

It is not unusual in our Catholic Tradition to talk in terms of metaphor.

When I was in catechism class preparing for my First Holy Communion I remember the Sister teaching us describing our soul “like a cloud with smudges on it.” After Confession, of course, our soul would be pure white.

And then there was St. Patrick who was preaching to the inhabitants of Ireland. When asked about the Mystery of the Trinity he plucked a three-leaf clover, later to be known as a shamrock, from the ground and explained it was like God: Three Divine Persons in the One God.

Recently after Mass I went outback to have a coffee and donut. And then it struck me; [hold up jelly donut] this is like God: Wonderful, sweet, fulfilling, nourishing.

[Hold up regular donut with confetti sprinkles] And this is like us: It has a certain charm, not all bad, a little flashy.

The words of Genesis came back: we were made in the image and likeness of God. Certainly, both look like donuts. But there is an **obvious** noticeable difference: we have a hole in us and the God donut does not. Instead it is filled with wonderful jelly in its center.

I suspect this may have started the problem with Adam and Eve. They pretty much had everything. But they had a hole in them. They thought if they would only eat the jelly, or apple, or whatever it was on the Forbidden Tree they would be more than just in some ways reflecting God – they would be **Like a God!** St. Augustine relates the story of Lucifer in a similar manner: “Inflated with pride, he wished to be called God.” And we all know what happened to Lucifer.

And, of course, we also know how the story of the Garden of Eden ended: – Adam and Eve were banished from the garden with a hole still right in the middle of them. They were left with the feeling of shame about their holes.

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They left Eden not really with humility, but with a sense of humiliation.

Let's imagine God in the generations after Adam and Eve. Can't you just hear Him say: "These humans just don't get the point about humility, do they? But I really care about them. I'm going to have to do something very radical – show them I love them by sending My Son who will be a role model for them as to what is really important!"

As we hear in St Paul to the Philippians:

    "[Jesus], though he was in the form of God  
    Did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.  
    Rather, he emptied himself,  
    Taking the form of a slave,  
    Coming in human likeness;  
    And found human in appearance,  
    He humbled himself."

It's OK to say I have a certain charm, gifts, even, I got "Sparkle". But one should add: I also have a hole. In fact, many holes. I'm not complete like God is. Although I've worked hard, without God my gifts would not exist. It's the truth. To quote St. Teresa of Avila: "Humility is Truth."

It's OK to say "I'm good with this and good with that; but I really messed up last week; I'm sorry and will try to do better next time." Humility is hard on narcissists.

Humility is having many gifts but when seeing someone less fortunate to be able to say: "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

But humility is not humiliation. Humility is not self-degradation. We are, after all, created in the image and likeness of God. From Sirach [chap 10]:

    "...With humility have self esteem:  
    Prize yourself as you deserve.  
    Who will acquit him who condemns himself?

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Who will honor him who discredits himself?"

Humility is not an over-estimation of oneself nor is it an underestimation.

Humility.... is Truth.

So the next time we see our brother Knights after Mass selling coffee and donuts, we should think "There are a lot of theological lessons around here." Yummmm