

LETTERS OF GOLD

From the House of the Divine Will

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ANNOUNCING THE THIRD FIAT OF GOD Creation - then Redemption - now Sanctification

God is now calling souls back to the Original Order, Place and Purpose for which He created mankind—as it was in the Garden of Eden—in order to fulfill the Lord's Prayer to the Father, *"Thy Will be done on earth as in Heaven."*

"The Holy Spirit wants to give Christians a 'new and divine holiness' at the Dawn of the Third Millennium" - Pope John Paul II



The Essence of Holiness before and after the Incarnation (Part One)

Introduction:

To the readers of Letters of Gold by the Internet, I have sent some notices that I was making a study of Holiness in the various periods of human history, both before and after the coming the Incarnation, and that I would write about it in the Letters of Gold.

I have learned much in my study so far and have also found that the subject is very vast and would require writing more than a book to do justice to the subject of Holiness because there are so many realities, interrelated factors and mysteries concerning the topic of Holiness.

So, a succinct statement of what seems to be the core or essence of Holiness in human beings will be made, followed by descriptions of many of the factors that comprise and affect Holiness in various stages of history.

Many sources have been used. The main sources have been the 1912 Catholic Encyclopedia published by the Robert Appleton Company and the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. The 1912 Encyclopedia has provided an abundance of material by numerous, highly qualified contributors. The "Book of Heaven" will be emphasized in the final part.

It has been interesting to find that there are various theological opinions on many of the fields of inquiry in my study on Holiness. There are many theological subjects of which the Church has not made definitive statements and others, of course, where the Church has made formal definitions. For the most part descriptions will be presented of those realities defined by the Church. For those not so defined there will be presented those more generally accepted by theologians and spiritual writers. Readers should also be aware that the legitimate development of doctrine over the centuries is still ongoing.

I welcome the constructive responses of those readers who may have insights and knowledge at variance with some of what they read in the following paragraphs.

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Some of the many factors involved in Holiness are: the human will; the Divine Will; Sanctifying Grace; Actual Grace (both sufficient and efficacious); the theological virtues (Faith, Hope and Charity); the moral virtues (chief of which are the Cardinal Virtues—Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance); the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, knowledge of God; the grace of Justification; the Sacraments; resignation to the Divine Will; abandonment to the Divine Will and Providence; possession of the Divine Will; disposition; participation in the Divine Nature; merits of Christ; human merit; the spirit of prayer and humility; the metaphysics of being, essence, substance, matter, form, accidents, causality, etc.; and more.



The Essence or Core of Holiness:

First: God is by essence eternal, infinite holiness, and creatures are holy only by participation in God's holiness. Whatever sanctity creatures possess comes to them as a Divine gift.

From all that I have read, the essence of holiness (in the human order) seems quite simply to be participation in the Life of God through the possession of Sanctifying Grace which is gratuitously infused by God in the soul who intentionally does his Will in faith.

Growth in holiness, *in the human order*, means growth in Sanctifying Grace and union with God brought about in many and varied ways, which will be touched upon later.

Sanctifying Grace is initially given to the soul at the moment of Justification. In the case of the Justification of infants, the intention and faith are supplied through the parents.

Justification prior to the time of the Incarnation came by faith in the coming Redeemer and his Passion. Certain ceremonies (sometimes called "Sacraments of the Old Law") among the Hebrew people in Old Testament times served as signs of Justification. The Rite of Circumcision served as such a sign as well as sign of distinction of the Jews from the Gentiles.

After the Incarnation, Justification comes with the Sacrament of Baptism following faith in the Redeemer who has come, suffered, died and risen.

Supernatural Grace:

Sanctifying Grace and *Actual Grace* are supernatural graces which have as their purpose the supernatural destination of the soul in the beatific vision and the eternal abode of Heaven. These Graces are given gratuitously to souls by the Author of Grace.

Sanctifying Grace:

Because Sanctifying Grace is invisible and mysterious, theologians must question, study and arrive at answers about its inner nature, its operations and effects in souls, and what accompanies it when Divine Love and Mercy grant it to souls. The following are several descriptive points about Sanctifying Grace taught or understood by the Catholic Church in its definitive teachings and accepted theological opinions.

- 1.** Sanctifying Grace forms the holiness of the soul and provides the supernatural foundation for the active principles of maintaining and growing in holiness, which are the theological and moral virtues, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the personal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit Himself. Sanctifying Grace remits sin and sanctifies and beautifies the soul who receives it. When first received in the soul, Sanctifying Grace inaugurates the state of sanctity in that soul and makes the baptized person an adopted child of God.
- 2.** Sanctifying Grace and Holiness in the soul are completely dependent upon the Divine Will and the cooperation of the human will. It is the Divine Will which chooses to give, and it is the human will that chooses to correspond to the gratuitous, actual graces communicated by the Divine Will that lead the soul to Justification and initial infusion of Sanctifying Grace, the maintenance and growth in Sanctifying Grace, and the recovery of Sanctifying Grace if lost by mortal sin. Venial Sin does not extinguish Sanctifying Grace.
- 3.** The process of Justification makes the soul acceptable to God and eligible for Heaven and is accomplished with the infusion of Sanctifying Grace and remission of sin.
- 4.** The infusion of Sanctifying Grace takes place instantly at the moment of justification.
- 5.** The Theological Virtue of Charity is distinct from Sanctifying Grace but is infused in the soul with Sanctifying Grace received in Baptism. She also allows for the possibility that Faith and Hope could be infused during the process of justification and before Baptism. And some theologians hold that not only the Cardinal Virtues but all the moral virtues are infused with Baptism.
- 6.** The Holy Spirit is the Giver of Sanctifying Grace and is distinguished from Sanctifying Grace as a giver is from his gift. He makes us holy and pleasing to God by giving us Sanctifying Grace.
- 7.** The Holy Spirit is God and can be called the Uncreated Grace, because He is present in the soul with his gift of created Sanctifying Grace. The precise manner of his presence in the justified soul is not defined by the Church, and there are differing theological opinions concerning the manner of his presence.
- 8.** Sanctifying Grace is a supernatural quality infused into the soul by God and which inheres in the soul as a habit by which we participate in the Divine Nature. It is an active reality, although it is not a substance which exists apart from the soul. It is an accident inhering in the soul, having become a permanent, supernatural quality of the soul.
(“Permanent,” here, means that it remains with the soul forever, unless a mortal sin is committed and Sanctifying Grace is lost. Once lost, Sanctifying Grace can be restored by proper repentance.)
- 9.** After Baptism, Sanctifying Grace can be increased in the soul through the other Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and by other means such as docile acceptance and love of the cross, acts of virtue, attentive prayer, imitation of Christ...
- 10.** The initial infusion of Sanctifying Grace at Baptism immediately removes the stain of Original Sin and remits any other sin in the soul, but the debilitating effects of Original Sin, primarily concupiscence, remain with the soul and can impede increases of

Sanctifying Grace. Lack of proper disposition and lack of cooperation with actual graces also impede increases in Sanctifying Grace.

11. The Church teaches that we cannot be absolutely certain of possessing Sanctifying Grace (except by a special revelation), that Sanctifying Grace can be lost, and that some souls possess more Sanctifying Grace than others.

12. Sanctifying Grace transforms the substance of the soul making it capable of producing charitable acts, and the simultaneously infused theological virtue of Charity supernaturally informs and influences the human will to actually operate in performing charitable acts. Deducing from this, some theologians include the supernatural moral virtues as being infused simultaneously with the Theological Virtue of Charity because of the relationship of Love of God with Love of Neighbor.

13. As mentioned above, the principal moral virtues are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. Some of the subsidiary moral virtues are abstinence (i.e. moderation in the use of food), sobriety, chastity, modesty, humility, meekness, patience, munificence, magnanimity, perseverance...

14. Precisely how the soul in the State of Grace participates in the Divine Nature has not been defined by the Church, although there have been some theological opinions. One opinion is that participation in the Divine Nature may be understood as an interior assimilation with God which allows the soul to share those goods of the Divine Order, which would naturally pertain to God alone.

15. The formal operations of Sanctifying Grace produce in the soul: sanctity, beauty, friendship and adoptive sonship of God, which entitles one to share in the paternal inheritance of the beatific vision.

16. Friendship with God is an excelling effect of Sanctifying Grace, because one of the results of Original Sin is that man became a servant and also an enemy of God. [Before Original Sin man was not a servant; rather, he was a legitimate, created son of God and member of the Divine Family.]

17. This re-birth in God is not brought about by an issuance of the substance of God, as in the eternal generation of the Word from the Father, but is an adoptive sonship coming from a state of unrelatedness to a relationship of adoption, gratuitously granted by the Father in his love as an adopting Parent and with the consent of the adopted child.

18. All that is said above about Grace and Holiness is derived solely from the Satisfactory and Meritorious actions of Jesus our Redeemer.



Themes on Holiness will be continued in the next issue of “Letters of Gold” to include the subject of actual grace and more on holiness in the Old and New Testament eras.

The culminating part of this series will demonstrate the infinite transcendence of the holiness of the Third Fiat of God.