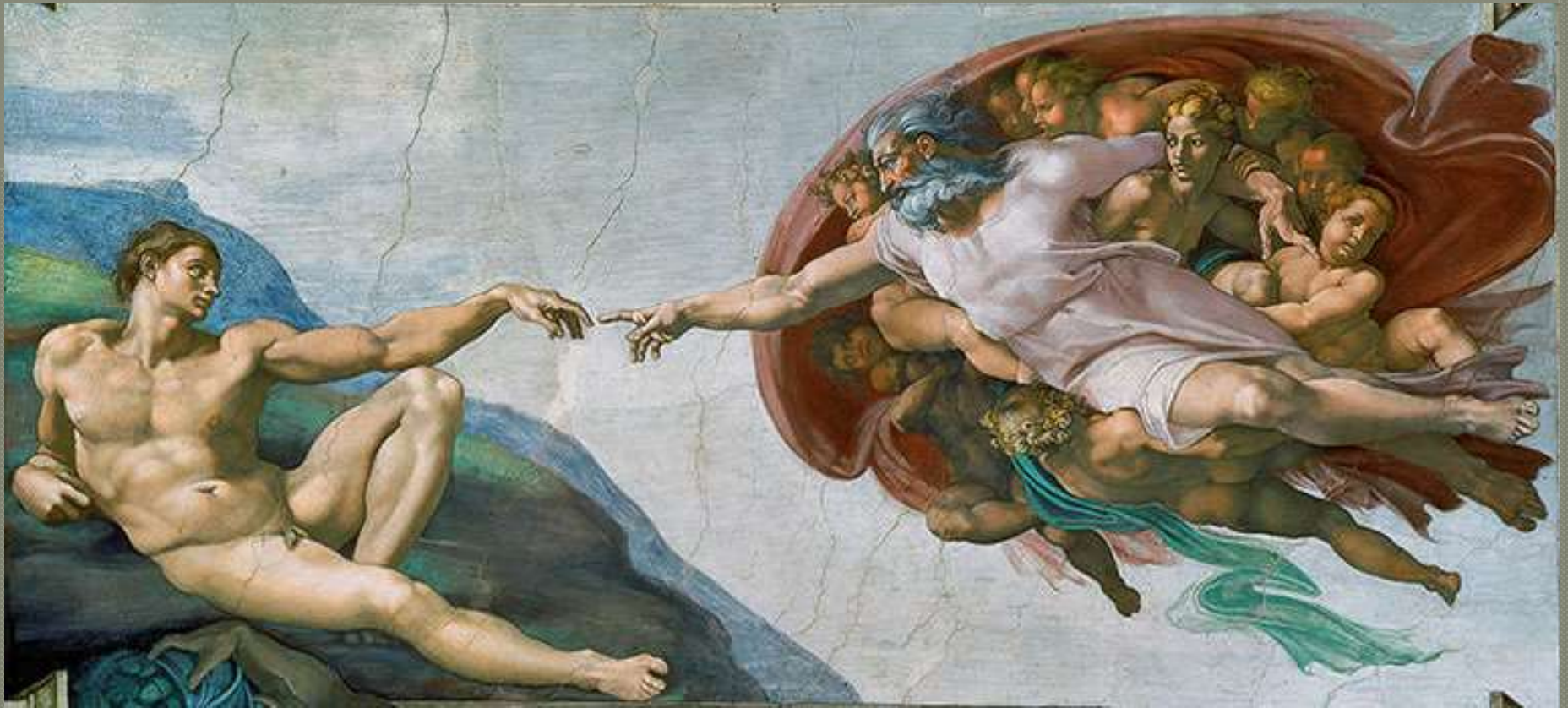


# Ethical Concerns and End-of-Life issues



- Dr. Pascoal Carvalho



# Paradigm Shift

## The evolution of Technology



# Paradigm Shift

The evolution of 'Wellness'





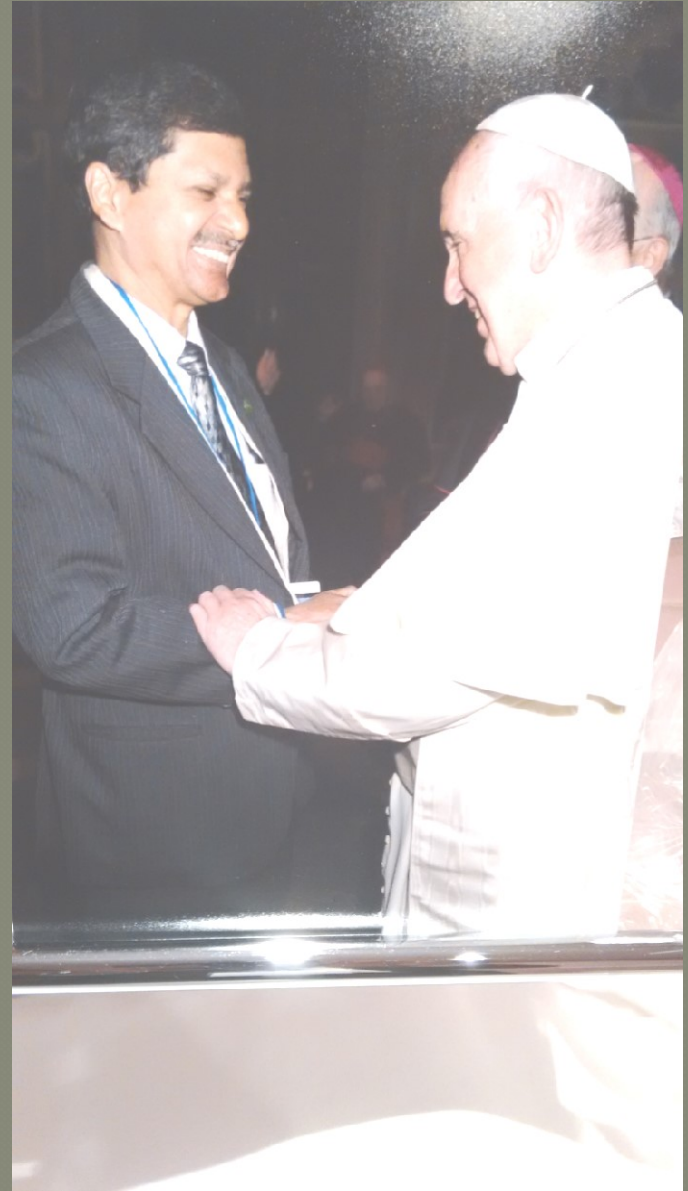


“They are questions that have always challenged humanity, but that today take on new forms by reason of increased knowledge and the development of new technical tools.... “Pope Francis

“Greater wisdom is called for today, because of the temptation to insist on treatments that have powerful effects on the body, yet at times do not serve the integral good of the person.”

"not everything that is technically possible or feasible is therefore ethically acceptable"

.....Pope Francis





## The Slippery Slope

Society has moved from **protecting life** - to **allowing** the vulnerable to seek the easy and painless way out – to **active measures** to end the lives of such human beings deemed to be a burden.

We begin at the time of conception with abortions, IVF, genetic manipulations and end with those having incurable diseases or suffering great pain.



Boredom will soon be a reason to be Euthanised in the Netherlands

**To stop this degenerative thinking we need to re-focus on the meaning of life and death.**

## How do we define 'Old Age' and when is 'End of Life'?

"To the extent that our concern with age is what it signifies about the measurement of age not in terms of years elapsed since birth but rather in terms of the number of years remaining until death....

.....Ryder N.. *Population Index* 1975

The discussion about the ethics of dying centers on the resources .... defined by the conditions for a control of death



## End of Life dilemmas...

### Therapeutic obstinacy

Continuing a burdensome treatment that becomes futile, given the state of the patient.

The physician must avoid any unreasonable care, for example, a treatment that has proved ineffective or has the sole purpose of artificially prolonging the patient's life - "overzealous treatment".

On the other hand, the physician must not discontinue the care that assures that the basic needs of the patient are met.



## End of Life dilemmas...

### Coma

People in a so-called persistent vegetative state are not dead, because they still have some brain activity.

The cardiopulmonary system may even be functioning naturally for some of them.

The persistent vegetative state must not be confused with the absence of brain activity or with death

## End of Life dilemmas...

### Death

Traditionally ..... permanent end of certain bodily functions in clinical death, especially respiration and heartbeat.

With increasing ability to resuscitate people with no respiration, heartbeat, or other external signs of life, there is a need for another definition.

**Brain death** is used as an indicator of legal death in many jurisdictions, but it is defined inconsistently.

Brain death is the complete loss of brain function (including involuntary activity necessary to sustain life). It differs from persistent vegetative state, in which the person is alive and some autonomic functions remain.



## Euthanasia

Euthanasia is a **form of murder** and thus is prohibited by the Fifth Commandment which says “Thou shalt not kill”.

Defined as “**an act** or **omission** which, of itself or by intention, causes the death of handicapped, sick, or dying persons—sometimes with an attempt to justify the act as a means of eliminating suffering.”

**It is a grave offense against the dignity of the human person and also against God**, the Author of human life. While motives and circumstances can mitigate one’s culpability, they do not change the nature of this murderous act, which must be forbidden.

(Catechism, no. 2277)



## Catholic teaching on Euthanasia.....



St. Pope John Paul II ...

“I confirm that euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person. This doctrine, based upon the natural law and upon the written Word of God, is transmitted by the Church’s Tradition, and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium” (EV, no. 65).



## Magisterium of the Catholic Church on Euthanasia.



The varieties of crime are numerous: all offenses against life itself, such as murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, and wilful suicide . . . are criminal: they poison civilization, and they debase the perpetrators more than the victims and militate against the honour of the Creator.

(Gaudium et Spes, no. 27).



## Catholic teaching on Suffering....

### **SALVIFICI DOLORIS - ON THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF HUMAN SUFFERING**

Encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II

#### INTRODUCTION

"In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church'....

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake"

....the Redemption was accomplished through the Cross of Christ, that is, through his suffering.....

For Catholics, **suffering is a process of purification** and Death can be the final moment of fulfilment.

The Apostle Paul says: "In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church".

St. Pope John Paul II says "These words have as it were the value of a final discovery, which is accompanied by joy. ...The joy comes from the discovery of the meaning of the salvific meaning of suffering."



## Salvifici Doloris...



The Cross of Christ throws salvific light, in a most penetrating way, on man's life and in particular on his suffering.

Paul writes: "That I may know him (Christ) and the power of his Resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

The possibility of being **made partners**, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery" is offered to all men. He calls his disciples to "take up their cross and follow him", (Mt.16:24).

## Catholic teaching on Suffering....



Suffering finds its true meaning in Jesus Christ. Christ, by his own suffering, gives it a **redemptive aspect**. Thus as man suffers he is called to share, like Christ, in the redemption of man.

Mary, the Mother of Christ, shared in the redemptive suffering beginning with prophecy of Simeon right up to the Crucifixion. Suffering requires courage and fortitude, placing hope in Christ and His victory over the world through His suffering, teaching us to unite ourselves to Christ.



## Salvifici Doloris....



Thus to share in the sufferings of Christ is, at the same time, to suffer for the Kingdom of God. Those who share in the suffering of Christ become worthy of this Kingdom.

"Whatever you do for  
your family, for your  
children, for your  
husband, for your wife,  
you do for God. All we  
do, our prayers, our  
work, our suffering,  
is for Jesus."

- Blessed Mother Teresa



Christ has led us into this Kingdom through his suffering. And also through suffering those surrounded by the mystery of Christ's Redemption become mature enough **to enter this Kingdom.**

## Points to ponder



**Suffering is a process of purification.**  
Struggle purifies you from all attachments.

Suffering is now **no longer an experience of uselessness** and burden to others.

Suffering provides an opportunity for **grace** and an opportunity **for others to show love.**

For us, **earthly life** is not an end but created as a **beginning for eternity.**



## Points to ponder .....

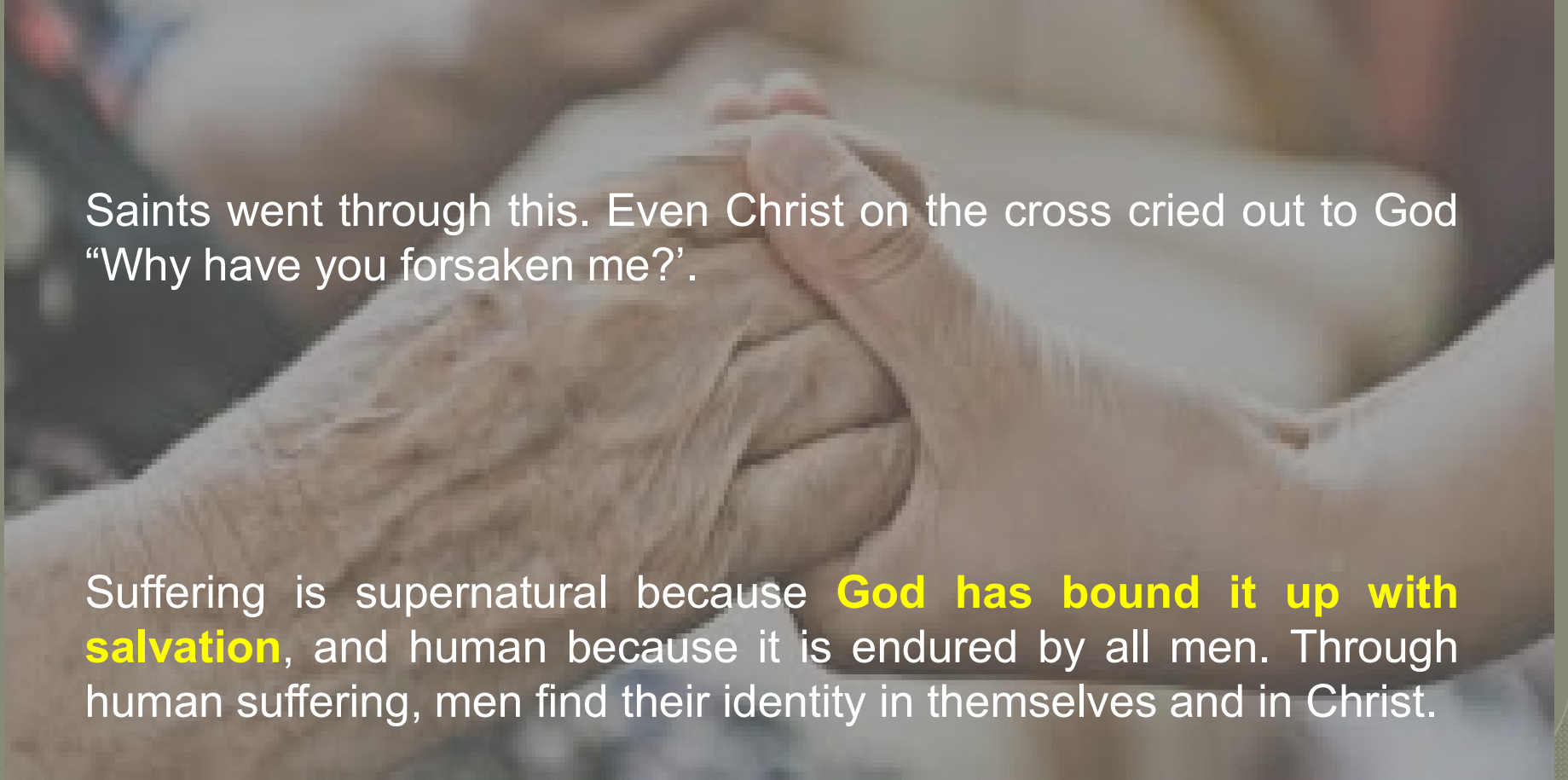


**You cannot interfere with a person's moment of illumination.** There is suffering for sure, but acceptance brings about a calmness knowing that we are participating with Christ in the redemption of man and will be at the right hand of God for eternity. The time of suffering, is the moment of deciding for God.

**God is the sole custodian for our life.** We cannot, in any form or by law, try to subvert this intimate relationship between man and God, by deceiving someone that life is meaningless and has an end on earth. *How then would man be any different from an animal?*

## Points to ponder....

Before death there is only one life. **Here we need to make a definite decision for or against God in this life.** We feel abandonment, yet our faith and acceptance of the Will of God is the highest point of spirituality.



Saints went through this. Even Christ on the cross cried out to God “Why have you forsaken me?”.

Suffering is supernatural because **God has bound it up with salvation**, and human because it is endured by all men. Through human suffering, men find their identity in themselves and in Christ.



## Further Reflections



Pope St. John Paul II ....

following of Christ “is not only the imitation of his virtues, it is not only living like Christ in this world, as far as possible, according to his word; but it is a journey that has a goal.

**And the goal is the right hand of the Father.**



## Conclusions

The position of the Catholic Church is not to keep the person alive at all costs...neither is it to terminate life just because there is pain and suffering.

Rather, it is ...

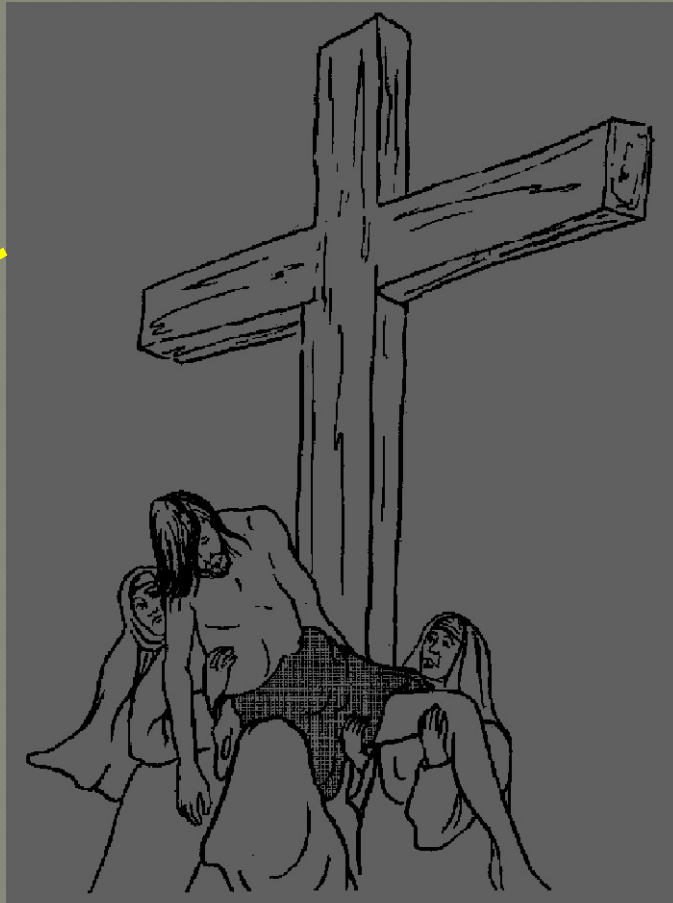
1. Acceptance of the reality of pain and suffering - NO TO EUTHANASIA.
2. Doing all in our power to heal the person suffering - YES TO PROPORTIONAL TREATMENT.
3. Accepting that when the time comes and death is near, we will as finite beings accept our limitations and surrender the person to God – ONE IS PERMITTED TO SAY NO TO AGGRESSIVE TREATMENT, WHEN DEATH IS IMMINENT
4. Accompanying the dying person with our love and with medication that will prevent excruciating suffering – YES TO PALLIATIVE CARE

*No one has the right to come between this unique relationship of God and man.*

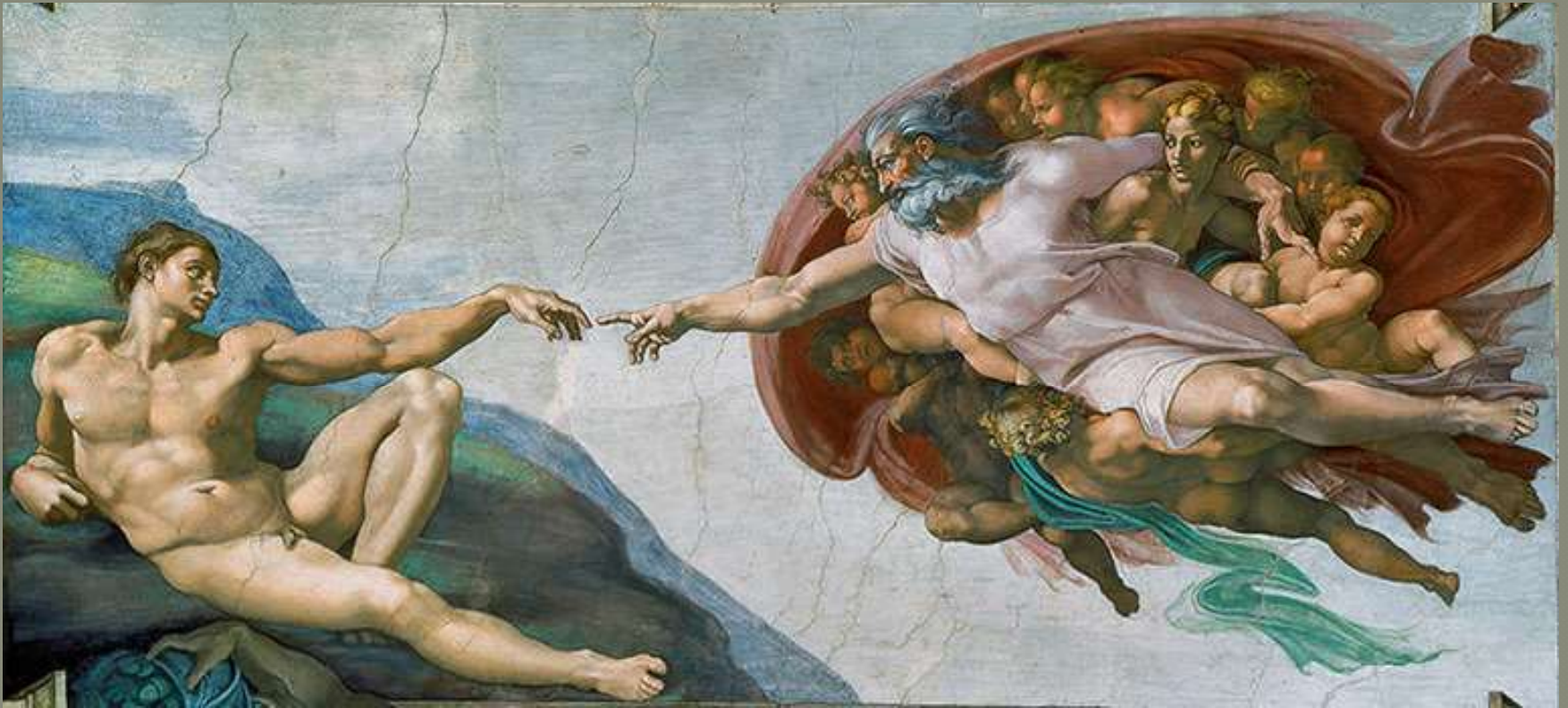


The JOURNEY.....

REDEEMPTIVE SUFFERING



**ETERNAL LIFE**



**THANK YOU**