

Creatures are Good Because They Lead Us to God

Homily by Tonny Kizza, Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Reflection on Genesis 1:1-31 and Psalm 136

Brothers and sisters, today Mother Church has given us wonderful scriptural texts as we have heard in the first reading from Genesis and then the responsorial Psalm. Both texts emphasize that man was created special but all other creatures are good because they lead to God.

In Genesis 1:1-31, we come to believe that God created this beautiful Universe. Scriptures and other traditions handed down such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Catechesis on creation) explains that “Other sciences and other areas of study do enrich and broaden our knowledge and understanding of the dimensions of the cosmos and the development of human life. By applying the wisdom and knowledge from these areas of study, we are invited to that greater admiration and meditation of the greatness of the Creator God” (CCC 283. 73). Psalms 136 highlights to us the value of other creatures because they lead us to God and with the help of science this becomes a great reality.

We have to give thanks to the God of gods, the Lord of lords because His love endures forever. God created man out of his great love and even when disobeyed, God continued to love man up to when he sent his only incarnate Son to liberate us and restore this love so that it can endure forever.

Through faith and science we learn that only God does great wonders whereby he fixed the sky and all creatures; galaxies in space without a supporting pillar. Psalms 136 calls upon all stars of heaven and all other creatures; the sun and moon to praise the Lord for his great love endures forever. And with the help of scientists (astronomers, astrophysicists and others), we can come to know more about particular planets in our orbit and stellar constellation beyond: Jupiter, Mars, Aquila, Cygnus, Polaris, Canopus, Venus, Algol, Wolf and others. So through science we can move a step further beyond

the Psalmist and call these individual astronomic objects by name just like we can invite persons such as James, Tom, Josephine, Rita to praise the Lord for his great love which endures forever.

More still, God sustains every creature and gives them life. He gives food to every creature and sustains every being in the eco-system. By creating man with intellect, we are able to know that creatures depend on one another to survive. For example, scientifically we know that man needs oxygen from plants to survive yet man supplies carbon dioxide to plants to survive. Through social sciences we learn that man is a social animal and hence needs other human beings in life. Theology teaches that man has a quest for God which is restless until man rests in God, while biology helps us to know about genetics which helps us to know our biological make up. And through biology we learn disease prevention and proper healthcare through things like good nutrition and physical care. And while God is still creating (such as each time a baby is born), we continue to learn about what God has already created! New scientific discoveries through the work of NASA have revealed seven other potentially habitable planets in the orbit. Scientific knowledge also helps us overcome the harms of global warming and how to use natural resources wisely.

God created the sun to rule the day and the moon, supported by the stars in the night to provide light. (Genesis 1:14). With God's help and providence, scientists go further to explain how the solar system works to supply light which is needed for man and plants to survive. For instance, astrophysics tells us that light from the sun takes eight minutes to reach planet Earth and here we have to give praise to the Lord for this wonderful knowledge.

Lastly but not least, the Psalmist in 136, reminds us to contemplate and meditate on the planets using special instruments like telescopes. By doing this, we need to pray and praise the Creator for his providence; the gift of our life and all other gifts God gives us out of his great love, mercy and charity. We also need to pray that God gives us the courage to face challenges with trust and hope. God cares for us and knows all our trials and tribulations. I recall in her presentation about the Solar system and its interconnectivity how Dr. Renu Malhorta (astrophysicist and Regents' Professor at the

University of Arizona) shared with us that if one planet in the solar system is removed, especially Jupiter, the whole solar system is likely to collapse. Jupiter is in a strategic, important position in as far as the operation of the solar system is concerned. For our case, if we cease to pray, we will lose our connection with God just like the removal of Jupiter can collapse the Solar System; hence we highly need prayer to be able to connect with God the creator.

In conclusion, the scriptural texts we have today help us to know where we came from. From theology we know that God created the universe and that we are to praise and glorify Him. From science to know more practical knowledge about the innerworkings of God's visible creation.