

21 Centuries of Catholic Doctrine: HOW WE ARE SAVED

As taught in the Church's historical writings, from the time of the Apostles down to today

circa 70 destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem

ca. 70 *Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*

—necessity of good works, perseverance—

16:1-2 "Watch" over your life: do not let "your lamps" go out, and do not keep "your loins ungirded"; but "be ready," for "you do not know the hour when our Lord is coming." (Mt 24:42, 44; Lk 12:35) Meet together frequently in your search for what is good for your souls, since "a lifetime of faith will be of no advantage" (*Letter of Barnabas* 4:9) to you unless you prove perfect at the very last.

ca. 96 *Pope Saint Clement I, fourth Bishop of Rome, disciple of the Apostles Peter and Paul, Letter to the Corinthians*

— necessity of grace, good works—

29:1 Let us, therefore, approach him in holiness of soul, lifting up to him pure and undefiled hands, loving our gentle and compassionate Father who made us his chosen portion. ...

30:1 Seeing then that we are the portion of the Holy One, let us do all the things that pertain to holiness, forsaking slander, disgusting and impure embraces, drunkenness and rioting and detestable lusts, abominable adultery, detestable pride (cf. 1 Cor 6:9-10). 2 "For God," he says, "resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Prov 3:34; Jas 4:6; 1 Pt 5:5). 3 Let us clothe ourselves in concord, being humble and self-controlled, keeping ourselves far from all backbiting and slander, being justified by works and not by words. ... 6 Let our praise be with God, and not from ourselves, for God hates those who praise themselves. 7 Let the testimony to our good deeds be given by others, as it was given to our fathers who were righteous. ...

—necessity of good works / merit—

33:1 [L]et us hasten with earnestness and zeal to accomplish every good work. 2 For the Creator

and Master of the universe himself rejoices in his works. ... 7 We have seen that all the righteous have been adorned with good works. Indeed, the Lord himself, having adorned himself with good works, rejoiced. So, since we have this pattern, let us unhesitatingly conform ourselves to his will; let us with all our strength do the work of righteousness.

34:1 The good worker receives the bread of his labor confidently, but the lazy and careless dares not look his employer in the face. 2 It is, therefore, necessary that we should be zealous to do good, for all things come from him. 3 For he forewarns us: "Behold the Lord comes, and his reward is with him, to pay each one according to his work" (cf. Isa 40:10; 62:11; Prov 24:12; and Rev 22:12). 4 He exhorts us, therefore, who believe in him with our whole heart, not to be idle or careless about any good work. ... 7 Let us also, then, being gathered together in harmony with intentness of heart, cry out to him earnestly, with one mouth, that we may come to share in his great and glorious promises. 8 For he says: "Eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and it has not entered into the heart of man, what great things he has prepared for those who patiently wait for him" (1 Cor 2:9; Isa. 64:4).

—necessity of grace ("gifts of God"), works, perseverance / merit—

35:1 How blessed and marvelous are the gifts of God, dear friends! 2 Life in immortality, splendor in righteousness, truth with boldness, faith with confidence, self-control with holiness! And all these things fall within our comprehension. 3 What, then, are the things being prepared for those who patiently wait [i.e., persevere] for him? The Creator and Father of the ages, the all-holy One himself, knows their number and their beauty. 4 Let us therefore make every effort to be found in the number of those who patiently wait [i.e.,

persevere] for him, so that we may share in his promised gifts. 5 But how shall this be, dear friends? If our mind is fixed on God through faith; if we seek out those things which are well-pleasing and acceptable to him; if we accomplish those things which are in harmony with his faultless will, and follow the way of truth, casting off from ourselves all unrighteousness and lawlessness, covetousness, strife, malice and deceit, gossip and slander, hatred of God, pride and arrogance, vanity and inhospitality (cf. Rom 1:29-32). 6 For those who do these things are hateful to God; and not only those who do them, but also those who approve of them. 7 For Scripture says: "But to the sinner God said, 'Why do you recite my statutes, and take my covenant upon your lips?' 8 You hated instruction and threw away my words behind you. If you saw a thief, you joined with him, and with adulterers you threw in your lot. Your mouth produced wickedness abundantly, and your tongue wove deceit. You sat there and slandered your brother, and put a stumbling block in the way of your mother's son. 9 These things you have done, and I kept silent. You thought, you unrighteous person, that I would be like you. 10 I will convict you and set you face to face with yourself. 11 Now consider these things, you who forget God, lest he seize you like a lion, and there be no one to save you. 12 The sacrifice of praise will glorify me, and that is the way by which I will show him the salvation of God' (Ps 50:16-23)."

ca. 100 *death of Saint John, last of the Apostles*

ca. 107 Saint Ignatius of Antioch, disciple of the Apostle John, *Letter to Polycarp*

—*necessity of good works, perseverance / merit*—

1:3 Where there is more work, there is much gain. ...

6:2 Please him whom you serve as soldiers, from whom you receive your wages. Let none of you be found a deserter. Let your baptism serve as a shield, faith as a helmet, love as a spear, endurance as armor. Let your deeds be your deposits, in order that you may eventually receive the savings that are due you. Be, therefore, patient and gentle with one another, as God is with you.

ca. 135 Saint Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, disciple of the Apostle John, *Letter to the Philippians*

—*necessity of good works, perseverance*—

7:2 Let us, therefore, forsake the vanity of the crowd and their false teachings and turn back

to the word delivered to us from the beginning, "watching unto prayer" (1 Pt 4:7) and continuing steadfast in fasting, beseeching fervently the all-seeing God (Clement, *Cor.* 55:6; 64:1) "to lead us not into temptation" (Mt 6:13), even as the Lord said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41).

8:1 Let us, then, hold steadfastly and unceasingly to our Hope (Col 1:27; 1 Tm 1:1) and to the Pledge (Eph 1:14; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5) of our righteousness, that is, Christ Jesus, "who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, who committed no sin, neither was guile found on his lips" (1 Pt 2:24, 22); but for our sakes he endured everything that we might live in him. 2 Therefore let us be imitators of his patient endurance, and if we suffer for the sake of his name, let us glorify him (1 Pt 4:15-16). For he set us this example (1 Pt 2:2; Clement, *Corin.* 16:17) in his own Person, and this is what we believed.

ca. 144 *Pope Saint Pius I defends inspiration of books of the Bible against Marcion*

ca. 150 Hermas, brother of Pope Saint Pius I, *The Shepherd*

—*necessity of good works, perseverance*—

Visions 3:8:7 "And yet to these [sinners] also," [the shepherd] continued, "repentance is possible. You see," he said, "that some of them have repented, and there is still remaining in them," he continued, "a hope of repentance. And as many of them," he added, "as have repented, shall have their dwelling in the tower [i.e., the Church]. And those of them who have been slower in repenting shall dwell within the walls. And as many as do not repent at all, but abide in their deeds, shall utterly perish. ... But if any one relapse into strife, he will be cast out of the tower, and will lose his life. Life is the possession of all who keep the commandments of the Lord."

ca. 150 Saint Justin the Martyr, *First Apology*

—*necessity of grace, good works / merit*—

10 We have been taught that God, in the beginning, in His goodness and for the sake of men, created all things out of formless matter. And if men, by their works, show themselves worthy of His design, they are deemed worthy, so we are told, to make their abode with Him and to reign with Him, being freed of all corruption and passion. Just as in the beginning He created us when we were not, in the same way, we believe, He will regard all those who choose to please Him, because of their choice, as worthy of immortality in communion with

Him. Our coming into being in the beginning was none of our doing. But now, to follow those things which are pleasing to Him, and to choose them by means of the rational faculties which He has bestowed upon us: to this He persuades us, and leads us to faith. ...

12 More than all other men, we are your helpers and allies in maintaining peace; for it is our position that it is no more possible for the evil-doer, the avaricious and the treacherous, to hide from God, than it is for the virtuous; and that every man will receive the eternal punishment or reward which his actions deserve. Indeed, if all men recognized this, no one would choose evil even for a short time, knowing that he would incur the eternal sentence of fire. On the contrary, he would take every means to control himself and to adorn himself in virtue, so that he might obtain the good gifts of God and escape the punishments. ...

43 We have learned from the Prophets and we hold it as true that punishments and chastisements and good rewards are distributed according to the merit of each man's actions. Were this not the case, and were all things to happen according to the decree of fate, there would be nothing at all in our power. If fate decrees that this man is to be good and that one wicked, then neither is the former to be praised nor the latter to be blamed.

Furthermore, if the human race does not have the power of a freely deliberated choice in fleeing evil and in choosing good, then men are not accountable for their actions, whatever they may be. That they do, however, by a free choice, either walk upright or stumble, we shall now prove. ... God did not make man like the other beings, the trees and the four-legged beasts, for example, which cannot do anything by free choice.

Neither would man deserve reward or praise if he did not of himself choose the good; nor, if he acted wickedly, would he deserve punishment, since he would not be evil by choice, and could not be other than that which he was born. The Holy Prophetic Spirit taught us this when He informed us through Moses that God spoke as follows to the first created man: "Behold, before your face, the good and the evil. Choose the good" (Dt 30:15, 19). ...

61 Whoever is convinced and believes that what they are taught and told by us is the truth,

and professes to be able to live accordingly, is instructed to pray and to beseech God in fasting for the remission of their former sins, while we pray and fast with them.

ca. 156 *martyrdom of Saint Polycarp, last of the Apostolic Fathers*

ca. 181 **Saint Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, *To Autolytus***

—*necessity of good works / merit*—

1:14 He who gave the mouth for speech and formed the ears for hearing and made eyes for seeing will examine everything and will judge justly, granting recompense to each according to merit. To those who seek immortality by the patient exercise of good works (Rom 2:7), he will give everlasting life, joy, peace, rest, and all good things, which neither eye has seen nor ear has heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man (1 Cor 2:9). For the unbelievers and the contemptuous and for those who do not submit to the truth but assent to iniquity ... there will be wrath and indignation (Rom 2:8).

ca. 185 **Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, student of Polycarp, *Against Heresies***

—*necessity of grace*—

3:17:2 The Lord promised to send us the Paraclete, who would make us ready for God (Jn 16:7). Just as dry wheat without moisture cannot become one dough or one loaf, so also, we who are many cannot be made one in Christ Jesus, without the water from heaven [i.e., Baptism]. Just as dry earth cannot bring forth fruit unless it receive moisture, so also we, being at first a dry tree, can never bring forth fruit unto life, without the voluntary rain from above. Our bodies achieve unity through the washing which leads to incorruption; our souls, however, through the Spirit. Both, then, are necessary, for both lead us on to the life of God. ...

—*necessity of grace, good works*—

3:24:1 The preaching of the Church truly continues without change and is everywhere the same, and has the testimony of the Prophets and the Apostles and all their disciples. ... That in which we have faith is a firm system directed to the salvation of men; and, since it has been received by the Church, we guard it. Constantly it has its youth renewed by the Spirit of God, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel; and it causes the vessel containing it also to be rejuvenated. ... In the Church, God has placed apostles, prophets and doctors, and all the other means through which the Spirit works (1 Cor 12:28); in

all of which none have any part who do not conform to the Church. On the contrary, they defraud themselves of life by their wicked opinion and most wretched behavior. For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God, there the Church and every grace. The Spirit, however, is Truth. ...

—*necessity of good works, perseverance / merit*—

4:37:7 [Paul], an able wrestler, urges us on in the struggle for immortality, so that we may receive a crown, and so that we may regard as a precious crown that which we acquire by our own struggle, and which does not grow on us spontaneously. And because it comes to us in a struggle, it is therefore the more precious; and as it is the more precious, let us love it always the more. Those things which come to us spontaneously are not loved as much as those which are obtained by anxious care.

ca. 205 Saint Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* or *Miscellanies*

—*necessity of good works*—

6:14:108:4 When we hear, “Your faith has saved you” (Mt 9:22; Mk 5:34; Lk 8:48), we do not understand [the Lord] to say simply that they will be saved who have believed in whatever manner, even if works have not followed. To begin with, it was to the Jews alone that He spoke this phrase, who had lived in accord with the law and blamelessly, and who had lacked only faith in the Lord.

ca. 211 Tertullian falls into the Montanist heresy

ca. 220 Saint Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop of Pontus, student of Irenaeus, *Against the Greeks*

—*necessity of good works / merit*—

3 Standing before [Christ’s] judgement, all of them, men, angels, and demons, crying out in one voice, shall say: “Just is your judgment!” (Ps 118 [119]:137; Rev 16:7) And the justice of that cry will be apparent in the recompense made to each. To those who have done well, everlasting enjoyment shall be given; while to lovers of evil shall be given eternal punishment.

248 Saint Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, *Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews*

—*necessity of good works*—

Treatises 12:3:Test. 26-27 That it is of small account to be baptized and to receive the Eucharist, unless one profit by it both in deeds and works.

In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: “Know ye not, that they which run in a race run indeed all, although one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And those indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible” (9:24-25). In the Gospel according to Matthew: “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire” (3:10). Also in the same place: “Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name have done great works? And then shall I say to them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye who work iniquity” (7:22-23). Also in the same place: “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (5:16). Also Paul to the Philippians: “Shine as lights in the world” (2:15).

—*necessity of good works, perseverance*—

That even a baptized person loses the grace that he has attained, unless he keep innocency.

In the Gospel according to John: “Lo, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee” (5:14). Also in the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God abideth in you? If any one violate the temple of God, him will God destroy” (3:16-17). Of this same thing in the Chronicles: “God is with you, while ye are with Him: if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you” (2 Chr 15:2).

ca. 255 Novatian, *On the Jewish Meats*

—*necessity of good works*—

5 By righteousness, I say, and by continency, and by the rest of the virtues, God is worshipped. ... God rejoices in our faith alone, in our innocency alone, in our truth alone, in our virtues alone. ... Yet there is no advantage at all of righteousness, while we are recalled by a voluntary slavery to those elements to which by baptism we have died.

313 Edict of Milan, legalization of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire

ca. 307 Lactantius, *The Divine Institutions*

—*necessity of good works / merit*—

7:6:1-2 Now let us seal the whole argument with a brief summarization. The world was made for this reason, that we might be born. We, in turn, are born, that we might know God, the Maker of the world and of us. We know, in turn, that we may worship. And again, we worship so that we may receive immortality as

the reward of our labors—for the worship of God entails great labors indeed. And, in turn, we are recompensed with the reward of immortality so that, having been made like the angels, we may serve the Most High Father and Lord forever, and may be an everlasting kingdom unto God. This is the sum of things; this is the secret of God; this, the mystery of the world.

325 *Council of Nicaea formally defines the divinity of Christ*

ca. 350 Saint Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, Doctor of the Church, *Catechetical Lectures*

—*necessity of good works, perseverance / merit—*

18:1 The root of every good work is the hope of the resurrection; for the expectation of a reward nerves the soul to good work. Every laborer is prepared to endure the toils if he looks forward to the reward of these toils. But they who labor without reward—their soul is exhausted with their body. ... He that believes his body will remain for the resurrection is careful of his garment and does not soil it in fornication; but he that has no faith in the resurrection gives himself to fornication, and abuses his own body as if it belonged to another.

382 *Pope Saint Damasus I, Synod of Rome, first declaration of the complete canon of the Bible*

ca. 389 Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Doctor of the Church, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*

—*necessity of good works / merit—*

7:156 Just as those who pay money absolve a debt, nor are they free of the name of debtor until the whole amount, even to the last penny, is absolved by some kind of payment, so too by the compensation of love and of other virtuous actions, or by some kind of satisfaction, the penalty of sin is removed.

391-430 Saint Augustine, Doctor of the Church, *Sermons*

—*necessity of good works—*

90:8 I do not exhort you to have faith, but love. For you cannot have love without faith; I mean the love of God and neighbor. Whence can it come without faith? How can he love God, who does not believe in God?

393 Saint Jerome, Doctor of the Church, *Against Jovinian*

—*necessity of good works, perseverance / merit—*

2:32 It is our task, according to our different

virtues, to prepare for ourselves different rewards. ... If we were all going to be equal in heaven it would be useless for us to humble ourselves here in order to have a greater place there. ... Why should virgins persevere? Why should widows toil? Why should married women be continent? Let us all sin, and after we repent we shall be the same as the Apostles are!

415 Augustine, *The Perfection of Man's Righteousness*

—*necessity of good works / merit—*

15:33 However great may be a man's righteousness, he must take thought lest something in him which he himself did not see be found to be deserving of blame when the righteous King shall sit upon His throne. He whose knowledge our transgressions cannot escape, not even those of which it is said: "Who knows his transgressions?" (Ps 18 [19]:13).

415 Jerome, *Dialogue Against the Pelagians*

—*necessity of grace, good works, perseverance—*

3:1 *Atticus*: This much you must know, that Baptism forgives past sins, but it does not safeguard future justice, which is preserved by labor and industry and diligence, and depends always and above all on the mercy of God.

428 Augustine, *Heresies*

—*necessity of good works—*

82 [The heretic Jovinian] said that all sins are equal. He said also that a man was not able to sin after he had received the bath of rebirth; and that there is no profit in fasting nor in abstaining from particular foods.

431 *Council of Ephesus formally defines Christ, one divine Person with two natures (divine and human); sanctions Marian title "Mother of God"*

ca. 450 Saint Prosper of Aquitaine, *The Call of All Nations*

—*necessity of grace / merit—*

1:24 By these testimonies [of Scripture], I think it is abundantly demonstrated,—although many other texts might also be assembled,—that faith, by which the impious man is made just, cannot be had except as God's gift; and it is not to be attributed to preceding merits, but is given so that it might itself be the source of merits, and, while it is itself given unprayed for, the prayers it inspires obtain all other favors.

529 Second Synod of Orange, *Canons*

—*necessity of grace, good works, perseverance / merit*—

10 The succor of God is to be ever sought by the regenerate [i.e., the baptized] and converted also, so that they may be able to come to a successful end or persevere in good works. ...

18 [*G*]race is not preceded by merit.

Recompense is due to good works if they are performed; but grace, to which we have no claim, precedes them, to enable them to be done. ...

Conclusion. According to the catholic faith we must also believe that after grace has been received through baptism, all baptized persons have the ability and responsibility, if they desire to labor faithfully, to perform with the aid and cooperation of Christ what is of essential importance in regard to the salvation of their soul. ... We also believe and confess to our benefit that in every good work it is not we who take the initiative and are then assisted through the mercy of God, but God himself first inspires in us both faith in him and love for him without any previous good works of our own that deserve reward, so that we may both faithfully seek the sacrament of baptism, and after baptism be able by his help to do what is pleasing to him.

ca. 540 Saint Caesar, Bishop of Arles, *Sermons*

—*necessity of good works*—

13 [265]:1 I beg you, beloved brethren, let us consider more attentively why we are Christians and bear the cross of Christ on our forehead. For we ought to know that it is not enough for us that we have received the name Christian, if we do not do Christian works. ... If you say a thousand times that you are a Christian and continually sign yourself with the cross of Christ, but do not give alms according to your means, and you do not want to have love and justice and chastity, the name of Christian will profit you nothing. ... If a man thinks evil thoughts, speaks evil words, or does evil deeds, and does not wish to amend himself, when he signs himself his sin is not lessened but increased. Many men, when they go out to commit robbery or adultery, if they dash their foot against something, they sign themselves; but they do not retreat from their evil deed.

636 death of Saint Isidore of Seville, last of the Western Fathers

ca. 645 Saint John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*

—*necessity of good works*—

Repentance is the renewal of baptism and is a contract with God for a fresh start in life. Repentance goes shopping for humility and is ever distrustful of bodily comfort. Repentance is critical awareness and a sure watch over oneself. Repentance is the daughter of hope and the refusal to despair. (The penitent stands guilty—but not disgraced.) Repentance is reconciliation with the Lord by the performance of good deeds which are the opposites of the sins. It is the purification of conscience and the voluntary endurance of affliction.

743 Saint John Damascene, Doctor of the Church, *The Source of Knowledge*

—*necessity of grace, good works, perseverance*—

3:2:30 We must recognize also that virtue is implanted by God in our nature, and that God Himself is the source and cause of all good, and without His cooperation and assistance we are powerless either to will or to do anything good. We, however, have it in our power either to abide in virtue and to be obedient to God, who calls us to this, or to stray from paths of virtue, which is to dwell in wickedness, and to follow the devil, who calls to us but cannot compel us. ...

—*necessity of good works / merit*—

3:4:27 We shall rise again, therefore, our souls united again to our bodies, the latter now made incorruptible and having put corruption aside; and we shall stand before the awesome tribunal of Christ. And the devil and his demons, and the man that is his, the Antichrist, and the impious and the sinners shall be consigned to everlasting fire, not material fire such as we know, but such fire as God would know.

And those who have performed good actions will shine like the sun (Mt 13:43) with the angels in eternal life, with our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing Him forever and being ever in His sight, and deriving increasing joy from Him, praising Him with Father and Holy Spirit in the infinite ages of ages. Amen.

ca. 749 death of Saint John Damascene, last of the Eastern Fathers

ca. 820 Eigil, Abbot of Fulda, *The Life of Saint Sturm*

—*merit*—

After these words his holy soul was released from the flesh and freed from the prison of the body. Full of good merits, it passed to Christ, whose kingdom endures for ever and ever, Amen.

866 Pope Saint Nicholas the Great, 105th Bishop of Rome, *The Responses to the Questions of the Bulgars (Letter 99)*

—*necessity of good works*—

1 Now then, at the very beginning of your questions, you properly and laudably state that your king seeks the Christian law. If we attempted to explain this law fully, innumerable books would have to be written; but, in order to show briefly in what things it chiefly consists, one should know that the law of the Christians consists in faith and good works. For faith is the first of all virtues in the lives of believers. whence, even on the first day there is said to be light, since God is portrayed as having said: *Let there be light* (Gn 1:3), that is, “let the illumination of belief appear.” Indeed, it is also because of this illumination that Christ came down to earth. Good work is no less demanded from a Christian; for just as it is written in our law: *Without faith it is impossible to please God* (Heb 11:6), so it is also written: *Just as a body without a spirit is dead, so, too, faith without works is dead* (Jas 2:20). This is the Christian law, and whoever keeps this law properly, shall be saved. ...

—*necessity of grace*—

16 Clearly, every sin is washed away with penance, which profits only when God’s grace accompanies it. ...

—*necessity of good works, perseverance*—

74 Furthermore, the person who perseveres in good work to the end (cf. Mt 10:22), shall be saved, especially when against the hostile attacks of his enemies; indeed, as we have stated above, triumph over the enemy should be expected from prayer rather than from arms.

968 Liutprand, Bishop of Cremona, *Report of His Mission to Constantinople*

—*necessity of grace (“holy baptism and the knowledge of God”), good works, perseverance / merit*—

“A certain man,” I said, “having suffered much injury from another, approached God with these words: ‘Lord, avenge me upon my adversary!’ To whom the Lord said: ‘I will do it at the day when I shall render to each man according to his works!’ (cf. Rom. 2:6) ‘Alas,’ said he, ‘how late that will be!’ ...

“The race of the Saxons, from the time when it received the holy baptism and the knowledge of God, has been spotted by no heresy which would have rendered a synod necessary for the correction of an error which did not exist. Since thou declarest the faith of the Saxons to be young, I am willing also to affirm the same; for always the faith of Christ is young [i.e., lively] and not old [i.e., lifeless] with those whose works second their faith. Faith is there not young but old where works do not accompany it; but faith is scorned, as it were, for its age, like a worn-out garment” (cf. Jas. 2:14-26, most especially 17, 20, 26).

1054 *Eastern Schism*

1081 Pope Saint Gregory VII, 157th Bishop of Rome, *Letter to the Bishop of Metz*

—*necessity of good works / merit*—

For if this virtue, love, has been neglected, no matter what good any one does he shall be without any fruit of salvation. And so by humbly doing these things, and by observing the love of God and of their neighbour as they ought, they may hope for the mercy of Him who said: “Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart” (Mt 11:29). If they have humbly imitated Him they shall pass from this servile and transitory kingdom to a true kingdom of liberty and eternity.

1152 Saint Hildegard of Bingen, Doctor of the Church, *Scivias*

—*necessity of grace, good works, perseverance*—

II: Vision 3 For to the men of the race of Abraham I gave circumcision in one member, but in My Son I commanded all men and women of all people to be circumcised in all their members. How? The circumcision of baptism sprang from the baptism of My Son, and so it shall remain till the last day, and then its sanctity will abide for eternity and know no end. And those who are thus circumcised in the washing of baptism will truly be saved, if they faithfully keep this washing by just works; for I will receive any person, whether of lesser or of greater age, who will keep My covenant, which he has made with Me, believing in Me and confessing the true Trinity either by himself or by those who speak for him, as an infant or a person unable to speak asks by another’s mouth. And I will not destroy him in eternity, like one who refuses to receive this font and the works of faith, as it is written in the Gospel in the teaching of My Son:

“He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be condemned” (Mk 16:16). What does this mean? A person who sees by his knowledge, which is his inner eye, what is hidden from his outer sight and does not doubt it, most certainly believes; and this is faith. For what a person perceives outwardly, he knows outwardly, and what he sees inwardly, he understands inwardly. Therefore, when human knowledge ardently perceives in the mirror of life the incomprehensible Divinity the outer eye cannot see, the lusts of the flesh are thrown to the ground and trampled on.

1215 Fourth Lateran Council, 12th ecumenical council, *Canons*

—*necessity of good works / merit*—

1 We firmly believe and openly confess that there is only one true God, eternal, beyond measure and unchangeable, incomprehensible, omnipotent and ineffable, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: Three persons but a single essence, substance, or nature that is wholly one; the Father proceeding from Son, the Son proceeding from the Father alone, and the Holy Spirit [proceeding] from both in like manner; without beginning and having no end for ever: the Father begetting, the Son being begotten, and the Holy Spirit proceeding; having the same substance, the same equality, the same omnipotence, and the same eternity; the one principle of the universe The Son of God, Jesus Christ, . . . will come at the end of time, and will judge the living and the dead, and will reward every man according to his works, both the reprobate and the elect. These will all arise in their own bodies which they now have, that they may receive their reward according to whether their works were good or evil, in the latter case unending punishment with the Devil, in the former eternal glory with Christ.

1377-1378 Saint Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church, *Dialogue*

—*necessity of good works / merit*—

82 [*God the Father*.:] You see, then, how the saints and all souls who have eternal life are desirous of the salvation of souls, but without pain. Their death put an end to their pain, but not to their loving charity. Indeed, they will pass through the narrow gate drunk, as it were, with the blood of the spotless Lamb, dressed in charity for their neighbors and bathed in the blood of Christ crucified, and they will find themselves in me, the sea of peace, lifted above

imperfection and emptiness into perfection and filled with every good. ...

—*necessity of grace*—

135 [*God the Father*.:] Constrained not by any justice or virtue of yours but by my own goodness, I clothed you anew in the person of this gentle loving Word, my only-begotten Son. He, by stripping himself of life, clothed you anew in innocence and grace (cf. Gal 3:27). You receive this innocence and grace in holy baptism by the power of the blood that washes away the stain of original sin in which you were conceived, which you contracted from your father and your mother.

—*necessity of good works / merit*—

159 [My Truth] said: “Let the little ones come to me, for the kingdom of heaven is for such as these. Whoever will not be humble like this little child will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 10:14-15; Lk 18:16-17; Mt 19:14, 18:3). For those who humble themselves, dearest daughter, will be exalted, and those who exalt themselves will be humbled (Mt 23:12; Lk 14:11, 18:14). This is exactly what my Truth said.

It is just, then, that I the eternal Father should exalt these humble little ones. They have humbled and subjected themselves in true holy obedience for love’s sake, not stubbornly resisting the rule or their superiors. With the true citizens of the blessed life they shall be rewarded for their every labor, and even in this life they shall have a foretaste of eternal life.

1418 Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*

—*necessity of good works, perseverance / merit*—

1:24 There is no vice that will not receive its proper retribution. The proud will be subjected to the deepest humiliation, and the greedy will experience misery and want. An hour’s punishment then will be more bitter than a century of penance on earth. . . . Therefore, live rightly now, and grieve for your sins, that in the Day of Judgement you may stand secure in the company of the Blessed. . . . Then will the poor and humble have great confidence, while the proud are encompassed by fears on every side.

It will then be seen that he who learned to be counted a fool and despised for Christ’s sake in this world was indeed wise (1 Cor 4:10). Then will he be glad for every trial patiently borne, and the mouth of the wicked will be sealed (Ps 107:42). Then will every devout man be glad and the ungodly grieve. Then will he who kept

his body in subjection (1 Cor 9:27) have greater joy than he who lavished every pleasure upon it. Then will the rags of the poor shine with splendour, and the gorgeous raiment become tarnished. Then will the humble cottage of the poor be preferred to the gilded palace. Then will the steadfast patience be of more avail than all worldly power. Then will humble obedience be exalted above all worldly cunning. Then will a good and clean conscience bring more joy than learned philosophy. Then will contempt for riches far outweigh all the treasures of the world. Then will devout prayer yield greater pleasure than fine fare. Then will you rejoice more in having kept silence than in much talking. Then will holy deeds count for more than fine words. Then will a disciplined life and hard penance prove more worth than all worldly delights. ...

3:36 CHRIST. Even if for the present you seem to suffer defeat, do not complain nor lessen your due reward through impatience (Heb 12:1). Instead, raise your eyes to Me in Heaven, for I have power to deliver you from all shame and wrong, and to reward every man according to his merits (Rom 2:6).

1517 *Martin Luther posts Ninety-five Theses at Wittenberg*

1538 *King Henry VIII breaks England away from the Church*

1545-1563 *Council of Trent formally defines various doctrines rejected by Luther*

1577 **Saint Teresa of Ávila, founder of the Discalced Carmelites, Doctor of the Church, Interior Castle**

—necessity of grace, good works, perseverance /merit—

1:2 While in a state like this the soul will find profit in nothing; and hence, being as it is in mortal sin, none of the good works it may do will be of any avail to win it glory; for they will not have their origin in that First Principle, which is God, through Whom alone our virtue is true virtue. And, since the soul has separated itself from Him, it cannot be pleasing in His eyes; for, after all, the intention of a person who commits mortal sin is not to please Him but to give pleasure to the devil ...

That person to whom I referred just now said that the favour which God had granted her had taught her two things: first, she had learned to have the greatest fear of offending Him, for which reason she continually begged Him not to allow her to fall, when she saw what terrible

consequences a fall could bring; secondly, she had found it a mirror of humility, for it had made her realize that any good thing we do has its source, not in ourselves but rather in that spring where this tree, which is the soul, is planted, and in that sun which sheds its radiance on our works. She says that she saw this so clearly that, whenever she did any good thing, or saw such a thing done, she betook herself straightaway to its Source, realizing that without His help we are powerless. She then went on at once to praise God; and, as a rule, when she did any good action, she never gave a thought to herself at all.

1617 **Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, Doctor of the Church, Sermon for the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady**

—necessity of grace, good works, perseverance—

During our long pilgrimage on this wretched earth Our Lord leads us in these two ways. He either leads us by the hand, causing us to walk with Him, or He carries us in the arms of His Providence. I mean that He holds us by the hand and lets us walk in the exercise of virtue. For if He did not hold us by the hand it would not be possible for us to travel this road of blessing. And who does not see that usually those who abandon His fatherly hand do not take a single step without tripping and falling head first to the ground. His Goodness is willing to lead us and to carry us, but He also wants us to take our little steps alone, doing on our part all that we can, helped by His grace. And Holy Church, tender and solicitous for her children's well-being, teaches us to pray each day a prayer in which she begs God to accompany us along our earthly pilgrimage and to assist us with His prevenient and accompanying grace, without which we can do nothing.

Leading us by the hand, our Saviour does with us the deeds for which He asks our cooperation. Later He carries us and does in us works altogether performed [by Him], by which I mean that it seems that we do nothing. These are the Sacraments. For, tell me, what does it cost us to hear the words, "I absolve you of all your sins," or to receive the Most Holy Sacrament in which is contained all heavenly and earthly delights? (Wis 16:20)

Oh, how happy are the souls who travel through life in this way and leave the arms of the Divine Majesty only to walk and do on their part what they can in the practice of virtue and good works, still always holding on to the hand

of Our Lord! For we must not think that we can do anything of ourselves (2 Cor 3:5).

1758 Pope Clement XIII, 248th Bishop of Rome, *A Quo Die*

—*necessity of good works / merit*—

9 Among the fruits of justice, mercy to the poor should certainly be considered the most important. That justice which comes from faith belongs to Jesus Christ. It is true that “if one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, “I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty” without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that?” (Jas 2:15-16). Thus, the apostle James questions all Christians. Every faithful person, especially everyone who is a little more wealthy than the others, should out of mercy come to the assistance of the poor. ... It is certainly everybody’s great gain, because we obtain grace from God by almsgiving. ...

—*necessity of perseverance*—

It is necessary to have humility to attain that faith, David cried: “I am poor and needy. God help me” (Ps 70:6). These words of the Lord show us how great is the power of perseverance and persistence in prayer: It is necessary to pray always without ceasing (Lk 18:1). ...

—*necessity of grace*—

19 In order that human weakness does not falter under the greatness of His grace, He who gave the dignity will also give the strength. Meanwhile in humble entreaty, beseech God in His merciful goodness to subdue now those who fight against Us, to strengthen your faith, and to increase devotion and peace. May He produce in Us, His humble servant, whom He wanted to oversee the government of His Church and to show the riches of His grace, enough strength in such a labor.

1870 First Vatican Council, 20th ecumenical council, *Schema of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Principal Mysteries of the Faith*

—*necessity of grace, good works / merit*—

[A]fter the divine Mercy had decreed that man was to be brought to the heavenly kingdom, it made Jesus Christ the way to this kingdom; and there now is no salvation in anyone else. He who does not believe in Christ or who does not keep his commandments will be cast with sinners into darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Hence it follows that the so-called good life, in which the commandments of God are somehow observed (at least as regards the substance of the works) is far different from the justice and sanctity which lead the one who does these works to the kingdom of heaven. For there is in nature the power for a rational soul to think and do lawful things and this is not blameworthy, but justly and rightly praised. Nevertheless, since these things are done without faith and without grace, none of them has any connection with the godliness that brings a man to eternal life. For what is true of the life of the blessed, namely, that since it is above nature it is a gratuitous gift of God’s mercy, is also true of the disposition for that life. Natural powers are not sufficient for any salutary act either in the just to increase their justice or in sinners to dispose them for justification. As our Lord says: “Without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). And the Apostle confirms it: “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God” (2 Cor. 3:5). Therefore, it is most truly said that by grace we are not only given the ability to do more easily what we could with difficulty do by our natural powers, but the ability to will and to accomplish what we could not do at all by our natural powers. God it is who of his good pleasure works in us both the will and the performance (see Phil. 2:13).

1962-1965 Second Vatican Council defines the nature of the Church

1964 Second Vatican Council, 21st ecumenical council, *Lumen Gentium*

—*necessity of grace, good works, perseverance*—

40 The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and everyone of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consummator of this holiness of life: “Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). Indeed He sent the Holy Spirit upon all men that He might move them inwardly to love God with their whole heart and their whole soul, with all their mind and all their strength (cf. Mk 12:30) and that they might love each other as Christ loves them (cf. Jn 13:34; 15:12). The followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to His own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine

nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then too, by God's gift, they must hold on to and complete in their lives this holiness they have received. They are warned by the Apostle to live "as becomes saints" (Eph 5:3), and to put on "as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved a heart of mercy, kindness, meekness, patience" (Col 3:12), and to possess the fruit of the Spirit in holiness (cf. Gal 5:22; Rm 6:22). Since truly we all offend in many things (cf. Jas 3:2) we all need God's mercies continually and we all must daily pray: "Forgive us our debts" (1 Mt 6:12). ...

—*necessity of works, perseverance / merit*—
48 Since however we know not the day nor the hour, on Our Lord's advice we must be constantly vigilant so that, having finished the course of our earthly life (cf. Heb 9:27), we may merit to enter into the marriage feast with Him and to be numbered among the blessed (cf. Mt 25:31-46) and that we may not be ordered to go into eternal fire (cf. Mt 25:41) like the wicked and slothful servant (cf. Mt 25:26), into the exterior darkness where "there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (Mt 22:13; 25:30). For before we reign with Christ in glory, all of us will be made manifest "before the tribunal of Christ, so that each one may receive what he has won through the body, according to his works, whether good or evil" (2 Cor 5:10) and at the end of the world "they who have done good shall come forth unto resurrection of life; but those who have done evil unto resurrection of judgment" (Jn 5:29; cf. Mt 25:46).

2013 Pope Francis I, 266th Bishop of Rome, *Evangelii Gaudium*

—*necessity of grace, good works*—
1:3 Saint Thomas Aquinas taught that the Church's moral teaching has its own "hierarchy," in the virtues and in the acts which proceed from them (cf. *Summa Theologica* I-II, Q. 66, Art. 4-6). What counts above all else is "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6). Works of love directed to one's neighbour are the most perfect external manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit: "The foundation of the New Law is in the grace of the Holy Spirit, who is manifested in the faith which works through love" (ibid., I-II, Q. 108, Art. 1). Thomas thus explains that, as far as external works are concerned, mercy is the greatest of the virtues, since all the others revolve around it and, more than this, it makes up for their deficiencies. This is particular to the superior virtue, and as such it is proper to God to have mercy,

through which his omnipotence is manifested to the greatest degree" (ibid. II-II, Q. 30, Art. 4). ...

—*necessity of perseverance / merit*—
3:3 Our falling short of perfection should be no excuse; on the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing. The witness of faith that each Christian is called to offer leads us to say with Saint Paul: "Not that I have already obtained this, or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Jesus Christ has made me his own" (Phil 3:12-13). ...

—*necessity of grace, good works*—
4:1 This inseparable bond between our acceptance of the message of salvation and genuine fraternal love appears in several scriptural texts which we would do well to meditate upon, in order to appreciate all their consequences. The message is one which we often take for granted, and can repeat almost mechanically, without necessarily ensuring that it has a real effect on our lives and in our communities. How dangerous and harmful this is, for it makes us lose our amazement, our excitement and our zeal for living the Gospel of fraternity and justice! God's word teaches that our brothers and sisters are the prolongation of the incarnation for each of us: "As you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). The way we treat others has a transcendent dimension: "The measure you give will be the measure you get" (Mt 7:2). It corresponds to the mercy which God has shown us: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you... For the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Lk 6:36-38). What these passages make clear is the absolute priority of "going forth from ourselves towards our brothers and sisters" as one of the two great commandments which ground every moral norm and as the clearest sign for discerning spiritual growth in response to God's completely free gift. For this reason, "the service of charity is also a constituent element of the Church's mission and an indispensable expression of her very being" (Benedict XVI, *Motu Proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura*, November 11, 2012). By her very nature the Church is missionary; she abounds in effective charity and a compassion which understands, assists and promotes.