin Him, with their flesh spiritualized, in His celestial dwelling.
 17. In place of being profaned on a wide scale as it presently is, since, while continuing to pillage our planet day after day in an unbridled manner, we have ended up transforming it into one vast supermarket.
 18. Valtorta M., *The Poem of the Man-God*, vol. I, Isola del Liri, Centro Editoriale Valtortiano, 1986, p. 338.

"THE GREAT MIRACLE REALLY LIVED"

(The Lady of All Peoples, 45th apparition, March 20, 1953)

Opening the way to a civilization of love, the Pope, with his penetrating and divinized regard, focusses our attention on the daily Miracle of the Eucharist.

In his Apostolic Letter for the Year of the Eucharist, the Holy Father opens us to something new. Although the Gospel, the Councils and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* make no mention of this, Pope John Paul II was not afraid to innovate when speaking of the Eucharist as a way of life. Is that not an unusual way to consider this great Sacrament?

Here is what he says: "The dismissal at the end of each Mass [here the Holy Father is referring to the "*Ite Missa est*". "*Ite*" literally means "Go, you are being sent".] is a charge given to Christians, inviting them to work for the spread of the Gospel and the imbuing of society with Christian values.

"The Eucharist not only provides the interior strength needed for this mission, but

is also – in some sense – its plan. For the Eucharist is a mode of being, which passes from Jesus into each Christian, through whose testimony it is meant to spread throughout society and culture. For this to happen, each member of the faithful must assimilate, through personal and communal meditation, the values which the Eucharist expresses, the attitudes it inspires, the resolutions to which it gives rise. Can we not see here a special charge which could emerge from this Year of the Eucharist?" (Pope John Paul II, *Stay With Us, Lord*, October 7, 2004, nos 24-25)

The Holy Father hopes that we will see in this not "a" but "THE" special charge of the Year of the Eucharist which is the summit of a whole trajectory elaborated over more than two decades. (Cf. *id.*, no. 4.) That is impressive.

In order to give us food for meditation, chapters 13 to 17 inclusively in Saint

John's Gospel present Jesus' farewell discourse. In a sense, that is His spiritual last testament. We know the importance of a will. Jesus states particularly that He wishes to unite us to the Eucharist. Stated in such a cursory fashion, it may shock us, but why should we be scandalized? Why not marvel instead at the beauty of God's plan which is being progressively revealed to us? In support of these comments, we have in the Church this old saying: *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi* (what we pray indicates what we believe). During this time of Lent, *The Liturgy of the Hours* or the breviary proposes the following to our faith:

"Be men of tomorrow. Take His body as of now; He bids you to become Eucharist. And you will see that God takes hold of you, that He shelters you in His life and makes of you men of His own blood." (Lenten hymn from the French breviary, no. 2, pp. 19-20)

It is up to us to enter into it and we will see that much more could be said on the subject.

Father Benoît Picard

– I have just finished reading the English edition of the paper *Le Royaume*, no. 170. How enlightening!

Betty Corcoran

– Father Benoît, we miss you so much, but we are consoled because of the beautiful work you did in Hot Springs and elsewhere. May you continue to be blessed by the Lord.

A Catholic priest

– The articles in this paper always contain such a spiritual wealth and coherence that we look for. One needs to say "bravo!" to Jeannine Thiffault-Blanchette for her wonderful legends written over the Christmas season. They are the joy of my son when I read them to him. Thank you for the excellent articles. United in prayer.

Cathleen Wolensky-Courchaine

ENGLISH RETREATS

Friday, April 22 to Sunday, April 24

Theme: "*Mass Is Worth Living!*"

Retreat master: Fr. Daniel Gauthier

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(5 days or weekend only)

Tuesday, July 19 to Sunday, July 24

Theme: "*The Year of the Eucharist and the Transfiguration of Human Love*" – Retreat master: Fr. Benoît Picard

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For information and registration, contact Charlotte Bélanger at:

Spiri-Maria Alma, 626 route du Sanctuaire, Lac-Etchemin, Qc G0R 1S0 Canada; tel./fax: 418-625-3333; E-mail: spiri-maria@communaute-dame.qc.ca