

Anselm and the Guilt of Adam

Kevin A. McMahon
Saint Anselm College

*Perhaps the most difficult element in the traditional teaching on original sin is the claim that the very guilt of Adam's sin has been passed on to the entire race. It was Augustine who, in the course of the Pelagian controversy, first drew this conclusion from St. Paul's discussion of sin, particularly in the letter to the Romans. Augustine ultimately attributed the transmission to the agency of concupiscence, a less than happy solution. When he came to treat the issue in his *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas shifted the agency from the impetus of concupiscence to the will of the first man, a move of marked importance in the Augustinian tradition. But, as this paper will show, Aquinas was already anticipated in this by the approach taken by Anselm in his *On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin*.*

Sometime between the summer of 1098 and the summer of 1100, at Lyons in France where he had gone after attending the Council of Bari, Anselm wrote a sequel to the *Cur Deus Homo*, bearing the somewhat cumbersome title of *On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin*.¹ Its purpose was to answer still another question of that ever-inquiring monk, Boso, namely, given that our redemption could have been the work only of a sinless man who was also divine, how is it that Jesus, who indeed shared our humanity, could nonetheless have escaped our condition of constituting a single mass of sin? It strikes me, however, that Anselm's answer, which pretty much follows the Augustinian line in explaining that Jesus' humanity was unique because his conception was unique, effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, is less important than what he has to say as he wrestles with the more basic question of how it could be that we do, in fact, make up a single *massa peccati*, understanding by this Augustine's claim that we are all sinners, even those of us who are too young to have committed any personal sin, because we all share in the sin of the first man, and we share in his guilt.

The statement that each person, from the moment of birth, is burdened with guilt was Augustine's defining contribution to the doctrine of original sin. The Jewish scriptural, and later the rabbinical and pseudepigraphal traditions, spoke of a first sin whose effects, including moral weakness and death, were passed on to the race, but not the guilt.² It will not be found in St. Paul, unless one wishes to argue that "guilt" is to be accounted among the many layers of meaning that belong to ἁμαρτία, sin, as Paul speaks of it in Romans 5. Then again, this may be exactly how Augustine understood St. Paul, for it was in the course of commenting on the letter to the Romans in his early treatise, *Ad Simplicianum* (396), that Augustine coined both phrases, "original sin" and "original guilt," distinguishing clearly two ideas that he may have considered were combined in St. Paul. Our mortality, he wrote, we inherit as the penalty of original sin

¹ Anselm of Canterbury, *Why God Became Man and The Virgin Conception and Original Sin*, translation, introduction and notes by Joseph M. Colleran (Albany: Magi Books, Inc., 1969), 22-3.

² This was the conclusion of F. R. Tennant after his study of the Jewish writings in *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968; reprint of 1903 edition), 167-68.

(*originale peccatum*), while carnal concupiscence has mixed the entire race into a single, doughy lump, with original guilt (*originalis reatus*) abiding throughout.³

It is the fact of this universal, original guilt, Augustine writes, that explains St. Paul's teaching in Romans 9:8-29 that salvation is entirely a matter of God's merciful grace, for "from Adam has come one mass of sinners and godless men."⁴ And it explains, too, why there is no injustice if although many are called only a few are chosen to receive this grace (Mt. 22:14), for condemnation is everyone's just reward.⁵ Gerald Bonner has said that the opinion "if not exactly expressed, is unquestionably implied" here by Augustine that even infants carry the original guilt, because this would be the only way to ensure the true universality of our human need for Christ's death (2 Cor. 5:14; Rom. 5:6).⁶ But it would seem that there is something more underlying Augustine's idea of universal guilt than just a concern to maintain the consistency of the Pauline texts, and that something would be the practice of infant baptism.

Infant baptism had long been an important part of church life in North Africa. As early as 388, the year after his own baptism in Milan, Augustine had raised what he called the "most obscure question" of what the point could be, what good served, in consecrating infants, though he decided to postpone investigation until the correct (or a better) moment.⁷ Writing earlier still, however, during the years 377 to 389, the man who had baptized Augustine, St. Ambrose, was speaking in his scriptural commentaries of the afflictions under which we labor even before birth. "Before we are born," he stated in *De Apologia Prophetarum David*, "we are stained with an infection; and before we receive the pleasure of light, we receive the injury of origin itself."⁸ In his homily on the Book of Tobit he wrote that from the Devil, Eve borrowed sin, and she thereby reduced all humanity to debt, namely to the condition of being a posterity liable to the payment of interest.⁹ In his *Exposition on the Gospel of Luke*, where he cited Romans 5:12, Ambrose said that in the bath of salvation, infants who have been baptized are reformed from the wickedness that was present at the formation of their nature.¹⁰

One cannot be sure whether Augustine was familiar with these remarks of Ambrose when he wrote his treatise to Simplician, but some twenty five years later, while embroiled in the

³ *Ad Simplicianum* 1.1.10; 1.2.20.

⁴ "Vna est enim ex Adam massa peccatorum et impiorum . . ." Ibid., 1.2.19. *Corpus Christianorum, Series latina* (Turnholt, Belgium, 1953-), 48.

⁵ Ibid., 1.2.13, 16.

⁶ Gerald Bonner, *Augustine and Modern Research on Pelagianism*, The Saint Augustine Lecture 1970 (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1972), 18.

⁷ *De quantitate animae* 36.80.

⁸ "Antequam nascimur, maculamur contagio et ante usuram lucis originis ipsius excipimus iniuriam." *De Apologia Prophetarum David* 11.56. *Sources chrétiennes* (Paris, 1940-), no. 239, 150.

⁹ "Quis iste peccati est faenerator nisi diabolus, a quo Eua mutuata peccatum obnoxiae successionis usuris omne genus defaeneravit humanum?" *De Tobia* 9.33. Lois Miles Zucker, *S. Ambrosii De Tobia*, The Catholic University of America Patristic Studies, vol. 35 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1933), 48.

¹⁰ "Iordanis conuersus est retrorsum, significat salutaris lauacri futura mysteria, per quae in primordia naturae suae qui baptizati fuerint paruuli a malitia reformantur." *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* 1.37. *Sources chrétiennes* (Paris, 1940-), no. 45, 65.

Pelagian controversy, we find him quoting them against Julian, the Pelagian bishop of Eclanum in Italy.¹¹ And we find, too, that the Pelagian assertion that each one of us is born free and able to lead an absolutely sinless life provided Augustine with the “correct” moment to return to the issue of infant baptism. In fact he raises the case of infants in the very first of his anti-Pelagian tracts, entitled *On the Merits and Remission of Sins* (412). He states:

If they were hurt by no malady of original sin, how is it they are carried to the physician Christ, for the express purpose of receiving the sacrament of eternal salvation, by the pious anxiety of those who run to Him? Why rather is it not said to them in the Church: Take hence these innocents: “they that are whole need not a physician but they that are sick;”—Christ “came not to call the righteous but sinners” (Lk. 5:31, 32)? There never has been heard, there never is heard, there never will be heard in the Church, such a fiction concerning Christ.¹²

A few years later, in the treatise *On Marriage and Concupiscence* (419-20), Augustine writes, That, therefore, which is born of the concupiscence of the flesh is really born of the world, and not of God; but it is born of God, when it is born again of water and of the Spirit. The guilt (*reatus*) of this concupiscence, regeneration alone remits, even as natural generation contracts it. . . . Until, then, this remission of sins takes place in children (*in prole*), they have within them the law of sin in such manner, that it is really imputed to them as sin; in other words, with that law there is attaching to them its sentence of guilt (*reatus*), which holds them debtors to eternal condemnation.¹³

And who has introduced this law of sin and guilt into humanity? The first man, Adam. “By one man sin entered into the world,” St. Paul wrote in Romans 5:12, “and death by sin.” Augustine comments: “he, in whom all die, . . . also by the hidden corruption of his own carnal concupiscence rotted in himself all those coming from his stock.”¹⁴

What had remained implied in his letter to Simplician, Augustine now states outright, that each of us born into the world is born in guilt. Furthermore, having come to see in his earlier writings that to suppose the preexistence of souls introduces an insuperable dualism into the person, Augustine at this point is convinced that the guilt present at birth could not have been contracted by one’s personal choice, and so it must be attributable to the first man. Finally, the agent said to involve us in the first sin is concupiscence.

¹¹ *Contra Julianum* 1.3.10. This was not, however, the first time Augustine quoted Ambrose in the Pelagian controversy. See *De natura et gratia* (415) 75 [63]; *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* (418) 2.47 [41].

¹² *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* 1.23 [18]; trans. Peter Holmes in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, vol. 5, *Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, ed. Philip Schaff (Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887; reprinted by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 24.

¹³ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1.21 [19], 37 [32].

¹⁴ “[S]ic et ille in quo omnes moriuntur . . . occulta etiam tabe carnalis concupiscentiae suae tabificavit in se omnes de sua stirpe venientes.” *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* 1.9.10; *Patrologia latina* (Paris, 1865), 44:115.

There can be no doubt that concupiscence is the most important idea in Augustine's doctrine of original sin. It is a word that occurs with some, but not great, frequency in the Latin Bible. One finds ten or so instances of its use in St. Paul, but they include such passages as the words in Romans 7-8 that became so influential for Augustine: "I did not know sin, except through the Law; I did not know concupiscence except that the Law commanded 'Do not desire with concupiscence.'" Moreover, sin took advantage of the commandment to work in me every concupiscence." Furthermore, Augustine identifies concupiscence with "the law at work in the inner man" that St. Paul goes on to speak of in 7:23: "moreover I see another law at work in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and having taken me captive under the law of sin that is in my members." And when St. Paul ends the passage with his famous lament, "Unhappy man that I am! Who will save me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore I serve the law of God with my mind, but the law of sin through my flesh," Augustine understands death to refer to the condition of alienation from God, from others and even from oneself, and of literal physical fragmentation, the condition that Paul refers to as "flesh," σαρκίς, which was introduced into the human race by the first sin, and which spreads and infects through the action of concupiscence.

Concupiscentia in the Latin rendering of St. Paul translated his term, ἐπιθυμία, which in the classical literature was generally used to mean a longing or a strongly felt desire. Now the letters of St. Paul, properly expurgated of course, were held in high regard by the Manicheans, to whom Augustine belonged for nine years.¹⁵ And Johannes van Oort makes the point that the Manicheans taught a view of sexual ἐπιθυμία as the epitome of the randomness inherent in matter, with which Augustine must have been familiar.¹⁶ Even so, there is no evidence that Augustine's thought on concupiscence was derived through any other medium than his immediate contact with scripture, and with the letters of Paul in particular, to which he turned with intensity after his ordination in 391.¹⁷ It can hardly be coincidence that we find Augustine at this very moment stating in book six of his *De Musica*, apparently for the first time, that the soul, debased by sin, now finds itself drawn down into the passions of the body by the pull of "*carnalis concupiscentia*," having become too weak to resist. And he finishes with the cry from Romans 7:24-25.¹⁸ Hence, while in the Manichean system concupiscence is a natural force that belongs to the body as evil, for Augustine it is an adventitious principle arising out of the free decision of the first man.

It was also during this period, between his ordination and his consecration as coadjutor bishop at Hippo in 395, that Augustine composed the portion of his treatise entitled *Eighty Three*

¹⁵ Paula Fredriksen Landes, *Augustine on Romans* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), ix.

¹⁶ Johannes van Oort, "Augustine and Mani on concupiscentia sexualis," in *Augustiniana Traiectina*, ed. J. den Boeft and J. van Oort (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1987), 137-52.

¹⁷ See *Ep.* 21; Roland J. Teske, "Introduction," St. Augustine, *On Genesis*, trans. Roland J. Teske, S.J., The Fathers of the Church, vol. 84 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 5, n. 11.

¹⁸ *De Musica* 6.5.13-14.

Different Questions that deals with the letters of St. Paul.¹⁹ And it is here that we first find Augustine writing that, as St. Paul says (Rom. 8:3), Jesus was born in the *likeness* of sinful flesh, because although his flesh was mortal, since Adam merited death for our nature by his sin, still it was not sinful because it was not born of fleshly desire, “*de carnali delectatione*.”²⁰ The idea is developed more fully some years later, around 414, in book ten of the *Literal Commentary on Genesis*. While commenting on the passage in the letter to the Hebrews (7:9-10) that speaks of Levi preexisting in the loins of his ancestor Abraham, Augustine distinguishes three separate elements in human conception. Two are found within human semen: the visible matter of the semen (“*materia seminis manifesta*”) and the “*ratio seminalis*,” the invisible seminal force (“*vis invisibilis*”) which acts in an immaterial way to regulate the development of the person.²¹ The third element is the corporeal substance, the physical material that is taken up by the fetus in its growth, and which apparently is derived from the mother. Augustine writes that whereas Jesus took the corporeal substance of his human body from Mary, he received neither the seminal matter nor the seminal force that would trace back to Adam. Instead, the development of his body was regulated by a divine *ratio*, the Holy Spirit.²²

Hence, like Levi, Jesus may be said to have resided in the loins of Abraham in terms of bodily substance. But unlike Jesus, Levi was in his ancestor’s loins as Abraham had been in his own father’s, “namely, through the law in the members fighting against the law of the mind and through invisible concupiscence”²³ For the sin of the first man had opened up in his bodily being a seething wound, identifiable with the warring law in our members, that is, with concupiscence, and this wound became “transcribed in the seminal reason” that shapes all flesh that is born by the work of concupiscence.²⁴ It is because Jesus did not descend through Adam’s concupiscence-stamped seminal force that he did not contract the guilt of one having to die (*reatus moriendi*), and so, by his obedience, could be the one to free us from our guilt, and by his death remit our mortal debt, “*exsolvendae indebitae morti*,” the very argument that is so central to Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo*.²⁵

These passages make clear just how technical a meaning concupiscence comes to have for Augustine. The capriciousness as well as the vehemence of sexual arousal and pleasure that he often stresses in his anti-Pelagian writings are only outward symptoms and manifestations of a force that in the first instance is something altogether pre-conscious and constitutive of our fractured, conflicted state. Yet even in his *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, Augustine was

¹⁹ David L. Mosher, “Introduction,” Saint Augustine, *Eighty Three Different Questions*, trans. David L. Mosher, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 70 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 19.

²⁰ *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Q. 66.6; cf. *De libero arbitrio* 10.31.

²¹ *De Genesi ad litteram* 10.21.37; *Patrologia latina* (Paris, 1887), 34:425.

²² *Ibid.*, 10.20.35; *Ibid.*, 424.

²³ “[P]er legem scilicet in membris repugnantem legi mentis et invisibilem concupiscentiam. . . .” *Ibid.*, 10.20.36; *ibid.*

²⁴ “[V]ulnus praevaricationis in lege membrorum repugnante legi mentis, quae per omnem inde propagatum carnem seminali ratione quasi transcribitur” *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.18.32; *Ibid.*, 422.

aware of the difficulties inherent in a theory that attributed the transmission of moral guilt to a physical force. We saw that by this time the practice of infant baptism had convinced him that all are born with the guilt of Adam. Yet he acknowledged that guilt belongs to the soul, not the body. And the soul, he insisted, is not something bodily. How, then, could an agent that is certainly bodily, concupiscence, affect the soul? The easiest solution, he admitted, would be to say that the child's soul is passed on from the father's, just as the body is from the father's body, reaching all the way back to the guilty soul of Adam. But of course this traducianist idea inevitably carries with it materialist overtones, and it made Augustine wary.²⁶

Which, no doubt, is why when we turn to Anselm, Augustinian though he is, and to his treatise *On the Virgin Conception*, where he apparently takes it as given that each soul is created immediately by God, there is almost no reference at all to concupiscence.²⁷ Instead, Anselm concentrates attention on human will and our nature. Not our nature as a supra-personal principle or idea, as is true, say, in John Scotus Eriugena,²⁸ but very much as a historical reality, the existential situation of being human. Our nature was made by God to be generative, that is, to be capable of passing on new human life, it was made just, meaning integral, it was made rational, free, graced with happiness, and it was rooted in the person of the first man, from whose side even the first woman was taken (cc. 2, 9, 10, 23). The entirety of our nature was located in those first two individuals; and in a true sense, the manner in which they lived that nature would define it. Made the principles of our existence, their decision would determine our history.

Anselm distinguishes between the body, which has its beginning in the seed transmitted in generation, and the soul which comes from God, though he is unsure when it is actually united with the body (c. 7). He distinguishes, too, between our nature as human, and our nature as changed by sin (cc. 10, 16). The human person is the individual human being, body and soul together; an individual instance of human nature (cc. 10, 23). The first man, created in the condition of rectitude of body and soul that Anselm calls "justice," had, by virtue of the generative power in his nature, the capacity to bring forth, by free exercise of this power, and in cooperation with God, a community of human persons born equally just. Indeed, at issue here is not simply a community, but a single, historical, human order, with Adam as the principium of the order, having a role in producing the order. When the first man sins, says Anselm, not only is he changed in his person, but the entire order of persons is changed, evidenced by the forfeiture of any person's control over the power of generation. Adam the person, Anselm writes, "made the nature sinful, because when Adam sinned, the man sinned" (c. 23). By sinful Anselm means unjust, disordered, at variance with God. And because the nature is sinful, or the order is sinful, anyone born into the order is said to be sinful. Just as any person who sins is said

²⁶ Ibid., 10.24.40-25.41.

²⁷ The one exception comes when Anselm appeals to concupiscence in the sense of physical pleasure or desire to explain how, if sin can exist only in a rational soul, one should understand the lines in scripture that speak of one having been "conceived from unclean seed" (Job 14:4) or "conceived in sins" (Ps. 51:5), as in *De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato* cc. 7, 14. The Latin text used is that found in F. S. Schmitt, O.S.B., ed., *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omni* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1968), vol. 1, 139-73.

²⁸ See John Scotus Eriugena, *De divisione naturae* 4.7-9.

to render so much the more sinful his own individual nature (c. 27). It is with this particular idea of nature in mind that Anselm can say that even in the infant, “nature stands accused of the wilful desertion of justice which it committed in Adam” (c. 27).²⁹

This, Anselm states, is what is meant by original sin. It is our natural sin, a sin charged to us because of our nature, which we receive in receiving our nature (c. 23). And Anselm is adamant: this sin is a true sin, not a sin by analogy, not a metaphor or the likeness of a sin, the way a painting is the likeness of a person (c. 3). This sin in the infant is the infant’s own sin, and for it the infant is justly condemned (c. 26). Only one person was sinless, Jesus Christ; and there is no one among us who is not in need of his redemption.

We do not find Anselm using Augustine’s term for guilt, *reatus*, though that is the word that the Council of Trent will use, perhaps pointedly, in its formal teaching on original guilt.³⁰ Instead, Anselm speaks of the *culpa*, the fault or blame that each of us bears. The sin of Adam has made all of us accountable. We are all responsible for the sin committed at the origin of our nature, liable for the debt (*debitum*) which that sin incurred, and yet, to a person, incapable of paying the debt—which is why this treatise is such a perfect companion to the *Cur Deus Homo?*

In order to make the case that Jesus could be truly human and yet not a sinner, Anselm has recourse to the Augustinian definition of evil as the absence of good. After sin, he reasons, it is not that human nature becomes another kind of essence, a new species called homo malus. It is rather that our nature is stripped of the integrity and blessings that it first enjoyed. The bodiliness that Jesus assumes from the Virgin is certainly injured because of sin, but it is not an evil kind of nature and is not itself sin. Having turned to this definition, Anselm does therefore speak of our sharing in the first sin in terms of what we have lost because of it. “The only way that I can understand this sin, which I call original sin,” Anselm states, “. . . is as that destitution of due virtue created by the disobedience of Adam, through which all have become the sons of wrath” (c. 27).³¹ Taken no further than this, Anselm might be seen as merely anticipating the contemporary view, found among writers from Karl Rahner to Germain Grisez, that the teaching of our birth in sin and guilt refers to our being born bereft of the supernatural grace that God originally intended.³²

²⁹ “[Q]uoniam et naturam accusat spontanea quam fecit in Adam iustitiae desertio” Schmitt, op. cit., p. 170.

³⁰ “Si quis per Iesu Christi Domini nostri gratiam, quae in baptisate confertur, reatum originalis peccati remitti negat . . . an. s.” Council of Trent, *Decretum de peccato originale*, n. 5. H. Denzinger, A. Schönmetzer, S.J., *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 33rd ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1965), n. 1515.

³¹ “Hoc peccatum, quod originale dico, aliud intelligere nequeo in eisdem infantibus, nisi ipsam quam supra posui factam per inobedientiam Adae iustitiae debitae nuditatem, per quam omnes filii sunt irae” Schmitt, op. cit., 170.

³² Karl Rahner, “The Sin of Adam,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 11 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974; New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), 257-58; “Original Sin,” *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, 6 vols., ed. Karl Rahner et al. (London : Burnes and Oates; New York: The Seabury Press, 1968-1970), vol. 4, 331. Germain Grisez and Russell Shaw, *Fulfillment in Christ: A Summary of Christian Moral Principles* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 170-71.

But to do so, I believe, would be to deny Anselm the significance of the position he is trying to develop. If the *effect* of sin may be understood simply in terms of defect or deficiency, the act itself is still rooted in a true movement of the will and not just a failure to move, a turning away from God instead of turning towards Him, an actual dishonoring of God (c. 10), a deed in defiance of Him that can be overcome only by a far deeper obedience given to Him.³³

It is only because he does regard them as having been born in positive guilt that Anselm, compassionate as he is, nonetheless concludes that infants who die without baptism can justly be consigned to hell where they will remain forever unrelieved of the evils into which their nature has fallen (cc. 22, 23). Certainly, lying behind the contemporary re-interpretation of original sin has been the difficulty raised by evolutionary science for any view that would require tracing the whole of the race back to the physical life and action of a single individual. But that is exactly what Anselm's approach to nature makes it possible to avoid. Just as he denies that the first sin changed our nature into some new, evil thing, so Anselm argues that our share in the guilt of that act is not transmitted by any physical process. It is not present in the seminal matter, nor in any occult force like Augustine's concupiscence. Sin, he states, can be attributed only to the will (c. 3), and therefore it comes to exist only with the existence of the person, with the creation of the rational soul (c. 27). It is the will's association with the nature reshaped by Adam's decision that gives it a share in that man's guilt. Anselm states repeatedly that human nature was created by God to be self-generative. Because this capacity to bring forth in succession the entire community of human individuals was subject to Adam's will, he may properly be said to have made every person born of human procreation (c. 23). It is Aquinas who will later suggest that the sin of the first man lay in his effort to convert his place as head of the human order into a glorification of his own power.³⁴ Anselm does not make this move. If he were, however, it would allow him to describe fallen human nature as an extension of the first sin, and to understand each new life as a carrying through of Adam's sin. In this sense even an infant might be held indirectly accountable for a sin that would not be his personal act. If the first Adam was made head of an order that he set in opposition to God, Jesus, the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), becomes the head of a renewed order, united in its depths with God. Anselm follows Augustine in arguing that because the bodily humanity of Jesus, taken from Mary, was formed by the operation of the Holy Spirit and not the generative power in human nature or the initiative of a human parent, Jesus carried neither Adam's injustice nor his guilt. The conception of the God-man constitutes a new beginning. As it was sufficient simply to exist through the operation of the old order for one's will to share in its injustice, even before that will was mature enough to be freely exercised, so now it is sufficient that one belong to the new order, united with the life of Christ in baptism, for his will to be held just, by participation in the will, the faith, of the Church (c. 29).

The impetus driving the teaching on the transmission of the first sin's effects and of its guilt was never a macabre pessimism about human existence. The assertion that in Christ, there had

³³ This would be the great deed of Jesus of which Anselm speaks in *Cur Deus Homo?* 1.9.

³⁴ Taking what Thomas says of Adam's sin in *Summa theologiae* 1-2, q. 81, a. 1 with what he says of it in 2-2, q. 163, a. 1, ad 1; a. 2, c.

been established a literal communion of human history with the inner life of God, a union that would lie at the core of a new heaven and a new earth, directly implied that human history possessed a unity already shaped by human freedom, which lay at the core of the primordial heaven and earth. That the communion established by Christ passed first along the way of the cross indicated just what sort of shape our unity had. If we are willing to take Anselm's talk of the human generative order defined by Adam's decision at the outset of creation as determining the material order as a whole, to the extent that after sin, the human order would still be carrying the mark of Adam's decision even if it actually emerges out of the animal order in time, then the way lies open to speak, as St. Paul does, of all creation groaning under the weight of sin (Rom. 8:19-23), and to speak of our participation in that original guilt, without having to assert a biological connection to the first couple that contemporary science has effectively disproven. Anselm's treatise is purportedly concerned with explaining to us God's act of salvation. But it is to our human mystery that Anselm offers the most provocative clues, compelling us to take a second look at old suppositions as we continue the search for the truth about ourselves.