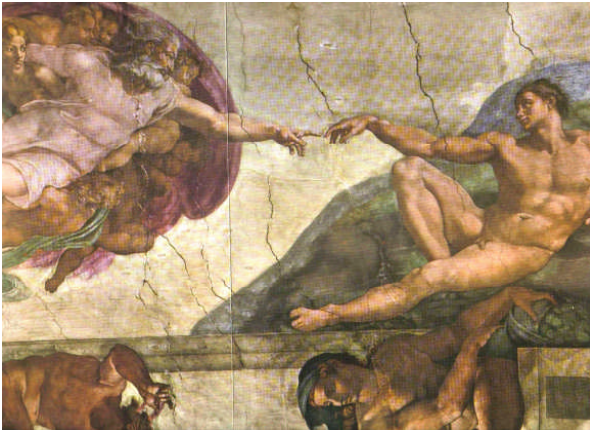


Theology for Beginners - Made in the Image of God

Overview

The expression “*Made in the image of God*” can be both misunderstood and not understood



at all. Let's examine this mystery.

What is the basis for the expression?

For this we have to start with Genesis 1:27 “*God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him...*” Man occupies a very unique place in creation. Of all of God's creation – man alone is able to know and to love his creator and man alone is called to share in God's own life (**CCC# 356**).

Being created in God's image means that man has self- knowledge and possesses the dignity of a person. With free will man has the capability of entering into communion with God and other persons – something no other creature has. Man is called by the grace of God to enter a covenant with God and to offer him a response with faith and love – also that no other creature can give (**CCC #357**).

God created everything for man and in turn man was created to love and to serve God (**CCC# 358**). For man - the heavens, the earth seas and all of the rest of creation exists.

Body and Soul – they are truly one

God (The Father and Creator) is spirit and therefore has no corporal body as we do.

Therefore when we say we are made in His image we are not referring to what He or we “look like”. The human being is both corporal and spiritual (**CCC#362**). The biblical account expresses this in symbolic language when it says that man was formed from the dust of the earth and God (The Holy Spirit) breathed into man the breath of life – giving man a spiritual soul – Genesis 2:7. Breath is the name for the 3rd Person of the Holy Trinity since the meaning of the word spirit is actually breath.

When the Holy Spirit breathed into man it made our soul also to be a spirit. Our soul is the only soul that also **IS** a spirit. This does not mean our soul contains a spirit. **Our soul also IS a spirit**. In this creation event – God now dwells in man.

The human body shares this dignity of the “*image of God*” because it is animated by the spiritual soul. Every living organism which includes plants, animals and man has a special life source principle that animates it. This is called the soul. Man is unique in that man's soul is also the spirit – and only man has a spiritual soul (**CCC#363-368**).

Made in the Image of God

We can sum up the attributes that makes us in the image of God as follows:

- We have **self knowledge**
- We have **free will**
- We **commune** with others
- We are called to be filled with **grace** and to be **holy**
- We have a **soul** that is a **spirit**
- We **know** God in our hearts
- We **know** right from wrong
- We **love** – the most important of all

Note CCC#xxx refers to a paragraph number of the Catholic Catechism