

*"God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good."* Genesis 1:31

My dear friends:

The Biblical story in the book of Genesis begins with God. And God's first recorded actions in that story tell of his abundant and joyous creative process... bringing all heaven and earth into being out of the overflow of Divine Joy. It is as if God found existence so wonderful that God wanted to share this abundance literally with all of us, and with all creation. God creates by speaking into existence, and at the end of each day of creation, as if looking over that day's work the way a farmer might sit on his or her porch gazing out over the productive fields, God pronounced the work GOOD. AND IT WAS GOOD!

For the first time in God's creative reflection – he might have stroked his chin so to speak – looked at solitary Adam alone in the garden, and said, IT IS NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO BE ALONE. In this paradise of Eden, the animals would share the garden with Adam and provide companionship with him. But as comforting as the animals were for Adam, God could tell Adam's sense of community was still not perfect. So God created a full human partner for man. God created woman. And in doing so, God created the beginning of human relations. When God brought the woman to Adam, the Genesis narrative shows him almost jumping up and down with glee, joining God in exuberant delight over creation. And Adam's first words when he saw Eve were: "This one at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."

What are we to make of this story? The writer of the sacred text of Genesis is using the language of song and poem to celebrate human beginnings. The primary thrust of the Genesis creation stories is to remind us that God is the creative presence behind all that is and that God loved creation into existence out of pure delight. The ancient story lets us know from the very start that God desires an intimate relationship with humankind and that God wants humankind to live in relationship with each other, as well as with creation itself. In other words, Genesis sings a song of a God who wired the entire creation in relationship, not in solitude.

My dear friends, you and I are wired for companionship and community. And that is why we know somewhere deep down that something is NOT GOOD when we are alone. Loneliness is one of the cancers of our day. Interaction, openness, friendship, genuine relationships are what God intended humankind to cultivate and cherish. The NOT GOOD of Genesis is the life of a person who mistakenly believes he or she is an island unto themselves... independent from the rest of humankind. God did not create human beings to be lone rangers.

As individuals and a faith community we must always be inclusive and never exclusive. We must be an inviting person and community of believers. May the summer months be an opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends. Might we ask ourselves: "do we foster relationships with openness, respect and joy? " I pray that we continue to build a vibrant, faith community which fosters human relationships in the manner God intended! May God look upon each of us and Our Lady of the Assumption parish and proclaim THIS IS VERY GOOD!

Your priest and friend,

Father Gene