

1. Context of today's Lesson

We are in the midst of the third missionary journey of Paul

Last time we were with Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19:1)

- And we left off in Acts 19:20

Acts 19:21-22 Paul resolved to go to Europe once again

- to Macedonia and Achaia (Greece and Corinth)

Ephesus was the home to the greatest shrine to Artemis, one of the most widely venerated of the Greek gods and goddesses.

- She also became identified with the Roman goddess Diana
- The Temple of Artemis (Diana) was the largest religious building in the Greek world
- One of the seven wonders of the world

Most people were in the grips of this superstition,

- enslaved by the fear of what this false god would do to them if they abandoned her for this new god Jesus,
- This led them to incite violent persecutions against the Christians

Throughout 55 AD there was great tension between

- the tradesmen and devotees of Artemis (Diana)
- Paul and the Christians

This tension grew worse day by day as the Church grew in numbers

- 1 Cor 15:32
- 1 Cor 16:9

Acts 19:23-41 The Artemis riots

- As pilgrims from throughout the Roman Empire came to Ephesus,
- They provided a lucrative market for the local craftsmen who made little statues and figurines of Artemis
- These craftsmen stood to lose all if Ephesus converted to Christianity
- Paul was seen as a threat to their livelihood
- This provoked the riot

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

2. Ephesians 1:1-5

- Eph 3:4, 9 “the plan of the mystery”

God's Plan from all eternity was

- To Create a universal family sharing in His own life and love
- Living forever with Him in the new heavens and new earth

This is accomplished by receiving God's grace

- Which transforms us into God's children
- Takes away all our sins

We see this in Eph 1:6-7 but it is a poor translation

The verb utilized in verse 6 (charitoun) is best translated as “transformed by grace”

St. John Chrysostom translated Eph 1:6 this way

- God has transformed us by this marvelous grace

1:7 This grace takes away sins

This is God's plan

- It took place first in Mary at the moment of her conception in a singular and supreme way
- It takes place in us at our Baptism

The verb (charitoun) "transformed by grace" is used only one other time the NT - **Luke 1:28**

Luke 1:28 the Gabriel addresses Mary "Hail, full of grace"

This greeting was reserved for Mary alone

- and it takes the place of her name,
- signifying her identity

"Full of grace" is the translation of the Greek word "kecharitomene"

The root of this word is "charis", meaning "grace," or a share in God's divine life

This verb in the perfect passive participle form indicates:

- An action that was performed on Mary
- A past action which is **complete** and continuous

It means God filled Mary with "a perfect and lasting grace which implies fullness."

And for this action to be **complete**

- it necessarily includes the beginning of her life.

From the first moment of her existence

- God filled Mary completely with His sanctifying grace
- This grace came through the Cross of Jesus Christ
- This grace preserved Mary from Original Sin

This is why the early Christians in Turkey and Greece called Mary the,

- "All-Holy" (Panagia), pronounced (pah-nah-**yee**-ah)

And the early Church Fathers referred to her as

- "free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature" [Vatican II, LG 56].

This is what Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854:

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin. [Pius IX, Ineffabilis Deus (1854): DS 2803]

3. Ephesians 1:3-14 Blessing and Adoration

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Blessing expresses the basic movement of Christian prayer.

2627 Two fundamental forms express this movement:

1. our prayer ascends in the Holy Spirit through Christ to the Father—we bless him for having blessed us;(Ephesians 1:3-14)
2. it implores the grace of the Holy Spirit that descends through Christ from the Father—he blesses us.

The Eucharist is the greatest expression of blessing and adoration (2643)

- It is "the pure offering" of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God's name
- According to the traditions of East and West, it is the "sacrifice of praise" Hebrews 13:15

4. Eph 3:10 “Through the Church”

- Through the teaching authority of the Apostles and their successors
- *Not* through “scripture alone”

5. Eph 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing, it is the gift of God, not because of works...”

Yes, salvation is *not* of your own doing

- It is a gift from God

Baptism is the sacramental sign God uses to give us

1. His Spirit
2. A share in His life (grace)
3. see Galatians 3:21-4:7

But nowhere does SS say “faith alone”

Galatians 5:6, says Faith working in love

Luther misunderstood the “virtue of Faith”

Faith is a gift from God

- We now share in God’s knowledge
- His revelation to us

God revealed to us

1. Get Baptized
2. Obey his word and will
3. Our actions must conform to what God has revealed

Example

- My wife reveals we have no money
- Then I buy all kinds of stuff
- When I get home she'll say "You didn't believe me!"
- b/c my actions don't match up to what she revealed

Eph 2:11-12 "not because of works"

- But Paul was speaking of circumcision
- This is clear from Ephesians 2:11
- "which is made in the flesh by hands"

6. Ephesians 4:1-3, 4:25-5:20 Moral Exhortation

The Goal is 4:22-24

- Put off the old nature
- Put on the new nature

The Means

- Read
- Reflect
- Resolution ([practice of virtue](#))
- Examination
- Confession
- Frequent Eucharist

7. Ephesians 5:21-33

The key verse is 31-32

This is in reference to Genesis 2:24

Genesis 2: 18-25

- God sees that it's not good for Adam to be alone in paradise.
- God casts Adam into a deep sleep (lit. a coma or a sleeping death)
- In this sleeping death God opens the side of Adam and takes a rib
to form Eve, Adam's bride,
- And the two become one flesh

As Eve came forth from Adam's side

- so too the whole human family since she is the **Mother of all the living**

This event foreshadows the way Christ saves us from sin and death

- Just as Eve came forth from Adams side
- The Bride of Christ, the Church will come from His side
- and she too becomes the new mother of all those who are alive in Christ

This is fulfilled in John 19:34

When the soldier pierced the side of Christ as He **slept the sleep of death,**

- Water and Blood came forth from His side.

The water and the blood signify Baptism and the Eucharist

For it is through the Sacraments of the Church

- Baptism and the Eucharist
- That Jesus pours the River of Life, the Holy Spirit and His grace
- into our souls – saving us from sin and death

Just As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side,

- so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross.

CCC 766

The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus. For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church. *As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross.*

Paul is also speaking about Marriage as a Sacrament

A sacrament is a sign instituted by Christ,

- that makes present and effective what it signifies

Marriage is a sign that signifies and makes present and effective

- The love of Christ for His Bride the Church

This sacrament gives spouses a special grace

- to love one another as Christ loves His spouse

Christ loves his bride

- faithfully
- indissolubly
- when Christ loves he gives new life

Divorce, contraception and direct sterilization do not image the love of Christ for His Bride the Church

8. Ephesians 6: 10-18 Put on the Whole Armor of God

Principalities and Powers

- Ranks of demonic spirits opposed to the Church

Most powerful weapon against the devil

- Reconciliation

Gird your loins with the Truth

- Our choices and actions ought to be based on reality rather than feelings
- Truth is the conformity of the mind to reality
- We must not be controlled by feelings
- Intellect and will should direct feelings

Breastplate of righteousness

- Righteousness means a life of virtue

“Such a life no one shall ever be able to overthrow; it is true many wound him, but no one cuts through him, no, not the devil himself.” **Chrysostom**

Practice a resolution, you practice virtue

Shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace

Allusion to Is 52:7 Isaiah envisions Yahweh reigning on Mt. Zion after crushing his enemies and redeeming his people.

News of his victory travels on foot as messengers bring “good tidings” of “peace” and “salvation” to the ends of the earth.

We must carry the Gospel to the world

- Don't wait for someone else to do it
- We are Baptized and confirmed; it is our responsibility

Take the shield of faith

- Chrysostom says Paul does not mean knowledge
- Rather Trust and Confidence in God
- The kind of trust that moves mountains

The helmet of salvation

- Your salvation

The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God

Ephesians 6:18 Pray at all times

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Prayer is a remembrance of God often awakened by the memory of the heart: “We must remember God more often than we draw breath.” (St Gregory Nazianzus)

But we cannot pray at all times if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it.

Read

Reflect

Resolution