

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
RCIA Class Transcript
The Holy Spirit and Grace
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Tonight's topic is going to be on the Holy Spirit and Grace. We'll deal with some very important topics, such as Justification, Sanctifying Grace, Actual Grace, Gifts, Virtues, and Fruits of the Holy Spirit, and the other Virtues, like the Theological Virtues and the Moral Virtues. This topic is very important, because we'll talk a little about the difference between what we need to do to be saved, and how is it that people of other denominations can be saved as well. That's an important topic – "Is there Salvation outside the Church?" is one of the topics we'll cover tonight as well.

We want to begin with the teaching of The Catechism on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, as we talked about in the earlier classes, is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit is the Love between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is God. There is one God, three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Go therefore. Make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the Name of the Father," (because there's only one God), "and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

The Lord ascended into Heaven. Jesus ascended into Heaven, and He told the disciples to go into Jerusalem and pray that the Holy Spirit would come down upon them. The Lord's going up into Heaven is called the *Ascension*. On the feast day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles. *Pentecost* means "the 50th day." (From the word "pent" we get the word Pentagon, the five-sided building over in Alexandria.) On the 50th day, the Holy Spirit came down upon Mary and the Apostles. Pentecost was a Jewish feast day already – it was 50 days after the Passover. That's the day that God decided to send the Holy Spirit upon the Church. Pentecost is called "the Birthday of the Catholic Church." It occurred 50 days after the Resurrection. The Lord rose from the dead on Easter. He then spent 40 days on Earth talking to the disciples, and then He ascended. The Ascension took place after 40 days, and then the Lord said, "Go into Jerusalem and to pray." They prayed for nine days. On the 10th day, that was the day of Pentecost. So, 50 days after the Resurrection was Pentecost.

This nine days of prayer, we refer to as "The First Novena." A *novena* means "nine days of prayer." You might have seen in some of the prayer books that Catholics often make novenas – a novena to the Sacred Heart, or a novena to the Blessed Mother. It means nine days of prayer, where we pray every day for that period, asking God for something. Is it good luck, or superstition, to pray? No. But it's based upon a Biblical pattern, the fact that the Apostles prayed for nine days, is a good idea for us to also pray for that time period as well. Then, on the 50th day after the Resurrection, or nine days after the Ascension, this day

was Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles and Our Blessed Mother.

The way the Holy Spirit appeared on this occasion was as tongues of fire, that the fire came down and split and fell upon Our Lady and the Apostles. That's one of the visible manifestations of the Holy Spirit in Scripture, is the tongues of fire. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit manifested Himself in the form of the rushing, mighty wind, in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit also manifested Himself as a dove, what looked like a dove, a spirit of peace. After Jesus came up out of the waters at the Jordan River, it says, "The Spirit of God descended on Jesus," which looked in a sense, like the form of a dove. The image of a dove represents gentleness, and peacefulness of the Holy Spirit. The mighty wind represents the strength of the Holy Spirit, and the fire represents the zeal, or fervor, of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was given to the Church by Christ. Christ said, "I must depart. Once I depart, I will send you the Spirit of Truth." In John, Chapter 16, Verse 12, "Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will teach you all Truth." The Lord predicted that He had to go, in order to send the Spirit. Why was that? Why didn't Jesus just stay on Earth, and sit on the throne for all eternity? Jesus could have done that. He could have decided to set up shop in Jerusalem, build a big palace and sit there, and we could all travel, maybe once in our lifetime, to get in line to see Him. We could stand in line, and then we'd have our couple minutes with Jesus. Jesus said, "No, I'm not going to remain on Earth like that. I'm going to ascend to sit at the right hand of the Father. What I'm going to do is send My Holy Spirit to dwell within you."

If Jesus only stayed in one physical location on Earth, Jesus would always be outside. But, what He did was, He decided to come inside of us through grace. And that's what He does – He comes into us by Sanctifying Grace, where He dwells within our souls. Jesus of course, is also present in every tabernacle. We'll talk about that more when we talk about the Blessed Sacrament, about Holy Communion – how Jesus is right back here in this little chapel, in that gold box called the tabernacle. Yes, Jesus is truly present there: Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in Holy Communion, in the Most Blessed Sacrament. But what He does also is that He sends His Holy Spirit to dwell within us. We now have the Holy Spirit dwelling within our souls.

This brings us to the topic of *Sanctifying Grace*. Sanctifying Grace is the grace that makes us holy. What is grace? It comes from the Latin word "gratia," which means "the gift." Gratia is "the gift of God." It's not something that we earn. It's not something that we deserve. It's a free gift from God. God loves us so much, He gives us His grace. What is grace? It's a share in the Divine Life. God gives Himself to us through His grace. Isn't that a wonderful thing? To imagine that God loves us so much, He elevates us to become His sons and daughters. We

don't just live an ordinary, natural life. Grace enables us to live a supernatural life. Animals live a natural life; we, as human beings, are given the opportunity to rise above the order of nature into the order of grace. This is done through the gift of God, which elevates us to the supernatural, above nature, a share in the Divine Life.

Sanctifying Grace is the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, in our souls. Sanctifying, this word means "that which makes us holy." Sanctifying Grace is a share in the very life of God. The definition of grace is "God's life," and "God's love," which dwells in our hearts and souls. Grace is the very life of God, the supernatural life of God, that elevates us to become the adopted sons and daughters of God. See, Christ is the only Son of God. But through grace, you and I become sons and daughters of God. We become His children. St. Paul talks about that in Scripture. He says, "Do you not realize that you have become temples of God, and dwelling places of the Holy Spirit?" We become temples of God through Sanctifying Grace. The Bible talks about that in Scripture, that once we become Christians, we become sons and daughters of Almighty God.

This work of sanctification, of us becoming holy, of us becoming sons and daughters of God, is the work of the Blessed Trinity. We especially attribute it to the Holy Spirit. We call the Holy Spirit "The Sanctifier." We call God the Father "The Creator." We call God the Son "The Redeemer." Now, it's true that the Blessed Trinity creates, redeems, and sanctifies us, but we especially attribute Creation to God the Father. You've seen the Sistine Chapel of God the Father stretching out His hand and touching Adam, and Adam coming to life. We attribute Creation to God the Father, even though all Persons of the Blessed Trinity create everything. We attribute Redemption to God the Son, because God the Son became Jesus; and He died on the Cross for us, so He redeemed us.

It's the work of the Blessed Trinity to redeem us, but it was God the Son who became the Child Jesus, who grew up, and who died on the Cross. We especially attribute redemption to God the Son, and we attribute sanctification to the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "I must go to the right hand of the Father, and there We will send you the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit has guided the Church, and the Holy Spirit will stay with the Church, until the end of time.

The Holy Spirit will not allow the Church to fall into error. Does that mean all the members of the Church will always be holy? Unfortunately, it doesn't guarantee that, because there have been some bad members of the Church, even a few bad popes; but none of them have ever taught error on issues of Faith and Morals. The Holy Spirit has always guided and protected the Church from falling into doctrinal error. Its teachings have always been pure, and accurate, and truthful, even though not all of the members of the Church have always lived out the doctrines or the teachings of Christ and the Church.

The Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles at Pentecost, and then inspired St. Peter to go out and preach. At that point, the Church only had about 120 members that were gathered together. St. Peter, the first Pope, began to preach; and 3,000 were added that very day, on Pentecost Sunday. The Holy Spirit came down upon them, and they were all baptized. The Church grew on one day from 120 to 3,000. In sales, we would call that “a good first day!” That’s very impressive that the Church grew so much. But that’s what the Holy Spirit did. The Holy Spirit came upon the Church, and the Church was born, and the Church began to grow rapidly.

Let’s look a little bit deeper now into Sanctifying Grace. The definition is: Grace is the supernatural gift of God, bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Those words are very important. Grace is supernatural. It’s a gift of God, and it’s given to us, not because we deserved it or earned it, but it’s because of what Jesus did for us on the Cross. We believe in the merits of Jesus Christ. Grace is a favor. It’s a free gift granted to us. We have no claim to it. God grants us graces because He is good, not because we are good. He gives us grace because He is God, and not because we deserve that. Paul says to the Romans in Chapter 3, “All have sinned and are in need of the glory of God. They are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ.” We are saved because of what Jesus Christ did for us, by His dying on the Cross.

When you look at the Cross, you see the price tag of our salvation. When you go into a store and look at a diamond ring, or look at a fur coat, you see how much it is. That price tag tells you how valuable that item is. How valuable are you to God? Just look at the Crucifix. When you see the Crucifix, you can tell that you’re worth the Blood of God, the Blood of Christ. That you’re so precious, so valuable, that Jesus died on the Cross for each one of you. And He would have gone through that terrible Crucifixion, Carrying of the Cross, Scourging at the Pillar, Crowning with Thorns – He would have gone through all of that if you were the only person in the world. He would have done it just for you. That’s how valuable you are to God.

We are justified. *Justified* means “how we are made right in the eyes of God, how we are made acceptable in God’s eyes.” So we’re justified. Another word for it is “we’re saved.” A lot of people use that in other denominations. They say, “I’m saved.” We prefer to say “redeemed.” Jesus redeemed us. If somebody says, “Are you saved?” we can say, “Yes, I believe that Jesus saved me. He died for me. Yes, I am saved.”

Does it mean that we can ever do something that we can lose our Salvation? Yes, we can commit a mortal sin, and we can lose our salvation. We believe that it is possible, even though we have been saved by Christ, that we can still lose this great gift that Jesus gives us. We prefer to say we’re *redeemed*. Redeemed means that Jesus paid the price for our salvation. We’re not in Heaven yet, so there’s still a chance that the redemption that Jesus won for us, a person might

not accept. Hopefully, we've all accepted Jesus, and accepted His redemption, but we're not saved until we get to Heaven, ultimately. We are justified, which means we are made right in God's eyes, by what Jesus did for us.

I remember years ago, when I was a little kid, we used to collect Green Stamps. When we would save up our Green Stamps and then we would take them to a Redemption Center, and we'd get a really nice toaster oven, or a nice blender. We would redeem; we would trade in our book of Green Stamps for a toaster. But what Jesus did was, He paid the price for us. He said, "I will die in your place." Since Adam and Eve had sinned, and since all of us have sinned as well, Heaven was closed for us. Jesus said, "I will take your place on the Cross. I will die in place of you." That's what it means, by the fact that He redeemed us. Instead of us being up on the Cross, paying the price for our sins, Jesus paid the price for our sins. That's how much He loved us. If you saw the movie The Passion, you get a little glimpse of how much suffering Jesus went through for each one of us. That's why Jesus is called our Redeemer, because He said, "I will die in your place."

There's a story that Bishop Sheen tells about a judge, whose son was brought in for murder. The father of this son was a judge. Because he was a judge, he had to be a good judge, and he had to condemn his son, and say his son was guilty. What he did though, after he pronounced his son guilty, he took off his robe, walked down, and said, "I will take your place. I will go on death row in place of you." It's an example of how, yes, we are guilty, but Jesus says, "I will take your place. I will go instead of you, and die for you." And that's what the Crucifixion is all about.

The Crucifixion is not the end of the story. Jesus then rose from the dead on Easter. Jesus took our sins on the Cross; by His wounds we are healed. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead, means that we can go to Heaven. Jesus paid the price for our sins; and the fact that He did not remain dead forever, but He rose from the dead, means we also will share in the glory of the Resurrection, those who die in the friendship of God, in the friendship of God's grace. We're justified; we're saved; we're redeemed by the merits of Jesus Christ.

Sanctifying Grace is the grace which confers on our souls a new life, that is, a sharing in the life of God Himself. What does Sanctifying Grace do for us? First of all, it makes our souls holy and pleasing to God. When we receive Sanctifying Grace, we become holy. How do we get Sanctifying Grace on our soul? It's through Baptism primarily. That's the ordinary way that God gives us Sanctifying Grace, the grace that makes us holy through Baptism. When a baby is baptized, or an adult is baptized, all their sins are washed away. Original Sin, which is what we inherit from Adam and Eve, all of our personal sins are washed away in Baptism, and we become holy and pleasing to God. Since Sanctifying Grace is the very life of God, when God looks into our soul, He sees Himself. That's why, when Jesus talks about that in Scripture, He says when people come before Me

on Judgment Day, he will look at them. To some, He'll say, "Welcome into the Kingdom." To others He will say, "I do not know you." Why would Jesus say, "I do not know you?" If He doesn't recognize His presence in our souls, then He doesn't recognize us. He doesn't know us. If we have God's grace in our soul, then He sees Himself in us; and we're able to go to Heaven, when Supernatural Grace is needed to get to Heaven.

A good analogy is up in the atmosphere. Let's say you have the Space Shuttle, and an astronaut is on the Space Shuttle. If an astronaut was accidentally jettisoned out of the shuttle, without wearing all the gear, he would die. He could not live in outer space, because he's not equipped to live in that atmosphere. The same thing is true about going to Heaven. In order to get to Heaven, we have to have the gear, which is Sanctifying Grace, in order to live in the atmosphere of Heaven.

Another analogy would be scuba diving. Let's say you're underwater. The only way you can hang out down there for any length of time is to have the scuba equipment – the tanks, the oxygen, and everything. If you have that, you can live in that environment. It's the same thing with Heaven. In order to be able to live in Heaven, a person has to have the gear, which is Sanctifying Grace. Remember, Heaven is a supernatural place, whereas Earth is natural. The only way that we can live in a supernatural destiny is to have Supernatural Grace within our soul, and that is Sanctifying Grace. So to live in the atmosphere of Heaven, to be able to live in Heaven, we need Sanctifying Grace.

I mentioned it primarily comes to us through Baptism. There's also what's called a desire for Baptism. We'll get into that more in a couple of weeks when we talk about Baptism. For example, let's say somebody is not baptized right now, but they want to be. God takes that into consideration. If they were to die, or something happened to them, they'd be saved because they are desiring Baptism. They desire God's grace within their soul.

How can we lose Sanctifying Grace? We lose it through mortal sin. The word *mortal* comes from the Latin word "mors," meaning "death," - a mortician, a mortuary. Remember in the Addams Family, the wife's name was Morticia? "Mors" means "death." A mortal sin does not kill our soul; it kills the life of grace within the soul. Does everybody see the difference? If we commit a mortal sin, we lose Sanctifying Grace. Mortal sin is a serious violation of one of the Ten Commandments. It has to be a serious matter. A person has to have sufficient reflection – they have to think about it. And, they have to have full consent of the will. They have to know it's wrong, and go ahead and do it anyway. It's a deliberate act of the will, where a person commits a mortal sin. Let's say murder, or adultery; those are prime examples of mortal sin, or stealing a large amount of money. Obviously, stealing a paper clip wouldn't, because that's not a serious enough matter, but stealing \$1000 off somebody would be. A mortal sin destroys the life of grace within the soul, and then the person is in mortal sin.

How can a person get out of mortal sin? The answer is through *Actual Grace*. The definition of Actual Grace is “the supernatural help of God which enlightens our minds, and strengthens our will to do good, and to avoid evil.” Actual Grace is what I would compare to an impulse that God gives us, like the power, to be able to resist temptation, or to do something supernaturally good. If a person sins, and God gives them the grace to be sorry, that is called an Actual Grace. Sanctifying Grace is the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity within the soul, and it abides until a person commits a mortal sin. Sanctifying Grace we can lose through mortal sin. What gets us back into God’s good friendship, God’s good grace? It’s called Actual Grace, which is the impulse, or the strength, the power, that Jesus gives us to be able to first of all, be sorry for our sins, and go to Confession, and repent, and start over. Those are Actual Graces. Actual Grace is transient. That is, it’s given to us when we need it to perform a good action, or to overcome a temptation.

We know that the Church teaches that God gives everybody enough grace to be saved. That’s a teaching of the Church. Everybody, during their lifetime, is given sufficient grace for salvation. Otherwise, that would be saying, “God wants some people to be saved, and some people to be damned.” That’s not true. God gives everybody enough grace to be saved.

Why isn’t everybody saved? If a person is not saved, it’s because they did not cooperate with God’s grace. God’s grace acts upon our intellect and upon our will. Our will can correspond and say yes to God, or our will can say no to God. When we cooperate with God’s grace, we work our way towards Heaven; we head towards Heaven. If we don’t cooperate with God’s grace, we go in the other direction. We all need Actual Graces. Actual Grace is what converts a sinner, like St. Augustine, for example, who was away from God for 20 years. He was living in mortal sin for 20 years. What happened to him that gave him the grace to repent and come around? His mother Monica prayed for him for 20 years. She never gave up praying for her wayward son, and eventually he came around. He was open. God gave him extraordinary grace. He corresponded to it, and he changed his life. He gave up his life of sin and began living a very holy life.

We also have examples in the lives of the saints, where God’s grace touched the hearts of many others. For example, St. Francis of Assisi was a good man, but he was very worldly. He was a soldier. He was captured. He was imprisoned. During his time in prison, he began to reflect upon his life. During that time, he began to realize how trivial his life was, because he was just after having a good time, and partying, and he realized there was something more. So he converted, and became, of course, the great St. Francis. That was an Actual Grace that he received, that transformed him from being an ordinary person, into an exceptional holy person. Another example is St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. St. Ignatius was a soldier as well. He was struck in the leg by a cannonball. During the time of recovery, he began to really reflect more upon his

life, and realized he had lived a pretty sinful life. When he was in his castle recovering, he wanted to read romance novels, but they couldn't find any. All they could find were the Bible and a book about the saints. He began to read that, and that converted him.

Actual Graces can come to us in many different ways: by people praying for us, maybe by somebody reading the Bible, or a good book. Like St. Augustine, even though his mother was praying for him for 20 years, he had opened up the Bible, and read a passage, and that helped to convert him. Sometimes just reading the Bible can give somebody Actual Graces. Reading the lives of the saints, sometimes going through a terrible near-death experience, like a car accident, or some other near-death experience, or let's say, hearing the news that a person has cancer. That can really be an opportunity for God's grace to break through, to get into their heart, and to bring about their conversion. Other times, just listening to a sermon or a homily. You might just be listening to the radio. There might be a great preacher on the radio, or on television. They might say something, and God uses the voice and the words of that preacher to be an instrument or channel of Actual Grace. That's why people are converted, like when Billy Graham speaks; thousands of people will come up and get baptized, or repent of their sins. Sometimes it's hearing the Bible being read at Mass. Sometimes, God can even give Actual Graces in many ways, like when people have met Mother Teresa, or Pope John Paul II, because they're so holy, that God's grace really works through them.

Actual Graces can come to us through holy people, holy places, and holy things. God can use holy people through which He can give us special grace. As I mentioned, many persons who met Mother Teresa were converted. Sometimes when people go to the Holy Land, they go to Bethlehem, or go to Nazareth, they get this overwhelming sense of the presence of God. Often times, people are converted at holy places, like shrines - when you go to the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, or the Franciscan Monastery. Holy things, like the Bible, people praying the Rosary, people receiving a cross or medal, or a book about the saints - these things usually are what God uses to be channels of His grace to others. God can even use bad things, like September 11th, to bring a lot of people back to Church, as terrible as that event was. God can always bring good out of everything, even out of the worst tragedy.

The way in which we can really receive God's grace in a powerful way is with the sacraments, and you'll hear more about this in the next coming weeks, as we go more and more into the sacraments. Baptism gives us Sanctifying Grace. If we commit a mortal sin, and go to Confession, that sin is taken away; and God's grace is restored to our soul. When we're confirmed, we're given a special outpouring of God's grace in our life. Every time we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we get abundant Actual Graces, Sacramental Graces that come into our hearts and souls. We can really receive a great amount of grace through the sacraments.

God will not force us. He gives us grace, but we have to accept it. We have to choose good or evil. We have to choose to say yes to God; or some people choose, and they say no to God. This whole topic is very fascinating, very interesting, because it's a topic on how we're made pleasing to God, how we're made His sons and daughters, how we become justified.

We cannot save ourselves. See, there was a heresy in the early Church, called the *Pelagian Heresy*. Pelagius was an Irish monk who basically said, "You can sort of save yourself. You can sort of work your own way to salvation." The Church condemned that. It said we need God's grace. We need the sacraments. We need Baptism, and God's grace to be able to do that. You can't pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. You need God's grace.

Sometimes people have a question about what's the difference between the Catholic understanding of salvation and the Protestant understanding of salvation. Martin Luther, when he was reading the Scriptures, said that we were saved by Faith alone. Has anyone ever heard that, "Faith alone?" Martin Luther believed this so much, that he even took it upon himself to add the word "alone" to his translation of the Bible. The Bible says we're saved by "Faith." What Luther did was, when he translated the Scriptures, he added this word "alone" – we're saved by "Faith alone," which, of course, was not in the original text. He was so adamant that we're saved by Faith alone, that he added that, whereas the Catholic Church does not teach we're saved by "Faith alone." Yes, we are saved by "Faith," but not by "Faith alone." The Bible says, "Without Faith, it's impossible to please God." Yes, Faith is necessary. But, we also believe in the Catholic Church, that it's not just "Faith alone," it's also Faith, Hope, and Charity. We are saved not just by Faith, because there are some passages in Scripture that show us that we're not saved by Faith alone. For example, in First Corinthians, Chapter 13, St. Paul talks about love, where he says, "Faith, Hope, and Love," but he says the greatest of these is what? Not Faith - "The greatest of these is Love," and that's important to remember. Paul even says, "If I had Faith to move mountains, but had not Love; I am nothing. If I have Faith to give my body to be burned, but have not Love; I gain nothing at all." So Faith is necessary for salvation, but there's more to it than that. St. Paul says, "Even the Devil has Faith." Even the Devil believes in God, but he's not saved, because he has no Charity. So, Faith alone will not save us. We also need Charity, and we need Hope.

Hope is trusting in our salvation, knowing that we can be saved through God's grace. The opposite of Hope is despair. If somebody has despair, then they won't be saved. They need the virtue of Hope. It's not just Faith alone; we also need Hope. Even if a person doesn't have any Hope, then they'll despair of God's mercy and God's forgiveness. We also need Charity, which is Love of God, and Love of Neighbor.

A good passage to look up is Matthew, Chapter 25. Jesus said, "When I was hungry, you gave Me food. When I was thirsty, you gave Me drink. When I was naked, you clothed Me. When I was sick, you visited Me." Jesus says, "Come into eternal life." But He says to those who did not visit Him, those who did not help Him in need, He says, "Go into eternal damnation." What's interesting is that those were all Works. Those were all Works of Charity, that the people were performing or not performing; and their salvation was dependent upon "Did they live out their Faith in Works of Charity?"

I would recommend reading Matthew, Chapter 25. Jesus says, "When I was hungry, you gave Me food. When I was thirsty, you gave Me drink." Then He says, "Come inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." By Charity, we mean "Love of God, and Love of Neighbor." Sometimes, this is called Works. Works for us means "living out our Faith in Love." It means "Loving God and Loving Neighbor." Works for us means following the Ten Commandments. It means helping the poor. It means treating our neighbor with Charity.

If somebody just had Faith alone, let's say that they had the greatest Faith, if they went out and killed people, or robbed people, or did all sorts of terrible things; well, the Faith alone is not going to save them. They also need Hope, and they also need Charity, which we sometimes refer to as Works.

One can say that Protestants believe in the Faith alone (like Luther believed in Faith alone), whereas Catholics believe in Faith and Works. As long as you understand what we mean by Works. We don't mean that we can work our way to salvation without God's grace. That's not what the Church teaches. Works for us means living a life of Charity, following the Ten Commandments, being good to our neighbor, and living out our Faith that way. That's what we mean by Works – everything that Matthew Chapter 25 talks about – "When I was hungry, you gave Me food. When I was thirsty you gave Me drink," etc.

(A question). "We walk by Faith, and not by sight." That's exactly right, of course, because in this world, and then again, after the break, we'll talk about the definition of Faith. Faith is believing in something we cannot see. In this world, we have to walk by Faith, because we can't see God face-to-face. Once we get to Heaven, we don't need the virtue of Faith anymore. Once you see God, you don't need to believe in Him, because He's there. Faith is believing in something we cannot see. Faith disappears in Heaven, and it's replaced by sight, by vision of God. That's why Paul says, "In this world, we walk by Faith, and not by sight," or not by vision, because we don't see God.

The only time that the words "Faith alone" appears in Scripture in the same sentence is in James. Look up the Letter of James, and it says, "We are not saved by Faith alone." We are saved by putting our Faith into practice. I would

recommend reading that passage in James, which does show that Faith alone is not all we need for salvation; we do need more than that.

The passage from James is James, Chapter 2, Verse 14. James says, "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have Faith, but has no deeds? Can such a Faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well. Keep warm and well-fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is that? In the same way, Faith alone, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have Faith, and I have deeds.' Show me your Faith without deeds, and I will show you my Faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good. Even the demons believe that, and shudder. Oh, you foolish man. Do you want evidence that Faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor, Abraham, considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his Faith and his actions were working together, and his Faith was made complete by what he did. The Scripture was fulfilled that said, 'Abraham believed God, and this was credited to him as righteousness.' He was called 'God's friend.' You see that a person is justified by what he does, and not by Faith alone." It's a passage where the words "Faith alone" appear, but it says we're justified not by "Faith alone."

How are we saved, then? How do we get to Heaven? We are saved by what Jesus Christ did for us, and dying on the Cross, and our accepting of that. God gives us grace. We cooperate with that. We cooperate with God's grace, and we become pleasing to Him, once we accept His grace into our soul. Remember that Sanctifying Grace makes us holy and pleasing to God. It makes us adopted sons and daughters of God. It makes us temples of the Holy Spirit. It gives us the ability to be able to enter Heaven. The greatest thing in the world is having Sanctifying Grace within your soul, having God's grace within you. The worst thing in the world is sin, because that's the only thing that can separate you from true happiness, from being with God for all eternity. The worst thing in the world is not disease, or cancer, or death, or illness, or tragedy – the worst thing in the world is serious sin, because that's the only thing that can deprive us of God.

(At this point the first side of the tape ended. It resumes below).

The primary way of salvation is through Baptism. Not only does the Catholic Church have Baptism, but almost every other Christian denomination also has Baptism – like the Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, and the Baptists. They have salvation. They have Baptism. It is possible for these other denominations, for people in them, to be saved, because they have received Sanctifying Grace within their soul, which is necessary to obtain Heaven. Even though they're not officially part of the Catholic Church, they are, in a sense, connected to the Church through Baptism. They are united to us, because they have the exact same Baptism, with water, and the words, "I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Any Christian

denomination which has that form of Baptism has truly baptized Christians, and therefore they have God's grace within their soul.

What happens then, if, let's say, a baptized member of the Catholic Church, or a baptized member of another Christian denomination, commits a mortal sin, and loses God's grace within their soul? How do they get it back? You get it back by *repentance*, telling God you're sorry for your sins, that you don't want to go to Hell; you want to go to Heaven; you want to be saved. It's called making an "Act of Contrition," or "An Act of Sorrow," for your sins.

Does everybody have that booklet with the prayers in it, called "This We Believe." The Act of Contrition is the prayer that we can all say together before we end class tonight.

We, as Catholics, can have our sins forgiven by going to Confession. But, since you don't have that wonderful sacrament, the only way you can have your sins forgiven is by telling God you're sorry for them, and He can, and does, forgive you, as well. That prayer is the most important prayer you'll probably learn, and it's called the Act of Contrition – telling God you're sorry for your sins. Because, that's how you can get, and stay in God's good graces - in His friendship. That's really what a soul in Sanctifying Grace is – the soul in God's grace is a friend of God. It's a pleasing person in God's eyes.

There are some differences between Catholic theology and Protestant theology. In some of the Protestant theology, they say, "Once saved; always saved." Has anybody heard that expression? For instance, once you accept Jesus, it doesn't matter what you do in the rest of your life; you're always saved. We know that that's not accurate, because people, even after they accept Jesus, can turn away from God. They can break away from Him, turn their back on Him, commit all sorts of terrible sins; and they could lose their salvation. We don't know we're saved until we actually make it to Heaven. Then we can say that we're saved. St. Paul talks about this when he says, "Work out your salvation in fear and trembling." Don't presume that you're saved. We shouldn't have the sin of presumption, thinking that no matter what we do, we're going to be saved. Nor do we want the sin of despair, which is thinking that no matter what we do, we can't be saved. Neither of those are right. Those are the opposite extremes.

Which really brings us into the topics of *Faith, Hope and Charity*, and we'll just spend a minute or two going through these in detail. These are called *Theological Virtues*. The word "theo" means God. Theology is the study of God. Theological Virtues are virtues that relate us to God. These are the chief supernatural powers that are bestowed on our souls. These Theological Virtues are given to us in Baptism. When we're baptized, we receive the infused virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. These virtues enter our souls through the sacraments, primarily at Baptism or Confession.

These three, of course, are Faith, Hope and Charity. The definition of Faith is: "Faith is a virtue, or power (a virtue is like a good habit, or the power), by which we firmly believe all the truths that God has revealed, upon the fact that God can neither deceive, nor be deceived." Faith is believing in God, and in all that God has revealed.

The virtue of Hope, is "the virtue by which we firmly trust that God, who is all-powerful, and faithful to His promises, will, in His mercy, give us eternal happiness, and the means to obtain it." That's the virtue of Hope. It's trusting that God will give us the graces we need to be saved. Of course, the opposite extremes of the virtue of Hope are despair (thinking we can never be saved), or presumption, which is thinking that no matter what we do, no matter what kind of terrible sins we commit, we will be saved. Both of those are not Hope. Hope is trusting that God will save us, and that He'll give us all the grace we need to be saved.

Charity is, "the virtue by which we love God above all things, for His own sake, and our neighbor as our self, for the love of God." So, it's loving God above all things, for His own sake, and loving our neighbor out of love for God.

The question came up about "In this world, we walk by Faith, and not by sight." Remember, since Faith is believing in something we cannot see, when we get to Heaven, Faith will cease. Faith will end, because Faith is replaced by the vision of God, by the sight of God. Hope will also end in Heaven, because Hope is trusting that we'll get to Heaven. Hope will be replaced by possessing God. We won't have to long for God; we will possess God. We will be with God.

What does remain is Charity. What's interesting also, is that of these three Theological Virtues (Faith, Hope, and Charity), Jesus did not have Faith, and He did not have Hope – Christ had Charity. Why didn't Jesus have Faith? Why didn't He have Hope? It's because Jesus is the Son of God. He always had the Vision (the Beatific Vision) of His Father. Therefore, He did not need the virtue of Faith, which is believing in something you cannot see. Jesus always saw the Vision of His Heavenly Father. He did not have Hope, because He possessed the Vision of His Father. He did have, of course, Charity. So, when we get to Heaven, in a sense we become more like Christ, because on Earth, Jesus saw the Vision of the Father. He possessed the Vision of the Father. In Heaven, we will see God face-to-face. We will become one with Him, and we will have Charity.

If Jesus isn't our model for Faith and Hope, who is? Of course, the saints, especially Mary, the Blessed Mother, because Mary was a human being. Mary is not God; she's a human being, like ourselves. But, she had great Faith, great Hope, and great Charity. So, she's our model for Faith, because she did not have the Beatific Vision in this life. She did not possess the Vision of God. Mary had Faith. She had to believe. She had to hope, and she had charity.

Let me go through the *Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*. These are special blessings that the Holy Spirit gives us, when we receive Baptism, and especially when we receive Confirmation. I think this will be especially helpful to all of you that are preparing for your Confirmation. You might think, "Well, I'm already baptized. Why do I need to get Confirmed?" And the benefit is that you will receive an outpouring of these Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit in your soul.

The first one is *Wisdom*. Wisdom is the gift from God by which we recognize the emptiness of earthly things. By it, we come to regard God and spiritual things as the highest good. Without the gift of Wisdom, we are indifferent to spiritual matters, avoiding all mortification. So, a wise person believes in God, and realizes that the most important things in life are the spiritual: getting to Heaven, and keeping the sacraments, receiving Communion – that's a wise person. Like the Bible says, "The fool and his heart has said there is no God." So, a little seven-year old could be wiser than a brilliant scientist, if that scientist did not believe in God or Heaven. That little seven-year old would be wiser than that brilliant person with an IQ of 175. It's interesting, because Wisdom enable us to see and believe in the reality of Heaven and God, and the emptiness of earthly things.

The second gift of the Holy Spirit is *Understanding*. Understanding is the gift by which we are enabled to recognize the true teachings of Christ and His Church, and to be able to detect false doctrines. This was given to the Apostles at Pentecost, where they understood everything that Jesus had been trying to teach them, and to reveal to them. They finally "got it."

Next is *Counsel*. Counsel is the gift that helps us discover the will of God under difficult circumstances. For example, is this the right person I should marry? Is this the right job I should take? Should I become a priest, or become a nun? That's the gift of Counsel.

Next is *Fortitude*. Fortitude is the gift by which we are strengthened under trials to do God's will. Another word is courage – it's the grace to remain steadfast in difficulties.

Next is *Knowledge*. Knowledge is the gift of the Holy Spirit that enables us to understand the teachings of the Church, to know God, and to know Christ, whom He sent.

Number six is *Piety*. Piety is the gift by which we love God as our Father, and want to do God's will. Piety means that we're sons and daughters of God. It's a filial trust in God, that He is our "Abba," our "Daddy." God is our loving Father.

Number seven is *Fear of the Lord*. The Bible says that, "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom." What does it mean to have Fear of the Lord? Fear of the Lord is the gift by which we dread sin as the greatest of all evil. It enables us to

not give in to human respect, or caring too much what other people think. Fear of the Lord – it's really a holy reverence for God, our loving Father, and not wanting to offend a loving God. Fear of the Lord is not servile fear; it's not the fear of a slave for his master. It's more that great respect that we should have for God, our loving Father.

These gifts are given to us from outside, from the Holy Spirit. Then, there are *Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit*. These Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit are what grow from within us, if we have God's grace within us. Just like an apple tree produces apples; an orange tree produces oranges; we as Christians should produce these virtues in our life.

Here are the Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit:

- *Charity*
- *Joy*
- *Peace* – You can think that people like Mother Teresa had these. Mother Teresa was always radiant with joy, with peace.
- *Patience* – It doesn't mean that if you lose your temper with your kids, you don't have the Holy Spirit, because everybody loses patience with their spouse and children. This is like perennial impatience – Christians should be the most patient people, because they have the Holy Spirit within them. The word patience actually comes from the Latin word "patientia," which means "the ability to suffer." A patient person is able to suffer.
- *Kindness* – Christians should be kind.
- *Goodness*
- *Long-suffering* – That's similar to patience.
- *Mildness*
- *Faith*
- *Modesty*
- *Continency* – This is purity or chastity.
- *Chastity*

These are the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Since we're temples of God, temples of His Holy Spirit, things like Purity, Modesty, Faith, Mildness, Kindness and Patience – these should be what are produced from a life of prayer, a life of holiness. If you read the Lives of the Saints, you'll see that these were their principal fruits in their life.

With the Holy Spirit, He also gives us what's called the *Moral Virtues*. The Virtues are powers - the abilities or strengths that God gives us. The Moral Virtues have to do with how we live our life. The Theological Virtues relate us to God. The Moral Virtues relate us to our daily actions.

Let me just mention the *Four Cardinal Virtues*, or the *Four Moral Virtues*:

- *Prudence* – Prudence disposes us, in all circumstances, to form right judgments about what we must do or not do. Prudence perfects the

intelligence, which is the power of forming judgments. A prudent person makes right decisions, and makes right judgments about courses of action to take.

- *Justice* – This enables us to give everyone what belongs to him. It teaches us what is due to God and man. Going to Mass on Sunday is an act of justice, because God is God – He deserves to be honored, worshiped, glorified, praised, and thanked. So, by going to Mass every Sunday, and going to Church, it's an act of Justice on our part. Justice is giving somebody what they're due. If somebody steals \$25 from somebody, as an act of Justice they would have to give it back. That's an act of justice – giving somebody what they're due.
- *Fortitude* – Fortitude enables us to do what is good in spite of any difficulty. It's another word for courage.
- *Temperance* – Temperance enables us to control our desires, and to use rightly the things which please our senses. A tempered person does not commit gluttony, or drunkenness. Temperance is moderation in food and drink, and in other things as well. Temperance is a virtue that is moderation, especially in regard to food and drink.

Those are the main Virtues that you should be well aware of. A couple of things to keep in mind, as you progress in your journey toward Easter, God willing, toward getting baptized, or receiving Jesus in Holy Communion, or getting confirmed, what I would recommend is that between now and the next couple of months, is make sure you're praying every day. Make sure you talk to the Lord every day in your prayer life.

Prayers can take on many different forms. It could be opening your Bible up, and reading your Bible very slowly, and talking to God heart-to-heart. Hopefully, it's praying the Rosary every day, getting to know the Lord and His life through the eyes of the Blessed Mother.

You should be reading your Bible, and reading The Catechism that we gave you, and of course, The Faith Explained. I think it might be pretty hard if people just came to the classes, and just listened to the lectures, without actually reading these two books. The Catechism and The Faith Explained will teach you the Bible, and all the teachings of the Church as well, because they contain thousands of Scripture passages. Please just don't come to class; make sure you're reading the chapters that correspond with the lectures. I think that would be very helpful. Or, get the tapes, and listen to the previous classes.

The other thing would be to attend Mass. Make sure you go to Mass every weekend, either Saturday night or Sunday. That's very important, because if you are going to become a member of the Church, one of the things that we do is that we come to Mass every Sunday, or of course, Saturday night.

Sometimes the question is, “Should you come up for a blessing at Holy Communion time?” I would say yes – make sure you come up, and get into my line. If you go into the line of the Eucharistic Ministers, they don’t give blessings. Only a priest or a deacon can give a blessing. I would recommend coming to Mass every weekend. What you would need to do is just place your hand over your heart (like this), and I’ll know to give you a blessing, until you’re able to receive your Holy Communion at Easter. If you have little kids, you can bring the little kids up for a blessing as well.

Make sure you do those things – pray, read your Bible, read your Catechism and The Faith Explained, and come to Mass every weekend.