

During Lent I try to take the opportunity to get back to basics. There are two areas of focus for me this Lenten season.

"Till and Keep":

"The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it" - Genesis 2:15

I routinely travel for work, but as a result of the travel restrictions I have been home with my wife and children more frequently. A blessing for me, likely more of a burden for them! As a husband and father, Genesis 2:15 reminds me to 'till and keep' my garden just as Adam was commanded. God gave Adam that responsibility and he requires of men the duty of doing the same for their 'gardens'. Modern social structures present distractions, confusion and challenges for men to accept and carry out their vocational duties. My marriage and wife, our children and home, my career and other responsibilities are all a part of my garden. Adam failed miserably by letting the serpent into the garden and allowed it to get close to his wife. That is always a good reminder for me that the job of tilling and keeping requires men to be vigilant and courageous as the devil prowls constantly seeking the ruin of our families and our souls.

First Fruits:

As a Catholic with stunted catechesis, I was ignorant of many of the traditional practices of our Catholic faith as well as their purpose and rationale. Many years ago as I was reenergized in my faith, I undertook the catechism again to teach myself about the richness of our practices and traditions. I was vaguely aware that as Catholics, we are called to tithe (10% of our income), but as I read and studied more, I was drawn back to the Book of Genesis and the story of Cain and Abel. The first siblings were instructed in the concept of the first fruits being an offering of thanksgiving and praise to God for all blessings. I am more aware than ever this Lenten season of how generous God's mercy and kindness have been in my life, and I strive to be like Abel - giving God my best.

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