



LEGION OF MARY
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Doctrine on Grace And Its Significance on the Legion Apostolic System

WHAT IS GRACE?

From the Baltimore Catechism - Grace is the supernatural gift of God bestowed on us, through the merits of Christ, for our salvation. Supernatural - that is above nature. It is a Gift, therefore God does not owe us. Health, talents and such things are natural things and belong to the nature or men; but grace is something above our nature and given to our soul. Sanctifying grace is the grace that makes us holy by cleansing, purifying our souls. Sin renders the soul ugly and displeasing to God.

WHAT IS GRACE?

Catechism of the Catholic Church (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.”**

WHAT IS GRACE?

Catechism of the Catholic Church (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.**

WHAT IS GRACE?

Catechism of the Catholic Church (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.

WHAT IS GRACE?

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.

CLASSIFICATION OF GRACES

Habitual/Sanctifying/Justifying Grace - A divine gift infused by God into the soul, as something permanent by its nature. In the strict sense, habitual grace is that **INFUSED** into the very essence of the soul since it confers **HOLINESS** and makes righteousness one who had been a sinner. It is a **constant supernatural quality** of the soul which sanctifies man intrinsically and makes him just and pleasing to God.

CLASSIFICATION OF GRACES

Actual Grace (also called assisting grace or helping grace) - is a *temporary supernatural* intervention by God by which the powers of the soul are stirred up to perform a **salutary act which is directed to the **attaining or preservation** or increase of sanctifying grace.**

CLASSIFICATION OF GRACES

Actual Grace may also be described as a supernatural impulse or motion that activates the **WILL to perform some action or a salutary act.** This is Aquinas' concept of potency and act (it happens through some CAUSE that effects the will to act). **This act (caused by God) is ORDAINED for sanctification and eternal life.**

CLASSIFICATION OF GRACES

Efficacious Grace - type of actual grace to which free consent is given by the will so that the grace produces its divinely intended effect. It is a supernatural divine influence on account of which the human will is determined infallibly but freely, to act with respect to eternal life. **It causes us to act and produce good action.** The 'divinely intended effect' is the salvation of man and is the work of the Holy Spirit.

CLASSIFICATION OF GRACES

Gratuitous Grace - although every grace is gratia data (gratuitous grace), i.e. a free gift of Divine Goodness, the term gratia data is given specifically to every grace which is conferred on particular persons **for the salvation of others**. It is independent of the personal moral life or behavior of its possessor. To this class belong such gifts of grace as charismata (prophecy, gift of miracles, gift of tongues), the priestly power of consecration and absolution, and the hierarchical power of jurisdiction.

CLASSIFICATION OF GRACES

External Grace - is any benevolent deed of God for the salvation of men which is EXTERNAL to man and which affects man in a moral way only. As for example: Revelation, Christ's teachings, sermons, the Liturgy, the Sacraments and examples of the saints.

Internal Grace - it affects the soul and its power intrinsically - for example, sanctifying grace; the infused virtues and actual graces. Note that external or outside grace dispose men for the reception of inner graces.

Sufficient Grace - supernatural gift which confers on man the power to act, if **he so wills**, in a salutary way. The concept of sufficient grace is that God's grace is sufficient for anything we need - salvation and forgiveness of sin.

CLASSIFICATION OF GRACES

Prevenient Grace (Antecedent Grace) - **supernatural intervention** of God in the faculties of the soul which precedes the free act of the will. In this, God works alone "in us and without us." Prevenient grace exists prior to and without reference to anything humans may have done. **It is grace considered prior to or man's free cooperation. Also, called as OPERATING GRACE.**

Consequent Grace (Subsequent Grace) - **supernatural influence** of God in the faculties of the soul which coincides in time with man's free will to act. Here, "God works in us and with us." God and man work together, so that they are a conjoint work of God's grace and of man's activity under the control of his will. This is the grace that supports and accompanies the salutary **act (effect of grace)**. Also, called as COOPERATING GRACE.

THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

(Saint Thomas Aquinas)

Saint Thomas Aquinas (in Summa Theologica), states that without grace man cannot know nothing of the Divine Truth, as **grace is necessary to assent to the supernatural Truths as revealed by God.** Aquinas writes: *“hence, no matter how perfect a corporeal or spiritual nature is supposed to be, it cannot proceed to its act unless it be moved by God; but this motion is according to the plan of His providence, and not by necessity by nature, as the motion of the heavenly body.”*

THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

(Saint Thomas Aquinas)

Man, therefore, needs Divine help, that the intellect may be moved by God to its act. A creature needs God for its existence to act, and for the exercise of his ability to act. Man's intellect needs God in a special way to know the truths that ***lie beyond its natural range.*** This so-called supernatural light is **the LIGHT OF GRACE.**

THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

(Saint Thomas Aquinas)

Aquinas further asserts that in a state of **perfect nature**, man can absolutely love God above all things **without grace**, for this is the very drive and purpose of his nature. However, man is fallen and SIN has hurt man's nature. Thus, he can no longer achieve what ought to be naturally attainable. Even to love God naturally **requires SUPERNATURAL GRACE.**

THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

(Saint Thomas Aquinas)

Man cannot fulfill the Commandments of the Law without the help of grace. Before the Fall, innocent man could **without grace perform the works required by the Commandments**, but could not perform them out of supernatural charity as their perfection demands. Therefore, man, innocent as well as fallen, needs the grace of God to fulfill the law of God.

THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

- For every salutary act, internal supernatural grace of God is absolutely necessary.
- Internal supernatural grace is absolutely necessary for the beginning of faith and of salvation.
- The justified also require actual grace for the performance of salutary acts.
- Without the special help, the justified cannot persevere to the end in justification.

THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

- The justified person is not able for his whole life long to avoid all sins, even venial sins, without the special privilege of the grace of God.
- **Man cannot merit Heaven by his unaided efforts.** Man labors for a supernatural end, and such an end is by the very force of ideas and words outside the range and grasp of natural powers - **the natural cannot compass the supernatural. To win heaven, man must have divine grace.**

HUMAN CAPACITY TO ACT WITHOUT GRACE

- Even in the fallen state, man can, by the natural intellectual power, **know religious and moral truths** (Man can know God by the sole light of reason - dogma - Vatican Council I)
- For the performance of a **morally good action, sanctifying grace is NOT REQUIRED.** (Although the sinner does not possess the grace of justification, he can **still perform morally good actions with the help of actual grace, even supernaturally good works (but not meritorious).** All works of those in mortal sin are not sins (Council of Trent).

HUMAN CAPACITY TO ACT WITHOUT GRACE

- The **Grace of Faith** is NOT necessary for the performance of a morally good action (even infidels or pagans can do morally good works).
- **Actual Grace** is NOT necessary for the performance of a morally good action (fallen man can perform **good works** without the help of divine Grace).

LIMITS OF NATURAL CAPACITY

- In the state of *fallen nature* it is **morally impossible for man without Supernatural Revelation**, to know easily, with absolute certainty and without admixture of error, all religious and moral truths of the natural order.

MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACES

More importantly, if the Legionary is to be the embodiment of Mary, then we must strive to remain in the state of grace, as our Mother is “full of grace,” the Immaculate Conception and the Mediatrix of All Graces. Mary’s title of mediatrix arises from her cooperation in the Incarnation and in the Redemption of mankind. Through her “yes” (Lk 1:38), she became the Theotokos (God-bearer), and, as the “New Eve,” she is “the Mother of all living.”

MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACES

Irenaeus (A.D. 120–200) wrote, “As by a virgin the human race had been bound to death, by a virgin it is saved, the balance being preserved, a virgin’s disobedience by a virgin’s obedience” (Against Heresies, 3, 22, 19). Eve made the Fall possible, but Adam effected it; Mary made our Redemption possible (by consenting to bring the Savior into the world), but Jesus effected it. God permitted the Redemption of mankind to depend on the free-will decision of a human, Mary.”

WHAT IS GRACE?

Going back to Aquinas, he states in the Summa Theologica that man **cannot without grace** even prepare himself to receive grace. To prepare himself for grace, man must be turned to God in a supernatural way. For this supernatural turning to God, supernatural aid is required i.e. grace itself. *"And that they are "turned" to God can only spring from God's having "turned" them. Now to prepare oneself for grace is, as it were, to be turned to God; just as, whoever has his eyes turned away from the light of the sun, prepares himself to receive the sun's light, by turning his eyes towards the sun. Hence it is clear that man cannot prepare himself to receive the light of grace except by the gratuitous help of God moving him inwardly."*

GRACE AND THE LEGION OF MARY

In the Legion HB (p,68), the doctrine of grace was implicitly mentioned and defined as follows: "Hence the holiness of life which the Legion of Mary seeks is also its primary means of action. ***'I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me: and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do NOTHING.'*** (John 15:5)

Without Divine Grace we cannot abide in Christ or be a member of His Mystical Body, and thus, we are impeded by the lack of it into producing any spiritual fruits (such as conversion of sinners) that would bring ourselves and others to Christ.

GRACE AND THE LEGION OF MARY

Having defined the object of the Legion of Mary, as the HOLINESS OR SANCTIFICATION of its members, Frank Duff recognizes that the means to accomplishing this is through the HOLY SPIRIT who provides each member this moving principle called **DIVINE GRACE**.

*"The general and essential means by which the Legion of Mary is to effect its object is personal service acting under the influence of the **Holy Spirit**, having **Divine Grace** as its moving principle and support and the Glory of God, and the salvation of souls as its final end and purpose." (HB p,67 - "Scheme of the Legion")*

APPLICATION TO THE LEGION SYSTEM (‘Governing Principles’)

So the stage is set - to effect the scheme of the Legion system, we **NEED Divine Grace** to bring forth what the Legion calls “**personal service**” for the salvation of our souls and that of others. Though, the Legion system embodies rules, functions and apostolic work activities requiring our natural abilities, we also depend on the supernatural means to achieve our goal. The HB states that we must ‘pray as well as work’ (HB p. 204). Our **human abilities are NOT ENOUGH. Divine assistance is needed (God’s grace)** in the works that we do for the salvation of souls.

Application to the Scheme of the Legion System (“Legion System”)

The Legion - An Intensely Ordered System - the key to the success of the Legion of Mary is its steadfast discipline in obedience to its rules as found in the Handbook and on the loyalty to the next higher council (Curia, Comitium and the Senatus) and to the Concilium Legionis. The Legion system is invariable and discourages ‘modernizers’ to effect any variation to its system. This rule demands in each member the cultivation of the virtue of obedience. Some unjustly criticize the system. This is not the spirit of the Legion, nor that of Mary, most humble. To develop in us the virtues of obedience and humility, we would need GOD’S GRACE.

APPLICATION TO THE SCHEME OF THE LEGION SYSTEM ('PRIMARY OBLIGATION')

The Primary Obligation - Attendance at the Weekly Meeting - the HB states "Foremost in its system, the primary obligation of each member, the Legion sets the duty of attendance at its weekly meeting. HB (p.70). **BUT WHY?**

The HB continues to state: "As the **burning lens** is to the rays of the sun, so its meeting to the members. The focus connects them, begets the **fire**, and kindles everything that comes near it." (HB p.70) **THIS FIRE, THIS BURNING LENS IS THE SPIRIT OF GOD - THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO BESTOWS ON EACH OF US THE GIFT OF GRACE. The meeting can be likened to the Upper Room where the apostles received the fire of the Holy Spirit on PENTECOST!!!**

APPLICATION TO THE SCHEME OF THE LEGION SYSTEM ('WEEKLY MEETING')

The HB states further: "In an atmosphere made **supernatural** by **its wealth of power** by its devotional usages, and by its sweet spirit of fraternity, the praesidium holds a weekly meeting, at which work is assigned to each legionary and a report received from each Legionary work done." (HB p. 71)

*As we arrive at each Praesidium meeting you will first notice that it is like just any other meeting held in the world. There are members, (participants), tables and chairs. However, when the **Sign of the Cross is made followed by the Invocation of the Holy Spirit, the atmosphere transforms from the natural to the supernatural.** This transformation is cause by **GRACE in action** and further provides us with the virtue of courage and perseverance.*

Application to the Scheme of the Legion System ('Heroic Works')

The apostolic works of the Legion of Mary require self-sacrifice that not only entails time and effort but also the courage and strength to face adversities. We are soldiers of the Blessed Mother and are engaged in the battle for souls. And thus, there is the reality of risks and danger in 'our line of duty.' Every member should be willing to accept work assignments that are so-called "heroic works" lest, as Frank Duff said, the Legion might die of prudence.