

## Grace

So what is grace, and how do we get more of it? We are very lucky in the Catholic Church because our priests dispense sanctifying grace each and every day to the faithful in the sacraments, especially Holy Communion and Confession. In this very busy and lustful world that we live in today, there is a need for more and more grace in our lives, if we want to overcome the evil one and get to heaven. Grace is an absolute necessity in our day-to-day activities. But how many people realize that? How many people live out their existence and never even once ask God to send more grace?

Grace is a free gift from God to man. There is nothing man can do to merit grace, because it is a gift, after all. Faith is also a free gift AND a response to grace - From the Catechism:

#162: Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man.

#166: "Faith is a personal act - the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself."

In the Bible, St. Paul is struggling with personal sin, in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10:

"And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

From the above statement of Paul, we see that God gives each one of us sufficient grace to overcome sin, even when it seems like we are struggling with overcoming sin. And when we are the weakest, that is when we are the strongest, because that's when God's power is made perfect in us. How many people, when things get so bad in their lives, fall down on their knees in tears and ask God to fix things? A lot, and that is exactly what God means when he says "my power is made perfect in weakness." The acknowledgment of God as our loving Father over our own strength and power is the beginning of our relationship with God, and the beginning of the end of our pride. The prideful and strong who are always in charge of their affairs never do this, so God can't work in them as powerfully as someone who is humble and acknowledges God in their distress.

### Grace in the Holy Bible

Wisdom 3:9: Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his elect, and he watches over his holy ones.

Sirach 37:21: for grace was not given him by the Lord, since he is lacking in all wisdom.

(\*\*NOTE - 1 Corinthians 3:19 says the following: " For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," . If you are wise in the ways of the world, but not in the ways of God, then you need to start changing your priorities. Otherwise, the grace you would otherwise receive may not be given to you)

John 1:17: For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Acts 15:11: But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

Romans 3:24: they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,

Romans 5:20-21: Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(\*\*NOTE - If you are leading a very sinful life, from the above verse, know without a doubt that God your loving Father is sending you even more grace to overcome your sinful lifestyle. All you have to do is to accept it through humility and prayer).

Romans 6:14: For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

(\*\*NOTE - Very true for all of us, but especially true for the Blessed Virgin Mary, who IS full of grace).

1 Corinthians 15:10: But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me.

Ephesians 2:8: For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God

(\*\*NOTE - Grace increases our faith, which in turn spurs us on to bear good fruit, our good works done out of love for Jesus Christ - Faith without works is dead - James 2:26).

Ephesians 4:7: But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

### From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

#1131 The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.

(\*\*NOTE - This is why one cannot receive Jesus in Holy Communion if in the state of mortal sin. The power of the

sacraments, while infinite, are proportional in their efficacy to the holiness of the person receiving them.

## II. GRACE

**#1996** Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life.

**#1997** Grace is a participation in the life of God. It introduces us into the intimacy of 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 who forms the Church.

**#1998** This vocation to eternal life is supernatural. It depends entirely on God's gratuitous initiative, for he alone can reveal and give himself. It surpasses the power of human intellect and will, as that of every other creature.

**#1999** The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. It is the sanctifying or deifying grace received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification:

Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself.

**#2000** Sanctifying grace is an 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.

**#2001** The preparation of man for the reception of grace is already a work of grace. This latter is needed to arouse and sustain our collaboration in justification through faith, and in sanctification through charity. God brings to completion in us what he has begun, "since he who completes his work by cooperating with our will began by working so that we might will it:"

Indeed we also work, but we are only collaborating with God who works, for his mercy has gone before us. It has gone before us so that we may be healed, and follows us so that once healed, we may be given life; it goes before us so that we may be called, and follows us so that we may be glorified; it goes before us so that we may live devoutly, and follows us so that we may always live with God: for without him we can do nothing.

**#2002** God's free initiative demands man's free response, for God has created man in his image by conferring on him, along with freedom, the power to know him and love him. The soul only enters freely into the communion of love. God

immediately touches and directly moves the heart of man. He has placed in man a longing for truth and goodness that only he can satisfy. The promises of "eternal life" respond, beyond all hope, to this desire:

If at the end of your very good works . . . , you rested on the seventh day, it was to foretell by the voice of your book that at the end of our works, which are indeed "very good" since you have given them to us, we shall also rest in you on the Sabbath of eternal life.

**#2003** Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church. There are sacramental graces, gifts proper to the different sacraments. There are furthermore special graces, also called charisms after the Greek term used by St. Paul and meaning "favor," "gratuitous gift," "benefit." Whatever their character - sometimes it is extraordinary, such as the gift of miracles or of tongues - charisms are oriented toward sanctifying grace and are intended for the common good of the Church. They are at the service of charity which builds up the Church.

**#2004** Among the special graces ought to be mentioned the graces of state that accompany the exercise of the responsibilities of the Christian life and of the ministries within the Church:

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

**#2005** Since it belongs to the supernatural order, grace escapes our experience and cannot be known except by faith. We cannot therefore rely on our feelings or our works to conclude that we are justified and saved. However, according to the Lord's words "Thus you will know them by their fruits" - reflection on God's blessings in our life and in the lives of the saints offers us a guarantee that grace is at work in us and spurs us on to an ever greater faith and an attitude of trustful poverty.

A pleasing illustration of this attitude is found in the reply of St. Joan of Arc to a question posed as a trap by her ecclesiastical judges: "Asked if she knew that she was in God's grace, she replied: 'If I am not, may it please God to put me in it; if I am, may it please God to keep me there.'"

<http://www.catholicbible101.com/whatisgrace.htm>