

Homily based on the readings from June 16, 2025 (2 Corinthians 6.1-10; Matthew 5.38-42)

Depending on where and when you grew up, you may have encountered a certain degree of controversy regarding the relationship between Darwin's Theory of Evolution and the Christian understanding of Creation. Almost a century after the infamous Scopes Monkey Trial, many Evangelical Protestants still *vigorously* maintain that the established scientific models are incompatible with the timeline laid out in the Book of Genesis. As a child growing up in North Carolina, that was certainly a perspective I heard quite frequently. On the other hand, many self-identified skeptics interpret Darwin's work as implying that Christianity is somehow erroneous or obsolete.

The position of the Catholic Church on the biological origins of life is somewhat nuanced and – as a result – is often misrepresented. The *fact* is that the Church has no official position on Darwin's theory – neither endorsing it nor opposing it. As long as we affirm that God is the sole

creator in the universe, we are free to come to our own conclusions about the particular methods he may have used.

Regardless of any opinions we may have about this issue, there is one particular fact that everyone must acknowledge: the impulse for self-preservation is hard-wired into every organism on the planet. “Survival of the fittest” may or may not be the way species come into existence, but it is clearly the natural tendency of every living creature. The strong overcome the weak – whether the rivalry relates to food, to habitat, or even to progeny. The same principle holds for our societal structures. Throughout recorded history, human beings have relentlessly competed for dominance – at every level, from local villages to multinational empires. Every country that exists today is the result of centuries of combat and confrontation.

The point of today’s readings, of course, is that – in spite of the apparent supremacy of strength over weakness – there is *another* power that transcends the might of the material world, a power that is woven into

the very *fabric* of existence. That power, of course, is the self-sacrificial love of Jesus Christ – which he perfectly and completely embodied as he died upon the Cross for our salvation. As Christians, it is our duty to accept that love as the guiding principle of our lives. As we heard in today's Gospel:

When someone strikes you on your right cheek,
turn the other one to him as well.

If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic,
hand him your cloak as well.

In a certain sense, this attitude is profoundly *unnatural* – in that it contradicts the biological imperative that is written into every single cell of our bodies. Nevertheless, if we surrender ourselves to the Holy Spirit – who descended upon the Church at Pentecost – he will grant us the wisdom, the understanding, and the fortitude to partake in the most *powerful* force in the universe: the inexhaustible and unquenchable love of Jesus Christ.