



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Gospel this weekend is a familiar one, often referred to as the Parable of the Good Samaritan. While this parable of Jesus is always one on which we should meditate and allow to enter our minds and hearts, I want to focus more on the second reading.

We have moved away from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians and now enter into his Letter to the Colossians. In today's passage, we hear this beautiful hymn to Jesus. He **"is the image of the invisible God"** (Col 1:15). Have you thought about this? God makes Himself visible to us. Even though God sometimes took on the appearance of humanity in the Old Testament, it was never permanent. When He took on flesh in the Incarnation, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity united Himself to our humanity in such a way that He will never again be without that human body, the human soul, the fullness of our humanity. St. John Paul the Great put it this way:

The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world, the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it. (TOB 19:4)

This means that the visible body of Jesus reveals the invisible reality of God. But more than that, because He united Himself forever to our humanity, our bodies – yours and mine – reveal not only the invisible reality of who we are, but also the invisible reality of God! Think about this when you look in the mirror: your body in some way reveals a unique facet of God to the world! Wow!

In another line from this reading, St. Paul says that all things were created in Christ, both those things visible (us, the world, the universe) and invisible (spiritual realities), and then he says, **"whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers"** (Col 1:16). You may not be familiar with these terms, but they are part of the celestial hierarchy. We've all heard of Angels and Archangels, and you've probably heard of Seraphim and Cherubim, but fewer have heard of Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers. The Church recognizes a hierarchy of spiritual beings (beings that are purely spiritual, never had a physical body and never will). From highest to lowest, they are: Seraphim, Cherubim, and **Thrones; Dominions, Virtues, and Powers; Principalities**, Archangels, and Angels. Each type of spiritual being has a different role in the Kingdom of God and how they relate to us. St. Paul reminds us that no matter how high the created being, all were **"created through him and for him"** (Col 1:16). All are under the authority of Christ.

Does this broaden your perspective of the spiritual realities? Many times, because they are invisible, we forget the expansiveness of the spiritual realm. Once in a while, this reality is made visible (see 2 Kings 6:16-17), but we easily forget. And remember that your Guardian Angel, if commanded by God, could destroy the whole physical universe! What power God has put in place to protect us!!

Both the physical and the spiritual are vitally important to us and our relationship with God. May we always appreciate the our two-fold nature and how they draw us closer to our Lord.