

## GRACE

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch; like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believe

A '**wretch**' who was saved: **St. Augustine (see below)**

St. Augustine's view on grace: the fall of Adam corrupted human nature, leaving humanity incapable of good without divine assistance. He believed that grace was essential for both the initial turning to God and for the subsequent struggle against sin.

What is Grace? Ephesians 2:1-10 \_\_\_\_\_

So what do you think grace is? (hint verses 8 & 4): \_\_\_\_\_

Augustine's teachings on grace:

- Grace is fundamentally God's gift, not something earned or deserved (God's initiative)
- Grace enables faith and the desire to turn towards God (**Prevenient** grace; coming before conversion)
- Grace empowers believers to live a righteous life and persevere in faith. (**Cooperating** Grace)
- Grace liberates the will from the bondage of sin, allowing individuals to choose good (**Liberating** the will)
- While grace is necessary, it doesn't automatically guarantee salvation. Individuals still have a role in accepting and cooperating with grace.
- Sacraments, like baptism, are seen as visible signs and means of God's grace.

When have I seen the power of God's grace manifested? Prevenient, cooperating, liberating grace?

Do I have to accept God's grace? \_\_\_\_\_

What is actual grace? 1 Cor 15:10 (What did it do for St. Paul and where did it come from) \_\_\_\_\_

What is Sanctifying Grace? Romans 6:3-11; (where did it come from and what was its effect?):

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What kind of grace (actual or sanctifying) did Augustine receive: \_\_\_\_\_

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What graces can flow from various Sacraments?

Baptism \_\_\_\_\_

Reconciliation \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_

Eucharist \_\_\_\_\_

Matrimony \_\_\_\_\_

Holy Orders \_\_\_\_\_

Sacrament of the Sick \_\_\_\_\_

- **Grace: CCC 1996-2005: 'cashing in'**

What grace can give us: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Prayers and petitions

### Amazing Grace

The Lord hath promised good to me,  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we first begun

## Who was Saint Augustine?

Augustine's mother, Monica, was a Catholic Christian. She instructed Augustine in the Christian religion and taught him how to pray. She was one of the greatest guiding forces in Augustine's life. Through his mother he learned about the Christian God and the values of a Christian life. Augustine's father, Patricius, was a pagan (no religion), however through the example and prayers of his wife, Saint Monica, he was baptized prior to his death.

Adolescence can be a difficult time for any person, and Augustine was no exception. Augustine was a very intelligent student, but he was lazy. As a young man he was more interested in partying than anything else. He was passionate, naughty, craved pleasure, hated pain. He loved knowledge, but hated study, he had an intense feeling for life in all its facets. Monica was troubled that Augustine was living recklessly and continually prayed that he would change his ways.

Augustine was fascinated by the world of literature. His studies of the Latin language, and reading of Cicero influenced him to study philosophy - the study and the seeking of wisdom. After he finished his studies, he became a teacher.

For 33 years he had lived a life of experimentation, and those who associated with him would never have believed that he would become an 'intellectual champion' of the Christian faith. Augustine became torn

between his ambition for his promising career as a teacher and the pursuit of spiritual and personal truth and wisdom.

Augustine came under the influence of The Bishop of Milan, St Ambrose, who went on to become his good friend and mentor. When reading the letters of Paul in the Bible, a constant nursery rhyme chanted to him "Tolle Lege" (take and read), and from this a miracle happened, and the heart of Augustine was now for Christ. After this conversion experience, Augustine broke with his old life. He was finally baptized at the age of 33, along with his good friend of 15 years Alypius, and Adeodatus his son, then aged sixteen years.

Upon visiting Hippo in Africa, his homeland, he was strongly pressured by the people that the local community needed him to be their priest and was ordained at the age of 36. Five years later he was made the Bishop in Hippo.

Augustine remained in Hippo for the rest of his life. He wrote 232 books and in excess of 500 sermons. He wrote honestly, not denying his faults and failings, and this enables us to closely identify with his life and conversion. After the Bible, his book *'The Confessions'*, was for centuries the world's second-best seller. This book describes how he learned the hard way, through disappointments and frustrations, and describes his life, his mother who never deserted him, his good friend Alypius, his son Adeodatus, and finally his developing friendship with his mentor St Ambrose.

He died at the age of 76 on August 28, 430 A.D.

## ANSWERS

**What is Grace?** v.8: a gift of God; v. 4: brought us to life in Christ

**Do I Have to accept God's grace?** No

**What is Actual Grace?** a gift of God to give us strength

**What is Sanctifying Grace?** Grace we receive in the sacraments which began in baptism when we receive the Holy Spirit and become adopted children of God; the other sacraments add other graces to the graces of Baptism.

**What kind of graces did St. Augustine receive?** actual in his conversion; sanctifying in his reception of sacraments; actual as an extension of the sacraments.

**What graces can flow from various Sacraments?**

Baptism: children of God, heirs of heaven, wiping out of all sin and temporal punishment...

Reconciliation: forgiveness of sin, strength to reject temptation, reconciled friendship with God.

Confirmation: Strength to live the Christian life, gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit...

Eucharist: Intimate union with Jesus, relationship with Trinity and faith community...

Matrimony: Making God part of our marriage; preparing for family life; bonding of the couple.

Holy Orders: Bonding the priest or deacon to the Church in a special relationship; giving the priest the power to consecrate the Eucharist and to administer the sacraments; deacons receive the power to administer the some sacraments and to preach the gospel...

Sacrament of the Sick: Bringing those who are ill into a better relationship with God giving them strength to deal with illness, suffering, and even death.

**What grace can give us (CCC 1996-2005)**

**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.**<sup>46</sup>

**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.

**1998** This vocation to eternal life is *supernatural*. It depends entirely on God's gratuitous initiative, for he alone can reveal and give himself. It surpasses the power of human intellect and will, as that of every other creature.<sup>47</sup>

**1999** The grace of Christ is the **gratuitous gift** that God makes to us **of his own life**, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to **heal it of sin and to sanctify it**. It is the *sanctifying* or *deifying* *grace* received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification:<sup>48</sup>

Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself.<sup>49</sup>

**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**. *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.

**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:"<sup>50</sup>

Indeed we also work, but we are only collaborating with God who works, for his mercy has gone before us. **It has gone before us so that we may be healed, and follows us so that once healed, we may be given life**; it goes before us so that we may be called, and follows us so that we may be glorified; it goes before us **so that we may live devoutly, and follows us so that we may always live with God**: for without him we can do nothing.<sup>51</sup>

**2002** God's free initiative demands *man's free response*, for God has created man in his image by **conferring on him, along with freedom, the power to know him and love him**. The soul only enters freely into the communion of love. God immediately touches and directly moves the heart of man. He has placed in man a longing for truth and goodness that only he can satisfy. The promises of "eternal life" respond, beyond all hope, to this desire:

If at the end of your very good works . . . , you rested on the seventh day, it was to foretell by the voice of your book that at the end of our works, which are indeed "very good" since you have given them to us, we shall also rest in you on the sabbath of eternal life.<sup>52</sup>

**2003** Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Spirit who **justifies and sanctifies us**. But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to **enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church**. There are *sacramental graces*, **gifts proper to the different sacraments**. There are furthermore *special graces*, also called **charisms** after the Greek term used by St. Paul and meaning "favor," "gratuitous gift," "benefit."<sup>53</sup> Whatever their character - sometimes it is extraordinary, **such as the gift of miracles or of tongues** - charisms are oriented toward sanctifying grace and are intended for the common good of the Church. They are at the service of charity which builds up the Church.<sup>54</sup>

**2004** Among the special graces ought to be mentioned the **graces of state** that accompany the exercise of the responsibilities of the Christian life and of the ministries within the Church:

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: **if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.**<sup>55</sup>

**2005** Since it belongs to the supernatural order, grace *escapes our experience* and cannot be known except by faith. We cannot therefore rely on our feelings or our works to conclude that we are justified and saved.<sup>56</sup> However, according to the Lord's words "Thus you will know them by their fruits"<sup>57</sup> - reflection on God's blessings in our life and in the lives of the saints offers us a guarantee that grace is at work in us and **spurs us on to an ever greater faith and an attitude of trustful poverty**.

A pleasing illustration of this attitude is found in the reply of St. Joan of Arc to a question posed as a trap by her ecclesiastical judges: "Asked if she knew that she was in God's grace, she replied: 'If I am not, may it please God to put me in it; if I am, may it please God to keep me there.'"<sup>58</sup>