

MAN AND WOMAN: GENESIS 1-3 REVISITED

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The argument at the heart of this paper is that there has never been an adequate account of the nature of woman in relation to man on offer in the Catholic intellectual tradition, or indeed, in the Western tradition as a whole. The purpose of the paper is to address this lacuna and to articulate a robust, philosophically and theologically grounded account of the nature of man and of woman and of their complementary missions. My thesis takes its point of departure from an exegetical framework derived from Genesis 1-3, interpreted here through the lens of the metaphysical anthropology of St. Thomas Aquinas. I will demonstrate that Scripture reveals that man and woman are both equally human, instantiations of the same substantial form and therefore equipped in equal measure with the powers of the rational soul; that they are differentiated in a certain sense by the matter of which they are made and which configures these powers; and that their respective places in the order of creation disclose the charisms that characterize their particular but complementary missions. Not only is there a feminine genius; there is also a masculine genius – and both can be derived from the Genesis account. I will demonstrate that the account of the fall reveals the ways in which Original Sin distorts these charisms in ways specific to man and to woman. Finally, I will point to scientific evidence that supports my proposal; it will reveal that God is indeed the author of all truth.