

# STUDY MATERIALS: Nature and Grace

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## Required Texts

Thomas Aquinas, [Summa Theologiae](#) (ST) (May be downloaded from the Internet)

Thomas Aquinas, [Summa Contra Gentiles](#), (SCG) Book III, cc. 25-63 (I will try to type salient portions in the text)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (henceforth referred to as CCC)

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## Lesson 1: The Natural Desire to See God - History

The Catholic Faith teaches that grace perfects nature. Grace does not destroy nature. There is some part of the human soul then, which is naturally *capax Dei* (capable of God). This capacity is affirmed at the very beginning of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. "The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: 'The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God'" (CCC #27). This truth is expressed in the famous saying of St. Augustine, also quoted at the beginning of the Catechism, "You have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you" (CCC #30).

All Catholic theologians are in agreement as to this truth. The problem comes with the explanation of just what the source of this capacity for God is which the Catechism terms in the title of the section where these quoted texts occur, "The Desire for God". The truth that man has a natural capacity for God is directly contrary to modern philosophical ideas on this subject, which stem from Rationalism and Fideism, that faith, God and the supernatural order are alienations of man from himself. Communion with the Trinity is treated as some very esoteric question which has nothing to do with ordinary Christian life. Dorothy Sayers in a mock test she made up about what Christians are popularly held to believe asked, "What is the Holy Trinity?" She answered in the name of the modern world, "The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, the whole thing incomprehensible. Something put in by theologians to make it more difficult -- *nothing to do with daily life or ethics.*" [Italics added]

The italics in the last phrase are very important for they denote a general opinion that communion with God is not really important to the perfection of the life of most people. Vatican II spoke very eloquently against this tendency in Catholic spirituality to split grace from morals and lay spirituality from the spirituality of contemplative religious and priests in the chapter which the Council Fathers entitled, "The Universal Call to Holiness". Theologians have generally been at pains to point out that since grace is a perfection of nature, each Christian receives the same sanctifying grace. God does not give seeds so that they will not become flowers, and in the same way he does not give grace so that some will experience the heights of contemplation and others have to be satisfied with a lesser spirituality. "All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity" (CCC n.2013).

Though this doctrine has been clearly enunciated by the Church in every age, in the last four hundred years there has been great difficulty in explaining why all men must be called to the perfection of charity. This was because of a famous solution given to the question of the perfection of nature by grace by a Dominican cardinal who was a great theologian at the Council of Trent named Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1469-1534). Cardinal Cajetan wrote a massive commentary on the *Summa Theologiae* in which he addressed the subject of the desire of man for God. His conclusion was that if one hypothetically examined the powers of the human soul: intellect, will, passions and body, there was not necessary capacity in them for grace. He thought this because he interpreted the desire for God to be in the will, a moral desire. If this were in some power of the human soul, then, Cajetan reasoned, God would be forced to give man grace, a monstrous conclusion. Cajetan called this hypothetical state, the state of pure nature.

Yet, Cardinal Cajetan was very much aware that it is defined doctrine that man cannot be happy with anything on this earth. Only the Vision of God in heaven can be the end of man. How can one explain this if there is no natural power in man, which must be completed in God? Cajetan taught that man was not created hypothetically, but historically. The Council of Trent had defined that man was created in grace. For Cajetan, this was the reason man was called to the Vision of God.

It was the creation of man in grace which is the explanation for his need for heaven. Cajetan therefore hit upon a solution, which has come to be known as the solution of the two ends of human life.

He taught that if you examine the powers of man *in the abstract*, then there is no ordering of man to the Vision of God. Man could have been happy knowing God only through his effects as the pagan philosophers knew him. This state was called the *hypothetical state of pure nature*. In fact, man was not created in this state. The Council of Trent defined that man was created in the "state of holiness and justice". This historical creation of man in the state of grace gave human nature a completely different end than it would have had if God had created man only in the State of Pure Nature. Thus, there are two ends to human nature, a hypothetical one which has never actually existed and the real end which order man to the supernatural.

Despite the fact that the Commentary of Cajetan on the *Summa* was considered problematic even when it was first published, this solution held sway for much of the next four hundred years. From the point of view of Aristotelian philosophy, this solution makes no sense. It is not possible for a single nature to have two ends. Either the ordering to grace would have to bring forth a different nature than the nature of man, or the nature, which was pure, would not be human nature. Not only that, but there was a strange interpretation of spirituality which grew up in the post-Tridentine era that the laity were called to the active virtues and contemplative religious to deep prayer. The Church never taught this, but this Laicist spirituality had a lot of popular credibility.

Fr. Henri de Lubac, S.J. made it his life mission to resolve this problem. In 1950, he published a famous book called *Surnaturel* in which he criticized the traditional solution

of Cardinal Cajetan. He believed that this separated nature from grace too much. For his criticism, he himself was much criticized and even silenced by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith from writing on this question. Pius XII wrote an encyclical called *Humani Generis* in which he maintained that, "Others destroy the true 'gratuity' of the supernatural order, since they think that God cannot produce beings endowed with intellect without ordering and calling them to the beatific vision." Some thought that this was ordered against the opinion of Fr. de Lubac, but this was not the case. Pius XII removed the prohibition on Fr. de Lubac and he reprinted a revised edition of his book in two volumes. These were published in English as: *Augustinianism and Modern Theology* and *The Mystery of the Supernatural*.

In the first of these volumes, Fr. de Lubac criticizes the solution of Cajetan by applying it to the difficulties the Church had in answering the Jansenist heresy. This is because Jansenism was an error about grace, which was based on a strange interpretation of the works of St. Augustine. The principal work of Jansen was called *Augustinus*. Fr. de Lubac is correct in the devastating criticism he launches against the traditional solution of Cajetan. In the second volume he gives his solution. This is more problematic. According to his solution, man can be considered in three ways. As pure nature, which is theoretical and abstract, as an individual concretized essence and as elevated to grace. The peculiar distinction between the abstract and concrete essence of man has no foundation in philosophy and shows a strange nominalism and voluntarism.

The last important person to write on this question takes up where Fr. de Lubac leaves off. This is Karl Rahner, S.J. In an article entitled "Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace", Rahner gives his solution which is very close to that of Fr. de Lubac. According to him, there are also three components in this problem. There are (a) the state of nature ordered to grace; (b) the state of nature without this ordering and (c) grace. When asked to define what nature would be like without an ordering to grace he says that this is a "remainder concept (*Restbegriff*)." If one tried to examine this nature, "there is no way of telling *exactly* how his (man's) nature for itself alone would react, what precisely it would be for itself alone."

These modern solutions have the advantage of avoiding the solution of Cajetan, which creates two natures. Though they are motivated by the intention to relate grace more closely to nature, they are worse as they place a third and alien body between the two. The problem is basically that they look on the desire of man for the Vision of God as a desire of the will and so somehow they must divorce this desire from the nature of the powers of the soul in order to find a place for the gratuity of grace. They have been accused of destroying grace, but what they actually destroy is nature.

The key to the solution to the problem is to place the desire for God as an aptitude of the intellect and not an appetite of the will. St. Thomas expresses it thusly: "Although man is naturally inclined to an ultimate end, yet he cannot attain that end by nature but only by grace and this is because of the exalted character of that end."

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## Lesson 2: The Natural Desire to See God - Solution

"Man is called to an end by nature that he cannot attain by nature, but only by grace because of the exalted character of the end." I ended the last lecture with this quote, and it must set the motif for the rest of the classes. The Nominalist metaphysics of Fr. Rahner have led to a strange distinction between nature which is ordered to grace and the Vision of God as the ultimate end and the nature which comprises the powers of the soul: intellect, will, emotions and body. This solution is called the "supernatural existential". The "supernatural existential" is the nature ordered to grace. One Jesuit author has correctly analyzed Fr. Rahner's Nominalism.

. . . Rahner took issue with Kòng and attempted to refute Kòng's thesis that the Church could not define infallibly because no human statement could be absolutely true, arguing instead that the judgement does take the mind to reality. . . . While we have seen how Rahner argued to this conclusion, we have also seen that there is an inherent weakness within his thought. . . . it is not transparently clear how conceptual thought in Rahner's epistemological system can be preserved from relativisation.

The modern solution to this problem is worse than Cajetan's. At least, for Cajetan the creation of man in grace raised nature as such to a different end than he would have had without being created in grace. In the modern authors, there is no real nature to raise as a whole. Nature in the abstract is not real. The only nature, which is real, is the concrete individual. Fulton Sheen said many years ago that the great problem of modern philosophy was seeing the universal as an impoverished sense experience. The desire for God and ordering for grace are treated this way especially by Fr. Rahner. This desire is zapped into each individual in creation, but has no relation to any powers of the human soul. This desire also makes nature completely different than it would have been without this desire. The modern theologians destroy nature, because they are looking for the desire in the wrong place, the will, and interpreting it as a rational appetite.

The true solution of St. Thomas can be found in the *Summa contra Gentiles* (hereafter SCG) III, 25-50 and *Summa Theologiae*, (hereafter ST) I, 12, 1. A tour of these pages yields the conclusion that the natural desire to see God is a desire of the **intellect** and not of the **will**. In SCG, St. Thomas identifies this desire with the desire in all men to know spoken of in the first book of the *Metaphysics* by Aristotle. He uses almost exactly the same language.

Besides, there is naturally present in all men the desire to know the causes of whatever things are observed. Hence, because of wondering about things that

were seen but whose causes were hidden, men first began to think philosophically; when they found the cause, they were satisfied. But the search did not stop until it reached the first cause, for 'then do we think that we know perfectly, when we know the first cause.' Therefore, man naturally desires, as his ultimate end, to know the first cause. But the first cause of all things is God. Therefore, the ultimate end of man is to know God. (III, 25)

Someone might object that this was the knowledge of God through his effects to which Cajetan refers. In the following chapters, St. Thomas examines each power and each kind of knowledge in which the ultimate end of man can consist. After a long process of elimination, he concludes that the knowledge of God cannot be the kind which the philosophers were able to attain.

Moreover, the will rests its desire when it has attained the ultimate end. But the ultimate end of all human knowledge is felicity. So, that knowledge of God which, when acquired, leaves no knowledge of a knowable object to be desired is essentially this felicity. But this is not the kind of knowledge about God that the philosophers were able to get through demonstrations, because, even when we acquire this knowledge, we still desire to know other things that are not known through this knowledge. Therefore, felicity is not found in such a knowledge of God. (SCG, III, 39)

St. Thomas denies that this happiness can consist in contemplation from faith. In fact the knowledge of God gained from faith "does not put this desire to rest but rather sets it aflame, since every man desires to see what he believes" (SCG III, 40). St. Thomas proves that this desire cannot be put to rest with any experience in this life.

If, then, ultimate human felicity does not consist in the knowledge of God, whereby he is known in general by all, or most, men, but a sort of confused appraisal, and again if it does not consist in the knowledge of God which is known by way of demonstration in the speculative sciences, nor in the cognition of God whereby he is known through faith, . . . and if it is not possible in this life to reach a higher knowledge of God so as to know Him through his essence, or even in such a way that, when the other separated substances are known, God might be known through the knowledge of them, as if from a closer vantage point . . . and if it is necessary to identify ultimate felicity with some sort of knowledge of God . . . then it is not possible for man's ultimate felicity to come in this life. (SCG III, 48)

St. Thomas then goes on to show that the desire for knowledge must be satisfied in the next life without the body. The logical question would be whether or not the angels could satisfy this desire in only knowing God through his effects which in their case is their own nature. If man could be satisfied with this sort of knowledge, even more it seems the angels should be as they are certainly better metaphysicians than any man. He concludes: "It is impossible for the natural desire in separated substances [the angels and our souls after death] to come to rest in such a knowledge of God" (SCG, III, 50). St. Thomas then gives six arguments to show that this natural desire for

knowledge must even in the angels be for the Vision of God. They could each be reduced to a syllogism. I will give the paragraph they refer to in Chapter 50 of Book Three of the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

1. What is imperfect desires perfection.
2. The knowledge of God the angels have through the knowledge of their own substance is imperfect.
3. Therefore, the angels seek to know God in Himself and not through his effects. (SCG, III, 50, 2)

1. One who knows the effect desires to know its cause.
2. Angels know they are effects of God.
3. Therefore, angels desire to know the cause in itself. (SCG, III, 50, 3)

1. One, who knows the existence of something, desires to know the essence.
2. Angels know that God exists.
3. Therefore they desire to know his essence. (SCG, III, 50, 4)

1. Nothing finite fulfills the power of the intellect to know.
2. Angels are finite.
3. Therefore, angels, in knowing God through themselves, cannot fulfill the desire of the intellect to know. (SCG, III, 50, 5)

1. Someone who desires knowledge, also desires to flee ignorance.
2. Angels know that God surpasses their natural knowledge, and so they are ignorant of him.
3. Therefore, angels desire to rid themselves of the ignorance they have in regards to God. (SCG, III, 50, 6)

1. The closer a thing comes to an end, the more it desires the end.
2. Angels are closer to God in being than man.
3. Therefore, angels desire to know God more in his essence than men do. (SCG, III, 50, 7)

All of these arguments are based on the power of the intellect to know the truth. One cannot arrive at knowing God in his essence (the Vision of God) by his own power. This is a supernatural goal and grace is needed for it. Notice that there is no reference to the creation of man in the state of grace as the cause of this desire. Instead, the desire is identified with having an intellect because even the angels have it. The angels could not have this desire from some state of nature because they have no common nature like man. Every angel has a unique nature. St. Thomas conclusively denies that this desire is one of the will at the end of this chapter when he says:

The conclusion from these considerations is that the ultimate felicity of separate substances does not lie in the knowledge of God, in which they know Him through their substances, for their desire still leads them on toward God's substance. (SCG, III, 50, 8)

Also quite apparent in this conclusion is the fact that the ultimate felicity is to be sought in nothing other than an operation of the intellect, since no desire carries on to such sublime heights as the desire to understand the truth. Indeed, all our desires for pleasure, or other things of this sort that are craved by men, can be satisfied with other things, but the aforementioned desire does not come to rest until it reaches God, the highest reference point for, and the maker of things. . . . Let those men be ashamed, then, who seek man's felicity in the most inferior things, when it is so highly situated. (SCG, III, 50, 9)

The Natural Desire to See God is identical with the power of the intellect. There is no such thing as a separate state of pure nature or an abstract nature apart from the need of man for the supernatural order. God created man in grace not as the cause of this desire but because God wished to give man the ability to realize this desire from His own goodness. There is no justice which demands this on God's part. He is not forced to create man in grace by anything in creation. If God does this, it is a result of His own goodness because God created man to enjoy Him.

### **Lesson 3: The States of Nature**



There is natural ordering in man for the Vision of God. This is due to the presence in him of the intellect because this power cannot be satisfied in its potential with any other experience. As the stone falls to satisfy the "desire" for rest on the earth, so man must be elevated by grace to satisfy the "desire" of the intellect to know truth. This desire can only be satisfied by arriving at the Vision of God. This alone can fulfill his nature. This fact of the natural desire is both a truth of faith and a truth of reason.

Therefore some that considered this, held that no created intellect can see the essence of God. This opinion, however, is not tenable. For as the ultimate beatitude of man consists in the use of his highest function, which is the operation of the intellect; if we suppose that the created intellect can never see God, it would either never attain to beatitude, or its beatitude would consist in something else beside God; which is opposed to faith. For the ultimate perfection of the rational creature is to be found in that which is the principle of its being; since a thing is perfect so far as it attains to its principle. Further the same opinion is also against reason. For there resides in every man a natural desire to know the cause of any effect which he sees; and thence arises wonder in men. But if the intellect of the rational creature could not reach so far as to the first cause of things, the natural desire would remain void. (Aquinas, ST, I, 12, 1)

In this text, St. Thomas clearly identifies the natural desire with the intellect and uses the same language that Aristotle uses in his *Metaphysics* to establish the fact that man must be able to arrive at the Vision of God for completion. This is a metaphysical argument which is based in the idea that what goes around, comes around. God must directly create man since matter cannot generate the human soul, and so man must also be able to directly experience God as his end.

A very beautiful summary of this position occurs in a later article in the same question:

The natural desire of the rational creature is to know everything that belongs to the perfection of the intellect, namely, the species and genera of things and their types, and these everyone who sees the divine essence will see in God. But to know other singulars, their thoughts and their deeds does not belong to the perfection of the created intellect nor does its natural desire go out to these things; neither, again, does it desire to know things that exist not as yet, but which God can call into being. Yet if God alone were seen, Who is the fount and principle of all being and of all truth, he would so fill the natural desire of knowledge that nothing else would be desired, and the seer would be completely beatified. Hence Augustine says, (Confess. V): *Unhappy the man who knows all these things (the creatures) and knows not thee! But happy the one who knows Thee although he knows not these other things. And the one who knows both Thee and them is not the happier for knowing them, than for knowing Thee alone.* (Aquinas, ST, I, 12, 8, ad 4)

Since man is called to this end by nature, grace is necessary to his perfect action. Grace is like health to his soul. The soul can exist without grace, but not with the ability to perform all of its actions perfectly. It is precisely the relationship to grace and the

pursuit of the ultimate end of the Beatific Vision of God, which forms the basis for the division of the various states in which human nature is found. One cannot have a complete anthropology or theory of the nature of man without understanding all these states. In this lesson, I wish to enumerate them and describe their characteristics.

The states of nature have traditionally been divided into three major ones with one of them divided in two. They are: (1) The State of Original Justice, Holiness of Integrity [Man before the Original Sin]; (2) a. The State of Original Sin and b. Redemption; (3) The State of Glorified Nature [Man in Heaven Completed and Perfected]

The formal cause of all these states is the relation of the powers of human nature to grace. In the state of Original Justice, man is created right. This means that not only was he ordered to God through grace, without experiencing any sin, but that all of his powers were ordered also. Traditionally man is said to have three sorts of gifts in the state of Original Justice: (a) the supernatural gift of grace; (b) the preternatural gifts present in the powers of the soul; and (c) the natural gifts of the powers of the soul themselves. These powers are intellect, will, emotions and body. The preternatural gifts reflect the ordering of these powers to the grace given by God without the presence of the condition of sin. They are infused knowledge in the intellect; loving obedience in the will; spontaneous enjoyment of the virtues in the emotions and no suffering or death in the body.

The condition of the preternatural gifts is described in Scripture as the fact that Adam and Eve were "naked and not ashamed" (Gen. 2: 25). After the sin they were "naked and ashamed". What has changed has nothing to do with the body. This is good in both cases. What has changed is the loss of grace and the preternatural gifts. The lack of shame shows that man and woman do not look upon their bodies as an occasion to manipulate each other because grace directs them to purity of heart through the preternatural gifts. As long as they were obedient to God, they could persevere in this state.

ORIGINAL JUSTICE	
GRACE ==> INTELLECT	INFUSED KNOWLEDGE
WILL	LOVING OBEDIENCE
EMOTIONS	SPONTANEOUS VIRTUE
BODY	NO SUFFERING AND DEATH

Adam and Eve were made partners in realizing their destinies by freedom of choice. They were tempted to make a choice without relying on God as though they could persevere in this state without God. They chose without relying on God's aid and this showed little love and trust in God for the marvelous state they were created in. In this they lost grace and the preternatural gifts. The cause of the state of Fallen Nature is the loss of grace for Adam and all those connected to him.

This is expressed in the powers of the soul. In the intellect man experiences ignorance; in the will, a tendency to manipulation called malice; in the emotions, concupiscence; in the body, suffering and death. The nature of these states can be examined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 374-412.

ORIGINAL SIN	
NO GRACE ==> INTELLECT	IGNORANCE
WILL	MALICE
EMOTIONS	CONCUPISCENCE
BODY	SUFFERING AND DEATH

REDEMPTION	
GRACE ==> INTELLECT	IGNORANCE
WILL	MALICE
EMOTIONS	CONCUPISCENCE
BODY	SUFFERING AND DEATH

Jesus restores man to grace in the state of Redemption, but he does not restore man to the preternatural gifts. Adam lived a gracious life without struggle before the sin. Now man lives the life of grace only with struggle. This struggle is joyfully born because Christ by his cross has given us the strength to live this life of grace. In fact, the suffering experienced in living the life of grace is now the Christian's share in the cross of Christ.

The final state of nature is the order of man found in heaven. In this state, the life of grace is perfected. In the intellect, man experiences the Vision of God; in the will, love perfected; in the emotions, the joy of completion; and in the body, no possibility of suffering and death because of the resurrection of the body. This is the final fulfillment of man. Human nature is totally fulfilled in this state. This is what man is created to be.

GLORIFIED NATURE	
GRACE ==> INTELLECT	THE VISION OF GOD
WILL	LOVE PERFECTED
EMOTIONS	PERFECT JOY
BODY	RESURRECTION

## Assignment One

Using these notes and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, write a three page paper explaining the present difficulties in the Church in light of the text of St. Irenaeus, "The Glory of God is man fully alive; but man fully alive is man when he sees God."

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### Lesson 4: The Nature and Types of Law

The States of Nature are distinguished according to the relation to grace. Man in the state of Original Sin finds himself in a condition of alienation from God, self, the world and other men because he is without grace. This is expressed in the two principal punishments for the Original Sin: ignorance and malice. God did not allow the human race to fall into the Original Sin merely to punish man. Instead, he immediately promised the Redeemer. Before enumerating the punishments for the Original Sin, God says to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). This is called the *Protoevangelium* (primordial gospel) and is considered to be the first announcement of the Gospel. The meaning of this announcement is described in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 410-412.

The rest of the Scripture and all time viewed from the point of view of God is occupied with preparing man to receive the promised Messiah who is foretold in shadow in the *Protoevangelium*. This is the progressive preparation for the human race lost in sin to receive back grace. For many centuries, men wandered in both ignorance and malice. God began to prepare a people from which the Messiah would come. The actual foundation of this people occurred on Mount Sinai when God chose to remedy for the punishment of ignorance by giving Israel the light of the Law (Torah). In his *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas calls the Law one of the two external aids given by God to the human race to induce man to a good interior formation of his soul.

St. Thomas puts his discussion of the Law in the context of Law in general. He uses the paradigm of the civil law. He defines Law as "an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by the one who is in charge of the community" (CCC n.1796). There are four basic types of law all based on the analogy of human law. There is first the source of all law, "All law finds its first and ultimate truth in the eternal law" (CCC n.1951)

The Eternal Law refers to the ideas in God's mind, which are the source and models for all the things in creation. Included in these models of types are not only substances, but accidents and all of Providence as well. These models are the bases for all the actions which things perform including man.

All the rest of the material beings in the universe participate in the Eternal Law, but without knowledge or will and so they do this just by realizing the kind of activities which God has placed in their natures. Man on the other hand is given the glory of participating in the divine plan for the world and in realizing his nature by his free choices. This means he must be able to know what the Eternal Law is by his own intelligence. When man understands what his nature is and how his given acts realize his nature or preclude this, he is said to know the Natural Law. "The natural law states the first and essential precepts which govern the moral life" (CCC n.1955). The Natural Law then resides in human reason and is expressed in those principles, which guide the free acts of man. Natural law has nothing in common with the laws of nature, which may be developed or discussed in Physics and Biology. These reflect God governing the world of matter. Natural Law is present in the human mind to guide human free choices. This does not mean that the Natural Law has nothing to do with biology. Because of the union of the soul and body in man, many biological acts are intimately involved in the perfection of the soul and it is under that rubric that Natural Law relates to them. "This law is called 'natural' not in reference to the nature of irrational beings, but because reason which decrees it properly belongs to human nature" (CCC n. 1955).

The specific area of human life which deals with those human acts performed in the earthly community demands a third kind of law. This law is the law which is made by men. It must be based on the Natural Law. There is no ordinance of reason if someone should make a human command, which does not conform to the plan of God for the world. Any law which contradicts the Natural Law is not a law and does not bind to obedience. This third kind of law is known as Human Law and is divided into civil and ecclesiastical law.

Because man is called to an end by nature which he cannot attain by nature, but only by grace, Human Law is insufficient to guide and direct man to his ultimate end. Also, man does not have a clear picture of the Natural law because of the darkness in his intellect due to the fall. Therefore, God gave the fourth kind of law as a divine aid to arrive at the Vision of God as his supernatural end and also as a remedy for the ignorance which human beings experience even about their own natural good after the Original Sin. Since God has also promised the Messiah as the direct and final cure for the wound of the Original Sin, this law is directly related to the community from which the Messiah will come. This is the Divine Positive Law which is contained in the Old and the New Law written in the Old and New Testaments. "There are different expressions of the moral law, all of them interrelated: eternal law -- the source, in God, of all law; natural law; revealed law, comprising the Old Law and the New Law; or Law of the Gospel; finally, civil and ecclesiastical laws" (CCC n. 1952).

All of these expressions of law are absolutely necessary for a complete picture of how reason forms human conduct. The one, which this class will take up as the most important for the relationship of nature to grace, is the Divine Positive Law. This law is one of the two great pillars on which the whole history of salvation rests. The other

pillar is grace. One cannot understand grace unless one understands both parts of the Divine Positive Law: The Old Law and the New Law.

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## Lesson 5: The Old Law

The Old Law was given to Moses and Aaron directly by God on Mount Sinai. It was a definitive step in the preparation of the community for the coming of the Messiah. God founded the community of Israel which is not a civil community in the Old Testament, but a "people of God", a *populus Dei* (ST, I-II, 100, 5, ad corp). Moses and Aaron aided God in the establishment of this community. The kingdom of Israel is the Church in shadow. There are three principal authorities in this kingdom: the priest, the prophet and the king. Each expresses some aspect of the Old Law to the people. The kingdom of Israel is not really a theocracy, but a hierarchical community with God Himself as the rector.

The divine positive law on which this community is founded is far superior to the human laws, which govern ordinary human states. This is well expressed in the verses of Psalm 19. "The law of the Lord is perfect", i.e. it allows not filth of sin, as opposed to human law. "It revives the soul", i.e. it is directed to both interior and exterior acts, as opposed to human law. "The rule of the Lord is to be trusted", i.e. it is completely truthful and reliable, as opposed to human law. "It gives wisdom to the simple," i.e. it lifts humanity to a divine and supernatural end.

The precepts of the Natural and Human Law are not enough because man is destined for a higher end than this world. Therefore the Divine Positive Law or Revealed Law is necessary. This law exists in two stages: the priesthood of Levi (the Old Law) and the priesthood of Christ (the New Law). These two laws are not different species of law. The Old Law is the same species of Law as the New Law, i.e. Divine Positive Law. The purpose of both laws is the same: charity and grace in the life of the Holy Spirit. These two types are distinguished as imperfect to perfect in relationship to this goal. The Old Law instructed people like children. The New law instructs people like adults.

Children need many commandments because they have not interiorized the values of the laws. They are encouraged to the practice of good by material punishments and rewards. According to the people at the time of Christ there were 623 precepts of the Old Law. 248 were commands and 365 were prohibitions. This was because the people were like children with respect to the life of grace. The common good of the Old Law is reflected in material and earthly promises. For instance, when Job is finally vindicated at the end of the book of Job, he receives back two fold from God the material goods he had lost. This is because the men of the Old Law could not have understood him receiving only spiritual promises even though the meaning of the book is that one can

lose all material goods and as long as one has not lost God, one has not lost his humanity. The promises of the New Law are spiritual. They are heaven and the Vision of God together with the Grace, Virtues and Gifts necessary to arrive there.

The relationship of the Old Law, the New Law and the Vision of God could thus be schematized in this way:

The Old Law	The New Law	The Vision of God
Umbra	Imago	Veritas
(Shadow)	Image (Christ)	Truth or Reality

Human Law is only sufficient for guiding man to certain ends in this world, but not to the Ultimate End which is heaven. The Old Law goes beyond both the Natural and Human Law and prepares man for his ultimate destiny, the Vision of God. God Himself founds a community of divine election by means of the Old Law from those who have common descent from Abraham. Angels promulgate the Old Law (Cf. Gal. 3:19). This shows that in itself it is a gift from God. The Old Law establishes a new community, which has heaven itself as its end. The Old Law unifies two aspects of God, which are necessary for the coming Redemption in which Christ will open the gates of heaven: God as author of nature and as Father of Jesus Christ. For this reason the primary precept of the Old Law is monotheism.

The Natural Law gives us the inclinations by which we are generally morally obliged to do good and avoid evil. The Old Law presupposes these principles and restates them as a specific preparation for the holy people of God from which the Messiah will come. This restatement and application is the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue.

For this purpose the Old Law had three sorts of precepts. The first were the general Moral precepts, which this law shared with the Natural Law. These are the Ten Commandments considered in general. The second was the application of these precepts to the worship of the one God of monotheism, which God Himself demanded to make the community consecrated to Himself. These are called the ceremonial precepts and they are contained in the first three commandments, which respect the correct attitude of man towards God. These are usually called the First Table of the Law because the Law was by Tradition given on two tablets to Moses. The third kind of commandments respects the actions, which befit a holy people towards man. These are called the Juridical Precepts and are usually referred to as the Second Table of the Law. They comprise the last seven commandments. So there are three sorts of precepts in the Old Law: Moral, Ceremonial and Juridical.

In both tables the Moral precepts are identical with the Natural Law. When Jesus says, "Do not think I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets," (Matt. 5:17) he is referring to the Moral precepts. The Moral aspect is implemented in Israel with very special ceremonial and juridical precepts which are characteristic of their society alone and now have been superseded by Christ in the society of the Church.

The Israelite community formed by God Himself has a special relationship to Him. The whole people was consecrated, the laity by circumcision, the priests by ordination. The Ceremonial Law as found in Exodus and Leviticus especially had to be punctiliously observed. This Ceremonial Law included everything from the observance of feasts in the Temple to laws governing the purification of foods and vessels in everyday life. The people showed their consecration by living these everyday rituals. God shows in this that He is not only the Creator of each person, but also the Founder and Ruler of the community. The Israelites acknowledge God as the rector by these practices.

The external practices are ordered to an interior formation. Charity as the love of the Holy Spirit and faith as embraced in the Holy Spirit are the first principles of the Old Law. The founder of the community demanded that the exterior rituals reflect these interior states of mind. Because Israel is a commonwealth of God, the prophets must constantly remind Israel of this. The Ceremonial precepts have both a literal and a figurative meaning. The figurative meaning is more important than the literal. God founds civil society indirectly through nature. God founds Israel and her successor the Church directly. Jesus reproves the Jews of his time repeatedly for emphasizing the literal meaning of the Ceremonial Precepts over the figurative. The cleansing and purification of the vessels, the Sabbath rest, for example merely prepare the people for the moral purification and rest in God which the Messiah will bring with grace.

The Ceremonial Precepts are applied in the Juridical Precepts. The Juridical Precepts are basically found in the book of *Deuteronomy*. These laws are very unusual in their constant emphasis on mercy towards others while applying justice as well. "Beginning with the Old Testament, all kinds of juridical measures (the jubilee year of forgiveness of debts, prohibition of loans at interest and the keeping of collateral, the obligation to tithe, the daily payment of the day-laborer, the right to glean vines and fields) answer the exhortation of *Deuteronomy*: 'For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, "You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land"' (CCC n. 2449).

The meaning of the Juridical Precepts is therefore just the opposite of the Ceremonial Precepts. In them the literal meaning is more important than the figurative. Jesus often reproves the Jews of his time for trying to reduce the mercy towards others demanded by the Law of God to mere human casuistry and thus excusing them from any real practical charity. The figure the Juridical Precepts present of the kindness of the future eschatological kingdom is much less important and urgent than the present demands of virtue in the practical actions which the Israelites were to perform in everyday actions.

God, our Creator and Redeemer, chose Israel for himself to be his people and revealed his law to them, thus preparing for the coming of Christ. The Law of Moses expresses many truths naturally accessible to reason. These are stated and authenticated within the covenant of salvation (CCC n. 1961).

The Old law is the first stage of revealed law. Its moral prescriptions are summed up in the Ten Commandments. The precepts of the Decalogue lay the foundations for the vocation of man fashioned in the image of God; they prohibit what is contrary to the



love of God and neighbor and prescribe what is essential to it. The Decalogue is a light offered to the conscience of every man to make God's call and ways known to him and to protect him against evil:

"God wrote on the tables of the Law what men did not read in their hearts" (CCC n. 1962).

## Lesson 6: The Old Law, part 2

The Old Law was a necessary stage in the progressive education of Israel by God in the ways of God. This stage remedied for the defect of ignorance in the intellect in the human race, which was one of the two principle punishments for the Original Sin. The other was malice in the will.

Human Law is directed to one end and Divine Law to another. Human Law is directed to peace in temporal affairs. This law accomplishes this by forbidding certain acts harmful to the peace of the state in external affairs. Divine Law is meant to guide man to eternal happiness through both interior and exterior acts. Human Law restrains the hand. Divine Law restrains both the heart and the hand. The Divine Law is medicine for the wound of the Original Sin. The Old Law is an incomplete and limited remedy because it can only heal certain symptoms of the disease, but cannot arrive at the root cause in itself. The Old Law does this by removing sin and so its purpose is to remove obstacles in both interior and exterior acts to accepting the coming of the Holy Spirit through the Messiah. The Old Law therefore has as its purpose union with God in heaven by means of the reception of grace here. The problem is that the Old Law does not in itself confer grace. It was good and perfect for its time, but not in relation to the final consummation of the world.

The Old Law was imperfect. "For the law made nothing perfect" (Hebrews 7:19). It could only remove obstacles but could not bring man to his end because the law did not in itself confer grace. In this sense, the Old Law kills. It was not the efficient cause of death and sin because it is good. It is only the occasional cause. The Latin way of putting this is that the Old Law did not cause death *efficialiter*, but *occasionaliter*. One can live the fullness of even the Old Law only by grace. One might keep the letter of the commandments but not their spirit without the Holy Spirit conferring grace. Man after the giving of the Law was more guilty of sin because he knew how all the sins were connected with God the Creator. He could not plead ignorance. Also, forbidden fruits are the more attractive. Man understood very well why all the sins against the Natural Law were forbidden.

The yoke of the Law could only be borne with grace, a grace that it did not in itself give. What is first in intention is last in execution. Christ was first in the intention of God. The purpose of this creation was the glorification of God in Christ. One could be justified under the dispensation of the Old Law and receive grace by prayerful faith in the coming of Christ as the future Messiah. "The Spirit who gives a law which none can obey without grace is also the Spirit who grants the grace of observing it by first inspiring a prayer of petition to this effect" (St. Augustine quoted by the Council of Trent in DS 1536 and DS 3718). One could receive grace under the dispensation of the Original Sin. The one who has faith receives grace but not the character of conformity with Christ. So if he sins, he reverts to the Original Sin.

In Hebrews 11, St. Paul enumerates all the people in the Old Testament who were justified by faith. "And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. . . . And all these well attested by faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11: 6 and 39-40).

Those who had cooperated with God under the dispensation of the Old Law should have immediately recognized Christ when he came, as this is the one they were preparing for. The Lord says that the fact that they did not accept him is because they were not true Israelites. In fact, they will be judged more harshly than the pagans will.

Both the Ceremonial and Juridical precepts were oriented to fulfillment in Christ. The Ceremonial precepts of the cult are all fulfilled in Christ's passion. Simeon expresses the fulfillment by Christ of both the Natural and the Old Law when he sees the Child who comes to meet the Temple and begin the completion of the cult. He says, "Now, Lord, you can let your servant go in peace. Your word has been fulfilled. For my eyes have seen your salvation. A light [the means of knowledge in philosophy] of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory [the shekenah which covered Mt. Sinai and filled the Temple during the sacrifices] of your people Israel" (Luke 2: 29-32). The veil of the Temple is torn in two at the hour of Christ's sacrifice to show that Jesus completes the cult. The Juridical precepts of the Old Law are brought to completion because Jesus shows us what our relationship with our neighbor is to be like.

The sacraments of the Old Law did not confer grace, but they did look forward to the future Messiah. Luther taught that the sacraments of the New Law of Christ and the sacraments of the Old Law caused grace in exactly the same way, i.e. by faith. Catholics believe that the sacraments of the New Law in themselves cause grace. The sacraments of the Old Law only cause grace by being means to express the faith of the recipient.

According to Christian tradition, the Law is holy, spiritual, and good, yet still imperfect. Like a tutor it shows what must be done, but does not of itself give the strength, the grace of the Spirit to fulfill it. Because of sin, which it cannot remove, it remains a law of bondage. According to St. Paul, its special function is to denounce and *disclose sin*, which constitutes a "law of concupiscence" in the

human heart. However, the Law remains the first stage on the way to the kingdom. It prepares and disposes the chosen people and each Christian for conversion and faith in the Savior God. It provides a teaching, which endures forever, like the Word of God. (CCC n. 1963)

The Old Law is a *preparation for the Gospel*. "The Law is a pedagogy and a prophecy of things to come." It prophesies and presages the work of liberation from sin which will be fulfilled in Christ: it provides the New Testament with images, "types," and symbols for expressing the life according to the Spirit. Finally, the Law is completed by the teaching of the sapiential books and prophets which set its course toward the New Covenant and the Kingdom of heaven.

There were . . . under the regimen of the Old Covenant, people who possessed the charity and grace of the Holy Spirit and longed above all for the spiritual and eternal promises by which they were associated with the New Law. Conversely, there exist carnal men under the New Covenant, still distanced from the perfection of the New Law: the fear of punishment and certain temporal promises have been necessary, even under the New Covenant, to incite them to virtuous works. In any case, even though the Old Law prescribed charity, it did not give the Holy Spirit, through whom "God's charity has been poured into our hearts." (CCC n. 1964)

## Assignment Two

Write a three page paper on the subject: Evaluate the content of the Old Law as a necessary preparation to receive grace.

## Lesson 7: The New Law of Christ

Read: *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 106-108.

The Old Law was written on tablets of stone. It was comprised of many commandments, which could be expressed in human speech. It remedied for the punishment of ignorance in the intellect for the Original Sin, but in itself it did not remedy for the defect of Malice or weakness in the will. Only Christ could do this in the New Law. This New Law of Christ is taught in the Sermon on the Mount. In this sermon, the interior motivation for the observance of the commandments is stressed as the foundation for the written letter. The New Law of Christ is primarily not a written law. Christ remedies for malice by sending the grace of the Holy Spirit into the soul. The New Law is both an interior law, taught by the Holy Spirit, and a written law. It is

primarily an interior law. Secondarily and no less essentially it is a written law. The written commandments in the New Law dispose someone to the grace of the Holy Spirit (dispositive) and teach someone how to act according to the grace of the Holy Spirit (executive).

The New Law justifies in itself, something the Old Law could not do. Still, it does not justify because of the written part, but because it contains in itself the grace of the Holy Spirit. If someone under the New Law only follows the letter without the Spirit, then they live as though they were under the Old Law.

There were, under the regimen of the Old Covenant, people who possessed the charity and grace of the Holy Spirit and longed above all for the spiritual and eternal promises by which they were associated with the New law. Conversely, there exist carnal men under the New Covenant, still distanced from the perfection of the New Law: the fear of punishment and certain temporal promises have been necessary, even under the New Covenant, to incite them to virtuous works. In any case, even though the Old Law prescribed charity, it did not give the Holy Spirit, through whom 'God's charity has been poured into our hearts'.

The New Law was not given immediately at the beginning of time because man had to be prepared to receive grace by realizing his dependence on God. This preparation of the human race was progressive. Nothing in nature is immediately brought to perfection and the same is true of the life of grace, which builds on nature. Had God offered grace to men as soon as the sin was committed, they would not have accepted it because they would not have understood their need for grace, their need to surrender to Him.

This New Law was given in the fullness of time and includes the interior grace of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it justifies in itself, as opposed to the Old Law, which only justified by the faith of the recipient. Since this is the essence of the New Law as given through the complete revelation of God, Jesus Christ, there will be no further revelation of God which is more complete than that given in Christ. In the Middle Ages, there was a heretical movement which taught that there were three ages of the world: the age of the Father (The Old Testament), the age of the Son (The New Testament and fleshly Church founded on Pentecost) and the age of the Holy Spirit. This latter age would be on this earth and would entail a more complete revelation of the God than the one given in Christ and expressed in the sacraments and the hierarchical Church. The implication was that the hierarchical Church would evolve into a more complete Church of the Spirit, which would be without structure and sacraments and entail only the perfect.

St. Thomas answers this heresy by saying that there are indeed three ages of the world: the age of the Father and the Son (the Old Testament which finds completion in the Messiah); the age of the Son and the Holy Spirit (the New Testament which finds its completion in the Sending of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles at Pentecost); the Final Perfect age. This last age is not experienced in this life. It is only experienced in the Vision of God in heaven. There will be no more complete revelation of God on this

earth than the one given to the Apostles on Pentecost and which is expressed in the hierarchical and sacramental Catholic Church.

The Old Law and the New Law are not two essentially different laws, but two stages in the same law. They are related like the plant to the rose or child to adult. The one is an imperfect stage of the other. Both are oriented to charity, but the Old Law could not in itself give this charity, though it was perfect for its time and place. The Old Law instructs us like children; the New Law like adults. For this reason, there were many temporal punishments and promises given under the Old Law. The New Law on the other hand is a law of Love. It is grace itself and motivates people as spiritual adults.

The Old Law contained 618 precepts, 248 commands and 365 prohibitions according to the authorities at the time of Jesus. It contained so many precepts because it instructed people like children who need constant reminders. Those who live under the Dispensation of the New Law have only those precepts which in themselves are according to or against the living of charity.

Jesus fulfills what is lacking in the Old Law as to both its end and its precepts. As to the end, Jesus truly gives the grace of the Holy Spirit and so the Old Law is brought to perfection. As to the precepts, He fulfills them in both His actions and in His teaching. In His actions, he was born under the Old Law and did all that was required under the Old Law. In the great hymn for Corpus Christi, *Pange Lingua*, Thomas Aquinas writes, "He obeys the law's directions, even as the Old Law ends."

In his teaching, Our Lord shows the proper understanding of the Old Law. The exterior principles of the Old Law were about charity, the interior love of God brought by grace. Jesus interprets the authentic meaning of the law by pointing to its ethical dimension, which implements the intention of charity.

For this reason, the New Law is more difficult to live than the Old Law is. Though the Old Law had many precepts, in itself it did not give the grace to live them properly. Since the New Law gives this grace, it demands that what it commands and forbids be done from the right interior intention. The person who acts according to the New Law must perform whatever works he performs from spontaneous joy and free internal love born from the supernatural perspective of life according to the Holy Spirit. The interior hardship, which the New Law demands, can only be borne with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who supports us with His presence and power. In this sense, the New Law is much more difficult to live than the Old Law is.

The New Law is therefore a law of freedom, but not in the sense that there are no works commanded. The external works of the New Law are few when compared with the Old Law, but this is because this is a law fulfilled. The external works commanded are those which lead to grace (the sacraments) and those which are in accord with (positive precepts) or contrary to the living of the life of faith working through love (negative precepts). There are still, then, absolute moral norms under the dispensation of the New Law against those actions, which are incompatible with the living of grace, e.g. murder, theft and adultery.

The Kingdom of God is primarily interior, and so all exterior actions which do not correspond to interior reconciliation with God are forbidden. Those, which are indifferent to this interior peace, have no relation to this law, e.g. food. All foods are permitted under the New Law and there are no ritual laws of purification or ablution. The New Law is a law of freedom in two senses: (1) it does not constrain us to do or avoid anything except what is necessary to or contrary to salvation and (2) it demands that we fulfill the precepts freely from the inner stirring of grace. The Old Law restrains the hand. The New Law restrains the heart and therefore also the hand.

Finally, Jesus adds to the precepts of the Old Law counsels of perfection in the New Law. These counsels recommend that one gives up even legitimate goods because of the possibility of manipulation under the New Law. They correspond to the legitimate goods which tempt us with the lust of the flesh (sexuality) -- chastity; the lust of the eyes (money) -- poverty; and the pride of life (perfection) -- obedience.

The New Law is called a *law of love* because it makes us act out of the love infused by the Holy Spirit, rather than from fear; a *law of grace*, because it confers the strength of grace to act, by means of faith and the sacraments; a *law of freedom*, because it sets us free from the ritual and juridical observances of the Old Law, inclines us to act spontaneously by the prompting of charity and, finally, lets us pass from the condition of a servant who 'does not know what his master is doing' to that of a friend of Christ -- 'For all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you' -- or even to the status of a son and heir (CCC n.1972).

## Lesson 8: The Necessity of Grace

Read: *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 109.

No question has occupied more debate in the history of the Church than the necessity of grace. This question spawned several major heresies, especially Pelagianism and Jansenism. The answer to this question demands several distinctions. The most important is the distinction between the Condition or Integral Nature of man before the Original Sin and the Fallen Nature of man after the Original Sin.

When St. Thomas treats this question he begins with the necessity of grace to know truth. He makes an analogy between physical nature and spiritual nature. In the physical world, God gives the form to every determined kind of being and so his action is necessary for that being to act according to its nature. God's interest and support, his movement is absolutely necessary as the ultimate source or first cause of any natural movement. In the same way, the action of the Holy Spirit is necessary for man to know

any truth at all. This is because the natural light of reason is a participation in the very light of God Himself. This is what makes man a being willed for his own sake.

But man is called to know truth, which is God Himself. He is called to an end by nature he cannot attain by nature because of the exalted character of the end. Thus, though God's action is necessary to know any truth, no special movement on His part is necessary to know those truths about God and the world which are accessible to reason alone. But God must enlighten the mind in a special way, by a special action of the Holy Spirit, if man is to know those truths which are beyond his capability to know by natural reason. So man must have grace to know about the Trinity and the Incarnation, but not to know about the fact that God exists. God could instruct some by faith and grace concerning His existence if their reasoning powers were not acute enough to discover this by themselves, as is the case with most of the human race after the sin. Still, God's grace is not absolutely necessary for this.

As for doing good, man in the state of Original Justice can do goods which are proportioned to his nature without sanctifying grace. He can do all the works of the virtues without the further need of a supernatural elevation. But he cannot do those works which are necessary to inherit eternal life, to go to heaven, without an interior change in his soul in which he is elevated to participate in God's own life. This is because there is no means in human nature left to itself by which man could obtain a relationship of equality with God. Man's acts have no proportion in and of themselves to the nature of God. So even in the state of Integral Nature without the presence of sin, man needs grace to go to heaven and to do the works by which he tends to heaven while on earth. There is no power in the human will sufficient to will supernatural goods. Man also needs the divine aid of actual grace to support him in willing and carrying out all goods of both sorts.

In Fallen Nature, man needs sanctifying grace to do both sorts of goods: those proportioned to heaven and those of which he is naturally capable. There is no such thing as a secular humanism in which man is able to be perfect, even in the natural grace without the healing of sanctifying grace. This is because man is now in a state in which he has fallen down from what he was to be by nature. He still needs grace to do works proportioned to heaven, but also needs grace for his nature to be healed. Actual grace is needed here also for both experiences. Man can do many good works without the aid of sanctifying grace; but he cannot do all the goods proportioned to his nature. St. Thomas uses the image of a sick man who can perform some healthy actions, but not all of them. He could walk, but not eat for example.

Man does not need grace in the state of Original Justice to love God above all things. Every nature, each in its own way, is called to love God above all things. Man can do the goods proportioned to his natural powers without the further aid of sanctifying grace in Original Justice and this includes loving God as the beginning and end of the world. In Fallen Nature, man needs grace to love God in this way.

God, however, has called man to love Him in a deeper way than all the rest of nature. Man is called to love God the way God loves Himself, as an object of communion with

whom man shares life and blessedness, the final good of man. Grace is needed in both integral and fallen nature for man to love God in this way. This is the love of fellowship, of *koinonia*. This love is the special love to which man is called. In both states and in both loves, God's aid with actual grace is needed.

Man could do the works of the Law without grace in Integral Nature, but not in Fallen nature. He could not do these works in either state with the proper interior intention of charity without grace.

Man, therefore, cannot merit eternal life without grace because there is no power in the will or the soul to do so. No one merits grace. Grace is prior to merit and necessary in order to merit. Even Jesus Christ did not merit the grace of the Hypostatic Union. This was a sheer grace given to Him and he merited our salvation in light of this prior grace.

"No one comes to the Father, unless the Father draws<sup>6</sup> him" (John 6:44).

God gives actual grace to aid man in his preparation to receive sanctifying grace. For a person to receive sanctifying grace, he must be turned or converted to God. The person must be open to the turning, but while he is open or preparing himself, God Himself is turning. So, no further grace is needed to receive the interior aid which God gives a person to turn themselves to Him. But the fact that they are prepared to receive sanctifying grace is due to God turning them. They receive the experience. This is not a passive reception in the sense that it is inert. But it is passive in the sense that it is received as befits a reasoning and free being. The great Scripture text, which expresses this, is: "Restore (Convert) us to thyself, O Lord, that we may be restored (converted)!" (Lam. 5:21 quoted in CCC n. 1432)

A person remains radically free not to prepare himself. He can simply not allow his will to be moved or turned by the Lord. Sufficient preparation consists in man being displeased with sin and having affection for God insofar as his lights allow him to do so.

One in sin cannot arise from sin without grace. This is because sin is an offense against God and when the act of sin ceases, the stain, the fault and the punishment still remain. Since grace is the beauty of the soul, the stain of sin is the loss of grace. Only God can give grace back to the soul. The fault is a disordered appetite and we can only finally turn from this if God gives us the power. Sin deserves eternal punishment and so no act of man can resolve for this punishment. Only God can do this. When the act of sin ceases, the debt (*reatus*) remains. Only God can resolve for this.

In the state of Original Justice man could avoid sin without sanctifying grace, but not without actual grace. In the state of Fallen Nature, man cannot avoid sin without sanctifying grace. He can avoid mortal sin if he is given grace, but not all venial sins, even after the reception of grace.

Some people believed that grace was given to man so that he no longer needed God's aid to live the life of grace. Man could avoid sin and do good by his own power without the aid of a further actual grace to sustain and support him. The Pelagians thought this



was true in Fallen Nature. The Jansenists thought this was true in Integral Nature. Both were wrong. The first grace elevates man to participate in divine life and begin by his acts to merit heaven. This is such a sublime and supernatural activity that God's aid and the assistance of actual grace are constantly needed for the daily life of infused virtues, which this grace entails. This is because no created thing can act without divine motion and support. Also because it is not possible for us to know ourselves fully and direct our actions perfectly. God's grace which is union with His divine nature is not given to us so that we can then act on our own without it. Even the saints in this world pray every day, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The Divine Office begins most hours with the psalm verses which the monks of the desert were accustomed to recite all day as we recite the Rosary, "O God, come to my assistance; Lord, make haste to help me."

Finally, when one receives grace, he receives the habit of mind by which he can stand firm in virtuous practice in the face of sorrow and fear and also the habit of perseverance. But that he actually perseveres in each and every daily act in living the life of grace demands further actual grace, divine aid and assistance. No more habitual or sanctifying grace is needed for this, but God's aid and assistance is. Grace is given to some, to whom final perseverance is not given. One who has grace must continually pray for final perseverance, for "Many are called, but few (that is, less) are chosen."

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## Lesson 9: The Definition and Kinds of Grace

Read: *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 110-111.

Grace must involve an interior change in the very essence of the soul of man. Luther taught that grace was forensic justification. This was as though man came into a court condemned of a capital crime and God, the judge, chose merely to overlook the crime without any punishment which would resolve for the evil and make the criminal a worthy citizen again. Luther used to call man in the state of grace "a lump of dung covered by snow." St. Thomas is of the opposite idea. He compares the love of God to human love and demonstrates that real human love has to respond to a real good in the being of the other. The same must be true, *mutatis mutandis*, with divine love.

Human love is expressed as grace in three ways.

1. The love of someone for someone else as in the phrase, the soldier enjoys the king's *grace*.
2. The gift given by the lover to the beloved as a sign of his grace as in the phrase, "I confer this grace on you."

3. The gratitude of the Beloved for both the love and gift of the Lover which is expressed in thanksgiving as in the words used by Romance languages to express thanks, e.g. *gracias* and *grazie*.

St. Thomas says that each further sense depends on the prior ones. So Thanksgiving depends on gifts, which in turn are an expression of love. Man's love always responds to a good in the soul, which he finds there already existing. Man's love must truly respond to a good really existing in the soul. Were someone to love someone thinking there was a real good present which was not there, this would not be true love but false love. In the last two senses, the gift and response, love entails something truly in the soul.

God's love differs from man's in that when God loves someone, he creates the good in him or her by his gift. His love does not have to find a prior good in the person, but makes the person good in loving him. The first good God creates in a being by loving it is existence. Everything, which exists, exists and moves as an expression of divine love. "God saw everything, and it was good."

But towards man, God has a special regard. In addition to the primary love by which He creates good in all things, God also creates a special good in man. His love towards man is a special love. He loves him in the most complete and simple sense of the word (*simpliciter*) because He elevates man to be like Him. He gives him a self-communication of His nature. This is not only given to men, but also to angels. This communication in nature is completely beyond the power of human nature. Man cannot attain it. He can only receive it.

*Grace is a participation in the life of God.* It introduces us into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the head of his Body. As an 'adopted son' he can henceforth call God 'Father,' in union with the only Son. He receives the life of the Spirit who breathes charity into him and forms the Church. (CCC n. 1997)

Since God communicates his nature to man, this must involve a change which is not just a psychological change. The change is ontological. God creates a new quality in the soul. This is a supernatural quality of life. It is metaphysically an accident, which is not an unforeseen event. An accident in philosophy is a being which can only exist in another being, as opposed to a substance, which is a being which can exist in its own right. Grace is an accident like health. In fact, it is the health of the soul. The body can exist without health, but not in natural wholeness. In the same way, the soul can exist without grace, but not with natural wholeness. This is because without grace, man cannot arrive at heaven, his natural destiny.

The soul is the life of the body as form; God is the efficient cause of the soul. But, God is the life of the soul through grace as form. Man is not corrupted and changed substantially into God. He still remains man. But, he receives an accidental form, a quality by which he is elevated to partake of divine nature. As the soul is the life of the

body, so God is the life of the soul. What is substantially in God is accidentally in the soul.

Grace is less perfectly in the soul than the soul subsists in itself because it is a supernatural habit. But it is nobler than the nature of the soul since it expresses a participation in divine goodness itself. Grace is also not the same as virtue. Virtues are in the powers of the soul. Just as human virtues which are acquired by human acts perfect human powers of intellect, will and emotions and make them more disposed to free actions according to man's nature, so grace is an interior change in the essence of the soul which enables man to form virtues according to God's nature. There are called supernatural infused virtues and theological virtues. These virtues perfect man according to a new standard, which is God's own inner nature.

The subject of grace or its material cause is then the very essence of the soul itself. One could summarize the nature of grace using the four causes of Aristotle in this way:

*Final Cause:* The Vision of God and love for this vision on earth

*Efficient Cause:* God Himself acting in a prepared soul

*Formal Cause:* An accidental quality by which the soul can know as God knows and love as God loves

*Material Cause:* The Essence of the Soul

One could schematize the relation of grace to nature as follows:

Grace	----->	virtues	----->	meritorious actions	GRACE
Essence	----->	powers	----->	actions of nature	NATURE

The primary division of grace is between that which makes a person pleasing to God, also called *gratia gratum faciens* (henceforth GGF) and the grace which is freely given, also called *gratia gratis data* (henceforth GGD). In modern terminology, GGF is sanctifying grace and GGD is charismatic grace. What is the difference between the two? Charismatic grace is freely given by God and not based on prior merit, but it has to do with the sanctification of others. Sanctifying grace is freely given, not based on prior merit and is the sanctification of the person who has it. Charismatic graces in the Church are either ordinary (e.g. power of the priest to consecrate at Mass or the infallibility of the Pope) or extraordinary (e.g. tongues, preaching, healing, etc.) The extraordinary graces are enumerated in 1 Cor. 12. One can exercise both these graces and the ordinary charisms and be in the state of mortal sin. Not so sanctifying grace. This is a true quality or habit in the soul which is the true interior change spoken of in the previous lesson.

In addition to sanctifying grace, the interior aid of God is also a grace. This is called actual grace. Since it is not a quality in the soul, but merely divine aid, it does not in

itself sanctify, but aids one to convert or live conversion. Two definitions of sanctifying and actual grace might read as follows:

*Sanctifying grace*: a created supernatural gift, a divine habit of being infused by God, which permanently inheres in the soul by which we participate in the divine nature of God Himself.

*Actual grace*: a temporary supernatural act of God by which He directly and interiorly enlightens the understanding and strengthens the will for the purpose of moving the person to a supernatural act.

Sanctifying grace is a habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love. *Habitual grace*, the permanent disposition to live and act in keeping with God's call, is distinguished from *actual graces* which refer to God's interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of the work of sanctification. (CCC n. 2000)

### Assignment Three

Explain why it is much more logical given the various explanations given for grace for Catholics to have treatises on progress in the presence of God and Mystical Prayer and Protestants to be peculiarly lacking in these.

## Lesson 10: The Cause of Grace

Read: *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 112.

The question of the cause of grace here refers to the efficient cause of grace. The efficient cause is the source of a given change or action in a being which that being did not possess before. The efficient cause of the statue is the sculptor. The efficient cause of the steam is the fire, which heats the water. The efficient cause imparts the form to a being, which did not possess that form before.

Grace is a supernatural form. It is the health of the soul. Man is enabled to participate in God's nature, to know as God knows and to love as God loves, by grace. This is a form, which is completely beyond the capability of human nature to produce. There is no power in man to obtain grace. God then is the only efficient cause of grace. After the coming of Christ, the human nature of Christ is the instrument by which God gives grace. The sacraments are extensions of that human nature. They are like the tools to the hand, which is connected to the divinity. The sacraments are the extension of

Christ's flesh throughout time and space. Thus, they participate in God imparting grace because Christ institutes them as extensions of his own flesh and person.

Though God is the sufficient cause of God, God never acts in anything against its nature. Since the nature of man involves freedom in all moral experiences, the reception of grace also presupposes that man is open to this reception by acts of free will. Sanctifying grace requires some preparation to be received in freedom. God, however, aids the soul to this preparation by actual grace and no prior preparation is required to have God's help in this.

Man's preparation is from God moving and the free will being moved. If preparation is looked at from the point of view of the free will, grace is a sheer gift and God does not have to give it to anyone. But if preparation is looked on from God's point of view, then God necessarily gives grace to one whom He finds prepared. This is not a necessity of coercion as though God was forced by the justice of man or his works to bestow grace on the human being. It is a necessity of infallibility because God has infallibly promised that He will give grace to those whom He finds prepared, and God always keeps his promises. In a sense, God binds himself. "Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from Him, comes to me" (John 6:45). The fact that one does not receive grace is due to lack of preparation then. The first cause of loss of grace is not God, but man.

It follows then that the measure of grace received by each soul is due to its measure of preparation. All do not experience grace equally then. "But to each one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7). On the part of the object, which is God's own divine nature, God gives himself equally to all. But on the part of the subject's receptive capability, the one who is more freely prepared to receive grace experiences the mercy and love of God more. However, since God is the initiator in preparation, God must impart his love more to one than to another. In fact, the Church has a hierarchy of holiness like the hierarchy of being in creation. No one, for example, will ever be as loved by God or made as lovable by God's love as the Virgin Mary. She is his bride and therefore the highest human person (Jesus being a divine person) in the hierarchy of heaven.

Since grace is a supernatural habit, only God can know who is engraced with absolute certitude. God sometimes enlightens the engraced person by special private revelation that he is in the state of grace in order to prepare him for some very difficult work like martyrdom. Most Christians, though, only have a relative certainty that they are in the state of grace. Someone who does what he can to live the Christian life and is not aware of being in serious sin can be relatively sure he is in the state of grace. St. Thomas says that a person can have some knowledge he has grace if he "is conscious of delighting in God and of despising worldly things" and "is not conscious of any mortal sins". This knowledge is imperfect. The Catechism invokes the classic example of Joan of Arc to prove this principle. She was asked if she was in the state of grace. This was a trick question. Had she answered "yes", she would have been burned as a heretic because no one can know for sure that they are in the state of grace. Had she answered "no", she would be been burned as a witch because all she did would have

possibly been a result of the inspiration of the devil. She answered, "If I am not, may God put me there; and if I am, may God keep me there" (Cf. CCC n. 2005).

## Lesson 11: Justification - God Works In Us

Read: *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 112.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1987-1995.

There is another division of grace, which was not treated in that section because it is not a division between kinds of grace as such, but only effects of grace. This is the division between operating and cooperating grace. These are not two kinds of grace, but two effects of the same sanctifying grace. How do they differ? Operating grace has two elements; cooperating grace has three. In operating grace, God moves and the soul is moved (freely). In cooperating grace, God moves, the soul is moved and in turn moves all of the other powers of man to the moral acts of ordinary life. Operating grace is also called justification. Cooperating grace is also called merit.

St. Thomas begins to examine this question by making a distinction between the virtue of justice and justification, which is what Aristotle calls metaphorical justice. The virtue of justice is in the will and has to do with a disposition to give rights to others. Justification refers to a rightness of order within the person himself. It is not a disposition but an ordering of the intellect, the will and the emotions within themselves because they are ordered towards the true ultimate end of man. In this inner ordering or righteousness, the emotions are subject to the intellect and will and the intellect and will are subject to God. Adam was created in this state before the sin. For everyone after the sin, justification involves a change not just from being without justice but from being in a state contrary to righteousness. Man after sin suffers from concupiscence which means that he has lost inner ordering and now all his powers go their own way. He experiences darkness in the intellect, rebelliousness in the will and does not really enjoy being virtuous in the emotions.

Justification now is a movement from the state of sinfulness involving forgiveness of sins to a state of being in grace. Justification thus includes two conditions now in the time after the Original Sin: the forgiveness of sins and the divine indwelling of the Trinity without which there could be no forgiveness of sins. This is what conversion means.

The first work of the grace of the Holy Spirit is *conversion*, effecting justification in accordance with Jesus' proclamation at the beginning of the Gospel: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Moved by grace, man turns toward God and away from

sin, thus accepting forgiveness and righteousness from on high. "Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inner man" (CCC n. 1989).

Justification cannot just be an overlooking of sin on the part of the offended party, as Luther tended to suggest. It must truly involve the presence of habitual or sanctifying grace in the soul. Sin is an offense against God and sin can only truly be forgiven when the mind of the offended party has been reconciled with the offender or when we are at peace with God. God can only be at peace with us because of our natural capacity for Him when his love creates a new form in us which is union with his own divine nature. This peace with God is sanctifying grace. Forgiveness of sins must be the presence of the divine form of God's own life in us. "[God] gave himself to us through his Spirit. By the participation of the Spirit, we become communicants in the divine nature . . . For this reason, those in whom the Spirit dwells are divinized" (CCC n. 1988).

In an adult, there must be a movement of free choice to experience justification and the presence of grace. John 6:45 says, "Everyone who hears the Father and has learned from Him comes to Me." Learning entails an act of free choice because in order to learn one must consent to what the teacher is explaining. The movement of free choice would not be necessary for someone who did not have the possibility of freely choosing like infants and the insane. They can be justified by baptism. Their catechesis and consent occur after they have reached the age of reason and is to a justification already experienced.

Justification is a movement of free choice, which is twofold: the renunciation of sin and the movement of faith to God. There are four aspects of this movement of free choice: the infusion of grace from God the mover, the movement of free choice to God from the one moved, the movement of free choice rejecting sin which is also moved by God, and the forgiveness of sins itself which is the termination of the movement of justification. This can be seen in the questions asked at baptism:

Do you reject Satan?

And all his works?

And all his empty promises?

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Since God is an infinite agent who brings about justification, He does not depend on a long preparation. In all natural changes there is a gradual change from one condition to another. This can be the case with justification. The Apostles had three years of instruction by Christ; St. Augustine had about thirty. But God does not have to bring about such a change successively. He can bring it about in an instant as is witnessed in the most famous conversion in the history of the Church, the conversion of St. Paul. This is a moral change and God is not limited by the lack of malleability of the matter, in this case the free choice of the soul. He can dispose it to choose for him in an instant.

From the point of view of the manner of working, the greatest work of God is creation because God brings something into existence from nothing. But creation is completed in the categories of time. Justification consists in God raising a created soul to the categories and experience of eternity. Justification finishes in the nature of God Himself. For this reason, one justified soul from the point of view of the work itself is greater than the whole created universe put together. "The good of grace in one is greater than the good of the nature of the whole universe" (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 113, 9, ad 2).

Justification is miraculous if one looks at it from the point of view of human power to bring it about. The Pelagians taught that man could merit justification by his own power. All grace did was allow man to do what he could have done by his own power but just in an easier way. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no active power in man by which he can attain grace. Every work, which can be done by God alone, is miraculous in this sense.

Sometimes the manner in which justification is carried out is beyond the customary order and in that sense is miraculous. An analogy would be when a sick man recovers his health instantaneously completely beyond the skill of art or nature. St. Paul's justification was like this, but not the other Apostles.

But for something to be completely miraculous there can be no passive potential in the nature of the thing for the particular action. For example, there is no power in asses to prophesy or in the wind and the sea to be calmed by the word of a man or a body to rise from the dead by the work of a man. Yet, Balaam's ass prophesied and Jesus raised the dead and calmed the wind and sea by his word. This is not the case with grace. There is a natural capacity in man for God and therefore for grace because of the presence of the intellect. "The soul is naturally capable of grace" (ST, I-II, 113, 10, corp.). "You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you" St. Augustine.

The one thing, which must be crystal clear, is that no one merits justification by works. Man can prepare himself to receive the justification of grace by allowing God to move his free will, but this is not a human motion in origin. It is only a human motion in effect. The primary cause is God.



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## Lesson 12: Merit - God Works with Us

Read: *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 114

*Catechism of the Catholic Church* nn. 2006-2011.

Perhaps no idea in the whole tract on grace has caused more difficulty than that of merit. For many, the term suggests that man can claim something in justice before God. A recent document of agreement between Catholic and Lutheran theologians states that if the term "merit" were only changed to "reward" or "wages" that this would go a long way to resolving the difficulty. After all, Scripture is clear that one receives one's reward by doing things to the least of the brethren. Christ separates the just from the wicked in the Last Judgement on this basis (Matthew 25:31-46).

The term merit has been used by Catholic theology to express the second great effect of grace, which is cooperating grace. All this term seeks to express is that when God gives a participation in his supernatural life, He gives it so that it will bear fruit. The fruits are the good works of infused virtues given by God in baptism. To experience these good fruits man must cooperate from his free will in the gifts given by God, a cooperation which God initiates with sanctifying grace and sustains with actual grace. This allows man to actively participate in his own salvation.

To understand merit, then, one must understand exactly which is meant by the term in theology because it is an analogous term. Merit is a kind of reward and normally it means something given in strict equivalence to someone for something he has done according to the virtue of justice. A contractor builds a house and merits a certain payment based on the contract and the work performed. If the one who contracted the work does not pay, then he is guilty of injustice. This is called condign merit, which is merit in strict equality. This is the normal experience of human reward in human affairs.

There can be no such merit in divine affairs. For one thing there is only the strictest inequality between God and the human person. God is infinitely distant from all his creatures. No one merits the first grace from God. No one can merit justification. Yet, in light of justification, God who acts according to his wisdom in all his creation never acts against the nature that he himself has created. In the case of man, this means that any effect of God's in which man must morally participate demands his action according to his free will if that is possible. God inspires the good work in us by both his gift of sanctifying grace and by actual grace. Man so inspired acts according to the lights God has given him. This means that in every Christian work, whether it be a cup of water to a child, writing a symphony, or suffering an insult with a hidden act of patience, if done from charity or from the motive of the love of God, both God and the Christian work. Each works according to his own mode of action. By God's will, God has determined that the salvation of the human being will be given not only according to God's part in

the action, but will also *proportionately* correspond to man's part. Each person received the reward of heaven according to a proportionate equality the proportion in which he acts from his part in his free will under the inspiration of grace. This is called *congruent merit*. By God's wisdom and will, man is rewarded proportionately according to his own participation in the work.

So, the foundation and initiation of all human merit is justification and the first grace given by God alone. No one merits grace or justification; but they merit the reward for a life lived in freedom as a result of being changed continuously by divine love: heaven.

Man in the state of integral nature could not merit heaven without grace because this is a supernatural effect. No human nature has any principle or power in it sufficient to merit heaven. In fallen nature there is a second reason for the necessity of grace in merit. There is an impediment to grace in fallen nature -- sin. Grace is necessary to merit for a second reason for man in fallen nature, because sin must be forgiven in order for man to merit heaven.

In every meritorious work, there are two factors which must be considered. The first is the act of the free will of man. From this point of view there is no condign merit possible before God, but only congruent merit. But the Holy Spirit is also present working in each of these acts. From the Holy Spirit's action, God rewards the work condignly. He rewards his own gifts. "I will make in him a fountain of living water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). So there are two participants in every meritorious act: God and the Christian. God rewards his own part condignly and he rewards the proportionate participation of the individual Christian congruently.

One's enjoyment of God in heaven is determined by congruent merit which is different for each person. Since merit is a loving cooperation between God and the soul, each person's place in the hierarchy of heaven is determined by that cooperation which is an expression of charity. One knows God more in heaven depending on how much one has loved him on earth. This love begins in practical works of charity according to the duties of one's ordinary state.

God gives these gifts freely. This is the meaning of parable of the 11th hour when all work differently but receive the same reward. All merit in this sense is repugnant to grace. "If from works, then not from grace" (Romans 11:6). Also, as to the nature of the work itself, no one can merit who does not already have grace. This is because God completely exceeds the proportion of our nature and also because in fallen nature, the impediment of sin must be removed.

Christ, a divine person with a human nature, merits the first grace for us by condign merit because He is the Word made flesh. But for all human persons, merit involves two things: the movement of God and human cooperation by free will. By congruent merit, one can merit the first grace of conversion for another. This is because God loves his special friends. Friendship is a union of love. Because of the union of love, which God has with his friends, He wants to love those men as they love them. God fulfills the will of man as to the salvation of another if we pray and work for them,

provided they are not completely disposed against it by lack of preparation. There are several classic examples of this in history: the conversion of St. Paul, which is attributed to the prayer of Stephen, the conversion of St. Augustine, which he always attributed to the prayers and tears of mother, and the conversion of the murderer of Maria Goretti which, he attributed to the prayers of forgiveness of Maria Goretti as she lay dying.

As to perseverance in grace, one must also make a distinction. Since the reward of heaven is a result of the prior grace given to man, one can merit the continual perseverance in grace when one is in heaven by congruent merit. One cannot merit the grace of final perseverance here on earth, though. This is why one must continue to pray for final perseverance every day and watch unceasingly for the final coming of Christ, first in one's own death and then in glory at the end of time.

"You are glorified in the assembly of your Holy Ones, for in crowning their merits you are crowning your own gifts" (Preface I for Holy Men and Women, quoted in CCC n. 2006).

#### **Assignment Four**

Write a three page paper applying the Catholic doctrine of justification and merit to the clear teaching of the Church expressed especially in Vatican II that there are not two different holinesses in the Church, but that everyone is called to the same holiness.