

Roman Catholic View on Justification

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- Justification based on “inherent” righteousness or “infused” righteousness; it includes both the merits of Christ plus human cooperation
 - A person can be made “just” through application of the sacraments; one is actually made internally holy and not just legally righteous before God

- The instrument of justification is the sacraments
 - Baptism is the first plank of justification; it imparts an “infusion of grace;” the Catholic is made righteous or just upon baptism; without baptism a person will go to hell
 - Penance is the second plank of justification; it is external acts done by the penitent sinner to pay for the penalty of sins committed; a priest can forgive the guilt of mortal sins, but he cannot remit the penalty due for those sins, therefore penance is required; it restores a sinner to a just or righteous state; it is not true repentance – there is no true sorrow for sin or turning away from wrongdoing

- Two classes of sin: mortal and venial
 - *Mortal sins* are “any great offense against the law of God”; must be forgiven by a priest or person will go to hell; even with forgiveness and penance, will require time in purgatory; mortal sins include violations of the Ten Commandments, the so-called “seven deadly sins” (pride, covetousness, lechery, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth), sexual offenses, attending a Protestant church, reading a Protestant Bible, eating meat on Friday, or missing Mass on Sunday morning without a good excuse
 - *Venial sins* are “small and pardonable offenses against God or our neighbor”; are not necessarily confessed to a priest, since they are comparatively light and can be expiated by good works, prayers, extreme unction, purgatory, etc.; the distinction between which are mortal sins and which are venial sins is not universally agreed upon

- The holiness of “infused” righteousness can be partially or totally destroyed by sin
 - One must be re-justified by sacramental grace in a constant cycle
 - Sin nullifies sacramental grace, and sacramental grace nullifies sin

- This view offers “salvation by works on the installment plan”
 - The poor sinner is always behind on his payments
 - When he dies, there is a large balance unpaid
 - The sinner continues to pay by suffering in purgatory; purgatory is a place of temporary suffering by fire; it is the same suffering as in hell, only it is of limited (but unknown) duration
 - The whole system calls for merit and money from cradle to grave and beyond

God Alone – *Sola Fide*

- Consequences of the Roman Catholic view on justification
 - No assurance of salvation
 - Denies the sufficiency of Christ
 - Doctrine of purgatory introduces fear and suffering; denies a peaceful death and comfort for the family
 - Salvation can be bought and sold
 - God is a “respector of persons;” the wealthy can purchase entrance into heaven more readily than the poor

Council of Trent on Justification – Sixth Session, 1547

- Chapter 4 (baptism is necessary for salvation)
 - By which words, a description of the Justification of the impious is indicated,-as being a translation, from that state wherein man is born a child of the first Adam, to the state of grace, and of the adoption of the sons of God, through the second Adam, Jesus Christ our Saviour. **And this translation, since the promulgation of the gospel, cannot be effected, without the laver of regeneration, or the desire thereof,** as it is written; unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.
- Chapter 5 (we participate in our justification by receiving it or rejecting it)
 - The Synod furthermore declares, that in adults, the beginning of the said Justification is to be derived from the prevenient grace of God, through Jesus Christ, that is to say, from His vocation, whereby, without any merits existing on their parts, they are called; that so they, who by sins were alienated from God, **may be disposed through His quickening and assisting grace, to convert themselves to their own justification, by freely assenting to and co-operating with that said grace:** in such sort that, while God touches the heart of man by the illumination of the Holy Ghost, **neither is man himself utterly without doing anything while he receives that inspiration, forasmuch as he is also able to reject it;** yet is he not able, by his own free will, without the grace of God, to move himself unto justice in His sight.
- Chapter 7 (justification comes through baptism and is distributed differently to each individual)
 - Of this Justification, the causes are these: the final cause indeed is the glory of God and of Jesus Christ, and life everlasting; while the efficient cause is a merciful God who washes and sanctifies gratuitously, signing, and anointing with the holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance; but the meritorious cause is His most beloved only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when we were enemies, for the exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, merited Justification for us by His most holy Passion on the wood of the cross, and made satisfaction for us unto God the Father; **the instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of faith,**

without which (faith) no man was ever justified; lastly, the alone formal cause is the justice of God, not that whereby He Himself is just, but that **whereby He maketh us just**, that, to wit, with which we being endowed by Him, are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and we are not only reputed, but are truly called, **and are, just, receiving justice within us, each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to everyone as He wills, and according to each one's proper disposition and co-operation.** For, although no one can be just, but he to whom the merits of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet is this done in the said justification of the impious, **when by the merit of that same most holy Passion, the charity of God is poured forth, by the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of those that are justified, and is inherent therein:** whence, **man, through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives,** in the said justification, together with the remission of sins, **all these (gifts) infused at once,** faith, hope, and charity. For faith, unless hope and charity be added thereto, neither unites man perfectly with Christ, nor makes him a living member of His body.

- Chapter 8 (faith is the beginning of salvation)
 - And whereas the Apostle saith, that man is justified by faith and freely, those words are to be understood in that sense which the perpetual consent of the Catholic Church hath held and expressed; to wit, that **we are therefore said to be justified by faith, because faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation, and the root of all Justification;** without which it is impossible to please God, and to come unto the fellowship of His sons: but we are therefore said to be justified freely, because that none of those things which precede justification—whether faith or works—merits the grace itself of justification. For if it be a grace, it is not now by works, otherwise, as the same Apostle says, grace is no more grace.

- Chapter 10 (justification can be increased by good works)
 - Having, therefore, been thus justified, and made the friends and domestics of God, **advancing from virtue to virtue,** they are renewed, as the Apostle says, day by day; that is, by mortifying the members of their own flesh, and by presenting them as instruments of justice unto sanctification, they through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, **faith co-operating with good works, increase in that justice which they have received through the grace of Christ, and are still further justified,** as it is written; He that is just, let him be justified still; and again, Be not afraid to be justified even to death; and also, Do you see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. And this increase of justification holy Church begs, when she prays, “Give unto us, O Lord, increase of faith, hope, and charity.”

God Alone – *Sola Fide*

- Chapter 11 (venial sins do not lose justification; justification is no guarantee against apostasy)
 - But no one, how much soever justified, ought to think himself exempt from the observance of the commandments; no one ought to make use of that rash saying, one prohibited by the Fathers under an anathema, -that **the observance of the commandments of God is impossible for one that is justified.** For God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to pray for what thou art not able (to do), and aids thee that thou mayest be able; whose commandments are not heavy; whose yoke is sweet and whose burthen light. For, whoso are the sons of God, love Christ; but they who love him, keep his commandments, as Himself testifies; which, assuredly, with the divine help, they can do. For, although, **during this mortal life, men, how holy and just soever, at times fall into at least light and daily sins, which are also called venial, not therefore do they cease to be just.** For that cry of the just, Forgive us our trespasses, is both humble and true. And for this cause, the just themselves ought to feel themselves the more obligated to walk in the way of justice, in that, being already freed from sins, but made servants of God, they are able, living soberly, justly, and godly, to proceed onwards through Jesus Christ, by whom they have had access unto this grace. **For God forsakes not those who have been once justified by His grace, unless He be first forsaken by them. Wherefore, no one ought to flatter himself up with faith alone, fancying that by faith alone he is made an heir and will obtain the inheritance,** even though he suffer not with Christ, that he may be also glorified with Him.

- Chapter 12 (denial of assurance of salvation)
 - **No one,** moreover, so long as he is in this mortal life, **ought so far to presume as regards the secret mystery of divine predestination,** as to determine for certain that he is assuredly in the number of the predestinate; **as if it were true, that he is justified, either cannot sin any more, or if he do sin, that he ought to promise himself an assured repentance;** for except by special revelation, it cannot be known whom God hath chosen unto Himself.

- Chapter 15 (grace can be lost through mortal sins)
 - In opposition also to the subtle wits of certain men, who, by pleasing speeches and good words, seduce the hearts of the innocent, **it is to be maintained, that the received grace of Justification is lost, not only by infidelity whereby even faith itself is lost, but also by any other mortal sin whatever, though faith be not lost;** thus defending the doctrine of the divine law, which excludes from the kingdom of God not only the unbelieving, but the faithful also (who are) fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, liars with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, railers, extortioners, and all others who commit deadly sins; from which, with the help of divine grace, they can refrain, and on account of which they are separated from the grace of Christ.

- Chapter 16
 - Before men, therefore, who have been justified in this manner, **whether they have preserved uninterruptedly the grace received, or whether they have recovered it when lost**, are to be set the words of the Apostle: Abound in every good work, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord; for God is not unjust, that he should forget your work, and the love which you have shown in his name; and, do not lose your confidence, which hath a great reward. And, for this cause, **life eternal is to be proposed to those working well unto the end, and hoping in God, both as a grace mercifully promised to the sons of God through Jesus Christ, and as a reward which is according to the promise of God Himself, to be faithfully rendered to their good works and merits.** For this is that crown of justice which the Apostle declared was, after his fight and course, laid up for him, to be rendered to him by the just judge, and not only to him, but also to all that love his coming. For, whereas Jesus **Christ Himself continually infuses his virtue into the said justified**, as the head into the members, and the vine into the branches, and **this virtue always precedes and accompanies and follows their good works, which without it could not in any wise be pleasing and meritorious before God**, we must believe that nothing further is wanting to the justified, to prevent their being accounted to have, **by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life, and to have truly merited eternal life, to be obtained also in its (due) time**, if so be, however, that they depart in grace: seeing that Christ, our Saviour, saith: If any one shall drink of the water that I will give him, he shall not thirst for ever; but it shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting. Thus, neither is our own justice established as our own as from ourselves; nor is the justice of God ignored or repudiated: for **that justice which is called ours, because that we are justified from its being inherent in us, that same is (the justice) of God, because that it is infused into us of God, through the merit of Christ.**