



**66** *Was it part of God's plan for men to suffer and die?*

**God does not want men to suffer and die. God's original idea for man was paradise: life forever and peace between God and man and their environment, between man and woman. [374-379, 384, 400]**

Often we sense how life ought to be, how *we* ought to be, but in fact we do not live in peace with ourselves, act out of fear and uncontrolled emotions, and have lost the original harmony that man had with the world and ultimately with God. In Sacred Scripture the experience of this alienation is expressed in the story of the Fall. Because sin crept in, Adam and Eve had to leave paradise, in which they were in harmony with each other and with God. The toil of work, suffering, mortality, and the temptation to sin are signs of this loss of paradise.



We have lost paradise but have received heaven, and therefore the gain is greater than the loss.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM  
(349/350-407, Doctor of the Church)



O God, to turn away from you is to fall. To turn to you is to stand up. To remain in you is to have a sure support.

ST. AUGUSTINE  
(354-430)




Human weakness cannot upset the plans of divine omnipotence. A divine master-builder can work even with falling stones.

MICHAEL CARDINAL VON FAULHABER  
(1869-1952, Archbishop of Munich and Freising)

**67** *What is sin?*

**At the core of sin is a rejection of God and the refusal to accept his love. This is manifested in a disregard for his commandments. [385-390]**

Sin is more than incorrect behavior; it is not just a psychological weakness. In the deepest sense every rejection or destruction of *something* good is the rejection of *good in itself*, the rejection of God. In its most profound and terrible dimension, sin is separation from God and, thus, separation from the source of life. That is why death is another consequence of sin. Only through Jesus do we understand the abysmal dimension of sin: Jesus suffered God's rejection in his own flesh. He took upon himself the deadly power of sin so that it would not strike us. The term that we use for this is

redemption.  [224-237](#), [315-318](#), [348-468](#)



Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

Rom 5:20b



When Christ's hands were nailed to the Cross, he also nailed our sins to the Cross.

ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX  
(1090-1153)

**68** *Original sin? What does the Fall of Adam and Eve have to do with us?*

**Sin in the strict sense implies guilt for which one is personally responsible. Therefore the term "Original Sin" refers, not to a personal sin, but rather to the disastrous, fallen state of mankind into which the individual is born, even before he himself sins by a free decision. [388-389, 402-404]**

In talking about Original Sin, Pope Benedict XVI says that we must understand "that we all carry within us a drop of the poison of that way of thinking, illustrated by the images in the Book of →[GENESIS](#). . . . The human being does not trust God. Tempted by the serpent, he harbors the suspicion . . . that God is a rival who curtails our freedom and that we will be fully human only when we have cast him aside. . . . Man does not want to receive his existence and the fullness of his life from God. . . . And in doing so, he trusts in deceit rather than in truth and thereby sinks with his life into emptiness, into death" (Pope Benedict XVI, December 8, 2005).



But the serpent said to the woman, ". . . When you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God."



A moral approach to the world is possible and beneficial only when one takes upon himself the whole awful mess of life, one's share in the responsibility for death and sin, in short, original sin as a whole, and stops seeing guilt always in others.

HERMANN HESSE

(1877-1962, German writer)

**69** *Are we compelled to sin by original sin?*

**No. Man, though, is deeply wounded by original sin and is inclined to sin. Nevertheless, with God's help he is capable of doing good. [405]**

In no single case are we obliged to sin. In fact, however, we sin again and again, because we are weak, ignorant, and easily misled. A sin committed under compulsion, moreover, would be no sin, because sin always involves a free decision.



The worst thing is not to commit crimes but, rather, not to accomplish the good that one could have done. It is the sin of omission, which is nothing other than to be unloving, and no one accuses himself of it.

LÉON BLOY

(1846-1917, French writer)

**70** *How does God draw us out of the whirlpool of evil?*

**God does not just look on as man gradually destroys himself and the world around him through the chain reaction of sin. He sends us Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer, who snatches us from the power of sin. [410-412, 420-421]**

“No one can help me”—this maxim of human experience is no longer accurate. Wherever man may have strayed by his sins, God the Father has sent his Son there. The consequence of sin is death (cf. Rom 6:23). Another consequence of sin, however, is the marvelous solidarity of God, who sends us Jesus as our friend and Savior. Therefore original sin is also called *felix culpa* (= happy fault): “O happy fault . . . which gained for us so great a Redeemer!” (Liturgy of the Easter Vigil).



And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son from the Father.

Jn 1:14

CHAPTER TWO  
I Believe in Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God