

The Last Adam (7th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C)

1 Corinthians 15:45-49—The First Adam and the Last Adam

⁴⁵ Thus it is written, “The *first man Adam* became a *living being*”; the *last Adam* became a *life-giving spirit*. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ *The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.* ⁴⁸ As was *the man of dust*, so are those who are of the dust; and as is *the man of heaven*, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Cor 15:45-49)

1. Two “Adams”: Adam (“first man Adam”) vs. Christ (“last Adam”) (1 Cor 15:45)

Old Adam

“the first man Adam”

(Greek *ho prōtos anthrōpos Adam*)

living soul

(Greek *psychē*)

from the earth

man of dust

image of Adam

first Adam: of dust

New Adam

“the last Adam”

(Greek *ho eschatos Adam*)

life-giving spirit

(Greek *pneuma*)

from heaven

man from heaven

image of Christ

last Adam: of heaven

2. Two Ages: old creation (“the earth”) vs. new creation’ (“heaven”) (1 Cor 15:48)

The Living Tradition

Augustine: First comes in *the natural body such as Adam was the first man to possess*. Had he not sinned, he would never have died. *Such a body we too possess, except that its nature as a result of sin has become so changed for the worse that it is now faced with inexorable death*. Such a body Christ also deigned to assume for our sakes, not indeed by necessity but in virtue of his power. *Afterward, however, comes the spiritual body such as that which Christ, our head, was the first to have been, but which we his members, will have at the final resurrection of the dead*. (Augustine, *City of God*, 13.23; trans. in G. Bray, *1-2 Corinthians* 175)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (7th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. When you think about Jesus Christ, does the term “new Adam” come to mind? If not, why not? What are the implications of Jesus’ identity as the “last Adam”?

For Further Reading

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (trans. F. R. Larcher, O.P.; eds. J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón; Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012).
2. Gerald Bray, ed. *1-2 Corinthians* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VI; Downers Grove, IL.: IVP, 1999).
3. George T. Montague, SM, *First Corinthians* (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).