

Theory 1b

HOLINESS AND THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Grace: Source and Definition

Relationship

God created us for relationship with Himself. As the source of all life, He is the author of all good.

- Goodness by nature wants to share of itself with others
- God shares His life with us and calls us to share our life with Him, bestowing on us the title of **Adopted Child**
- Sin destroys that relationship
- Christ redeems and restores it; His gift to us is what we mean by the phrase, Life of Grace, or Holiness

Grace

Grace is favor from God, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to His call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life (CCC, 1996).

- Grace is a participation in the inner life of God.
- We are introduced into this Divine Life through baptism.
- From this doorway, we enter into the life of Christ by receiving all the sacraments.
- All the sacraments are themselves centered around the Eucharist, as the Eucharist is the “**source and summit of all Christian life**” (CCC, 1324).
- All sacraments give us Grace, as that is what they are designed by Christ to do. However, their full affect is dependent on our disposition.
- Sanctifying Grace slowly perfects our souls, making them fit to be with God and share deeply in His glory.
 - This is what is meant by the term **holy**. To be holy is to be like Christ, sharing in His life and Divine Son-ship, so that we can receive a great intimacy in the Holy Spirit and relate to the Father as an Adopted Child.
 - Holiness is described this way in the Sacred Scriptures:

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17-18).

Holiness

Holiness is being united with God in the way that Jesus is – it means **divine sonship**.

- This is what Jesus reveals about being the image and likeness of God; it means being God’s son, He by nature, we by adoption.
- Another word we could use is “divinization” - Jesus is divine by nature, we become “divine” by participation.
- Holiness means sharing in, and **living**, the very life of God, and being completely transformed by that life such that “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20).
- Spiritual progress tends toward ever more intimate union with Christ (CCC, 2014).
- This union is called **mystical** because it participates in the mystery of Christ through the sacraments (ibid).
- Grace of holiness offers a two-fold gift: it draws us **away** from sin and **toward** God (CCC, 2018).
- This is the goal of my life.

Turning Away from Sin

The *mastery of self* described in CCC 377 is what it is like to be totally free.

Mastery of self is all the powers of your soul working in harmony to bring you what is good and to make you happy.

That is what life was like in Paradise before the Fall. Now, however, we have the tendency to sin, (concupiscence); further, because of the Fall, our intellect is darkened, our will is weakened, and our passions are disordered. This results in the inability to follow God the way we are supposed to. This creates a two-fold problem in our souls:

- **Habitual sins.** These are easy to commit. These blind us to our need of God’s mercy; they can even be spiritually fatal.
- **Disordered attachments.** Although these are not always sins (although sometimes they are), these are bonds we forge to things we like that, unwittingly, lead us to prioritize pleasures to things of this world ahead of serving Jesus.

So, what do we do? How do we travel the **spiritual journey** to attain holiness? We need to know ourselves to root out these tendencies that get in the way, and to do this, we need grace: grace that comes through the Sacraments and prayer.