

The Garden Sanctuary

WHAT WE FOUND

- Genesis 2 is not a rival creation story; “These are the generations” (2:4) marks a zoomed-in close-up of chapter 1’s wide shot.
- We are dust that God has breathed on (2:7): creatures, and God-breathed. Both halves matter.
- Eden is painted as the first sanctuary: planted by God in the east (2:8), rich in gold and onyx, watered by a river that goes out to the world; and after the fall its entrance stands on the east, guarded by cherubim (3:24), just like the sanctuary’s east-facing door. Adam’s job, “to till it and keep it,” uses the Levites’ sanctuary verbs (Numbers 3:7–8).
- The woman is made from the man’s own side: same substance, equal dignity, face to face. “Helper” (ezer) is a word Scripture most often uses for God Himself.
- Genesis 2:24 is the Creator’s charter for marriage, and Paul says its full mystery is Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31–32). From the side of the new Adam, asleep on the Cross, the Church was born.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Ephrem the Syrian · *Hymns on Paradise*

Paradise is portrayed as a holy mountain sanctuary where Adam was to serve as priest; what Adam lost as sanctuary, Christ reopens. In the tradition’s image: paradise was not destroyed; it is waiting.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom · *Homilies on Genesis; Homily 20 on Ephesians*

The woman formed from the man’s side declares her equal nature and dignity. And a Christian household is a small church, imaging Christ and the Church to the world.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. John Paul II · *Theology of the Body*

Genesis 2 reveals original solitude, original unity, and nakedness without shame: the body has a spousal meaning, made to express the sincere gift of self.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Name your garden: one deliberate act of tilling (building up) and one of keeping (protecting) this week.
- Married or preparing: read Ephesians 5:21–33 together once. Single: pray daily for one married couple by name.
- Read Genesis 3 before next session, slowly; watch the serpent’s technique.

MEMORY VERSE

“Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.”
(Genesis 2:24)

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read Genesis 3 slowly before next session, watching the serpent's technique.

Catechism references: CCC 369–379, 1602–1605, 105–110, 128–130.