

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA Law, Grace, and the Magisterium of the Church

“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son . . .”

(Hebrews 1:1–2a)

Insight

Who among your family and friends is the person who helps clarify your decisions?

Her parents had just arrived at the restaurant for the graduation dinner. Sissy could just imagine how the last hour-and-a-half had played out. Sissy’s mom would have laid out the suit she chose for her father with a coordinating shirt and tie.

Her father always relied on her mother for direction in clothing. In fact, he relied on her for all sorts of direction and guidance. Retired college instructor that he was, he fit the image of the absent-minded professor. Sissy knew her mother excelled at propelling her father through all sorts of social situations. Her judgment never exceeded his needs and never usurped his autonomy.

Sissy’s mother and father had been married for a little over fifty years. They knew each other’s preferences and could complete each other’s sentences. It was a joy to see how well they complemented one another.

For Reflection . . .

Grace justifies us, that is, it wipes away our sins and enables us to share in the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus and by Baptism into his Paschal Mystery.

Who among your family, friends, and coworkers are most gracious in their relationships and why?

What sort of help or guidance from God do you expect in daily life?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1949–2051

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 327–331

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 415–433

Church Teaching

Moral Law

Natural moral law is imbedded within the heart of each person by God. Discerned by reason, it comprises our original moral sensibilities, whereby we know right from wrong.

Revealed moral law has been given in successive stages. The Old Law, summarized by the Ten Commandments (the Decalogue), was the first stage. The New Law, the second stage, fulfills the first. It is found in the life and preaching of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Apostles. The Sermon on the Mount stands at the heart of this Law. It is summed up in the commandment to love God and our neighbor, to love one another as Christ loved us.

Grace

God places within our hearts a longing for truth and goodness that can only be satisfied by him. Grace, the direct gift of God, enables us to live in this world as his adopted children.

Grace prepares and elicits our free response. Without this help we would fail in our calling. With divine help, we can live according to the precepts of the moral law and grow in holiness.

The Church, Mother and Teacher

We are given further help from God by the Church. She is like a mother to us, guiding us as a wise teacher in right ways.

The Magisterium—the pope and the bishops, teachers of the faith—reflect upon the moral law and pronounce on moral questions. They concretely apply moral precepts to life, providing clarity in our pursuit of beatitude.