

mortal sin. (Cf. Trent, sess. VI, can. xi: "Si quis dixerit, homines justificari vel sola imputatione justitiae Christi, vel sola peccatorum remissione, exclusa gratia et caritate, quae in cordibus eorum per Spiritum Sanctum diffundatur atque illis inhaereat. . . , a.s.") In considering the effects of justification it will be useful to compare the Catholic doctrine of real forgiveness of sin with the Protestant theory that sin is merely "covered" and not imputed. By declaring the grace of justification, or sanctifying grace, to be the only formal cause of justification, the Council of Trent intended to emphasize the fact that in possessing sanctifying grace we possess the whole essence of the state of justification with all its formal effects; that is, we possess freedom from sin and sanctity, and indeed freedom from sin *by means* of sanctity. Such a remission of sin could not consist in a mere covering or non-imputation of sins, which continue their existence out of view; it must necessarily consist in the real obliteration and annihilation of the guilt. This genuinely Biblical concept of justification forms a essential element of Catholicism.

Although it is a Catholic dogma that sanctifying grace and sin (original and mortal) do never exist simultaneously in the soul, there may be, nevertheless a diversity of opinion regarding the extent of this incompatibility, according as it is considered as either moral, physical, or metaphysical in character. According to the now universally rejected opinion of the Nominalists (Occam, Gabriel Biel) and the Scotists (Mastrius, Henno) the contrast between grace and sin is based on a free decree and acceptance of God, or in other words, the contrast is merely moral. This would logically imply in contradiction to the "unica causa formalis" of the Council of Trent, a twofold formal cause of justification (cf. Pohle, "Dogmatik", II, 4th ed., Paderborn, 1909, p.512). Suarez (De gratia, VII, 20) and some of his followers in defending a physical contrast come nearer the truth. In their explanation grace and sin exclude each other with the same necessity as do fire and water, although in both cases God, by a miracle of his omnipotence, could suspend the general law and force the two hostile elements to exist peacefully side by side. This opinion might be safely accepted were sanctifying grace only a physical ornament of the soul. But since in reality it is an ethical form of sanctification by which even an infant in receiving baptism is necessarily made just and pleasing to God, there must be between the concepts of grace and of sin a metaphysical and absolute contradiction, which not even Divine omnipotence can alter and destroy. For this last opinion, defended by the Thomists and the majority of theologians, there is also a solid foundation in Holy Writ. For the contrast between grace and sin is as great as between light and darkness (2

Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:8), between life and death (Romans 5:21; Colossians 2:13; 1 John 3:14), between God and idols, Christ and Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15 sqq.), etc. Thus it follows from Holy Writ that by the infusion of sanctifying grace sin is destroyed and blotted out of absolute necessity, and that the Protestant theory of "covering and not imputing sin" is both a philosophical and a theological impossibility. Besides the principal effect of justification, i.e. real obliteration of sin by means of sanctification, there is a whole series of other effects: beauty of the soul, friendship with God, and Divine adoption. These, as freely bestowed gifts of God, cannot be regarded as formal effects of justification.

(4) The Qualities of Justification

We have seen that Protestants claim the following three qualities for justification: certainty, equality, the impossibility of ever losing it. Diametrically opposed to these qualities are those defended by the Council of Trent (sess. VI, cap. 9-11): uncertainty (*incertitudo*), inequality (*inaequalitas*), amissibility (*ammissibilitas*).

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The Catholic Doctrine on Justification

We have an authentic explanation of the Catholic doctrine in the famous "Decretum de justificatione" of the Sixth Session (13 Jan., 1547) of the Council of Trent, which gives in the clearest manner all necessary information about the process, causes, effects, and qualities of justification.

(1) The Process of Justification (Processus justificationis)

Since justification as an application of the Redemption to the individual presupposes the fall of the entire human race, the Council of Trent quite logically begins with the fundamental statement that original sin has weakened and deflected, but not entirely destroyed or extinguished the freedom of the human will (Trent, sess. VI, cap. i: "Liberum arbitrium minime extinctum, viribus licet attenuatum et inclinatum"). Nevertheless, as the children of Adam were really corrupted by original sin, they could not of themselves arise from their fall nor shake off the bonds of sin, death, and Satan. Neither the natural faculties left in man, nor the observance of the Jewish Law could achieve this. Since God alone was able to free us from this great misery, He sent in His infinite love His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, Who by His bitter passion and death on the cross redeemed fallen man and thus became the Mediator between God and man. But if the grace of Redemption merited by Christ is to be appropriated by the individual, he must be "regenerated by God", that is he must be justified. What then is meant by justification? Justification denotes that change or transformation in the soul by which man is transferred from the state of original sin, in which as a child of Adam he was born, to that of grace and Divine sonship through Jesus Christ, the second Adam, our Redeemer (i.e., cap.iv: "Justificatio impii. . . translatio ab eo statu, in quo homo nascitur filius primi Adae, in statum gratiae et adoptionis filiorum Dei per secundum Adam, Jesum Christum, Salvatorem nostrum"). In the New Law this justification cannot, according to Christ's precept, be effected except at the fountain of regeneration, that is, by the baptism of water. While in Baptism infants are forthwith cleansed of the stain of original sin without any preparation on their part, the adult must pass through a moral preparation, which consists essentially in turning from sin and towards God. This entire process receives its first impulse from the supernatural grace of vocation (absolutely independent of man's merits), and requires an intrinsic union of the Divine and human action, of grace

and moral freedom of election, in such a manner, however, that the will can resist, and with full liberty reject the influence of grace (Trent, l.c., can.iv: "If any one should say that free will, moved and set in action by God, cannot cooperate by assenting to God's call, nor dissent if it wish. . . let him be anathema"). By this decree the Council not only condemned the Protestant view that the will in the reception of grace remains merely passive, but also forestalled the Jansenistic heresy regarding the impossibility of resisting actual grace. With what little right heretics in defence of their doctrine appeal to St. Augustine, may be seen from the following brief extract from his writings: "He who made you without your doing does not without your action justify you. Without your knowing He made you, with your willing He justifies you, but it is He who justifies, that the justice be not your own" (Serm. clxix, c. xi, n.13). Regarding St. Augustine's doctrine cf. J. Jausbach, "Die Ethik des hl. Augustinus", II, Freiburg, 1909, pp. 208-58.

We now come to the different states in the process of justification. The Council of Trent assigns the first and most important place to faith, which is styled "the beginning, foundation and root of all justification" (Trent, l.c., cap.viii). Cardinal Pallavicini (Hist. Conc. Trid., VIII, iv, 18) tells us that all the bishops present at the council fully realized how important it was to explain St. Paul's saying that man is justified through faith. Comparing Bible and Tradition they could not experience any serious difficulty in showing that fiduciary faith was an absolutely new invention and that the faith of justification was identical with a firm belief in the truths and promises of Divine revelation (l. c.: "illumque [Deum] tanquam omnis justitiae fontem diligere incipiunt"). The next step is a genuine sorrow for all sin with the resolution to begin a new life by receiving holy baptism and by observing the commandments of God. The process of justification is then brought to a close by the baptism of water, inasmuch as by the grace of this sacrament the catechumen is freed from sin (original and personal) and its punishments, and is made a child of God. The same process of justification is repeated in those who by mortal sin have lost their baptismal innocence; with this modification, however, that the Sacrament of Penance replaces baptism. Considering merely the psychological analysis of the conversion of sinners, as given by the council, it is at once evident that faith alone, whether fiduciary or dogmatic, cannot justify man (Trent, l. c., can. xii: "Si quis dixerit, fidem justificantem nihil aliud esse quam fiduciam divinae misericordiae, peccata remittentis propter Christum, vel eam fiduciam solam esse, qua justificamur, a.s."). Since our Divine adoption and friendship with God is based on perfect love of God or charity (cf. Galatians 5:6; 1

Corinthians 13; James 2:17 sqq.), dead faith devoid of charity (*fides informis*) cannot possess any justifying power. Only such faith as is active in charity and good works (*fides caritate formata*) can justify man, and this even before the actual reception of baptism or penance, although not without a desire of the sacrament (cf. Trent, Sess. VI, cap. iv, xiv). But, not to close the gates of heaven against pagans and those non-Catholics, who without their fault do not know or do not recognize the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, Catholic theologians unanimously hold that the desire to receive these sacraments is implicitly contained in the serious resolve to do all that God has commanded, even if His holy will should not become known in every detail.

(2) The Formal Cause of Justification

The Council of Trent decreed that the essence of active justification comprises not only forgiveness of sin, but also "sanctification and renovation of the interior man by means of the voluntary acceptance of sanctifying grace and other supernatural gifts" (Trent, l. c., cap. vii: "Non est sola peccatorum remissio, sed et sanctificatio et renovatio interioris hominis per voluntariam susceptionem gratiae et donorum"). In order to exclude the Protestant idea of a merely forensic absolution and exterior declaration of righteousness, special stress is laid on the fact that we are justified by God's justice, not that whereby He himself is just but that whereby He makes us just, in so far as He bestows on us the gift of His grace which renovates the soul interiorly and adheres to it as the soul's own holiness (Trent, l. c., cap. vii: "Unica formalis causa [justificationis] est justitia Dei, non qua ipse justus est, sed qua nos justos facit, qua videlicet ab eo donati, renovamur spiritu mentis nostrae: et non modo reputamur, sed vere justi nominamur et sumus, justitiam in nobis recipientes unusquisque suam"). This inner quality of righteousness and sanctity is universally termed "sanctifying (or habitual) grace", and stands in marked contrast to an exterior, imputed sanctity, as well as to the idea of merely covering and concealing sin. By this, however, we do not assert that the "justitia Dei extra nos" is of no importance in the process of justification. For, even if it is not the formal cause of justification (*causa formalis*), it is nevertheless its true exemplar (*causa exemplaris*), inasmuch as the soul receives a sanctity in imitation of God's own holiness. The Council of Trent (l. c. cap. vii), moreover, did not neglect to enumerate in detail the other causes of justification: the glory of God and of Christ as the final cause (*causa finalis*), the mercy of God as the efficient cause (*causa efficiens*), the Passion of Christ as the meritorious cause (*causa meritoria*), the reception of the Sacraments as the

instrumental cause (*causa instrumentalis*). Thus each and every factor receives its full share and is assigned its proper place. Hence the Catholic doctrine on justification, in welcome contrast to the Protestant teaching, stands out as a reasonable, consistent, harmonious system.

According to the Council of Trent sanctifying grace is not merely a formal cause, but "*the only* formal cause" (*unica causa formalis*) of our justification. By this important decision the Council excluded the error of Butzer and some Catholic theologians (Groppe, Scripando, and Albert Pighius) who maintained that an additional "external favour of God" (*favor Dei externus*) belonged to the essence of justification. The same decree also effectually set aside the opinion of Peter Lombard, that the formal cause of justification (i.e. sanctifying grace) is nothing less than the *Person* of the Holy Ghost, Who is the hypostatic holiness and charity, or the uncreated grace (*gratia increata*). Since justification consists in an interior sanctity and renovation of spirit, its formal cause evidently must be a created grace (*gratia creata*), a permanent quality, a supernatural modification or accident (*accidens*) of the soul. Quite distinct from this is the question whether the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost, although not required for justification (inasmuch as sanctifying grace alone suffices), be necessary as a prerequisite for Divine adoption. Several great theologians have answered in the affirmative, as for instance Lessius ("De summo bono", II, i; "De perfect. moribusque divin.", XII, ii); Petavius ("De Trinit.", viii, 4 sqq.); Thomassin ("De Trinit.", viii, 9 sqq.), and Hurter ("Compend. theol. dogmat.", III, 6th ed., pp. 162 sqq.). The solution of the lively controversy on this point between Fr. Granderath ("Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie", 1881, pp. 283 sqq.; 1883, 491 sqq., 593 sqq.; 1884, 545 sqq.) and Professor Scheeben ("Dogmatik", II, sec. 169; "Katholik", 1883, I, 142 sqq.; II, 561 sqq.; 1884, I, 18 sqq.; II, 465 sqq., 610 sqq.) seems to lie in the following distinction: the Divine adoption, inseparably connected with sanctifying grace, is not constituted by the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost, but receives therefrom its full development and perfection.

(3) The Effects of Justification

The two elements of active justification, forgiveness of sin and sanctification, furnish at the same time the elements of habitual justification, freedom from sin and holiness. According to the Catholic doctrine, however, this freedom from sin and this sanctity are effected, not by two distinct and successive Divine acts, but by a single act of God. For, just as light dispels darkness, so the infusion of sanctifying grace *eo ipso* dispels from the soul original and