

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Time Entering Creation    The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Tuesday, December 8, 2015    8:15 AM    **Gn 3:9-15, 20;**    Eph 1:3-6, 11-12;    Lk 1:26-38  
(So the story of redemption is the story of eternity coming into time to rescue the creation intended for this communion with the divine.)

Today's first reading is from the Book of Genesis because **the whole story of Mary's conception and Jesus' birth is all a new genesis**; it's a new creation; it's a new beginning.

But people usually misunderstand the first Book of Genesis, and the reason is that it doesn't fit into the categories of modern thinking. **In modern thinking we know that time and space are interconnected.** An alibi in a court doesn't mean anything without pinning down the time: When was this person in this place? To have a place but no time doesn't mean anything for courts and for modern physics, which now incorporates this relativity into its very principles. But for the ancient world this was not so. **The ancient world didn't think this way.**

When the author of the Book of Genesis writes about **God fashioning the earth in the garden, he is talking about God doing something in space, but without any time.** There's no time in the garden at first. St. Augustine says **time begins when Adam and Eve sin.** That casts them out of communion with God, out of that eternal embrace. **That begins a period of death,** because without time there is no death, but once you have time, well, everything passes. **So the story of redemption is the story of eternity coming into time to rescue the creation intended for this communion with the divine,** intended to be forever in this garden where God walks in the cool of the evening. These are all images of course, but they are conveying something that we cannot grasp with our ordinary concepts.

**Now ancient religion was all about going back, all the myths and rituals of ancient people.** Why? Because somehow **there is this deep conscience that things aren't the way they should be.** And because there is so much good and beauty in the world and yet it is so marred

with human behavior and evil obviously coming from people, **something went wrong**. And so there are **all these rituals of returning to the beginning**. And I'm sure God is pleased with all these good intentions and all this good will and desire to return to the beginning and do things right, **but human beings have been incapable of rebooting the creation**, as a matter fact. So God had to come to the rescue if there was to be a rescue. **And that is the story that we tell of God coming into our world.**

**In preparation he prepares a mother for this extraordinary role, this extraordinary ministry of being a home for the divine Word, the eternal Word that is coming into time, into the world, becoming, in St. Paul's word, becoming "sin" so that he can bring us back out of this life of degradation and disappointment, alienation from God and one another, and ultimate death, to bring us to life. And life is ultimately being with God.**

We celebrate that in a very particular way today in the honoring of **God's work in the conceiving of Mary in a sort of unusual way without the ordinary effects of time**, of sin, of involvement in the world, somehow really responding more perfectly to the original idea, God's original choice, enabling her to be **a proper mother to the Word of God**, who will grow up, as we all grow up, but **for a very unique task to bring salvation to the world. And how did Jesus bring that? It was by accepting the evil that came his way and forgiving it**, overcoming hatred through love, overcoming pride through obedience, in all things believing in the goodness of God and God's plan, leading others to hope for God's promises to be fulfilled.