

## PASTOR'S CORNER



*Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked;*

Just before the Fall we hear: *The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.* What happened?

Adam and Eve have eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – they have rejected the Fatherly love of God and decided that they will decide what is right and wrong for themselves.

And now they look at each other and they see not just a person to be loved for her own sake, but a body that I can use for my own gratification. Before their fall they had recognized the complementarity of their bodies: their bodies were made for love and for union. But that union, they recognized, was about giving themselves entirely to each other for the good of the other.

Now Eve realizes that she can choose to use Adam simply for the sake of pleasure – and that Adam might simply use her as well. And so she covers herself. Adam does the same.

Shame is in itself a good thing. Shame is what causes us in this fallen world to protect ourselves from those who would simply use us and reduce us to something less than who we are. It can easily be distorted: we can become ashamed of our thoughts, our actions, and our bodies to a degree that we cannot reveal them even to someone who does see the person or can help us heal. On the other hand, there are those who are shameless – who flaunt themselves in such a way that says I don't care if I'm looked at as a thing to be used; perhaps I even welcome the attention as a mere thing for someone's pleasure, entertainment, or mockery – it does, after all, feel better than not being seen at all.

But we were made for so much more. We were made to be seen as a person: loved for our own sake and never reduced to things to be used. We need to protect ourselves from ever being used that way, we need to refuse to look at others or think of others in that way, and we need to cultivate authentic love that wills the good of the other so that we can be, not shameless, but truly without shame among true friends and good spouses – able to share our thoughts and even our faults with those who love us unconditionally – and able, even in this fallen world, to share in the complementarity of our bodies with someone who has stood before God and the community and sworn to love us through a complete gift of self until death.

In Christ, through Mary,

*Fr. Dominic David Maichrowicz, OP*