

To Cultivate and Care for the Garden Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time Labor Day
Monday, September 4, 2017 8:15 AM **Gn 2:4b-9, 15;** Mt 6:31-34 (After creating this, God created an image of himself to care for it.)

“The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.”

The beauty of the Book of Genesis has many different levels. But one of them is the idea that in its basic foundation the creation is good and that **humanity is good**, basically. It's true individuals can be evil, but people on the whole are good, not necessarily smart and not necessarily informed, but good and created to naturally seek the good. Seeking the good is not some sort of bright idea that human beings invented; rather, **we are created to seek the good**. This is very important. Our good works in any field at all, whether it's religious or not, all our good works are basically according to our nature. We are good. **We are created to be good and to do what is good**. And even sin, which the Scripture will subsequently describe, even sin, although it does thwart goodness, it doesn't overcome it. So there's this fundamental goodness in nature, and **humanity is created with a very specific purpose**. Now this is not said of any other creature. Squirrels are not said to be created in order to gather nuts, although they may do that. And we may imagine that somehow the divine intelligence has placed this instinct within them, but it doesn't say that in Scripture. That's our deduction. But **it says very clearly in Scripture that humanity is created to cultivate and care for the garden**.

Now there are different kinds of gardens, but **all gardens have order in them**. If there is something that is completely disorderly and chaotic, that's not a garden. Perhaps it used to be a garden, but it isn't one now. A garden by its nature must have order in it. That's another thing that **the word of God tells us about the creation, is that it's orderly**. It is not the result of pure chance; in fact pure chance will not lead to order. I don't know how anyone could ever think it would; it doesn't. And no one will ever prove that it does because it doesn't, and can't. So there's order in the creation, and this order in this particular case is called a “garden.”

Now there are different kinds of gardens. For example there are the formal gardens we see in France in Versailles. That's actually based on a Roman model. The Romans liked order and they put formal order, special spots, beds for flowers and areas for different things all in their own

place. The English have a different idea of order. An English garden in my opinion is more beautiful than a formal garden. In an English garden everything grows together in a lovely natural way, but it's still very orderly in a natural way. But guess what? An English garden doesn't just happen. It may look totally natural, but it doesn't just happen. **An English garden is carefully created to look natural**, to blend all kinds of different flowers in the same bed, for example, all carefully done and carefully maintained, **and that's a lot of work.**

Well that's also **the creation: carefully planned it looks so-called "natural."** It looks as if everything just fits together beautifully, **but that's all a part of a plan.** It has to be cared for. But guess what? **After creating this, God created an image of himself to care for it.** So God didn't intend to create everything and then continue to take care of it, but rather, he created a caretaker. That's part of the plan. Part of the plan of creation is that creation will have its own caretaker and that is called here "man," meaning the human race. **The human race is created for the caretaking of the creation.** That's a very important role.

So our intelligence is not just, oh, good luck. **Our intelligence is given to us for a purpose so that we can take care of the creation: cultivate it and care for it. And whatever benefits and blessings we happen to have in life, even if we have really worked hard for them, they are all part of a bigger plan, and it's to serve the Creator and to maintain order in the garden.** And **we all have a role to play** in this grand process. And anyone who thinks that they can just do as they please and take what they want are really disrupting the order in the garden. And this cannot go without notice, and will not. So the earliest writings of our Scripture really are talking about our fundamental responsibility to live in this beautiful world, but to keep the beauty there, to enhance and care for it. **And if we ever forget that, we are truly doomed.**