

Grace: Some Points to Ponder

Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love
Catholic Character Themes: Discipleship, Reverence

There is a popular Christian understanding of grace as **God's help**: "By the grace of God, I got through the day" or "T'was grace that brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home." God's grace surrounds us, it transforms, makes holy and sustains us in difficult times. Grace moves us to be thankful, joyful, prayerful and persevering, to repent, to challenge, to share and forgive.

Grace as Relationship

In simple terms, the language of grace is about our **relationship** with God. In this relationship, God always takes the initiative, and we have the free will to respond. Grace is **God's gift** of life and love, shared with us. Even our response to God's love is made possible by grace. Apart from grace, we can do nothing.

A Graced Existence

Wherever the power and goodness of God are present in the world, grace is there at work. The grace of God's indwelling Presence **sustains our very existence** and that of all created things, material and spiritual. We live in a **graced world**. All that *is* continues to *be* because of grace. Life itself and all that we have is grace.

Humanizing and Divinizing

Grace can be seen as having two basic functions: Grace **humanizes** and **divinizes** us. It *heals and makes whole*, and *transforms and clothes us* with the power of the Holy Spirit to live as partakers of God's divine life – in our reasoning, our actions, with heroic love, self-giving, and even laying down our lives for others.

At Work in Justice and Peace

Grace enables us to build up what is good in the body of believers and in the world. It therefore has a **social dimension**. It moves human hearts, inspiring and strengthening us to work for the justice and peace of God's Kingdom. Wherever human dignity is promoted, grace is at work.

Empowering us to Live by Faith

Grace **opens our minds and hearts to live by faith**: to see with new eyes, to believe with Christ's Church and trust God's abiding love for us in Christ. Grace **enables us to pray**, to live life *religiously*, and recognize our share in a larger human family that is loved into existence and called to fullness of life for eternity.

Grace Leads to Glory

Lastly, the power of grace **leads us to glory**, beginning here in this life, and continuing after death into the fullness of God's Kingdom at the end of time. Then, in the consummation of all grace (which comes through Christ), we will be given our *glorified* bodies to dwell in God's presence in a new heaven and new earth forever.



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Questions for Reflection

1. Try and describe an experience in your life that you would call “graced.”

2. How did this experience affect...

-your life (that day and after)?

-your relationship with God?

-relationships with others?

3. What did this experience teach you that you could pass on to others?