

SIN, GRACE, AND CONVERSION

I. Prayer

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, You are everywhere present and fill all things. Treasury of Blessings, Giver of Life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O Gracious Lord. Amen.

II. Importance of this topic – Because the reality of grace and sin have a direct bearing on how we will live for the rest of eternity.

III. Sin

A. Definitions and basic points

1. First, God did not intend, nor did He desire sin
2. “God desires that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.” -1 Timothy 2:4
3. God gives sufficient grace to every person for him/her to be saved, but He won’t force anybody to be saved. We must cooperate with His grace.
4. Sin was and is chosen by the misuse of man’s own free will.
5. But sin does not have the last word.
6. Sin is first, foremost, and always an offense against God.
7. A traditional definition of sin – Sin is any purposeful thought, word, deed, or omission that is contrary to God’s law.
8. Sin must, by its very nature, be deliberate.
9. We must differentiate sins from mistakes. They are not the same thing.
10. With all sin, we put ourselves and our desires above God and His desires for us. All sins boil down, in some way, to selfishness.

B. Adam and Eve and Original holiness and Justice

1. God makes nothing evil. Man was created good by God.
 - a. In harmony with God
 - b. In harmony with himself
 - c. In harmony with creation.
 - d. He shared in the divine life. What we call sanctifying grace.

2. In an earthly paradise. As long as Adam & Eve remained in divine intimacy with God, they would not suffer or die.
3. Adam and Eve had complete mastery of self. They were free from concupiscence. Concupiscence is an attraction toward evil or sin.
4. Work not yet a burden, but a collaborative work between God with man and woman in perfecting visible creation.

C. The Fall

1. Adam and Eve, tempted by the devil, let trust in God die in their hearts, abused their freedom and disobeyed God.
2. Original innocence, justice, and holiness were lost for all human beings for all time.
3. Adam and Eve transmit fallen human nature to their descendants.
4. All future sin consists of disobedience toward God and a lack of trust in His goodness.
5. As a result of the Fall, human nature is weakened, we are subject to ignorance, inclined to sin, and we will suffer and die.

D. Genesis 3:15 and God's plan of redemption

1. The punishments
2. The God's plan of redemption
3. A series of covenants
4. God's full revelation of Himself in the Person of Jesus, the sending of the Holy Spirit and establishment of the Church.

E. The gravity of sin

1. Mortal Sin
 - a. Destroys charity (supernatural love) in the soul
 - b. Cuts us off from the life of sanctifying grace
 - c. If un-repent of, mortal sins cause eternal death of hell
 - d. Mortal sin necessitates a new initiative of God's mercy.
 - e. Three conditions for mortal sin
 - grave matter
 - full knowledge that it is grave sin
 - deliberate consent
 - f. What can diminish culpability?
 - unintentional ignorance
 - promptings of the passions
 - external pressures
 - pathological disorders
 - g. Sins of malice are the most grave

2. Venial Sin
 - a. Sins that weaken, but do not destroy charity
 - b. Can dispose a person, little by little, to commit mortal sin
 - c. Do not deprive us of sanctifying grace
3. Capital Sins – These are, in a sense, general categories of sin. There are many particular sins that can fall under each of these. They all include disordered attachments.
 - a. Pride - A disordered love of self
 - b. Avarice – A disordered love of money
 - c. Envy – Sadness at another person’s good. The only capital sin that is incapable of bringing some sort of pleasure.
 - d. Wrath – Desire for revenge or hatred of another person. Worst form is desiring someone’s damnation.
 - e. Lust – Disordered love of sex. Within the proper context of a valid marriage between man and woman, and open to life and love, sex is good and even holy.
 - f. Gluttony – A disordered love of food and drink.
 - g. Sloth – A disordered love of ease.

IV. Justification and Grace

A. Justification

1. The grace of the Holy Spirit which confers upon us the righteousness of God.
2. Ordinarily first received in sacramental baptism
3. Justification has two aspects:
 - a. turning toward God and away from sin
 - b. accepting God’s forgiveness and righteousness from on high
4. Justification includes:
 - a. the remission of sins
 - b. sanctification
 - c. the renewal of the inner man
5. Merited for us by Christ through His passion, death, and resurrection

B. Grace

1. The help God gives us to respond to our vocation of becoming His adopted sons and daughters.
2. Introduces us into the Trinitarian life.

3. God's initiative precedes, prepares, and elicits the free response of man to cooperate with his grace. His grace perfects our freedom – makes us truly free.
4. Kinds of grace
 - a. Sanctifying grace – The gratuitous gift of His life that God makes to us. Infused in us by the Holy Spirit in Baptism to heal the soul and sanctify it. Intended to be permanent. Only way to lose it is through mortal sin.
 - b. Actual grace – God's interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of sanctification.
 - c. sacramental graces
 - d. Graces of state – For example, particular graces given for Marriage, Holy Orders, Consecrated Life

V. Keys for Conversion and Holiness

- A. Attendance at Holy Mass at least every Sunday & Holy Day of Obligation and frequent reception of the Most Holy Eucharist (must be in a state of sanctifying grace when receiving the Eucharist).
- B. Following the commandments
- C. Frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance
- D. Obedience to the Church (Not being a “cafeteria Catholic.”)
- E. Daily prayer
- F. Formation in the truth
- G. The practice of the virtues, the greatest of which is charity.
- H. Penance and almsgiving
- I. Commitment to the poor and vulnerable
- J. True devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, the holy angels, and the saints
- K. The value of sacramentals

