



THE ARCHANGEL

Church of St Michael Archangel • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW • stmichaels@fsspx.uk

No.77

September 2024

The Glories of Divine Grace

We all wonder what it would be like to win the lottery. The possession of great wealth would alleviate the burden of worry and provide us with a greater feeling of security and comfort. And we would delight in sharing our new-found wealth with others, thus alleviating their burdens too.

Yet, we rarely dwell on the great wealth we already possess, one that was won for us by another and passed on and made our own. It is a fortune that is greater than that any in history, a treasure that the most vivid imagination or the most villainous ambition could never even dream of.

Fr. Matthias Scheeben describes our great heritage and fortune in his book *The Glories of Divine Grace*. He is at pains to bring home to his fellow Catholics the sublime nature of sanctifying grace and the gifts that accompany it when it is imparted to the soul in baptism.

St Thomas Aquinas teaches that the whole world, and all it contains, is of less value before God than the grace of a single man. St. Augustine maintains that all of Heaven, together with all angels, cannot be compared with it. This is because grace is a divine quality that is imparted to the soul, making it akin to God, participant in His divine perfections and heir to His beatitude and glory. Nothing in the created order, whether angel or man, can equal such a gift.

Divine grace raises us to a dignity and status such that God's own might, power, bliss and contentment become ours. We are made worthy to share in His eternal happiness. The lottery and the possibilities of all its worldly wealth pale into nothingness compared to the delight and security that come of sanctifying grace. That is why our Lord tells us: « Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell. » (Matt. 10:28) Mortal sin is our deadliest enemy.

We do not esteem enough the greatness of our divine endowment. St. Thomas does not hesitate to say that

it is a greater work to bring a sinner back to grace than to create heaven and earth. Let us consider: a single baptism is of far greater importance and consequence than the creation of the universe in all its magnificence. The universe is temporary and will pass. It is but the stage for a greater endeavour: the bringing forth of angelic and human beings destined to be endowed with divinity. In the words of Proverbs, grace is better than all the most precious things: and whatsoever may be desired cannot be compared to it. (Prov. 8:11)

Fr Scheeben concludes: « If a miser could, by a single day's fast, or a single prayer, secure a whole fleet laden with treasures from India, who could restrain him from the act or disturb him therein? Who could impress him by representing the difficulty of his performance, or the danger of his health? With what right, then, and prudence, or rather folly, do we pretend such a difficulty, when we are certain of a reward, the smallest share of which incomparably surpasses a thousand Indies, aye, a thousand worlds! Yet we remain idle and will not labour to cultivate a field that immediately yields a golden harvest! »

The Glories of Divine Grace is a good book to read. It presses home the great Pauline theme of spiritual renewal. The merits of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension have been applied to our souls in baptism. We are become new creatures, supernatural beings, God's children, called henceforth to live in divine love and holiness. Until the world is definitively renewed at the end of time, we will always feel out of place, exiled in a place that is marred by so much sin. That is why, along with sanctifying grace, God grants us special powers to help us cope and remain steadfast. Faith guides us, hope toughens our resolve and charity spurs us on.

We possess a pearl of great price. If only we were ready to give up all rather than risk losing it.

Fr John Brucciani, Prior

Book for sale in the repository.

The Treasures of Divine Grace

Contrary to Protestant belief, Christ's mission was not merely to placate Divine Justice by making reparation for man's sin. His mission was primarily in order to found His Mystical Body through which man is elevated to the rank of the divine and shares in the very life of God.

As head of the human race, Christ's self-offering obtained for us this great and wondrous privilege. Just as Adam's sin had plunged humanity into the darkness of spiritual lifelessness by losing for us the gift of sanctifying grace, Christ's expiatory sacrifice reconciled humanity to God and restored to us our lost innocence.

Once children of wrath, we are now become, through grace received at baptism, the beloved of the Most High. Through our membership of Christ's Mystical Body, effected by the reception of sanctifying grace, we truly share in Christ's munificence and glory. This is the true meaning of our justification, which entails not only the forgiveness of sins, but also the adornment of our soul in divine splendour. Like the prodigal son, we are cleansed of our filth and clothed in our Father's robe, and His ring is clasped upon our hand, and heaven makes merry, "for that which was dead has come to life again, and that which was lost has been found." (Lk. 15:22)

The transformation of the sinner into a saint is thus the first effect of sanctifying grace in our soul. The Psalmist tells us: "God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Myrrh and stacte and cassia perfume thy garments, from the ivory houses: out of which the daughters of kings have delighted thee in thy glory." (Ps. 44)

Sons and daughters of God

When Nicodemus came in secret to visit our Lord, Jesus spoke these words: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (Jo. 3:5) Later on, speaking to the Samaritan woman, our Lord explains further His plan for mankind: "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink', thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." (Jo.4:10)

The living water is grace, from the Latin *gratia*, or gift. As water cleans and purifies in the physical world, God's living water, or grace, cleanses and purifies the soul and perfumes it with Godly scent. It is living water because it ever flows from its divine

source, the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in the heart of the sanctified man as a fount of holiness. St. Thomas comments: "That holiness which exists in God essentially and substantially is by grace given to our soul as a gift and a boon; we are thus to share in a goodness essentially Divine." Thus St. Peter is able to write that we have been made "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4)

Our participation is not to be understood in a moral sense only, consisting merely in leading a morally upright life. The Fathers of the Church are adamant: through the presence and action of grace and the Holy Spirit, we are elevated to a real and formative sharing of the Divine nature, so much so that St. John was able to declare: "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God." (1Jo.3:1). Our soul becomes as an incandescent piece of iron vested through and through with the fire that penetrates and permeates it, or like a diamond struck by the rays of the sun and transformed into a focus of dazzling light. It is lifted to the height of a Divine being, Who thus renders it capable of performing functions that are proper to God, namely knowing and seeing Him as He is, and loving Him with a beatific love.

Such beauty is at the same time the consequence of the action of the Holy Spirit upon the soul, and also the cause of its coming to the soul to take up its abode there. Grace so transforms and elevates us that we enter into the actual possession of God. The Holy Spirit may only dwell in a holy place, and thus prepares its own abode in us before coming to regale us with the splendours of its divinity. "If only you knew the gift of God..."

Heirs to the Kingdom

Our elevation to a sharing in God's own nature establishes us in a new relation to Him. Sin had sundered us from all things divine through the loss of the life of grace. We were forever separated from God, cast away upon the high sea of despair and oblivion. The destruction of sin removed our eternal death sentence, but it is the inhabitation and activity of the Holy Spirit in us that transforms our destiny into one of noblesse and delight, for God bestows upon us the dignity of children and adopts us as His own.

Our divine adoption is of a higher order and implies more than the common adoption practiced among men. However tight the bonds of understanding and love between parents and their adopted child, the

latter remains an orphan who utters the names of 'mother' and 'father' in a moral sense only, no matter how intense his esteem and gratitude. Human adoption will always be a legal fiction with social implications only. The adopted child remains an alien to his adopted family's bloodline. Not so with the justified soul! Through our participation in the divine nature, it is as if God's very blood flows in our veins. He becomes, through the mission of the Holy Spirit, the soul of our soul. His gift of supernatural life makes us His children, just as the gift of natural life makes us the children of our natural parents.

As real and true children of God, we stand to inherit all that belongs to Him. The right to inheritance constitutes what is most essential in the idea of adoption. It is because He wishes to share with us all He has, all that constitutes His eternal happiness, that God has given us a share in His divine life. At baptism we received titles of nobility that immediately granted us a divine right to eternal beatitude! And although we have not yet entered into the permanent possession of our inheritance, we already enjoy the wealth and splendours of heaven's royal court. We are become the King's knights and nobles, feasting at His Eucharistic banquet and revelling in His company. More wonderful still, God Himself comes to the poor abode of our soul and there chooses to dwell. He is at home in our company because He is our Father and we are His children.

Infused Virtues

Along with our deification by grace, God imparts to the sanctified soul special powers which allow it to act in a divine manner and to merit a share in God's beatitude. As St. Augustine says: "He Who created thee without thee, will not justify thee without thee!" In heaven, God wishes us to enjoy a reward well-earned. Thus St. Peter encourages his faithful: "Wherefore, brethren, labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election." (2 Peter 1:10)

However, that we may merit heaven by our good actions, it is not enough that we be deified. We must also receive specific powers and energies, special helps that give us the requisite means to act in a manner worthy of God and of His beatitude.

Therefore, along with sanctifying grace, the Holy Spirit infuses into the soul certain forces which allow it to act above the ordinary course of nature, in keeping with its divine status. His liberality pours into our souls supernatural virtues that allow us to elicit supernatural actions which, in turn, merit for us a supernatural reward.

Our natural powers are thus elevated above and beyond their natural strength. Grace first makes us into children of God, and then brings forth in the soul principals of action that allow it to act in a godly manner. Not only do we resemble God by nature, but we begin to think, see, and act like Him also.

The principal infused powers or virtues that the soul receives are firstly faith, hope, and charity. These are called the theological virtues, since they have God as their object (by them we know Him, we desire Him, and we love Him) and they depend on God for their increase. Then come the moral virtues, the chief ones being justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude, that are referred to as the cardinal virtues under whose headings the other virtues gather respectively.

These virtues, along with the grace in which they are rooted and upon which they depend, are infused in the soul at baptism, and they come to their fullness when we receive the sacrament of confirmation. They are the wings upon which we fly to our heavenly reward.

One may ask: if such powers are indeed given to us, why is virtuous living such a challenge? Should not the supernatural powers we have received make the practice of virtue easy?

The infused virtues do facilitate the practice of virtue by imparting to us an inclination to ordered living, but they do not take away the need for strenuous effort. They are powers that enable us to act in a supernatural manner, and thereby merit a supernatural reward, but they require the cooperation of our will in order to come to fruition. Man must, therefore, put forth effort and exercise his will in the pursuit of good living. Thus is he able to truly merit his eternal salvation.

Gifts of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost brings not only grace and the Christian virtues to the soul in which He makes His abode, but also various endowments called gifts. These are gratuitous favours, habits, or dispositions that render the soul sensitive to the express action of the Holy Spirit. They render the soul ever more docile to God's inspirations and impart new energy in the soul's quest for holiness.

There is much to say about the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but space does not allow. I encourage readers to read Fr Scheeben's wonderful book. It will leave you in awe of God's goodness and mercy to us, poor sinners. ❧



*1st Sunday of the month, after each mass, fathers are invited to pray the **Fathers' Prayer for Vocations** at the communion rail.*

Launching the

St Margaret Clitherow Sewing Guild



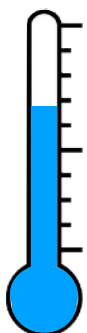
The Sewing Guild of St Margaret Clitherow is primarily a spiritual endeavour to help souls come closer to God through personal and communal prayer and the gift of time and talent for the beautification of the Sacred Liturgy. In particular, guild members will have a special love and care for the vestments and sacred linens necessary for the worthy celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

The new guild is in its infancy and membership spaces are limited. However, once we have organised a dedicated workspace large enough to accommodate the guild's activity, the guild will be able to receive more applications.

Miss Caroline P. is the guild's secretary. Please email [clitherow@sanctusmichael\(DOT\)com](mailto:clitherow@sanctusmichael(DOT)com) if you wish to find out more about the guild.

This initiative can become an immense source of spiritual and temporal assistance to the parish. Only the best is worthy of our Lord. Our vestments and linens should reflect the beauty, cleanliness and purity of the Lamb of God Who is offered in sacrifice at each Holy Mass.

« I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of thy house; and the place where thy glory dwelleth. » (Ps. 26)



The vestment fund currently stands at:

£2986

Target: £3700

(Green chasuble, dalmatics, humeral veil)

FYI: A kind soul has donated four new Low Mass vestment sets made with the finest embroidered silk. Deo gratias. It is wonderful to see the sacristy slowly equipped so that the liturgy can be celebrated in a worthy manner.

Liturgical Calendar - Sept 2024 Confessions before Saturday and Sunday Masses & during 1st Friday Holy Hour.

1	Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost	7:30, 9:00
	<i>2nd Collection/Prayers for Vocations</i>	18:00 Benediction
2	St. Stephen of Hungary, King & Confessor	7:30
3	St. Pius X, Pope & Confessor	7:15
4	Feria	7:15
5	St. Laurence Justinian, Bishop & Confessor	7:15
6	Feria 1st Fri - Holy H. 6:00PM	7:15 / 19:00
7	Saturday of Our Lady 1st Sat.	7:30 / 12:00
8	Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
9	Feria	7:15
10	St. Nicholas of Tolentino, Confessor	7:15
11	Feria	7:15
12	The Most Holy Name of Mary	7:15
13	Feria	7:15
14	Exaltation of the Holy Cross	7:30 / 12:00
15	Our Lady of Sorrows (1st cl. SSPX)	7:30, 9:00
	<i>Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost</i>	17:30 Holy Hour
16	Ss Cornelius, Pope, and Cyprian, Martyrs	7:15
17	Stigmata of St. Francis	7:15
18	Ember Wednesday	7:15
19	Ss Januarius, Bishop, and Comps, Martyrs	7:15
20	Ember Friday	7:15
21	St. Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist	7:30 / 12:00
22	Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
23	St. Linus, Pope & Martyr	7:15
24	Feria	7:15
25	Our Lady of Ransom	7:15
26	Feria	7:15
27	Ss Cosmas & Damian, Martyrs	7:15
28	St. Wenceslaus, Duke & Martyr	7:30 / 12:00
29	St. Michael the Archangel	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
30	St. Jerome, Priest, Confessor & Doctor	7:15

INCREASE YOUR DONATIONS BY 25%

- USE THE YELLOW ENVELOPES
- MAKE ANNUAL ONLINE [GIFT AID DECLARATION](#)



SANCTUARY LAMP FOR OUR LADY?

I have my eye on a dedicated lamp for the our Lady. It is very expensive but beautiful.

Someone has pledged 1/3 of the price if the rest can be found...

[DETAILS HERE](#)

