

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

SEMINAR READINGS

1. Genesis 1
2. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*
First Part, Q. 93 Article 1



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Genesis 1

Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

³ And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

⁶ And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth." And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. ¹⁷ And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens." ²¹ So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, First Part

Question 93

Article 1. Whether the image of God is in man?

Objection 1. It would seem that the image of God is not in man. For it is written (Isaiah 40:18): “To whom have you likened God? or what image will you make for Him?”

Objection 2. Further, to be the image of God is the property of the First-Begotten, of Whom the Apostle says (Colossians 1:15): “Who is the image of the invisible God, the First-Born of every creature.” Therefore the image of God is not to be found in man.

Objection 3. Further, Hilary says that “an image is of the same species as that which it represents”; and he also says that “an image is the undivided and united likeness of one thing adequately representing another.” But there is no species common to both God and man; nor can there be a comparison of equality between God and man. Therefore there can be no image of God in man.

On the contrary, It is written (Genesis 1:26): “Let Us make man to Our own image and likeness.”

I answer that, As Augustine says (QQ. 83, qu. 74): “Where an image exists, there forthwith is likeness; but where there is likeness, there is not necessarily an image.” Hence it is clear that likeness is essential to an image; and that an image adds something to likeness—namely, that it is copied from something else. For an “image” is so called because it is produced as an imitation of something else; wherefore, for instance, an egg, however much like and equal to another egg, is not called an image of the other egg, because it is not copied from it.

But equality does not belong to the essence of an image; for as Augustine says (QQ. 83, qu. 74): “Where there is an image there is not necessarily equality,” as we see in a person’s image reflected in a glass. Yet this is of the essence of a perfect image; for in a perfect image nothing is wanting that is to be found in that of which it is a copy. Now it is manifest that in man there is some likeness to God, copied from God as from an exemplar; yet this likeness is not one of equality, for such an exemplar infinitely excels its copy. Therefore there is in man a likeness to God; not, indeed, a perfect likeness, but imperfect. And Scripture implies the same when it says that man was made “to” God’s likeness; for the preposition “to” signifies a certain approach, as of something at a distance.

Reply to Objection 1. The Prophet speaks of bodily images made by man. Therefore he says pointedly: “What image will you make for Him?” But God made a spiritual image to Himself in man.

Reply to Objection 2. The First-Born of creatures is the perfect Image of God, reflecting perfectly that of which He is the Image, and so He is said to be the “Image,” and never “to the image.” But man is said to be both “image” by reason of the likeness; and “to the image” by reason of the imperfect likeness. And since the perfect likeness to God cannot be except in an identical nature, the Image of God exists in His first-born Son; as the image of the king

is in his son, who is of the same nature as himself: whereas it exists in man as in an alien nature, as the image of the king is in a silver coin, as Augustine says explains.

Reply to Objection 3. As unity means absence of division, a species is said to be the same as far as it is one. Now a thing is said to be one not only numerically, specifically, or generically, but also according to a certain analogy or proportion. In this sense a creature is one with God, or like to Him; but when Hilary says “of a thing which adequately represents another,” this is to be understood of a perfect image.