



Creation, the Fall, Angels & Demons

“Look at the heaven and the earth and
see everything that is in them, and
recognize that God did not make them
out of things that existed.”

- 2 Macc. 7:28



Creation - A Product of God

- All cultures throughout history have asked themselves questions about the origin of all things:
 - Where did the world come from? How was it created? Where is it going and how will it end? **Where did man come from and why is he different from the other animals?**
 - This **longing to know is part of man's nature**, as Aristotle says, "All men by nature desire to know" (*Metaphysics*, I).



Creation - A Product of God

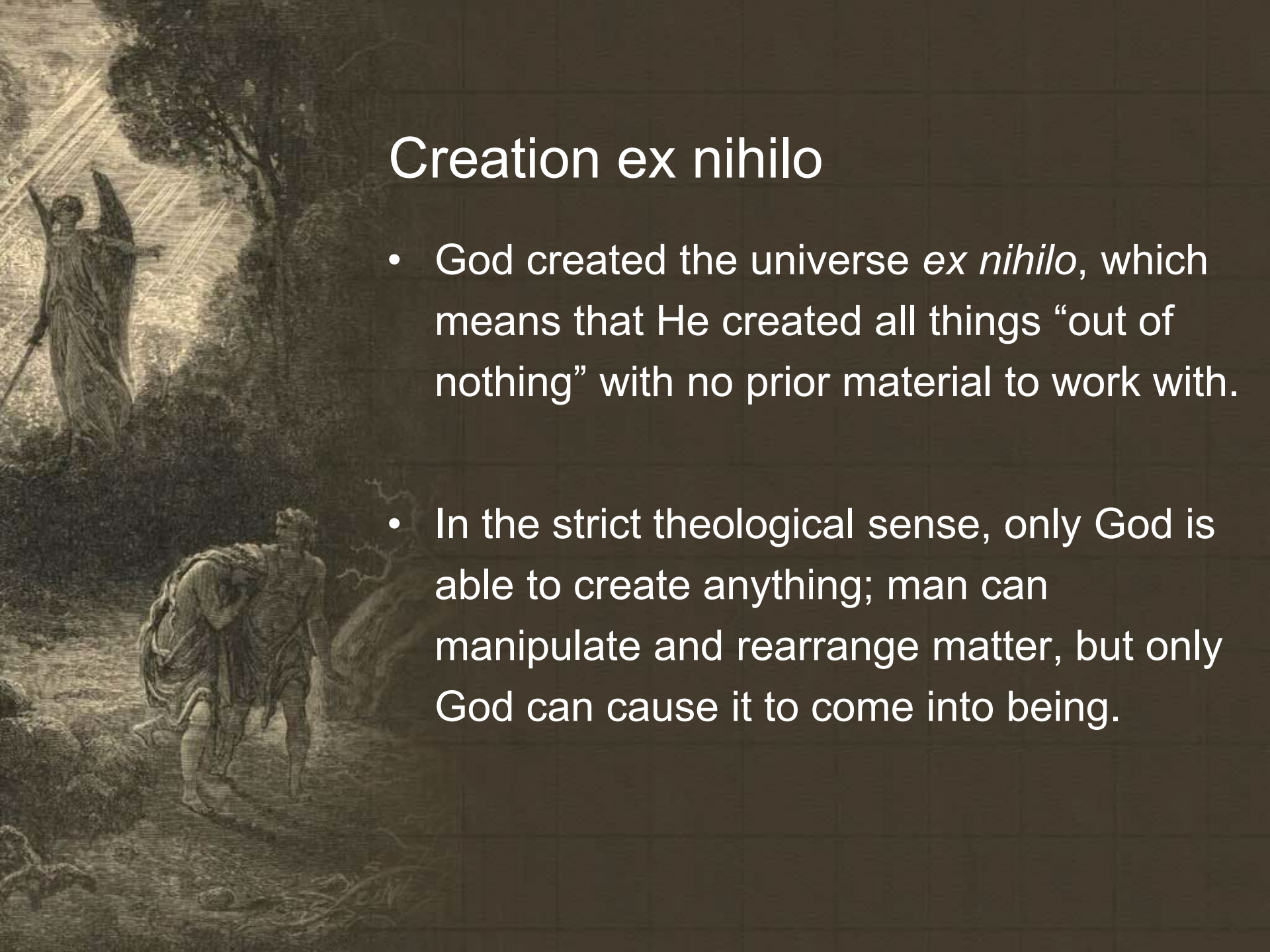
- The existence of creation testifies to the existence and power of God. “The heavens proclaim the glory of God, and the firmament declares His handiwork” (Ps. 19:1).
- Foolish by nature were all who were in ignorance of God, and who . . . from studying the works did not discern the artisan. For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen (Wis 13:1,5)



Why Did God Create?

- It is wrong to imagine that God *needed* to create the universe because He was lonely or to increase His glory or otherwise suffered some lack. **God chose to create out of His infinite goodness**, in order to show forth and communicate His glory
- *This one, true God, of His own goodness and almighty power, not for increasing his own beatitude, nor for attaining his perfection, but in order to manifest this perfection through the benefits which he bestows on creatures, with absolute freedom of counsel and from the beginning of time, **made out of nothing both orders of creatures, the spiritual and the corporeal...***

- Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, 1



Creation ex nihilo

- God created the universe *ex nihilo*, which means that He created all things “out of nothing” with no prior material to work with.
- In the strict theological sense, only God is able to create anything; man can manipulate and rearrange matter, but only God can cause it to come into being.



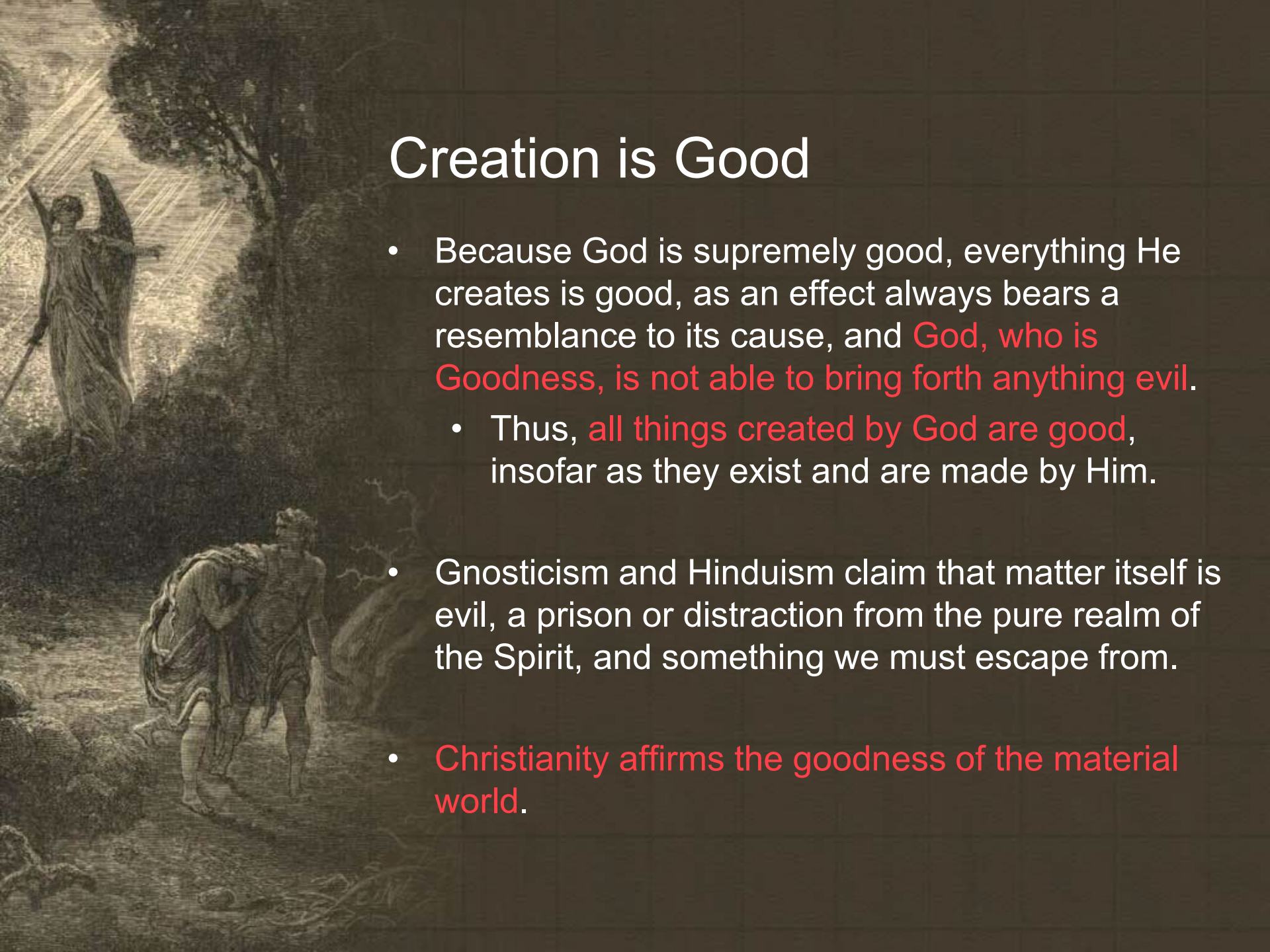
A Trinitarian Work

- Genesis 1 tells us that it is through the agency of God's "Word" that creation was called forth and uses the formula "and God said" to denote creation.
- From the beginning, Genesis tells of the Spirit of God's involvement in creation. It is He who hovers over the waters (or in some translations, "broods") waiting to give form to the world God has called forth
- The New Testament tells us that Christ was present at the Creation and indeed was the agent through whom God created: "He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." "For in him [Christ] all things were created, visible or invisible..." (John 1:2-3, Col. 1:16)



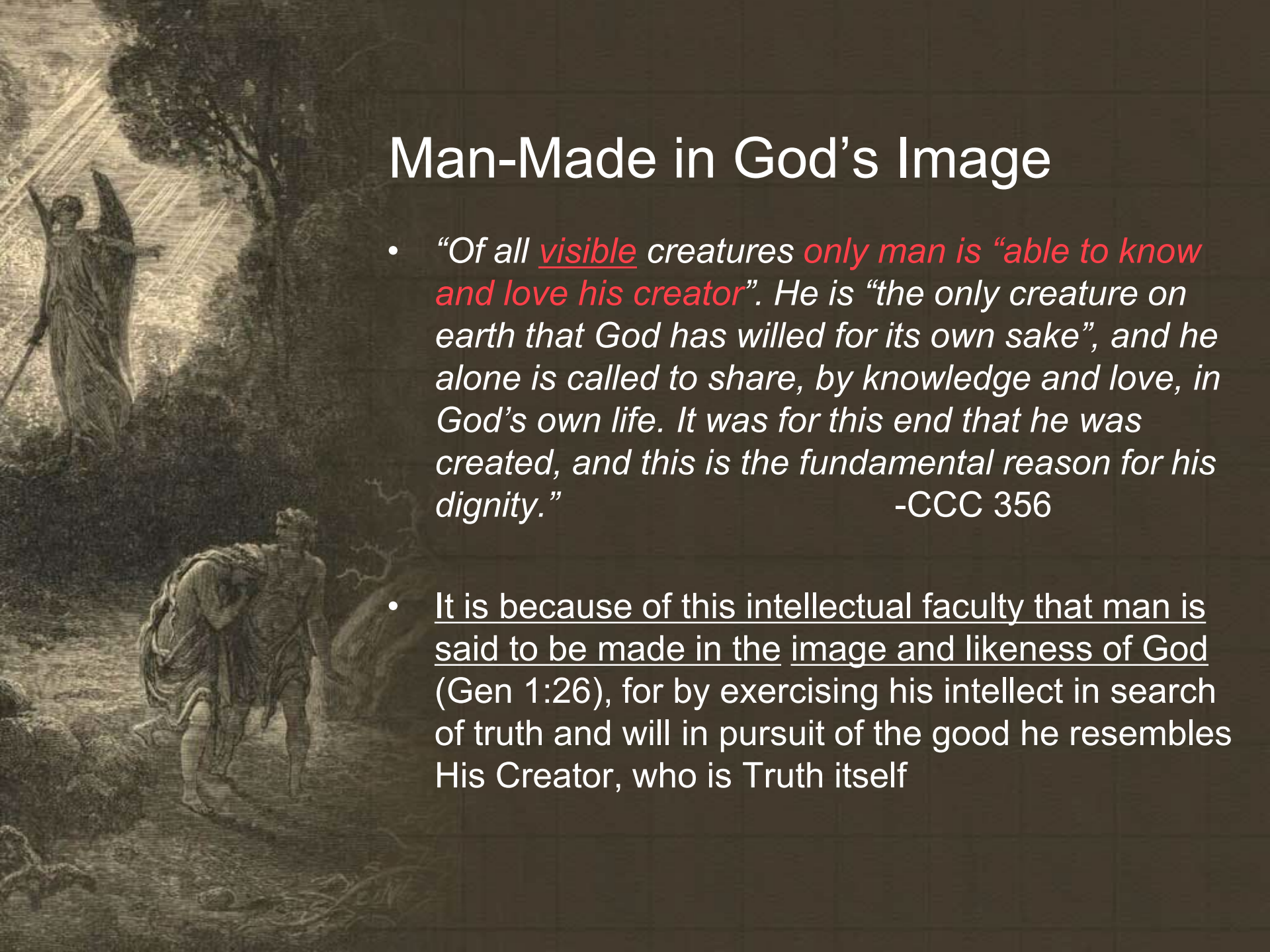
God sustains Creation

- God not only created the universe at a single point in the past but continually sustains it at every moment.
- This is against the notion, made popular by the Deists in the 18th century, that God created and founded the universe, but He then let it go according to its own laws and no longer has any involvement in it.
- “If He should take back His spirit to Himself, and gather to Himself His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust” (Job 34:14-15).



Creation is Good

- Because God is supremely good, everything He creates is good, as an effect always bears a resemblance to its cause, and **God, who is Goodness, is not able to bring forth anything evil.**
 - Thus, **all things created by God are good,** insofar as they exist and are made by Him.
- Gnosticism and Hinduism claim that matter itself is evil, a prison or distraction from the pure realm of the Spirit, and something we must escape from.
- **Christianity affirms the goodness of the material world.**



Man-Made in God's Image

- “Of all visible creatures *only man is “able to know and love his creator”*. He is “the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake”, and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity.”
-CCC 356
- It is because of this intellectual faculty that man is said to be made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26), for by exercising his intellect in search of truth and will in pursuit of the good he resembles His Creator, who is Truth itself



Man-Made in God's Image

- Man is a *composite* being; he is made up of a material body and an immortal, immaterial soul.
- This is contrary to modern secular science, which sees man as just a biological being.
- This is also contrary to the systems of Descartes and Plato, who saw man as a spirit trapped in a body, a “ghost in a machine.”



Angels

- The word “angel” is Greek for messenger (angelos).
- *“With their whole beings the angels are servants and messengers of God. They “always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven” (Mt 18:10). They are the “mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word.” (Ps 103:20)*
- As purely spiritual creatures angels have intelligence and will: they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness.”
-CCC 330
- Angels, even the lowest, are much more powerful than humans. Nevertheless, they are not infinite, nor omnipotent or omnipresent



Angels

- Tradition distinguishes nine different grades or “choirs” of angels: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, principalities, powers, strengths, dominations, archangels and angels.
- The exact hierarchy and powers of each choir are a matter of speculation.
- It is also of Catholic Tradition that every person has a guardian angel, “a protector and shepherd leading him to life” (CCC 336).



Devils (“Demons”)

- Demons are angels who, at some point after their creation by God, rejected God’s lordship and thus “fell” from heaven and have turned their will towards evil.
 - Called “demons”- from the Greek word *daemon* meaning “spirit” or sometimes “devils” - from the Greek *diabolos*, meaning “accuser”
- The leader of these fallen angels goes by many names: Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebub , Belial. Tradition simply calls him “The Devil” or “The Evil One.”
- No one knows how many devils there are, but Tradition and Scripture seem to suggest that around 1/3 of the angels followed Lucifer in his revolt against God (see Rev. 12:4)



Devils (“Demons”)

- They, like the angels, are individual, personal intelligences (not impersonal forces or “bad karma”)
- The devils were originally created good and became evil through a free choice of their own. Scripture attributes this sin to pride (see: Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:11-19).
- Their sin is irrevocable. It is through the final, definitive and irrevocable nature of their decision and not through any defect of God’s mercy that their sin is unforgivable.
- It is through the instigation of the Devil that our first parents chose to disobey God and fall into original sin.



Devils (“Demons”)

- The demons continue to this day to attempt to lead man away from God and into sin in thought, word and deed.
- They are not omnipotent and cannot read our thoughts. The power of God and the good angels is much greater. Despite the devil’s temptation, man is still responsible for his own moral actions.
- Their final downfall and condemnation is assured by Scripture and it is only a matter of time until their ultimate defeat. “And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone...” (Rev. 20:10)
- Though one ought not to dwell inordinately on the presence and activity of the demons, one ought certainly not disregard them either.



The Fall of Man

- **Man**, created in the image and likeness of God, possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just a something but a *someone*.
- **Man** was not only created good, but **was created in a state of friendship and communion with God** his Creator and in harmony with himself and with the creation around him. This is called the original “state of holiness and justice,” which was “to share in divine life” (CCC 375).
- Man, **tempted by the devil**, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, **disobeyed God’s command. This is what man’s first sin consisted of**. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and **lack of trust in his goodness** (CCC 397)



The Fall of Man

- (CCC 400): The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed.
- Harmony with creation is broken: **visible creation has become alien and hostile to man.**
- Finally, the consequence explicitly foretold for this disobedience will come true: man will “return to the ground”, for out of it he was taken. **Death makes its entrance into human history.**




Results of Adam's Fall

- (CCC 402): All men are implicated in Adam's sin, as St. Paul affirms: “**By one man's disobedience many (that is, all men) were made sinners**”: “sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and **so death spread to all men** because all men sinned.”
- The Apostle contrasts the universality of sin and death with the universality of salvation in Christ.
 - “Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, **so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men.**”



Original Sin & Concupiscence

- Although it is part of each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants.
- It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded - an inclination to evil that is called "concupiscence."
- **Concupiscence arises because of original sin**, and disposes us to commit actual sin, but itself is not sin. Concupiscence is marked by three characteristics that plague mankind:
 - A darkened intellect
 - A weakened will
 - Disordered passions



Evolution and the Literal Meaning of Genesis

- The Catholic Church has no official teaching on how Genesis must be interpreted, and the ancient Fathers have widely divergent opinions on the matter.
- The encyclical *Humani Generis* (“On Human Origins”) of Pope Pius XII issued in 1950 teaches that while **it *may* be acceptable to believe the evolution of the human body** may have taken place, certain traditional Christian doctrines must be preserved.


Evolution and the Literal Meaning of Genesis

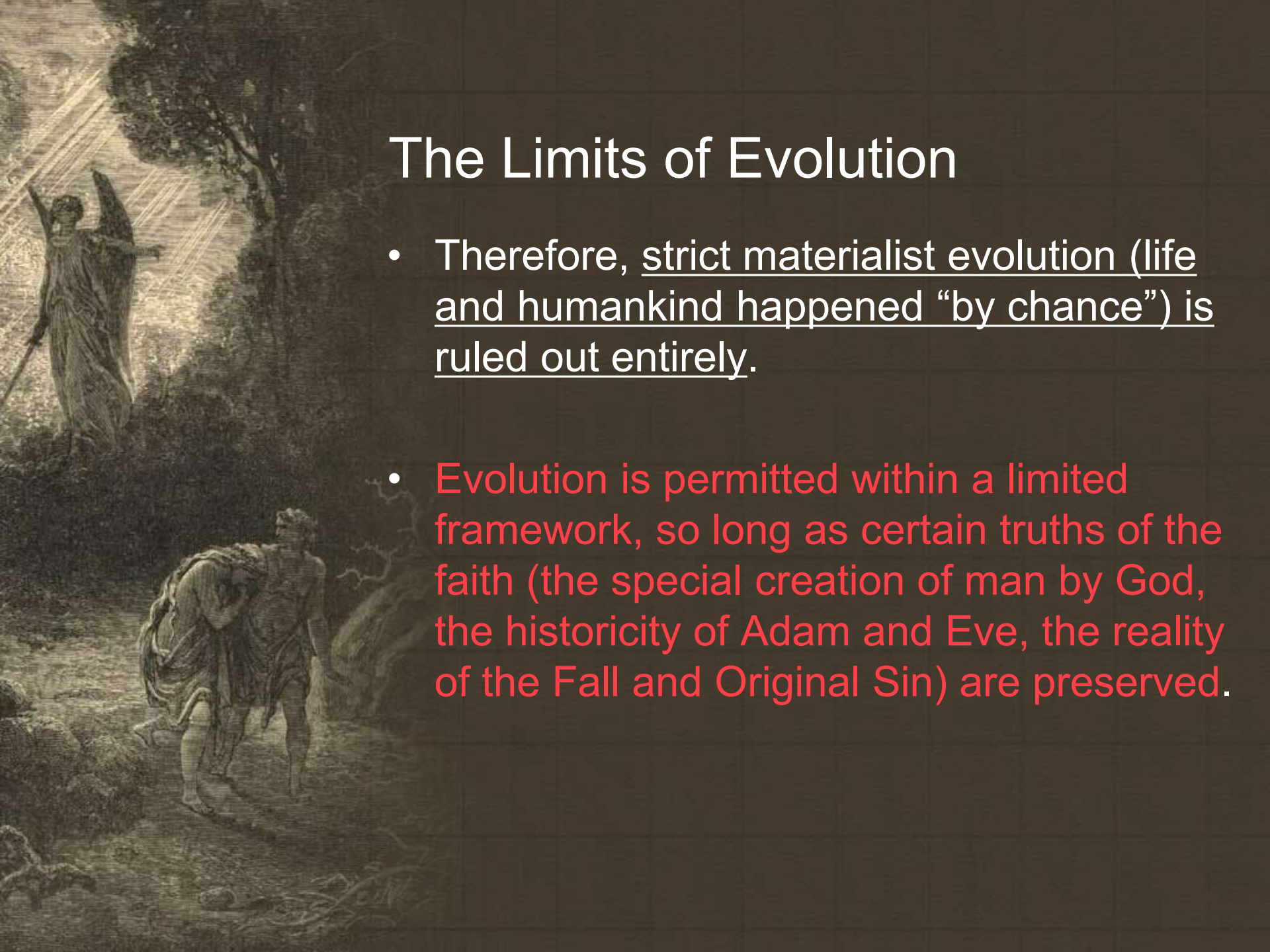
According to the Church, what we must believe about Creation is:

- 1) Evolution can be said to have occurred with the material from which the human body comes, but **it can by no means be taught as certain and must be put forth as only a theory.**
- 2) The human **souls** of Adam and Eve, and of all subsequent humans, **are immediately created by God**; the **soul did not evolve.**



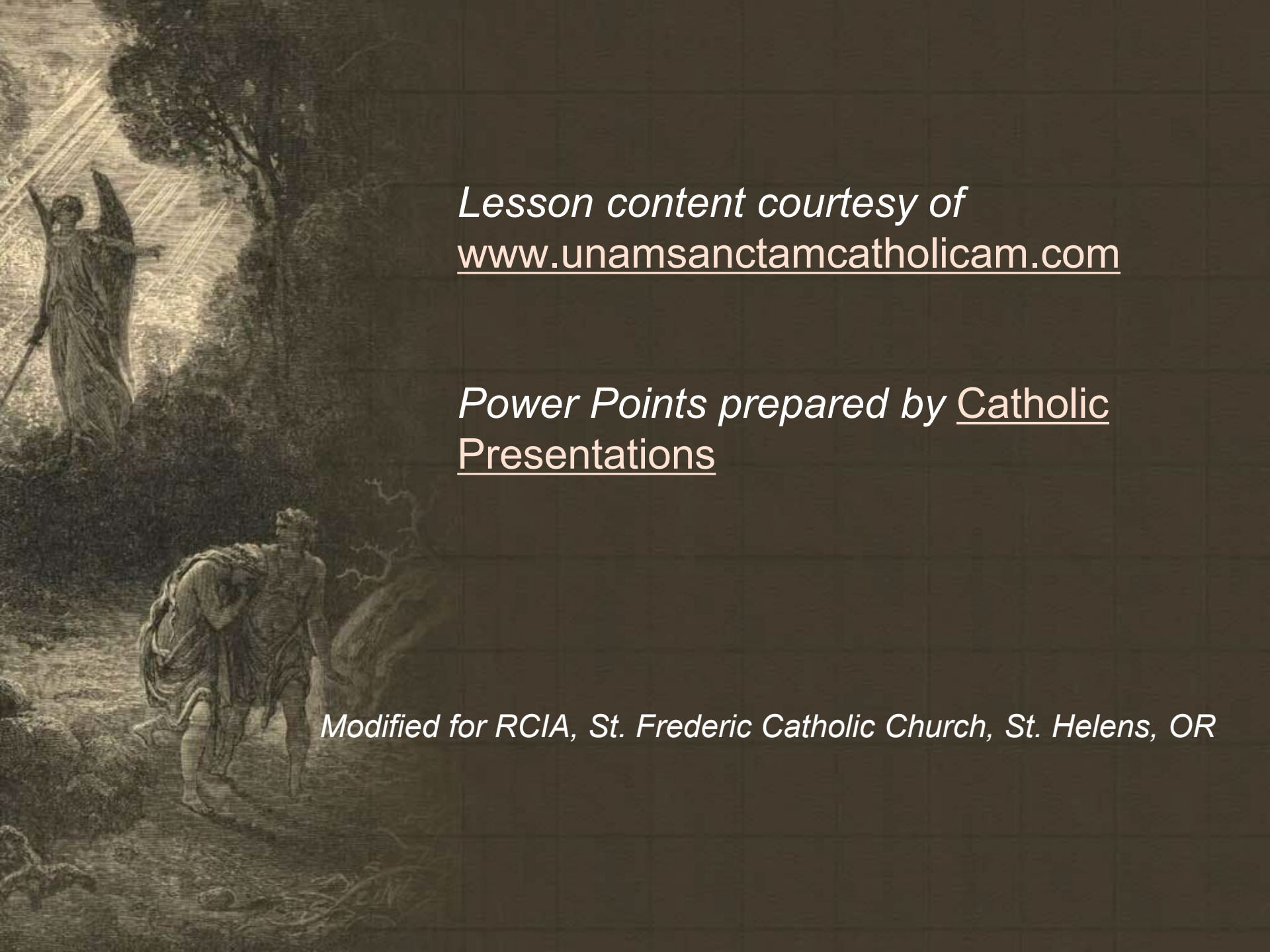
Evolution and the Literal Meaning of Genesis

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- 3) All human beings take their origin from an original pair or two human beings (Adam & Eve) and that Adam and Eve were real, historic individuals.
 - 4) Genesis 1-11, though containing metaphoric images, are nonetheless to be taken as historical accounts of true events. The language is metaphorical, and perhaps mythic, but preserves the account of truly historic events.



The Limits of Evolution

- Therefore, strict materialist evolution (life and humankind happened “by chance”) is ruled out entirely.
- Evolution is permitted within a limited framework, so long as certain truths of the faith (the special creation of man by God, the historicity of Adam and Eve, the reality of the Fall and Original Sin) are preserved.



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