

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

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From the Compendium to the Catechism paragraphs: 422 – 428

GRACE AND JUSTIFICATION

What is justification?

Justification is the most excellent work of God's love. It is the merciful and freely-given act of God which takes away our sins and makes us just and holy in our whole being. It is brought about by means of the grace of the Holy Spirit which has been merited for us by the passion of Christ and is given to us in Baptism. Justification is the beginning of the free response of man, that is, faith in Christ and cooperation with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

What is the grace that justifies?

That grace is the gratuitous gift that God gives us to make us participants in His Trinitarian Life and able to act by His Love. It is called *habitual, sanctifying* or *deifying* grace because it sanctifies and divinises us.

What other kinds of grace are there?

Besides habitual grace, there are actual graces (gifts for specific circumstances), sacramental graces (gifts proper to each sacrament), special graces or charisms (gifts that are intended for the common good of the Church) among which are the graces of state that accompany the exercise of ecclesial ministries and the responsibilities of life.



What is the relationship between grace and human freedom?

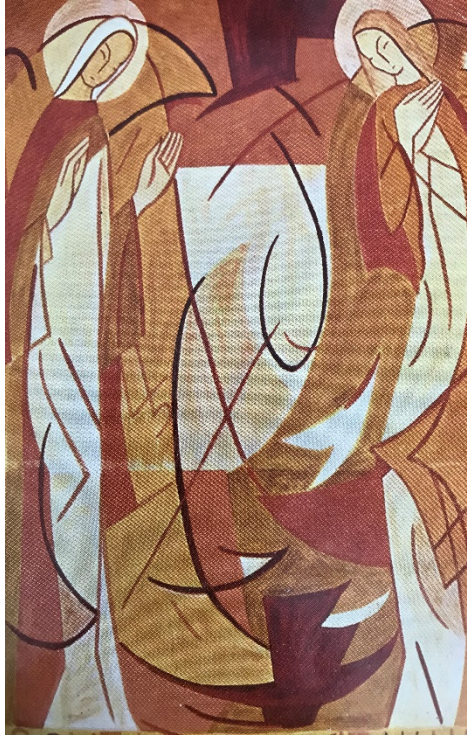
Grace precedes, prepares and elicits our free response. It responds to the deep yearnings of human freedom, calls for its cooperation and leads freedom toward its perfection.

What is The Response to Grace? *

Traditionally, this response to grace has been conceived of in terms of the virtues of faith, love and hope, which are themselves caused by grace, and enable us to act in accordance with God's Will. But its first effect is gratitude.

What is merit?

In general merit refers to the right to recompense for a good deed. With regard to God, we of ourselves are not able to merit anything, having received everything freely from Him. However, God gives us the possibility of acquiring merit through union with the love of Christ, who is the source of our merits before God. The merits for good works, therefore must be attributed in the first place to the grace of God and then to the free will of man.



What are the goods that we can merit?

Moved by the Holy Spirit, we can merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification and to reach eternal life. Even temporal goods suitable for us, can be merited in accordance with the plan of God. No one, however, can merit the initial grace which is at the origin of conversion and justification.

Are all Christians called to holiness?

All the faithful are called to Christian holiness. This is the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity and it is brought about by intimate union with Christ and, in Him, with the most Holy Trinity. The path to holiness for a Christian goes by way of the Cross and will come to its fulfilment in the final resurrection of the just, in which God will be all in all.

It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk

**(from New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality 1993)*