

To Govern Without God is To Live Without Peace

Our Lady at Fatima, speaking to the three children in 1917, said, “He (*i.e.*, God) is going to punish the world for its crimes by means of war, hunger, persecution of the Church. ... To forestall this, I shall ask the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart. ... If they heed my request, Russia will be converted and there will be peace. If not, she (*i.e.*, Russia) shall spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecution of the Church.”

I'm sure most of you have heard this many times before. However, my point here is not just to remind you again, but to point out that we have not done what she asked. Thus, we are living through the fact that Russia is spreading her errors throughout the world. There are wars, and the Church is being persecuted.

The world has rejected God and He is allowing us to suffer for our rejection of Him, just like a person who is in poor health because he drinks too much: God doesn't send an angel to tell him to stop; no, He lets him drink too much and suffer the consequences.

Russia has not been consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so that country has spread her errors (*i.e.*, goals) throughout the world. These goals are listed below and were published in the Congressional Record of Jan. 10, 1963. As you read these goals, recall how ***they have already been accomplished*** and disastrously impact our daily life.

CURRENT COMMUNIST GOALS:

- Provide American aid to all nations regardless of Communist domination.
- Permit free trade between all nations regardless of Communist affiliation and regardless of whether or not items could be used for war.
- Promote the United Nations as the only hope for mankind.
- Resist any attempt to outlaw the Communist Party.

- Capture one or both of the political parties in the United States.
- Use technical decisions of the courts to weaken basic American institutions by claiming their activities violate civil rights.
- Get control of the schools. Use them for transmission belts for Socialism and current Communist propaganda. Soften the curriculum. Get control of teachers' associations. Put the party-line in textbooks.
- Use student riots to foment public protests against programs or organizations which the Communists oppose.
- Infiltrate the press. Get control of book-review assignments, editorial writing, and policy-making positions.
- Gain control of key positions in radio, TV, and motion pictures.
- Continue discrediting American culture by degrading all forms of artistic expression. An American Communist cell was told to “eliminate all good sculpture from parks and buildings; substitute shapeless, awkward, and meaningless forms.”
- Control art critics and directors of art museums. “Our plan is to promote ugliness, repulsive and meaningless art.”
- Eliminate all laws governing obscenity by calling them “censorship” and a violation of free speech and free press.
- Break down cultural standards of morality by promoting pornography and obscenity in books, magazines, movies, radio, and TV.
- Present homosexuality, degeneracy, and promiscuity as “normal, natural, and healthy.”
- Infiltrate the churches. Discredit the Bible.
- Eliminate prayer or any phrase of religious expression in the schools on the ground that it violates the principle of “separation of church and state.”
- Discredit the American Constitution by calling it inadequate, old-fashioned, out of step with modern needs, *etc.*

- Discredit the American Founding Fathers. Present them as selfish aristocrats who had no concern for the “common man.”
- Support any Socialist movement to give centralized control over any part of the culture--education, social agencies, welfare programs, mental health clinics, *etc.*
- Discredit and eventually dismantle the FBI.
- Infiltrate and gain control of more unions.
- Infiltrate and gain control of big business.
- Transfer some of the powers of arrest from the police to social agencies.
- Dominate the psychiatric profession and use mental health laws as a means of gaining coercive control over those who oppose Communist goals.
- Discredit the family as an institution. Encourage promiscuity and easy divorce.
- Emphasize the need to raise children away from the “negative influence” of parents.
- Create the impression that violence and insurrection are legitimate aspects of the American tradition [*e.g.*, Black Lives Matter & Antifa], that students and special-interest groups should rise up and use “united force” to solve economic, political, or social problems.

It is certainly not difficult to see that the above Communist goals are actually being increasingly achieved, as per Our Lady’s prediction. It is a direct consequence of the failure to conduct the consecration of Russia to the Blessed Mother.

But what now? What can we expect in the future?

Unfortunately, I expect that our day-to-day life will become almost unbearable, with our culture and morals destroyed by anti-God Communist errors spread everywhere. The other side of this bleak picture is Our Lady’s promise: “.....in the end my Immaculate Heart shall triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, which will be converted, and a time of peace will be given to the world.”

So do not despair. God will not leave uncompromising traditional Catholics in the catacombs indefinitely. No, I believe He will give us many more graces to strengthen us to fight the good fight with inner peace and hope for our heavenly reward.

Of course, it goes without saying that we must pray unceasingly, sacrifice, and live with complete confidence in God.

Words to Live by – from Catholic Tradition

It is vanity to wish for long life and to care little about a well-spent life. It is vanity to be concerned with the present only and not to make provision for things to come.

The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas à Kempis, Book I, Chapter 1.

The Indwelling of the Holy Trinity

Objective truth series – Reflection #23

Our Lord taught us:

If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. The spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not nor knoweth Him; but you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you and shall be in you. ...

In that day you shall know, that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ...

He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them; he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father: and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. ... If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.¹

How wonderful it is to think about Our dear Lord Jesus Christ, His Father, and the Holy Ghost abiding in our souls!

In our last reflection we considered how God wants us to become self-forgetful as a means to become more united to God. We also spoke of wanting to spend ourselves in the service of God which includes helping the souls of our neighbor.

¹ *St. John's Gospel*, 14:16-17, 20 & 23.

God gives Sanctifying Grace, the source of all supernatural virtues.

It is natural that we humans should want to be united to God. He is our last end and we were created to be with Him. In our Baptism we were given Sanctifying Grace which is the participation of the soul in the Divine goodness. We say “participation” because we are not God and can only have this grace as a habitual gift infused by God into our souls. This gift or quality in our souls does not change our human nature, which is still not divine. However, Sanctifying Grace, called *habitual grace* by St. Thomas Aquinas, makes the soul pleasing to God. He says further that “grace is a certain disposition which is presupposed to the infused virtues as their principle or root.”²

We mentioned in the *Objective Truth Series*’ very first *Reflection* (about God sculpting our souls) St. Thomas’ teaching that first God chooses a soul, then He loves that soul, and then makes the soul worthy of His Love by giving the soul Sanctifying Grace.

St. Thomas explains that along with Sanctifying Grace, God infuses the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Love involves an act of the will in which we value or esteem something highly. The highest thing that we can esteem is God as the chief Object of our supernatural happiness. This makes Charity, then, the certain perfection of love (in the sense that Charity is the highest kind of love).

St. Thomas also explains that:

There is a communication between man and God, inasmuch as He communicates His happiness to us, some kind of friendship must needs be based on this same communication.³

He adds further that, “the love which is based on this communication is charity” and thence, “charity is the friendship of man for God.” *Id.*

This friendship with God is so beautiful, and of course it is logical that our supernatural friendship with our neighbor is based on our friendship with God. Thus St. Paul speaks of charity as the “bond of perfection.”

The indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul

Friends communicate with each other and our prayer life is our communication with God. Included in prayer life is our focus on God. However, even though it seems too bold to

² *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.110 a.3, *ad* 3.

³ *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.23, a.1, *Respondeo*.

think about the Holy Trinity dwelling in one's soul, the fact remains that when one is in the state of grace, the reality is that the Trinity **is** dwelling in the soul.

What is this dwelling? Since God is a spirit and the human soul is immaterial, this “dwelling” is of course, not physical. God must dwell in the soul in some other way. St. Thomas says that God is indeed present in multiple ways in all things in the universe⁴ – even in rocks, plants, animals, and in the souls of those in mortal sin. But in those with sanctifying grace, His power and presence are incomparably stronger.

The Persons in God

We learn in our catechism that there are three Persons in one God. Unfortunately, most catechism books do not attempt to explain this truth to us. The term Person when referring to God is not used in the same way we humans use it when we refer to an individual intellectual creature. When we think about God, we must realize the Three Divine Persons are special. The use of the term Person is a special case or application.

First of all, we must consider that God, as the Supreme Being, is above all other existing things. God is completely simple. He has only one action [one act], which is, to exist. His existence is His nature. God reveals this to us when He calls Himself, “I am Who am” [Ex. 3:14]. By contrast, in us humans, our human nature does not include the very notion of existence or the necessity that we must exist. A man might exist, or might not.

Second of all, we must understand that God's only action is to simply exist. We can describe His action as one continuous action [act]; however, this act includes many aspects which our feeble human minds need to grasp one at a time.

To understand the term of Divine Person better, we need to take two particular aspects into consideration. The first aspect to consider is the one Divine Intellect. God thinks about Himself and knows Himself. His thought about Himself is called His Word or Divine Son. The fact that God thinks and knows helps us see that the Divine Intellect naturally thinks about Himself. The Thought/Word **is** His only Begotten Son. This Son is the 2nd Person of the Blessed Trinity Who shares the Divine Nature.

The second aspect to consider is the one Divine Will. God naturally wants Himself and loves Himself. This makes sense because He is the Supreme and most perfect Being. [Thus, He loves Himself infinitely because He is the Infinite Good and is infinitely worthy

⁴ *Summa*, Ia, Q.8, aa. 2 & 3. In article three, St. Thomas quotes Pope St. Gregory the Great, teaching: “God, by a common mode, is in all things, by His presence, power and substance. Still, **He is said to be present more familiarly in some by grace**”.

of love.] This love proceeds from both the Father and His only Begotten Son. This proceeding love is called the Holy Ghost, the third Person.

Thus, we see that God's one continual act involves His Intellect and Will in continual self-reflection and love. God's knowledge of all other existing things and His love of all other existing things are also included in His one continual act.

The importance of meditating on the Blessed Trinity, and Its Indwelling in us

Then it is so very important to try to foster the habit of focusing on this beautiful reality. We ought to strive to focus on the Trinity dwelling in the soul and talk to God; adore Him; thank Him; tell Him we are sorry for having offended Him; and ask His constant aid and protection.

How can we do this? One possible way is to imagine our soul as the monastery of the Holy Trinity and our heart as the chapel of this 'monastery'. Or one could imagine the soul as the monastery of the Holy Family and the dwelling-place of the Most Holy Trinity.

If one seeks solitude in his soul and tries to imagine the soul as the monastery of the Holy Family and the dwelling of the Most Holy Trinity—this will foster recollection and conversation with Mary, Joseph and Jesus and speaking with and adoring the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. One's heart may say this to Them:

O Wondrous Trinity Divine,
Thou dwellest in this heart of mine,
Unworthy am I to have Thee,
As a Guest, abiding in me.

Oh, Mary help me 'tis my prayer,
Please make me daily more aware,
Of the Majesty of the Three,
Divine Persons dwelling in me.

The consoling words of Thy Son,
Remind me that His Heart is won,
By true observance of His Laws,
The Triune God in the soul draws.

"Abide in Me, and I in thee,
There My Father will likewise be,
To make in your soul Our abode,
And keep you on the narrow road."

“The Spirit of truth comes to dwell,
Makes Divine love in you to swell,
Divine Friendship within you too,
To assist you, in all you do.”

This is the friendship so sublime,
Which makes a soul to heaven climb,
Helping one to, vigilant, keep,
Desiring truths to ponder deep,

Oh, St. Joseph, I need your aid,
To follow well the path thus made,
To focus on the Triune Guest,
And to see how to serve Him best.

My soul can be like a monk’s home,
I ne’er desire from there to roam,
To use as a place to adore,
To study my Guest, learn of Him more.

To serve Thee well, my Triune Friend,
Please preserve me unto the end,
Please let me ne’er abandon Thee,
Keep me close dearest Trinity!

There is no limiting principle for the evil (supposed) “right to choose”

If a mother’s (so-called) “right to choose” means she can **choose** to kill her baby **before** he is born, why can’t she **choose** to kill her baby **after** he’s born? How about when her baby is 3 years old? Or 8? Where’s the cut-off? ... Or is there one?



Catholic Candle note: We should study the Catholic Faith our whole life. Part of this duty is to understand more fully the truths of the Faith we already learned as children. Thus, for example, concerning the question “Who is God?”, we know from our *First Communion Catechism* that “God is the Supreme Being Who made all things.” During our life, we should learn more about God, as best we can, little-by-little, using the opportunities we have.

The article below is an aid to help us “peering a little more deeply” into a few related truths of the Faith which we already learned in our catechism as children. The article below is merely one more step in the journey of learning our Faith better.

Sanctifying Grace – the “Companion” of Charity; Necessary for Meriting from God

What is Charity, and How does it relate to Sanctifying Grace?

Charity is friendship with God. Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Church, explains this truth: “**charity is the friendship of man for God.**”⁵

⁵ Here is the longer quote from St. Thomas:

It is written (John 15:15): “I will not now call you servants . . . but My friends.” Now this was said to them by reason of nothing else than charity. Therefore, **charity is friendship.** ...

According to the Philosopher (Ethic. viii, 2,3) not every love has the character of friendship, but that love which is together with benevolence, when, to wit, we love someone so as to wish good to him. If, however, we do not wish good to what we love, but wish its good for ourselves, (thus we are said to love wine, or a horse, or the like), it is love not of friendship, but of a kind of concupiscence. For it would be absurd to speak of having friendship for wine or for a horse.

Yet neither does well-wishing suffice for friendship, for a certain mutual love is requisite, since friendship is between friend and friend: and this well-wishing is founded on some kind of communication.

Accordingly, since there is a communication between man and God, inasmuch as He communicates His happiness to us, some kind of friendship must needs be based on this same communication, of which it is written (1 Corinthians 1:9): “God is faithful: by Whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son.” The love which is based on this communication, is charity: wherefore it is evident that **charity is the friendship of man for God.**

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.23, a.1, *sed contra* and *respondeo* (emphasis added).

Without charity, a man is an enemy of God, since every man is at enmity with God through Original Sin⁶ (and mortal sin), unless (and until) he becomes His friend through the friendship of charity⁷, which is only acquired with Sanctifying Grace.⁸

Sanctifying Grace is God's Life within us⁹ and makes us holy and pleasing to God.¹⁰

⁶ As the psalmist teaches, concerning everyone being born with Original Sin: "I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me." *Psalm*, 50:7. St. Paul teaches that, because of Original Sin, we are all "by nature children of wrath". *Ephesians*, 2:3.

⁷ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth, following and quoting St. Augustine: "whosoever has not charity is wicked, because 'this gift alone of the Holy Ghost distinguishes the children of the kingdom from the children of perdition'". *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.178, a.2, *sed contra*, quoting St. Augustine's treatise on the Blessed Trinity, *De Trinitate*, bk.15, ch.18.

St. Paul teaches: "the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." *Romans*, 5:5.

⁸ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth, quoting St. Augustine:

Sanctifying Grace is given chiefly in order that man's soul may be united to God by charity. Wherefore Augustine says (De Trin. xv, 18): "A man is not transferred from the left side to the right, unless he receives the Holy Ghost, by Whom he is made a lover of God and of his neighbor."

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.172, a.4, *respondeo*.

⁹ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth:

[T]he light of **grace** which **is a participation of the Divine Nature** is something besides the infused virtues which are derived from and are ordained to this light

Summa, Ia IIae, Q.110, a.3, *respondeo*.

See also, St. John of the Cross, the Mystical Doctor of the Church, where he teaches the same truth: *Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza 38, §4.

St. Peter refers to Sanctifying Grace as making us "partakers of the Divine Nature". *2 Peter*, 1:4.

¹⁰ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth:

Even as when a man is said to be in another's good graces, it is understood that there is something in him pleasing to the other; so also, when anyone is said to have God's grace – with this difference, that what is pleasing to a man in another is presupposed to his love, but whatever is pleasing to God in a man is caused by the Divine love, as was said above.

Summa, Ia IIae, Q.110, a.1, ad 1.

Let us summarize what we covered so far: God's life is to know and love Himself, and that life is pure and perfect bliss; He is the only worthy object of His love and knowledge.¹¹

Yet the astounding fact is this: When we possess charity and Sanctifying Grace, we also participate in that very life of God – His love and knowledge for Himself! We know and love God in a way *similar to* the way that He Himself knows and love Himself. Note that we said “in a way similar to how He knows and loves Himself” – but not to the same extent.

This qualification of “*in a way similar to*” is very important. Perhaps an example might help: let us suppose a very bright philosopher who knows and can prove many truths about God, yet who lacks Sanctifying Grace. This man might be able to explain many natural truths about God (truths knowable by the human intellect without Revelation) which many or even most Catholics cannot prove because of a lack of education. Yet this bright man is not able to know God in the way that the simplest peasant can know Him when he has Sanctifying Grace.

What is the way the bright man knows God? He can prove things about God from a distant and cold perspective, in a dry, academic way. For example, he can prove there must be a God, because of such-and-such human reasoning. He can prove that this God must be eternal, and can prove many other truths. This is all good, but yet it is a “far cry” from what Sanctifying Grace does for the soul.

Let us now contrast: What can the peasant in the state of grace do which the bright philosopher in the state of mortal sin cannot do? The peasant is able to know God as a loving Father – a personal God Who cares about each of us deeply, Who was born and died for us, Who is always looking out for us, guiding us, showering us with gifts, and Who longs to have us with Him forever in heavenly bliss. But love requires knowledge of the thing loved. Thus, because the peasant is able to know God in this way, he is also

A little below these words of St. Thomas, he says “***we speak of grace inasmuch as it makes man pleasing to God***”.

Summa, Ia IIae, Q.110, a.3, *respondeo* (emphasis added).

Here is how the *Baltimore Catechism* #3 explains this truth:

Q. 461. What is sanctifying grace?

A. Sanctifying grace is that grace which makes the soul holy and pleasing to God.

¹¹ The only way God knows creatures is through knowing Himself and knowing us as His works. *Summa*, Ia, Q.14, a.7, *respondeo*; Ia, Q.16, a.7, *respondeo*. The reason why God loves us creatures is because we are His works and He loves His works and the good He put into us. *Summa*, Ia, Q.14, a.5; Ia, Q.20, a.2.

able to love God in a way that bright philosopher is simply not able to.

The “Companionship” of Sanctifying Grace and Charity: Sanctifying Grace and Charity always come into a soul together¹² and increase together (and they leave together, in any soul that has the great tragedy of committing a mortal sin).¹³

Thus, we can see that Sanctifying Grace and charity are inseparable “companions” in the supernatural life. Here is how God’s Life and His Love for Himself are reflected in our possessing Sanctifying Grace and charity:

- God *is* His Own Divine Life; Sanctifying Grace is God’s Life in us by participation.
- God has one act, which is to love Himself.¹⁴ By charity, we love God in a similar way.

Without Charity and Sanctifying Grace, we cannot merit.

What is merit?

To “merit” means “to be worthy of or entitled or liable to earn”.¹⁵

Merit is a right to a reward. For example, let us suppose a man who is in mortal sin discovers a plot to kill and overthrow the king. The man informs the king. This deed deserves praise and reward, because perhaps it not only saved the king himself, but also the whole kingdom. Thus, the king – if he is a just man – might say to the man, “Well

¹² Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth:

Sanctifying Grace is given chiefly in order that man’s soul may be united to God by charity.

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.172, a.4, *respondeo*.

¹³ Mortal sin deprives a man of sanctifying grace. *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.109, a.7, *respondeo*. Mortal sin deprives a man of charity. *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.88, a.1, *respondeo*.

¹⁴ This same one act of loving Himself is also an act of knowing Himself. It is hard for us to understand this, but God is wholly simple and has only one act, which is to know and to love Himself. *Summa*, Ia, Q.3; Ia, Q.16, a.5, ad 1.

¹⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/merit> (definition of the transitive verb, “merit”).

done! You have merited a reward and my gratitude.” In that case, the man merited a natural reward from a mere man.

Merit can be natural or supernatural.

But what if the man did the same thing, but this time possessed Sanctifying Grace and charity? When in the state of grace, the motive behind our actions can be that of love of God, and thus take on a supernatural dimension. In such case, not only would the man gain natural merit from the human king, but also supernatural merit. God, Who is Justice itself, might well give him natural gifts (*e.g.*, good health, success), but also supernatural gifts (*e.g.*, a right to a higher place in heaven, an increase of virtue and grace).

But without Sanctifying Grace, we cannot merit anything from God.

Anyone who is without Sanctifying Grace is God’s enemy.¹⁶ How could God’s enemies ever merit from Him while remaining His enemies and remaining in mortal sin – with their wills turned against Him?¹⁷ Thus, it is not surprising that a person cannot merit from God unless he is in the state of Sanctifying Grace.¹⁸

¹⁶ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth, following and quoting St. Augustine: “whosoever has not charity is wicked, because ‘this gift alone of the Holy Ghost distinguishes the children of the kingdom from the children of perdition’”. *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.178, a.2, *Sed contra*, quoting St. Augustine’s treatise, *De Trinitate*, bk.15, ch.18.

As the psalmist teaches: “I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me.” *Psalms*, 50:7. St. Paul teaches that, because of Original Sin, we are all “by nature children of wrath”. *Ephesians*, 2:3.

¹⁷ Concerning three ways that all sin is an infinite offense against Almighty God and concerning a fourth way in which mortal sin is an infinite offense against God, read this article: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-infinite-evil-of-sin.html>

¹⁸ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth, referring to Sanctifying Grace using its other name, *i.e.*, “habitual grace”, since Sanctifying Grace remains in (inhabits) those in the state of grace:

The preparation of the human will for good is twofold: the first, whereby it is prepared to operate rightly and to enjoy God; and this preparation of the will cannot take place without the ***habitual gift of grace***, which ***is the principle of meritorious works***

Summa, Ia IIae, Q.109, a.6, *respondeo* (emphasis added).

Let us “unpack” the consequences a little further, of the truth that without Sanctifying Grace, a person can merit ***absolutely nothing*** from God. This means that:

- A man in the state of mortal sin who builds orphanages, schools, or monasteries (which are good works) does not merit even the slightest thing from God, by doing so.¹⁹
- A man in the state of mortal sin who teaches the Catholic Faith, does not merit even the slightest thing from God, by doing so.²⁰

Here is how the *Catechism of St. Pius X* teaches this truth:

5 Q. Why do not those who are in mortal sin participate in these goods [shared in the Communion of Saints]?

A. Because that which unites the faithful with God, and with Jesus Christ as His living members, rendering them capable of performing meritorious works for life eternal, is the grace of God which is the supernatural life of the soul; and hence as those who are in mortal sin are without the grace of God, they are excluded from perfect communion in spiritual goods, **nor can they accomplish works meritorious towards life eternal.**

Catechism of St. Pius X, section, *Ninth Article of the Creed*, subsection, *Communion of Saints* (bracketed words added to the question, to show the context).

Here is how the *Baltimore Catechism* #3 teaches this truth:

Q. 141. Why then do we say a soul is dead while in a state of mortal sin?

A. We say a soul is dead while in a state of mortal sin, because in that state it is as helpless as a dead body, and **can merit nothing** for itself.

¹⁹ We already implicitly know this truth, since we know what St. Paul teaches regarding the importance of Charity, which is the inseparable “companion” of Sanctifying Grace:

And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, ... and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

1 *Corinthians*, 13:3.

²⁰ We already implicitly know this truth, since we know what St. Paul teaches regarding the importance of Charity, which is the inseparable “companion” of Sanctifying Grace:

If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ... And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

1 *Corinthians*, 13:1-2.

- A man in the state of mortal sin who dedicates his life to fighting communism or disease, or who dies trying to rescue a child in a burning building, does not earn anything at all from God, by doing so.²¹

This is true even if the man's work was an instrument to save many other souls and brought about much good in other ways. Persons without Sanctifying Grace **never merit** from God by the good works they do. On the other hand, though, those persons are able to commit further evil. By choosing to commit more sins, they offend God further and deserve further punishment.

This does not mean that a man in mortal sin never **does** anything good and that he cannot have any **natural** virtues. When the man teaches the truth or constructs a building, those are truly **natural** good works and this fact is not "taken away" by the man's inability to merit from God for those works.²² Again, a man might merit natural rewards, such as from the human king, as explained in the above example.

Natural virtue is not a source of supernatural merit, when a man is in mortal sin.²³ For example, a Satanist (or other enemy of God) could possibly have the habit of being patient with his neighbor or be habitually generous to a crippled child. These habits (patience and generosity) would be **natural** virtues. What **is** impossible is for such a man to merit supernaturally from God, by his (natural) good acts and virtues.

We ordinary Catholics, who are unaccustomed to the ways of God, might tend to falsify the truths (above) by supposing that there is a way "through the back door" for a man in

²¹ We already implicitly know this truth, since we know what St. Paul teaches regarding the importance of Charity, which is the inseparable "companion" of Sanctifying Grace:

If I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

1 *Corinthians*, 13:3.

²² Here is one way St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth:

Yet because human nature is not altogether corrupted by sin, so as to be shorn of every natural good, even in the state of corrupted nature it can, by virtue of its natural endowments, work some particular good, as to build dwellings, plant vineyards, and the like

Summa, Ia IIae, Q. 109, a.2, *respondeo*.

²³ Here is one way St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth:

[W]ithout grace man cannot merit everlasting life; yet he can perform works conducing to a good which is natural to man, as "to toil in the fields, to drink, to eat, or to have friends," and the like, as Augustine says. ...

Summa, Ia IIae, Q. 109, a.5, *respondeo*.

mortal sin to merit in some way. For example, although we know that a man in mortal sin cannot merit from God, we might suppose that, when God sees the man's (human) good works or (natural) virtues, God might decide to give that man grace on that basis, *i.e.*, for this reason. But our supposition (*viz.*, that God might act this way) would contradict the truth that a man in mortal sin ***never merits from God by anything he does***. In other words:

Nothing done by a person without Sanctifying Grace inclines God to give him any blessing or good.

Remember the explanation above: *to “merit” is to be a cause of good or to earn good in some way*. If a man in mortal sin were to influence God favorably toward him in any way, through the good works that man did, so that God gave him something which the man would not have otherwise received, then that man has merited while in mortal sin. In other words, that man's good works would have been a cause of the good he received from God. This is impossible.²⁴ Thus, God ***never*** gives ***any*** good to a man because of that man's good works while he is in mortal sin, because that man cannot merit anything by his works.

However, this truth certainly does not mean that God could never (or would never) give grace to a man in mortal sin. Rather, the Sanctifying Grace and other good things which

²⁴ St. Thomas teaches that: “Man by himself can no wise rise from sin without the help of grace.” *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.109, a.7, *respondeo*.

St. Thomas teaches that a man in mortal sin is as unable to merit return to grace, as a dead man is unable to cause his soul to return to his body. Here are St. Thomas's words:

[M]an cannot be restored by himself; but he requires the light of grace to be poured upon him anew, as if the soul were infused into a dead body for its resurrection.

Summa, Ia IIae, Q.109, a.7, ad 2.

Here is how the *Catechism of St. Pius X* teaches this truth:

5 Q. Why do not those who are in mortal sin participate in these goods?

A. Because that which unites the faithful with God, and with Jesus Christ as His living members, rendering them capable of performing meritorious works for life eternal, is the grace of God which is the supernatural life of the soul; and hence as those who are in mortal sin are without the grace of God, they are excluded from perfect communion in spiritual goods, **nor can they accomplish works meritorious towards life eternal**.

Catechism of St. Pius X, section, *Ninth Article of the Creed*, subsection, *Communion of Saints*.

God gives to a man in mortal sin are in no way ***merited*** by him. They are given as a free, undeserved gift of God, not based on anything he did.

In a future article, we will look at how someone can merit supernatural good ***in some way*** (called “condignly”), when he is ***already*** in the state of Sanctifying Grace.

Conclusion

A man in mortal sin cannot merit Sanctifying Grace or any other good from God, by the (human) good works he does or by the (natural) virtues he has. Sanctifying Grace is a free gift of God, not merited in any way by the man in mortal sin.

Reasons for a person to pray, do good works, and do penance, even if he is in mortal sin

The horror of sin, especially mortal sin

Sin is always a great evil.²⁵ All sin is an infinite evil in three ways and all mortal sin is an infinite evil in a fourth way also.²⁶ Everything else which we might call a “misfortune” (and which is out of our control), is God’s Will for us and is for our good. St. Paul assures us that, except for our sins, “*all* things work together unto the good for those who love God.” *Romans*, 8:28 (emphasis added). Thus, our own sins are the only true evil for us.

The most tragic of all sin, is mortal sin.²⁷ No number of venial sins could ever be as horrific as a single mortal sin.²⁸

A person in mortal sin must strive immediately to get back into God’s grace

²⁵ Here is how St. Alphonsus de Liguori, Doctor of the Church, teaches this truth:

A single venial sin is more displeasing to God than all the good works we can perform.

Uniformity with God’s Will, §6.

Here is how St. John of the Cross, Doctor of the Catholic Church, teaches this truth:

Our Lord said in the Gospel: “He that is unfaithful in little will be unfaithful also in much.” For he that avoids the small sin will not fall into the great sin; but great evil is inherent in the small sin, since it has already penetrated within the fence and wall of the heart; and as the proverb says: Once begun, half done.

Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book III, ch.20, section 1.

Here is how Cardinal Newman compares the smallest sin to the greatest human suffering:

The Catholic Church holds it better for the sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail, and for all the many millions on it to die of starvation in extremest agony, as far as temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say, should be lost, but should commit one single venial sin, should tell one willful untruth, or should steal one poor farthing without excuse.

Apologia Vita Sua, by John Henry Cardinal Newman, Image Books, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, © 1956, p.324.

²⁶ Read the explanation of this truth here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-infinite-evil-of-sin.html>

²⁷ Read the explanation of this truth here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-infinite-evil-of-sin.html>

²⁸ Read the explanation of this truth here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-infinite-evil-of-sin.html>

When a person has the tragedy of being in mortal sin, he cannot merit through anything he says or does.²⁹

Obviously, the most important thing he can do is immediately seek to get back in the state of Sanctifying Grace, by making *Acts of Contrition* as perfectly as possible³⁰ and by sacramental Confession (if it is available without compromise).³¹ Beware of Bishop Richard Williamson's evil advice that you should go to confession to any priest who believes in sin.³²

A person cannot be sure that his act of contrition is perfect enough. If the person did succeed in making a perfect act of contrition, he is then back in the state of Sanctifying

²⁹ Read the explanation of this truth here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/06/14/sanctifying-grace-companion-charity/>

³⁰ The *Catholic Encyclopedia* teaches:

Perfect contrition, with the desire of receiving the Sacrament of Penance, restores the sinner to grace at once. This is certainly the teaching of the Scholastic doctors (Peter Lombard in P.L., CXCII, 885; St. Thomas, *In Lib. Sent. IV, ibid.*; St. Bonaventure, *In Lib. Sent. IV, ibid.*).

Catholic Encyclopedia, 1908, Volume 4, article: *Contrition*, page 339.

After this first attempt at a perfect act of contrition, he should continue to attempt to make further perfect acts of contrition.

Regardless of the state of his soul, everyone should strive greatly, every day, to make perfect acts of charity and perfect acts of contrition for his past sins. A man in mortal sin should do this even more urgently.

Read this article about making perfect acts of contrition:

- <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/04/02/rome-has-the-churches-but-traditional-catholics-have-the-faith/>

³¹ Read these two articles about avoiding compromise confessions:

- <https://catholiccandle.org/?s=excuses>
- <https://catholiccandle.org/2020/04/02/a-compromise-groups-masses-and-sacraments-do-not-give-grace-because-the-end-does-not-justify-the-means/>

³² Read an explanation of the evil of his advice here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/williamson-confess-priest-believes.html>

Grace³³ and can immediately begin meriting again, while he seeks to go to confession (to an uncompromising priest, as soon as one is available).

Thus, one reason for a person to continue his prayers, good works, and penances even before going to confession, is because they are meritorious if he is back in the state of grace.

But a person in mortal sin should still strive to do good, even though there is no merit

Even if the person were not back in the state of grace, he should continue praying, doing good works and doing penance, although he would not merit supernaturally for that conduct. There are five reasons to continue this conduct even while in mortal sin:

1. This conduct does good on a natural level;
2. This conduct avoids harm on a natural level;
3. This conduct enforces habits which are good on the natural level, to help us even when we cannot merit;
4. This conduct avoids harm to ourselves by avoiding the strengthening of our bad habits or making us more prone to evil which would harm us on a natural and a supernatural level; and
5. We should always act according to reason and, even when in mortal sin, our reason tells us to pray, perform good works, and do penance.

Below, we discuss each of these five reasons.

1. This conduct accomplishes good on a natural level.

Such prayers, good works, and penance set a good example, especially for those to whom he is nearest and loves the most. Does he love his friends and family? If yes, doesn't he want to do them good even if he does not benefit from that good? Of course, he does! Love is "willing the good for another".³⁴ So, a man who loves even naturally, wills the

³³ Of course, he is still obliged to go to confession when he has the chance to do so, to an uncompromising priest.

³⁴ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Church, explains this truth:

According to the Philosopher (Ethic. viii, 2,3) not every love has the character of friendship, but that love which is together with benevolence, when, to wit, we *love someone so*

good for those whom he loves. So, continuing his prayer, good works, and penance is a good example which does good to his loved ones. This is especially true for parents and spouses, whose very vocation involves the care of and love of others.

Nor does it suffice to merely pretend to do good so as to give good example. That pretense is a sin of dissimulation – not leading an honest life – which is a sin against the Divine Law and the Natural Law.

Further, most fakery is discovered and it does even more harm to a person if he is a fraud, especially in the good he does.

2. This conduct avoids harm on a natural level.

By contrast, the failure to pray, do good works, and do penance can scandalize others, especially those who are nearest and dearest to him. A period of such bad example from him can ruin his friends and relatives for life, even if the person himself were to return to the state of grace. Again, a parent in mortal sin might, for example, feel like a hypocrite or unworthy to pray the Rosary with his family, and thus be tempted to not do so. But it is part of his duty and part of love to show good example to his spouse and children.

3. Prayer, good works, and penance enforce habits which are good on the natural level, to help us even when we cannot merit from them.

Men are creatures of habit. Even on a natural level, it is easier for a person to later pray, do good works, and do penance *meritoriously once back in the state of Sanctifying Grace*, if he maintains those natural habits even while unhappily unable to merit due to mortal sin.

Even while a person is (tragically) in mortal sin, he can work on acquiring or strengthening his *natural* virtues, *e.g.*, patience. Good conduct while in mortal sin can help a person acquire or strengthen those natural virtues.

as to wish good to him. If, however, we do not wish good to what we love, but wish its good for ourselves, (thus we are said to love wine, or a horse, or the like), it is love not of friendship, but of a kind of concupiscence. For it would be absurd to speak of having friendship for wine or for a horse.

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.23, a.1, *sed contra* and *respondeo* (emphasis added).

4. **This conduct avoids harm to ourselves by avoiding the strengthening of our bad habits or making us more prone to evil which would harm us on a natural and a supernatural level.**

Further, failures to continue those good practices lets down our guard and makes us more likely to commit future sins we otherwise would not have committed.

5. **Even when in mortal sin, our reason tells us to pray, perform good works, and do penance.**

Our reason is our highest and most God-like part of our nature. We should always act according to this highest and best part: *viz.*, our reason.

Our power of reason is the way God made us in His own Image.³⁵

Even on a natural level, we know God is the source of all goodness and that we owe Him worship and prayer.³⁶

Even when in the state of mortal sin, a person's reason tells him to pray, perform good works, and do penance as a matter of justice to God.

He owes this to God even if he does not merit from this worship and prayer. This debt to God is right and reasonable. A person must pay his debt to God even if he were not to merit, just as a child must show respect for his parents, keep his room neat, and do his schoolwork even though he did not receive a reward for doing so. Thus, reason tells a person that he must pray even if he is in mortal sin.

A person's reason tells him to continue doing good works – they are a natural good and a man in mortal sin should follow his reason doing good works even when he cannot merit supernaturally from those good works.

Even on a natural level, we know that we must conform our lower passions to our reason and our will, and that this task requires that we mortify our passions and do penance.

Committing mortal sin is a “wake-up call” which should immediately cause us to *increase* our prayers and good works.

³⁵ *Summa*, Ia, Q.93, a.2, found here: <https://www.newadvent.org/summa/1093.htm#article2>

³⁶ *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.109, a.3.

Not only should a person not stop praying and doing good works following commission of a mortal sin, but he should immediately *increase* his prayers and good works.

His sin is a reminder of his weakness. The best remedy for this weakness is prayer. When a person sins, it is unreasonable (and is a further sin) to not take concrete means to avoid similar falls in the future. So, the more “wake-up calls” (*i.e.*, sins) a person commits, the more he should realize his need for more prayer – and take those means.

Conclusion

Sin is the only true evil. Mortal sin is the gravest evil and destroys a person’s ability to merit. However, even a man in mortal sin should continue his prayers, good works, and penances, to avoid further harm to himself and others and to make it easier to do good in the future.

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