

ANTOINE SUAREZ

Can we give up the origin of humanity from a primal couple without giving up the teaching of original sin and atonement?

Supplementary Material

Appendix 1

The concept of the ‘soul’ does not necessarily imply a ‘dualistic’ view of human nature

Regarding the concept of the ‘soul’ one should avoid misunderstanding some of the essays presented in Joel B. Green (ed.) *What about the Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology*, Nashville: Abingdon Press (2004).

In my opinion the contributions in this book do not actually deny the concept of a ‘spiritual soul’ but rather the view that the human body can be explained exclusively in material terms without invoking non-material qualities. The tenet that ‘the soul is the form of the body’ (as I understand it) does not mean that the human person is a composite of ‘spiritual soul’ and ‘material body’, but rather refers to the dynamic unity resulting from the soul’s animating organic stuff (‘the dust of the land’ in Genesis 2:7): the body is the soul itself appearing in the space-time. This non-dualistic concept of soul is perfectly compatible with both neuroscience and quantum physics. In many respects (for instance to define personal identity) it is advantageous to rely on the concept of human personhood inspired in the teaching about the triune God; however, such a concept is perfectly compatible with the concept of the ‘soul’. What is more, the concept of ‘human soul’ may be especially helpful for coherently explaining that Jesus Christ has a true human body and truly died, although he is a divine person.

Highly interesting is the remark by Joel Green that after the resurrection the corporal appearance of Jesus Christ is not the effect of a vision, in contrast for instance to the appearance of the angel Raphael in the book Tobit¹. If one tries to substitute the operations of Christ’s human soul (knowledge and will) through those of His divine person one falls into the heretical position of Apollinaris of Laodicea. When a mother or a father speak and play with a baby they adapt their mental capabilities to the baby stage and even behave like a baby. One could say that they assume a ‘baby’s soul’ and become a baby, without ceasing to be an adult person. Similarly God’s Son restricted their divine pure spiritual capabilities to that of a human person; that is, He assumed a ‘human soul’ to become an embodied divine person.

It is also noteworthy that in the book edited by Joel Green no mention is made of Benjamin Libet’s experiments, which may be considered to demonstrate unconscious although voluntary movements.² This unconscious spiritual activity distinguishes the human person from pure spiritual persons like God and the angels. If human persons were conscious

¹ Green, J.B. ‘Resurrection of the body’, in Green, J.B. *What about the Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology*, Nashville: Abingdon Press (2004), pp. 91-100.

² Adams, P. & Suarez, A. ‘Exploring free will and consciousness in the light of quantum physics and neuroscience’, in Suarez, A & Adams, P. (eds.) *Is Science compatible with Free Will?*, New York: Springer (2013), pp. 282-284.

all the time (without need of sleep) then the concept of a human soul might be redundant, but then the human person would be an angelic person. In other words, pure spirits are persons who have neither soul nor body; by contrast, human persons whose consciousness is intermittent (mainly limited by sleep) have a soul and are embodied consciousness or personal bodies.

In his contribution Lawson Stone dreams of overcoming a dualistic reading of human nature as 'matter' and 'spirit' and asks: 'What if, for example, quantum physics is correct and there is no final distinction between matter and energy? What if, in the end, materialism is just as naive and uninformed as idealism?'³ The view I am proposing supports Stone's dream and even goes beyond it: quantum experiments tell us that even the 'conservation of energy', the most fundamental rule in the 'material world', is underpinned by non-material agency, and even space-time emerges from outside space-time.⁴

³ Stone, L.G. 'The soul: possession, part, or person?', in Green, J.B. *op. cit.*, (1), p. 61.

⁴ Suarez, A. 'Free will and nonlocality at detection as basic principles of quantum physics', in Suarez & Adams *op. cit.*, (2), pp. 63-79.

Appendix 2

The *Principles II and III* in the light of Genesis 1 and 2

The *Principles* derived in Sections IV-V, and the Genesis narrative about creation of man by God, illuminate each other in various respects:

1. The term ‘living *nefesh*’ (‘living soul’ or ‘living creature’):

Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature (Genesis 2:7).

The same term ‘living *nefesh*’ (‘living creature’) in the immediate context of Genesis refers clearly and repeatedly to non-human animals: these and Adam are made from the dust of the ground, and are each a ‘living *nefesh*’.⁵ ‘It is not man’s possession of ‘the breath of life’ or his status as a ‘living creature’ that differentiates him from the animals’.⁶ Thus Genesis 2:7 can be read in correspondence to the gradual appearance of the species *Homo sapiens* in Africa about 150,000 years ago consisting of non-personal human animals.

2. Interpersonal communion, work as loving creative power, and the ‘*imago Dei*’:

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man (Genesis 2:21-22).

Personhood as a result of divine intervention is suggested in Genesis 2:22 by the fact that God creates the man and the wife as called to fulfil their existence in relation to each other, that is, in the context of an interpersonal ontology.⁷ Thus the ‘deep sleep’ referred to in Genesis 2:21 can be considered to correspond to the creation of primeval human persons from the modern humans.

The creation of mankind as ‘male and female’ appears in Genesis 1:26-27 immediately after the declaration ‘in the image of God he created them’:

Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Pope John Paul II puts this text in relation to God’s Trinitarian Life:

It is, rather, the original plan of the Creator who from the ‘beginning’ willed the human being to be a ‘unity of the two’, and willed man and woman to be the prime community of persons, source of every other community, and, at the same time, to be a ‘sign’ of that interpersonal communion of love which constitutes the mystical, intimate life of God, One in Three.⁸

⁵ Stone, *op. cit.*, (3) pp. 54-56.

⁶ Wenham, G.J. *World Biblical Commentary I, Genesis 1-15*, Waco, Texas: Word books (1987), pp. 60-61.

⁷ Ratzinger, Cardinal, J. ‘*In the Beginning...*’: *A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1995), pp. 72-73; Alexander, D. *Creation or Evolution: Do we have to choose?*, Oxford: Monarch Books (2008), p. 197.

⁸ John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, 52, 1998.

Similarly, Karl Barth assumes that the intradivine I-Thou relationship of the triune God is reflected in the human relationship between the I and the Thou, between male and female. J. Richard Middleton questions this interpretation of Genesis 1: 27 as misguided, mainly because ‘male’ and ‘female’ ‘are biological, not social, terms and thus cannot support either the notion of human relationality or culturally male/female characteristics.’ By contrast, the creation story of Genesis 2 uses the social categories of ‘man’ and ‘woman, wife’.⁹

Undoubtedly, the intradivine relationship of the triune God is rather an element of the New Testament. However, in reply to Middleton one could claim that in this case it may be appropriate to apply the principle that ‘*Novum in Vetere latet*’. Indeed it is Jesus Christ himself who, when teaching about divorce (Matthew 19: 3-9 and Mark 10:1-12), refers explicitly to Genesis 1:27, explains this verse using Genesis 2:24, and clearly interprets the male-female relationship as a unity of two persons who God himself joins in one flesh (we come to this point again in Appendix 3). In any case, Genesis 2:22-24 describes human existence as an ‘interpersonal communion of love’, and Jesus Christ reveals to us that this is also an appropriate way for describing God’s life.

For his part, Middleton focuses on Genesis 1:26 and proposes the interpretation that Genesis 1 depicts creation as an ‘act of loving power’ and ‘the model for human action’. God is ‘a generous creator’ inviting humanity to participate in the ‘unfinished creative (and historical) process’ and so become ‘the imago Dei’.¹⁰ Gordon Wenham shares a similar view: ‘mankind is here commissioned to rule nature as a benevolent king, acting as God’s representative over them [the animals] and therefore treating them in the same way as God who created them.’¹¹ In my opinion Middleton’s and Wenham’s views are not opposed to Barth’s ‘relational’ interpretation, but rather complement it, and both should be seen in connection with Genesis 2: 15. To state that human ‘ruling over the world’ ought to be an act of creative love ultimately makes work an ability that God bestows on mankind¹² in order to care for the world and develop personhood, that is, the relationship with God and other persons.

If interpersonal relationship and creative loving work make man in ‘the image of God’, then sin impairs this relational capacity (mainly between man and woman), and the unity of human ability and the worship of God. In the same line of thinking one may interpret ‘eternal death’ (eradication of ‘the image of God’) as forever becoming an individual who is intrinsically incapable of communication, who can neither call others nor be called by others, an individual without a name.

In summary, the biblical expressions of creating mankind ‘in the image of God’, creating them ‘male and female’, and putting them in the world ‘to work it and take care of it’, together define mankind’s personal appearance and vocation, and can be consistently interpreted as happening later in time than the appearance of the human ‘living *nefesh*’.

3. Moral responsibility: the distinctive sign of human personhood.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;

⁹ See the description of Karl Barth exegesis of the Genesis by Middleton, J.R. *The Liberating Image*, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press (2005), pp. 22-23, and the criticism pp. 49-50.

¹⁰ Middleton *op. cit.*, (9) pp. 296-297.

¹¹ Wenham *op. cit.*, (6), p. 33.

¹² Wenham *op. cit.*, (6), p. 67.

but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die' (Genesis 2: 15-17).

God gave the primeval persons a law to fulfil, which 'resembles in its form [you shall not eat] the Ten Commandments' (Exod. 20: 3-17).¹³ Through this law the human persons became aware of their freedom, but also of their *responsibility* toward God, and toward each other, for God's law means always to keep this one command: 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Galatians 5:14). Moral responsibility is a distinctive of human personhood. Since God as supreme Good and Judge cannot be moral responsible toward a higher authority, moral responsibility distinguishes the human persons both from the non-personal animals and from God.

Nonetheless I think that the capacity for moral agency has something to do with the 'the image of God in humans', and dare to claim that there is evidence in Scripture to support this view (in reply to Malcolm Jeeves who expresses some doubt in this respect¹⁴).

Genesis 2:15-17 is eloquent: Both the gift of freedom and its restriction appear immediately after God commissions man to work the world and collaborate in the creative process. This is the meaning of acting in 'God's image' (according to Middleton and Wenham as discussed above). Moral responsibility introduces a decisive clarification: although mankind is made 'in the image of God' he remains 'a creature' and a 'representative of God'. Creative power and freedom should not lead mankind to rebel against his dependence on God and refute worshipping him.

But the most significant text is likely to be Philippians 2:5-9:

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.

Christ although equal with God accepts to be the '*imago hominis*' and makes himself *responsible* for our trespasses. In return, the '*imago Dei*' is a call to have the same mindset as Christ in our relationships with one another: By accepting to guide freedom of choice by this commandment, human persons renounce their deluded equality with God, but then God exalts them, makes them in His image, and gives them an imperishable name.

In summary, paraphrasing Middleton,¹⁵ one can conclude that a careful reading of Genesis 1:1-2:22 converges on John 3:16, and Genesis 2:15-17 on Philippians 2:5-9. In both creation and redemption God so loved the world that he gave his only Son (his Word) to move us (respecting our freedom) to participate in his personal life through respecting and loving one another.

¹³ Wenham *op. cit.*, (6), p. 67.

¹⁴ Jeeves, M. 'The emergence of human distinctiveness', in Jeeves, M. *Rethinking Human Nature*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2011), p. 198.

¹⁵ Middleton *op. cit.*, (9), p. 297.

Appendix 3

The meaning of ‘the tree of knowledge’ and ‘the two become one flesh’

Our analysis supports the distinction between the origins of the ‘biological species’ *Homo sapiens* about 150,000 BC (probably through a primal population of thousands of individuals) and the appearance of primal human persons (‘personal or theological species’) during the Neolithic period after 10,000 BC, possibly somewhere in the Near East. The *first sin* could have involved a single couple or a community.

At first sight the option ‘single couple’ seems better able to fit the Genesis narrative about Adam and Eve. However as we have claimed in the main article (Section VI), in the first three chapters of Genesis the term ‘Adam’ is rather used in the sense of ‘humanity’.¹⁶ As far as the doctrine of original sin is concerned, there is no compulsory theological reason to exclude the possibility that the first sinners were a community. Even in the case of a single couple, it is in principle possible that generations passed before the first sin occurred, and that it was committed by a number of people. So for the time being the question of whether the first sinners were a single couple or a community remains open. Nonetheless in this Appendix I will show that the assumption that the first sin was the deed of a primal group (consisting of more than just one couple) allows us to explain the temptation and transgression in Genesis 3: 1-6 in a natural way.

It is interesting to note that Jesus Christ himself refers to the creation of humankind only once. The episode is reported in Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 10:1-12. I quote here from Matthew’s version:

Some Pharisees approached him, and to put him to the test they said, 'Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?' He answered, 'Have you not read that the Creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and the two become one flesh? They are no longer two, therefore, but one flesh. So then, what God has united, human beings must not divide.' They said to him, 'Then why did Moses command that a writ of dismissal should be given in cases of divorce?' He said to them, 'It was because you were so hard-hearted, that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.'

Jesus here interprets Genesis 2:24, which is the last verse of Chapter 2, immediately before the report of the Fall in Chapter 3:1-6. Jesus’s hermeneutic reinforced certain existing Jewish traditions, rejecting repudiations like those recorded in the book Malachi (2:14-16) and in the Damascus Document of Qumran.¹⁷ Jesus states beyond any doubt that this verse means the explicit proscription of divorce by God at the very beginning of creation:

Jesus’ exegesis of Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 in Mark 10:9, ‘What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate’, implies that there is more to this [marriage] covenant than the husband and wife belonging to each other in mutual commitment: ‘... the third person negative imperative is used [in Mark 10:9] and it formulates absolutely Jesus’ prohibition of divorce itself. It involves God Himself in the matter...’ [11]¹⁸

¹⁶ Berry, R.J. ‘Adam or Adamah?’, *Science & Christian Belief* (2011) 23, 23-48.

¹⁷ Benoit, P. & Boismard, M-E. *Synopse des quatre Évangiles, Tome II, Bible de Jérusalem*, Paris :Les éditions du Cerf (1972), pp. 306-308.

¹⁸ Wenham, G.J. & Heth, W.E. *Jesus and Divorce*, London: Paternoster Press (1984), pp. 102-103. Note [11] in this quotation refers to Fitzmyer, J. A. ‘The Matthean divorce texts and some new Palestinian evidence’, *Theological Studies* (1976) 37, 204.

It is also noteworthy that, in the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus explains about the fulfilment of the Law, he considers divorce after adultery and before the oaths (Matthew 5:27-30, 31-32, 33). The fidelity of Yahweh towards Israel, whom he has joined with himself in covenant commitment, is implicitly put forward as a model for husband and wife.¹⁹ Therefore Mark 10:9 means that, according to Jesus, Genesis 2:24 expresses a commandment God Himself gives to mankind from the beginning in an explicit form, which corresponds to a particular content of the Ten Commandments.

Thus one cannot help asking whether there is any relationship between the prohibition of divorce in Genesis 2:24 and the other prohibition formulated before in Genesis 2:17 regarding the eating from ‘the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil’.

Gordon Wenham describes Genesis 2:17 as a ‘blunt and firm restriction’ directly pronounced by God at the beginning of the history of humanity, which ‘resembles in its form the ten commandments’.²⁰ After reviewing extended scholarship on the Old Testament Wenham concludes that the best interpretation is that this veto regards ‘moral autonomy’ intended as ‘a professed self-sufficiency of knowledge’, and means the proscription of ‘deciding what is right without reference to God’s revealed will. This is confirmed by the allusions to Genesis 2-3 in Psalm 19:8-10 [7-9], where the law is compared to the tree of knowledge.’²¹

All this points to the following explanation: The prohibition to eat from ‘the tree of knowledge’ (Genesis 2:17) is a symbol for the moral law God wrote upon the hearts of the first human persons (Romans 2:14-15) and revealed later to Moses in Mount Sinai in the form of the Ten Commandments. The ‘one flesh’ word (Genesis 2:24) formulates explicitly a particular content of this law: God’s prohibition of divorce to the first human persons. Why did God consider it convenient to give this commandment a particular status? By gently excusing, but firmly correcting, the permission to divorce given by none other than Moses (Matthew 19: 3-9, Mark 10:1-12) Jesus acknowledges that God’s reasons to veto divorce may be difficult for us to understand, or at least not as immediately obvious as the reasons for other aspects of the law. In a sense one can consider the prohibition of divorce as the Achilles’ heel of the law, so God put special emphasis upon it, highlighting the sanctity of the marriage covenant.

The disobedience of ‘eating from the tree of knowledge’ revealed in Genesis 3 is a symbol of original sin. It means the *first* transgression of God’s law, that is, the historical ‘first of all sins’ (and not necessarily the sin of the historical ‘first human persons’), which bore the state of original sin (see: main article, Section IV). Jesus’s work of redemption makes sense only in the light of the disobedience of mankind to God’s law, the first one, with its particular consequences, as well as the subsequent ones: ‘we cannot tamper with the revelation of original sin without undermining the mystery of Christ.’²² Thus it is highly significant that the only time Jesus Christ refers to an explicit content of God’s law ‘from the beginning’ he speaks about the prohibition to divorce. The ‘tree of the knowledge of the good and evil’ refers to the whole law that could be trespassed in the beginning, and has been trespassed ever since then; the ‘one flesh’ refers to the particular commandment that was broken in the beginning and has been ever since.

¹⁹ Wenham & Heth *op. cit.*, (18), pp. 102-103, includes also a reference to Grelot, P. *Man and Wife in Scripture*, Brennan, R. (trans.), New York: Herder & Herder (1964), p. 71.

²⁰ Wenham *op. cit.*, (6), p. 67.

²¹ Wenham *op. cit.*, (6), p. 64.

²² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 389-390.

The proscription of divorce would be baffling if it had been spoken to a single couple, but it is quite meaningful and clear if it was addressed to several couples, which formed the group of the first modern humans capable of moral responsibility.

Jesus refers to Moses by his personal name, whereas he refers to the primal humans as ‘male’ and ‘female’ according to Genesis 1:27, which does not use the personal names of ‘Adam’ and ‘Eve’.²³ This is even more surprising when one considers that Jesus reads Genesis 1:27 in the light of Genesis 2:24, and clearly understands the male-female relationship as a unity of two persons (as discussed in Appendix 2).

In the state of original righteousness (in absence of concupiscence) other contents of God’s law had been less open to temptation to transgression, for they appear unquestionable to reason. By contrast, obedience to prohibition on divorce requires deeper insight. As discussed in the main article (Section VII) the first personal humans were genetically and neurologically determined by their evolutionary history, and therefore each of them (like the other primates and hominids) experienced the selfish Darwinian tendency to reproduce their own genes by sharing several females or males. However, because of the strength of intellect and will they were endowed with, they were capable of mastering the instinct to change their partner. Thus the temptation did not appeal primarily to lust but to pride (for example the snake may have tantalised women in the primeval community with the prospect of being adored by all men, and in this sense to be ‘like gods’). After all, the sin consisted in the intellectual acceptance of a contradiction: the first personal humans could directly communicate with God and were perfectly aware of God’s love for them. So they should have concluded that the commandment for lifelong marriage was intended for their happiness and the happiness of the whole human species, even if the reasons for this conclusion were not immediately obvious. Nonetheless they accepted the contradiction and rebelled against God.

As said, the fall severely damaged the human spiritual capacity for subordinating the Darwinian tendencies. Mankind then descended into perverse behaviours, like those referred to in Genesis 6:1-3, which are described as characteristic of the days preceding the Deluge:

When people began being numerous on earth, and daughters had been born to them, the sons of God, looking at the women, saw how beautiful they were and married as many of them as they chose. Yahweh said, 'My spirit cannot be indefinitely responsible for human beings, who are only flesh; let the time allowed each be a hundred and twenty years.'

Jesus himself integrates this description in his eschatological discourse in Matthew 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26-27, and thereby highlights the importance that God had given to lifelong marriage since the beginning.

It is interesting to note that transgression of the prohibition to divorce (the commandment that man and wife become ‘one flesh’) within a primeval community, implies that those persons who sinned would have acted as ‘if they were one person’ (the same way as Genesis 3:6 tell us Adam and Eve did in eating from ‘the tree of knowledge’), and each of them could be considered the ‘first sinner’, in whom the whole human kind was subsumed ‘as one man’. Notice also that the perspective of ‘*Relational damage*’ (Section III) applies especially well to divorce.

²³ The Greek text of Mt 19:4 is as follows: ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν, Οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ὅτι ὁ κτίσας ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς.

In summary, the 'Tree of the knowledge of good and evil' is a 'potent symbol'²⁴ for the law that God promulgated to the primeval populations of human persons, simply by engraving it in their hearts (Romans 2:14-15). Respecting the tree of knowledge means to accept that there cannot be a contradiction between God's love (which creates us) and God's law, and in particular the commandment for lifelong marriage: 'Marriage is an ordinance created by God and we mess about with it at our peril'.²⁵ The death that the fall brought was primarily that of the mind: the intellectual acceptance of living with a contradiction.

As far as we can see, assuming that God first created a single couple or several couples is not that important for Christian belief. Even less important is the assumption that the whole of humanity is descended biologically from a man and a woman who were the first two sinners. Nonetheless, on the basis of the teaching of Jesus Christ himself the original sin can be interpreted in a natural way as the trespass of a community against the commandment for lifelong marriage.

²⁴ Alexander, D. *Creation or Evolution: Do we have to choose?*, Oxford: Monarch books (2008), pp. 259-260.

²⁵ Alexander *op. cit.*, (24), p. 197.

Appendix 4:

The Catholic Magisterium on original sin, monogenesis, and polygenesis

From a Catholic perspective the Magisterium or official teaching of the Councils and the Popes is binding in matters of Faith. Therefore, in light of the conclusions drawn in the article, it is interesting to see what the Magisterium establishes about the original sin. The fundamental and binding declarations are those in the *Decree concerning original sin* of the 5th Session of the Council of Trent, in particular the following one:

If anyone asserts, that this sin of Adam, – which in its origin is one, and being transfused into all by propagation, not by imitation, is in each one as his own, – is taken away either by the powers of human nature, or by any other remedy than the merit of the one mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath reconciled us to God in his own blood, made unto us justice, sanctification, and redemption; ... let him be anathema.²⁶

An important aspect of this declaration is that it uses the word ‘propagation’. This means that they do not limit the transfusion of the original sin to the offspring as resulting from the biological process of reproduction, but are compatible with the assumption that the original sin was also ‘transfused’ into persons who biologically did not descend from Adam (in the sense discussed in the main article Section IV). Thereby the Trent’s Decree concerning original sin does not definitely proclaim that the whole humankind originates biologically from a single couple.

The declaration that brings the original sin in relation with the issue of polygenism is rather formulated by Pope Pius XII in his Letter Encyclical *Humani generis*:

For the faithful cannot embrace that opinion which maintains that either after Adam there existed on this earth true men who did not take their origin through natural generation from him as from the first parent of all, or that Adam represents a certain number of first parents. Now it is in no way apparent how such an opinion can be reconciled with that which the sources of revealed truth and the documents of the Teaching Authority of the Church propose with regard to original sin, which proceeds from a sin actually committed by an individual Adam and which, through generation, is passed on to all and is in everyone as his own [cf. Rom., V, 12-19; Conc. Trid., sess, V, can. 1-4].²⁷

The teaching of Pius XII in *Humani generis* excludes polygenesis, only as far as it is established that there is no way of reconciling polygenesis with the Teaching of the Church regarding original sin. Consider God’s commandment to man: ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die’(Genesis 2: 15-17). Suppose that to eat ‘from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ the co-working of more than one couple was necessary. Then polygenesis would fit better with the teaching of original sin than monogenesis and should be preferred to this.

Notice also that although *Humani generis* seems to use the word ‘natural generation’ in the sense of ‘carnal reproduction’ it refers explicitly to the Canones 1-4, 5th Session of the Council of Trent, which use the broader formulation ‘by propagation, not by imitation’, as we have seen. In fact the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* keeps to ‘propagation’:

²⁶ The Council of Trent, 5th Session, *Decree concerning Original Sin* (June 17, 1546). I would like to stress that the excommunication clause (‘let him be anathema’) in such solemn definitions of faith is important more from a logical than a punitive point of view. By using it the Pope imposes himself the duty of defining what he wants the faithful have to believe beyond any doubt.

<http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct05.html> cited 3 April 2014.

²⁷ Pius XII, *Humani generis*, sec. 37 (12 August 1950).

By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state. It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. and that is why original sin is called 'sin' only in an analogical sense: it is a sin 'contracted' and not 'committed' – a state and not an act.²⁸

Anyway, the text of *Humani generis* by Pius XII does not contradict the polygenist origin of human persons any more than the text of *Quanta cura* (December 8, 1864) by Pius IX contradicts the declaration on religious freedom as stated in the document *Dignitatis humanae* of the Second Vatican Council.²⁹

Paul VI in his speech of July 11, 1966 to the participants at the Symposium on Original Sin states:

It is evident that you will not consider as reconcilable with the authentic Catholic doctrine those explanations of original sin, given by some modern authors, which start from the presupposition of polygenism which is not proved, and deny more or less clearly that the sin which has been such an abundant source of evils for humankind has consisted above all in the disobedience which Adam, the first man and the figure of the future Adam, (Conc. Vat. II, Const. Gaudium et spes, n. 22; cf. also n. 13) committed at the beginning of history.³⁰

Here Paul VI is clearly rejecting only arguments that purport polygenism *to the extent that they deny original sin*.

It is noteworthy that John Paul II in his *Message on Evolution* delivered to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on 22 October 1996 quotes *Humani generis* as follows:

Pius XII underlined the essential point: if the origin of the human body comes through living matter which existed previously, the spiritual soul is created directly by God ('animas enim a Deo immediate creari catholica fides non retimere iubet' [*Humani Generis*]).³¹

The International Theological Commission, in the document 'Communion and Stewardship. Human Persons Created in the Image of God' published in 2004 states:

In its original unity – of which Adam is the symbol – the human race is made in the image of the divine Trinity. While the story of human origins is complex and subject to revision, physical anthropology and molecular biology combine to make a convincing case for the origin of the human species in Africa about 150,000 years ago in a humanoid population of common genetic lineage. ... Catholic theology affirms that the emergence of the first members of the human species (whether as individuals or in populations) represents an event that is not susceptible of a purely natural explanation and which can appropriately be attributed to divine intervention.³²

²⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nr 404: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P1C.HTM cited 3 April 2014.

²⁹ In fact, an accurate anthropological analysis shows that there is no contradiction between *Quanta cura* and *Dignitatis humanae*; see Suarez, A. 'The social question is radically an anthropological question: The perspective of caritas in veritate', *Journal of Markets & Morality*, (2013) 16, 1, 85-99.

³⁰ Paul VI, Speech to the participants in the symposium on the mystery of the original sin (11 July 1966). http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/speeches/1966/index.htm cited 22 May 2013.

³¹ John Paul II in his *Message on Evolution* delivered to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences 22 October 1996.

³² The International Theological Commission, *Communion and Stewardship. Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, No 43, 63 and 70 (2004). http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040723_communion-stewardship_en.html cited 21 May 2013.

As stated in the main article (Section V), the assumption that the emergence of the first human persons ‘is not susceptible of a purely natural explanation’ and requires ‘divine intervention’ should not mistakenly be interpreted in the sense that other events in evolution happen without divine intervention. The emergence of human persons and animals are natural God-given processes, God intervenes in both although in different ways.

In line with this document of the International Theological Commission, different Catholic scholars endorse the view that polygenism cannot be considered incompatible with the Magisterium. After quoting the text of Pius XII, *Humani generis*, sec. 37 (12 August 1950) referred to before, the philosopher Mariano Artigas summarises the state of affairs as follows:

It is plain from this text that the Magisterium of the Church does not intend to support the monogenism for itself, and in fact she does not have made of it the content of any explicit definition as a dogma of faith: commonly it is accepted that Pius XII in the text just quoted intentionally avoided to close the door to future developments. The Church is interested in monogenism only as far as it is related to the sources of revelation, and the teaching of the original sin and redemption. In the last decades there have been several attempts on the part of some theologians to interpret the original sin and redemption in a way compatible with the polygenism. One cannot say that for now one has reached a really satisfactory explanation, but one can neither completely exclude that this will succeed one day.³³

Unfortunately the question of polygenism was apparently sidestepped in the International Conference on ‘Biological Evolution: Facts and theories’ held on the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome) in March 2009.³⁴ By contrast a more detailed presentation of the *Status questionis* on monogenism and polygenism has been provided more recently in 2014 by Rubén Herce. Discussing the claim that ‘Catholic teaching requires monogenism as the only way to explain the existence of the sin in the world’, he states:

Although one can invoke for it a tradition that tends to support the monogenism, one has to note that the Catholic Church has not confirmed this position by a dogmatic declaration. In fact the well-known declarations of Pius XII [in *Humani generis*, as quoted before] explicitly avoid a complete bond with monogenism and, by the way, they do not discuss the problem of sin on the basis of the narrative of the Genesis about man’s creation, but in the Pauline statement of Jesus Christ as the new Adam.

And Herce sums up the stand of the current state of investigation in a very suggestive way:

In lack of a better explanation about the origin of the humankind and of the spiritual evil in the world, the present paradigm [monogenism] remains still valid. But even so, it is important to investigate and test whether the perceived anomalies are real, and if they necessarily lead toward a change of paradigm where the polygenism and a better understanding of the original sin become the key elements. It would not be wise to remain sitting on a branch that had begun to rot.³⁵

Cardinal George Pell seems to support a ‘change of paradigm’ when he referred to Adam and Eve as a ‘mythological account’ in a recent TV debate with Richard Dawkins:

Well, Adam and Eve are terms – what do they mean: life and earth. It’s like every man. That’s a beautiful, sophisticated, mythological account. It’s not science but it’s there to tell us two or three

³³ Artigas, M. ‘Desarrollos recientes en evolución y su repercusión para la fe y la teología’, *Scripta theologica* (2000/1) 32, 243-267.

³⁴ Auletta, G., Leclerc, M. & Martínez, M.A., (eds.), *Biological Evolution: Facts and theories: A Critical Appraisal 150 Years After ‘The Origin of Species’*, Rome: Gregorian Biblical Press (2011). To the best of my knowledge, neither ‘monogenism’ nor ‘polygenism’ appear in the Subject index of this publication. Reference to *Humani generis* appears only in the essay of Robert John Russell as a footnote on p. 657, nonetheless without quoting the original magisterial text and giving, in my opinion, a partial interpretation.

³⁵ Herce, R. ‘Monogenismo y poligenismo. Status Quaestionis’, *Scripta theologica* (2014) 46 1, 105-120.

things. First of all that God created the world and the universe. Secondly, that the key to the whole of universe, the really significant thing, are humans and, thirdly, it is a very sophisticated mythology to try to explain the evil and suffering in the world.³⁶

With Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger one can interpret:

In the Bible this word [‘Adam’] expresses the unity of the whole creature ‘man’, so that one can speak of the biblical idea ‘corporate personality’. So if Jesus is called ‘Adam’, this implies that he is intended to gather the whole creature ‘Adam’ in himself.³⁷

Such a view can actually already be found in Gregory of Nyssa.³⁸ In line with Ratzinger there are New Testament scholars, such as Prof. J. Dunn, who argue that Paul did not envisage Adam as a historical figure but as ‘everyman’.³⁹ Quite interesting is also the position expressed by Fr. Funes, Director of the Specola Vaticana regarding the possibility of the existence of other living creatures and beings like us in the universe:

In my opinion this possibility does exist. Astronomers hold that the universe is formed of 100 billion galaxies, each composed of 100 billion stars. Many of these, or almost all of them, could have planets. How can we exclude that life may have developed in other places? ... It is possible. Up to now we have no proof, but certainly in a universe so vast no hypothesis can be excluded.

Asked whether this would present a problem for our faith, Funes claims

I do not think it would. Just as there is a multiplicity of creatures on the Earth, so there could be other beings, including intelligent ones, created by God. This is not in contrast with our faith, because we cannot set limits to the creative freedom of God. If we consider earthly creatures as ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’, as St Francis did, why should we not speak also of an ‘extraterrestrial brother’? He would still be part of Creation.

And to the question of whether redemption would be possible for extraterrestrials if they were sinners, he answers:

Jesus became flesh only once. The Incarnation is an event which cannot be repeated. But I am sure that they, too, in some way, would have the possibility to enjoy the God's mercy just as we have had.⁴⁰

Pope Francis himself has recently reawakened this discussion by suggesting that one should be ready to baptise Martians if they came and asked for it.⁴¹

In line with Funes and Pope Francis I too think that if one takes evolution seriously one has to admit in principle to the possibility that other living beings like humans exist on

³⁶ George Pell vs. Richard Dawkins, Debate ABC-TV, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/txt/s3469101.htm> cited 17 February 2013.

³⁷ Ratzinger, J. *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press (2004), p. 236. In the German original: ‘Das Neue Testament macht das erkennbar, indem es ihn einen, “Adam” nennt; dies Wort drückt in der Bible die Einheit des ganzen Wesens Mensch aus, sodass man von der biblischen Idee einer “Korporativepersönlichkeit” spricht.’ *Einführung in das Christentum*, München: Kösel 6. Auflage (2005), p. 222.

³⁸ Maspero, G. ‘Anthropology’, in Mateo-Seco, L. F. & Maspero, G. (eds.) *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden-Boston: Brill (2010), p. 43; ‘Trinity and Man, Gregory of Nyssa’s *Ad Ablabium*’, in den Boeft, J. et al. (eds.) *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol 86, Leiden-Boston: Brill (2007), p. 6.

³⁹ Dunn, J.D.G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (2006).

⁴⁰ Interview with Fr. José Gabriel Funes, S.J. Director, Specola Vaticana, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, 11 June 2008, p. 10. <http://www.ewtn.com/library/ANSWERS/intfrfunes.htm> cited 1 January 2014.

⁴¹ See for instance the report in <http://time.com/99616/for-pope-francis-its-about-more-than-martians/> cited 20. May 2014.

other planets, and it is clear that they cannot have originated from a primal pair on Earth. One cannot reject this argument by claiming that ‘the existence of Aliens has not been proved’, since unless one explicitly rejects the existence of Aliens, one has to develop an explanation of original sin and atonement in accord with this possibility for reasons of logical consistency.

In summary, the only thing that the Magisterium says Catholic faithful cannot deny in any way is the ‘Teaching of the Church with regard to original sin’ as stated in the Council of Trent, that is, that this sin means a fallen state and because of it all human persons require salvation, and to save us the Second Person of the Holy Trinity became a man, Jesus Christ. But the Magisterium does not state that monogenism (the origin of all humans from a primal couple) is essential for original sin and leaves open the possibility of polygenism if this is supported by science. On the other hand, if one could show that original sin fits better with the polygenist view than with the monogenist one, then this would be a reason for the Church to admit polygenism.