

Apologetic on Salvation

Notes by Father Brian Doerr

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

Protestant View

“Happily, the Bible teaches that any person who *simply and truly* believes in Jesus Christ as *his or her personal Savior* from sin is at that moment *irrevocably and eternally justified*. Justification is the final verdict of God brought into the present. He not only forgives and pardons the sins of the believers, but also declares them perfectly righteous *by imputing (crediting)* the obedience and righteousness of Christ Himself to them. It is on this basis – that of Christ’s perfectly righteous life and atoning death for sin – that God “*pronounces* believers to have fulfilled all the requirements of the law which pertain to them.”

-John Ankerberg, Fast Facts on Roman Catholicism, p.36

Romans 4:5-6

“But when one does not work, yet believes in the one who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness. So also David declares the blessedness of the person to whom **God credits righteousness apart from works...**”

Romans 5:1

“Therefore, since we **have been justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”

Romans 3:20

“...**no human being will be justified** in his sight by observing the law; for through the law comes consciousness of sin.”

Romans 3:21

“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested **apart from the law**, though testified to by the law and the prophets...”

Romans 3:22, 24

“...the righteousness of God **through faith in Jesus Christ** for all who believe. They are justified *freely* by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus...”

Romans 3:25

“God set [Jesus] forth as an expiation, **through faith**, by his blood, to prove his righteousness because of the forgiveness of sins previously committed, through the forbearance of God--to prove his righteousness in the present time, that he might be righteous and justify the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Romans 3:28

“For we consider that a person is **justified by faith apart from works of the law.**”

Romans 11:6

“But if by grace, it is **no longer because of works**; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.”

Titus 3:5

“But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit”

Works of the Law: “Paul uses this expression eight times in his writings, twice in Romans (3:20, 28) and six times in Galatians (Galatians 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10). Christian scholarship, both ancient and modern, has understood [Works of the Law] in different ways. 1) Some, like St. Augustine, take it to mean observance of the *entire Law of Moses*, whole and undivided. On this view, Paul contends that no act of obedience to the moral, ceremonial, or juridical commandments of the Torah can bring about the justification of the sinner. 2) Others, like St. Jerome, understand the expression to mean the *ceremonial laws of Moses*, such as circumcision, dietary laws, feast days, and Sabbath observance. On this view, Paul charges that the ritual works of the Torah, which defined the Jewish way of life during the Mosaic age, have become obsolete in the New Covenant and thus have no bearing on justification. Both views are correct in their proper context: initial justification in Baptism takes place apart from any observance of the Law whatever (Titus 3:4-7), whereas final justification at the Last Judgment takes place apart from the ceremonial works of the Law, but not apart from

observing the moral commandments of the Law (Romans 2:13; Matthew 19:16-19; I Corinthians 7:19; James 2:8-13).” Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, *The Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2003, Page 21.

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God -- not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

NECESSITY OF “WORKS”

Merit

2010 *Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, no one can merit the initial grace, no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion.* Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life.

Catechism of the Catholic Church - Grace and Justification

I. Justification

1987 ... The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to **communicate** to us "the righteousness of God through **faith** in Jesus Christ" and through **Baptism**.

1989 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 interior man**.”

1992 **Justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ who offered himself on the cross as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God**, and whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men. **Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith**. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who **makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy**...

II. Grace

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:"

III. Merit

2008 The merit of man before God in the Christian life arises from the fact that **God has freely chosen to associate man with the work of his grace**. The fatherly action of God is first on his own initiative, and then follows man's free acting through his collaboration, so that the merit of good works is to be attributed in the first place to the grace of God, then to the faithful. Man's merit, moreover, itself is due to God, for his good actions proceed in Christ, from the predispositions and assistance given by the Holy Spirit.

Luke 13:6-9 – Parable of the Fig Tree

“And he told them this parable: "There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. (So) cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?' He said to him in reply, 'Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; **it may bear fruit in the future**. If not you can cut it down.'”

Matthew 25:20ff – Parable of the Talents

“Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.' His master said to him in reply, '***You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.***'”

Matthew 25:31ff Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ...Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ***For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.***' ...He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

I Corinthians 13:1ff

“If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if ***I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing.*** If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.”

Ezekiel 33:13-20

“Though I say to the virtuous man that he shall surely live, if he then presumes on his virtue and does wrong, none of his virtuous deeds shall be remembered; because of the wrong he has done, he shall die. And though I say to the wicked man that he shall surely die, if he turns away from his sin and does what is right and just, giving back pledges, restoring stolen goods, living by the statutes that bring life, and doing no wrong, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of the sins he committed shall be held against him; he has done what is right and just, he shall surely live. Yet your countrymen say, 'The way of the LORD is not fair!'; but it is their way that is not fair. When a virtuous man turns away from what is right and does wrong, he shall die for it. But when a wicked man turns away from wickedness and ***does*** what is right and just, because of this he shall live. And still you say, 'The way of the LORD is not fair!'"? ***I will judge every one of you according to his ways, O house of Israel.***”

2 Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according ***to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.***”

1 Peter 1:17

“Now if you invoke as Father him who judges impartially ***according to each one's works***, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb.”

Matthew 7:20-21

“So by their ***fruits*** you will know them. ‘Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, ***but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.***’”

Colossians 1:24

“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in ***my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ*** on behalf of his body, which is the church...”

I Corinthians 9:27

“No, ***I drive my body and train it***, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”

Matthew 19:17

“And behold, one came up to him saying, ‘*What good deed must I do to have eternal life?*’ He answered him, ‘Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, *keep the commandments.*’”

James 2:14-26

“*What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?* Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? *So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.* Indeed someone might say, “You have faith and I have works.” *Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works.* You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble. *Do you want proof, you ignoramus, that faith without works is useless?* Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? *You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by the works.* Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called “the friend of God.” *See how a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.* And in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by a different route? For just as a body without a spirit is dead, *so also faith without works is dead.*”

John 14:15

“*If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*”

Romans Commentary:

3:24-25 “...*they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus [redemption], whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood [atonement], to be received by faith.*”

- “If anyone says that, without grace through Jesus Christ, man can be justified before God by his own works, whether they were done by his natural powers or by the light of the teaching of the Law: let him be anathema” (De iustificacione, can 1).
- “None of those things which precede justification – whether faith or works – merit the grace itself of justification. For if it be a grace, it is not now by works, otherwise, as the same Apostle says, grace is no more grace” (Ibid, chapter 8).

3:28 “*For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law.*”

- Simple interpretation: “Works of the Law” refer to works of the Old Covenant Law, not *works of charity*.
- “Boasting is a sign of both Gentile (1:22, 30) and Jewish (2:17) sin. So Paul reminds his readers that the ‘law’ or principle of faith correlates with the ‘law’ of divine impartiality in judgment. According to 3:28, therefore, those who have [the law] or do ‘works prescribed by the law’ – that is, Jews – are justified no differently than are Gentiles.
- Martin Luther read 3:28 to mean ‘faith alone.’ “*For we hold that a person is justified by faith* [‘alone’ – Luther] *apart from works prescribed by the law.*” Paul would not disagree with Luther’s maxim, as long as he got to define the key terms. Certainly Paul does not think anyone ever could (or ever did) ‘earn’ right standing with God. But his main point is not so much the exclusion of ‘works righteousness’ as the exclusion of religious or ethnic pride – Jewish or Gentile. The problem with introducing ‘alone’ is not that Paul believes something other than faith is needed, but rather that common definitions of faith are often so myopic when compared to Paul’s. **For Paul, faith is clearly a comprehensive response: trust, absolute surrender, obedience, and commitment to the covenant. The gospel offers grace and demands obedient faith,** and thereby opens covenant membership to all on the same terms; that is the point of these verses” (Gorman 360).

Martin Luther on Faith Alone

“You tell me what a great fuss the Papists are making because the word ‘alone’ is not in the text of Paul. If your Papist makes such an unnecessary row about the word ‘alone’ say right out to him: ‘Dr. Martin Luther will have it so,’ and say: ‘Papists and asses are one and the same thing.’ I will have it so, and I order it to be so, and my will is reason enough. **I know very well that the word ‘alone’ is not in the Latin or the Greek text,** and it was not necessary for the Papists to teach me that. It is true those letters are not in it, which letters the jackasses look at, as a cow stares at a new gate... **It shall remain in my New Testament,** and if all the Popish donkeys were to get mad and beside themselves, they will not get it out.” Stoddard, John. Rebuilding a Lost Faith, 136-137.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Philippians 2:12

“So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present but all the more now when I am absent, *work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*”

Galatians 5:4

“You are separated from Christ, you who are trying to be justified by law; *you have fallen from grace.*”

2 Timothy 2:11-13

“This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him; if we *persevere* we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him he will deny us. If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.”

I Corinthians 10:11-12

“These things happened to them as an example, and they have been written down as a warning to us, upon whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore, whoever *thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall.*”

Hebrews 6:4-6

“For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift and shared in the holy Spirit and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, *and then have fallen away*, to bring them to repentance again, since they are recrucifying the Son of God for themselves and holding him up to contempt.

Hebrews 10:26-27

“*If we sin deliberately after receiving knowledge of the truth*, there no longer remains sacrifice for sins but a fearful prospect of judgment and a flaming fire that is going to consume the adversaries.”

BAPTISM

John 3:5

“Jesus answered, ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being *born of water and Spirit.*”

I Peter 3:21

“This prefigured *baptism*, which *saves you* now. It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

Mark 16:16

“Whoever *believes and is baptized* will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

I Corinthians 15:21-22

“For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life...”

Colossians 2:11-12

“In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, with the circumcision of Christ. You were buried with him in *baptism*, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”

INFANT BAPTISM

1250 *The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism.*

1231 “Where infant Baptism has become the form in which this sacrament is usually celebrated, it has become a single act encapsulating the preparatory stages of Christian initiation in a very abridged way. By its very nature infant Baptism requires a *post-baptismal catechumenate*. Not only is there a need for instruction after Baptism, but also for the necessary flowering of baptismal grace in personal growth. The *catechism* has its proper place here.”

1257 *God as bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.*

Mark 10:14

“When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.’”

Joshua 24:15

“If it does not please you to serve the LORD, decide today whom you will serve, the gods your fathers served beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose country you are dwelling. As for me *and my household*, we will serve the LORD.”

Acts 16:31

“When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew (his) sword and was about to kill himself, thinking that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted out in a loud voice, ‘Do no harm to yourself; we are all here.’ He asked for a light and rushed in and, trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved.’ So they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house. He took them in at that hour of the night and bathed their wounds; then he and *all his family* were baptized at once.”

1 Corinthians 1:16

“I baptized the *household of Stephanas* also; beyond that I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.”

Mark 2:3-5

‘They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw *their* faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Child, your sins are forgiven.’”

Matthew 8:5-13

“When he entered Capernaum, a centurion approached him and appealed to him, saying, ‘Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully.’ He said to him, ‘I will come and cure him.’ The centurion said in reply, ‘Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.’ ... When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said... And Jesus said to the centurion, ‘You may go; *as you have believed*, let it be done for you.’ And at that very hour (his) servant was healed.”

Matthew 15:21

“A Canaanite woman... came and called out, ‘Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon.’ ... He said in reply, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ But the woman came and did him homage, saying, ‘Lord, help me.’ He said in reply, ‘It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.’ She said, ‘Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.’ Then Jesus said to her in reply, ‘*O woman, great is your faith!* Let it be done for you as you wish.’ And her daughter was healed from that hour.

CHURCH AUTHORITY

Matthew 16

“He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter said in reply, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus said to him in reply, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. **And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.** I will give *you* the keys to the kingdom of heaven. **Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**’

- “May Protestants argue that Jesus is not building His Church on Peter by pointing out that, in the Greek text, the word used for Peter is *Petros*, a masculine noun, while the word used for rock is *Petra*, a feminine noun. *Petros* means “small stone,” while *petra* means “massive rock.” They claim, therefore, that the “massive rock” (*petra*) upon which Christ will build His Church must not refer to Peter the “small stone” (*Petros*) but rather to Peter’s profession of faith or to Jesus. However, Jesus spoke Aramaic, which leaves no room for the Greek *Petros/petra* distinction. In Aramaic, the word for rock is *kepha*. What Christ said was, “You are Kepha (Rock) and upon this kepha (rock) I will build my Church.” In Aramaic, the identification of Peter as the rock is clear” (Beginning Apologetics One, San Juan Catholic Seminars, p. 14).
- **Isaiah 22:19-22** “I will thrust you from your office and pull you down from your station. On that day I will summon my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah; I will clothe him with your robe, and gird him with your sash, and give over to him your authority. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. I will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; when he opens, no one shall shut, when he shuts, no one shall open.”

Luke 10:1-2, 16

“After this the Lord appointed seventy (-two) others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, ‘The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. **Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.**’”

Matthew 28:19-20

“Then Jesus approached and said to them, ‘All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, ***I am with you always***, until the end of the age.’”

John 14:16

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.”

TRADITION

II Thessalonians 2:15

“Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours.”

II Thessalonians 3:6

“We instruct you, brothers, in the name of (our) Lord Jesus Christ, to shun any brother who conducts himself in a disorderly way and not according to the tradition they received from us.”

1 Corinthians 11:1-2

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold fast to the traditions, just as I handed them on to you.”

PURGATORY

“For there is a manner of life neither so good as not to need such helps after death, nor so bad that they cannot benefit.”
St. Augustine.

I John 5:16-17

“If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. ***There is such a thing as deadly sin***, about which I do not say that you should pray. All wrongdoing is sin, ***but there is sin that is not deadly***.”

2 Samuel 12:13-14

“Then David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’ Nathan answered David: ‘The LORD on his part has ***forgiven your sin***: you shall not die. ***But*** since you have utterly spurned the LORD by this deed, ***the child born to you must surely die***.’ Then Nathan returned to his house. The LORD struck the child that the wife of Uriah had borne to David, and it became desperately ill.”

Hebrews 12:14

“Strive for peace with everyone, and for ***that holiness without which no one will see the Lord***.”

James 3:2

“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you realize that ***we will be judged more strictly***, or we all fall short in many respects. If anyone does not fall short in speech, ***he is a perfect man***, able to bridle his whole body also.”

Revelation 21:27

“The treasure and wealth of the nations will be brought there, ***but nothing unclean will enter it***, nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

Matthew 5:25-26

“Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, ***you will not be released until*** you have paid the last penny.”

Matthew 12:32

“And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, ***either in this age or in the age to come***.”

Matthew 12:36

“I tell you, on the day of judgment people ***will render*** an account for every careless word they speak.”

2 Maccabees 12:44-46

“He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death.”

I Corinthians 3:15

“But if someone's work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; the person will be saved, ***but only as through fire***.”

I Peter 3:18-20, 4:6

“For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit. In it he also went ***to preach to the spirits in prison***, who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. For this is why ***the gospel was preached even to the dead*** that, though condemned in the flesh in human estimation, they might live in the spirit in the estimation of God.”

2 Timothy 1:15

"May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus because he often gave me new heart and was not ashamed of my chains. But when he came to Rome, he promptly searched for me and found me. **May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day.** And you know very well the services he rendered in Ephesus."

Catechism of the Catholic Church – What is an indulgence?"

"An indulgence is a **remission** before God of **the temporal punishment due to sins** whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints."

"An indulgence is **partial or plenary** according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin." The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead.

THE GREAT GIFT OF DIVINIZATION

Genesis 3

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the LORD God had made. The serpent asked the woman, *"Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?"* 2 The woman answered the serpent: *"We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.'"* 4 But the serpent said to the woman: **"You certainly will not die!** 5 No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and **you will be like gods** who know what is good and **what is bad.**" 6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

397 *Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness.*

398 *In that sin man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good. Constituted in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully "divinized" by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to "be like God," but "without God, and not in accordance with God.*

God's Response

Leviticus 17:14

14 "For the life of every creature is the blood of it; therefore I have said to the people of Israel, **You shall not eat the blood of any creature**, for the life of every creature is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off."]

John 6:23

28 So they said to him, "What can we do to accomplish the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in **the one he sent.**" 30 So they said to him, "What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? 31 Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 So Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 **For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.**" 34 So they said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

35 Jesus said to them, "**I am the bread of life;** whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst. 36 But I told you that although you have seen (me), you do not believe. 37 Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I

will not reject anyone who comes to me, 38 because **I came down from heaven** not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me....

41The Jews murmured about him because he said, "**I am the bread that came down from heaven**," 42 and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, '**I have come down from heaven**'?" 43 Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring among yourselves. ...46 Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; **he has seen the Father**. 47Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48 **I am the bread of life**. 49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; 50 **this is the bread that comes down from heaven** so that one may eat it and not die. 51 **I am the living bread that came down from heaven**; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

52 **The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us (his) flesh to eat?"** 53 **Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven.** Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever." 59 These things he said while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

60 Then many of his disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" 61 Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? 62 **What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?** 63 It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail... The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ... 66 As a result of this, many (of) his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.

67 Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and are convinced that **you are the Holy One of God**." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you twelve? Yet is not one of you a devil?" 71 He was referring to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot; it was he who would betray him, one of the Twelve.

2 Peter 1

1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of equal value to ours through the righteousness of our God and savior Jesus Christ: 2 may grace and peace be yours in abundance through knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3 His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and power. 4 Through these, he has bestowed on us **the precious and very great promises**, so that **through them you may be partakers of the divine nature**, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.

Ephesians 2:4-8

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with him, **and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus**, 7 that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

1 John 3

1 See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed **we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is.

Catechism on Divinization

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.

1691 "Christian, recognize your dignity and, **now that you share in God's own nature**, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God." St. Leo the Great, *Sermo 21 in nat. Dom.*, 3: PL 54, 192C.

1988 “[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*.”

Church Fathers on Divinization of the Person

- St. Athanasius “The Son of God became man in order that the sons of men, the sons of Adam, might become sons of God... *He is the Son of God by nature; we by grace*” (Navarre 528).
- St. Augustine “They hear and obey the Lord’s words: A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; not as men love one another for their own selfish ends, nor merely on account of their common humanity, *but because they are all gods and sons of the Most High*.” (*Treatise on John*; LOH, Thursday, Fourth Week of Easter)
- St. Basil the Great “Man is a creature which has received the command to become God.” (Quoted by St. Gregory the Theologian in *In laudem Basilii Magni*, Oration XLIII, 48.)
- St. Maximus the Confessor “In the same way in which the soul and the body are united, God should become accessible to participation by the soul and, through the soul’s intermediary, by the body, in order that the soul might receive an unchanging character, and the body, immortality; and finally that *the whole man should become God, soul and body, by nature; and becoming whole God, soul and body, by grace*” (Ambigua, PG 91:1088c).
- St. Athanasius the Great “It was in the power of none other to create anew for men the likeness of the image, except the Image of the Father. . . .He [the Word], indeed, assumed humanity, that *we might become God*; He [the Son of God] became man that *we might become God*. The true Son of God by nature took all of us upon Him that all might assume God. He [the Word] is God bearing flesh, and we are spirit-bearing men” (*On the Incarnation*, 20, 54; *Ad Adelph.*, 4).
- St. Gregory the Theologian “What is the mystery all about me? I had a share in the image; I did not keep it. And now He partakes of my flesh that He may both save the image and make the flesh immortal. He unites with us in a second way more marvelous than the first; *then He imparted to us a better nature*, but now He shares Himself in a worse one. *This is more godlike an action than the first: this is loftier in the eyes of anyone with understanding*” (*Oration 33:12*).
- Attributed to St. Maximos the Confessor “God created us that we should become ‘partakers of the divine nature (2 Pt 1:4) and of his immortality, and that we should ‘be like Him’ (1 John 3:2) through *deification* by grace. To this end everything is created and exists and things that are as yet not, are brought into existence and born” (Light for Life, Part Three: The Mystery Lived. God With Us Publications, 2001. ISBN 1-887158-12-X).
- Doxastikon at the Praises, Feast of the Annunciation “The eternal mystery is revealed today! The Son of God becomes the Son of Man. By sharing in what is imperfect, *He makes me share in what is perfect*. Of old Adam disobeyed: he wished to become God, but failed. Now God becomes man that He might make Adam god. Let creation rejoice. Let nature sing with joy for the Archangel stands before the Virgin with great respect and greets her with the good news that takes away our sorrow. O God, who took flesh in Your merciful compassion, glory to You!” (Light for Life, Part Three: The Mystery Lived. God With Us Publications, 2001. ISBN 1-887158-12-X).

"Outside the Church there is no salvation"

846 How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers? Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body:

Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. **Hence they could not be saved**

who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.

847 This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church:

Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation.

848 "Although in ways known to himself God can lead those who, through no fault of their own, are ignorant of the Gospel, to that faith without which it is impossible to please him, the Church still has the obligation and also the sacred right to evangelize all men."