

FEBRUARY 12, 2025 FATHER TOMASZ SKIBINSKI

It is truly beautiful that in those days, we have a chance to listen once again to the account of Creation, to the account of everything that happened from the very beginning. And it is good to listen to it again, because first of all, everything in there has already been given to us, and it explains why things are, and why we are the way we are as well. And it kind of lays out for us, also, this tremendous, amazing design that God has had from the beginning for every human being. And so, if we want to understand who we are and understand why we function the way we do, it is good to listen to it and really to meditate upon it.

Creation-- You know, everything that has been given to us, everything that has been entrusted to us, but also the drama of man, and you know, the sin, and how we went against this design of God's love for us. Today, we hear about God creating the first man and putting him in the garden of Eden. You know, this place of harmony. This place of, really, peace and tranquility. And again, this vision that God had for all humanity, really, to be in communion with him. And also, the-- In a way, the guide that God has given to man, saying, "Yes, you may freely eat of any of the tree, but of the tree that is in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." And we know what happens later on. That, you know, man and woman that God has created have really went against-- They went against this plan of God's love, and all the consequences that followed that.

We are now in this Jubilee year, and the Jubilee year exactly reminds us of this, that God had the plan, has always had a plan: a plan of love for us, but we had forfeited that plan. But God did not leave us there. But really, God wants to bring us to happiness. God really wants to bring us back to communion with him. And in this year, we have such a great gift

that the Church gives to us, that yes, not only that we can have our sins forgiven, but also that, you know, the consequences of those sins and the consequence of the first sin is also-- You know, has also been-- Can also be remedied in a way that yes, we can enter. We can truly return into communion with God.

And this is such a gift, such a gift, because we know what happened after. And today, Jesus, he speaks about this. He speaks about what defiles us, what makes us truly unclean, what makes us-- What ruptures this communion with him. And that is what we carry inside of our heart. That because God, in the plan of his Creation, has also included freedom, and that freedom, we have sometimes taken very lightly, as just doing whatever I think is good for me, not so much what God has told me that is good for me. And that is the drama that is always, you know, at the heart, at the centre of our lives. And we know that this causes us to experience suffering. Because it is not so much just those external things that really make us suffer, but really, what is coming out of the heart. Because it's not only about a certain defilement, you know, kind of like a ritual impurity, but really, what makes us suffer deep down, what makes us suffer is when we go against the plan of God.

And so, Christ speaks about the human heart. Christ speaks about the evil intentions that come out from us: intentions, even thoughts. You know, those desires that we carry, and sometimes we harbour them so much in our minds. You know, maybe the fact that I know somebody had-- Someone has done some harm for us, to us, but-- Which is not good, obviously, but you know, what is it that then we have in our hearts? Maybe, you know, judgments. Maybe grudges, lack of reconciliation and so on. And Christ goes right there. He wants to touch that point, that this is truly what defiles us. All this list, you know, of sins that Christ enumerates. But yet, we have such a great gift that the

Church gives to us as well: the sacrament of reconciliation. That we can be cleansed, that we can return to communion with God, to this original plan of God, and be reconciled with him and with the other person who is beside us. With our neighbour, as we say. And yes, it is so necessary and so beautiful, but also, so helpful to us. That we're not just left to ourselves, but that God has already, in this plan of Creation, has also foreseen the Saviour. Has foreseen Jesus Christ, the one who is coming to give us the true freedom. Freedom, but not that freedom that we have taken lightly, but the freedom that really means to be able to follow him, to listen to him, to obey him, because this is where our true happiness is.

And so today, once again, it is a reminder that we are on a journey and that there is hope for us. We are the pilgrims of hope, as Pope Francis has given this title to this Jubilee year. The pilgrims of hope. And the hope is Jesus Christ, and he is the only door that is opened, has been opened for us, so that we may return to the loving embrace of the Father and truly experience that peace and that happiness that he's always had in mind for each one of us.