

Homily: 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Cycle B: 2024: Am 7: 12-15; Ps. 85; Eph 1: 3-14; Mk 6:7-13

**“3 Types of God’s Graces On the Path to Holiness”**

The solution to all of our sins and difficulties and struggles in life which arise from the effects of original sin is God’s **grace**, namely, *His very life which God wants to share with us human beings in the depths of our souls* – it’s amazing that the Lord loves us that much! God takes the initiative with His grace, but we must freely respond to benefit from it. I want to look at 3 types of grace in this homily.

1. **Sanctifying Grace:** This is the grace we first receive when we are baptized. It begins the very life of God within us. It is through the 7 Sacraments that we receive sanctifying grace, which is why the Church so strongly proclaims the need to receive the Sacraments. It is why we should invite all people who are not Catholic to consider becoming Catholic, and those who are Catholic and have drifted away from the active practice of the Faith to come back to the Sacramental life of the Church. Of course, this is not spiritual magic – we benefit from the Sacraments to the degree of our Faith, which is why daily we must beg the Lord to deepen our Faith. **But each time we do receive one of the Sacraments with faith, the life of God, of the Blessed Trinity, within us increases, and we grow in holiness which is the purpose of sanctifying grace.** The only thing that can take away sanctifying grace once it is received, in faith, is deliberate mortal sin, which is why the saints would often say, ***they would rather die than commit ONE mortal sin!*** Of course, by God’s tender mercy, even after mortal sin, His life can be restored in us through a sincere Confession with purpose of amendment in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but it is better NEVER to have committed any mortal sins in the first place. Truly a special grace to pray for daily: *Lord, please protect me from committing even one mortal sin, and for the conversion of all the souls in mortal sin in our world, who God alone knows.*
2. **Actual Graces:** These are the helps we receive from God daily to choose the good and reject evil. **To be like Jesus, we need daily help!** But we must cooperate with God by doing our part: *trying to live the Catholic Faith*

*generously, being a self-giving person, living chastely in mind and body, by prayer and daily acts of penance/ self-sacrifice for our soul and for the conversion of others, growing in habits of virtue that open our **heart, mind,** and most importantly our **will** to the graces that will enable us to be more Christ-like.*

We also need to avoid “**the occasions of sin**” namely **the people, places and things** which often lead us into sin – knowing from reflection. It’s because of actual grace that we believe along with St. Paul that **we are never tempted beyond our strength.** It may seem like sometimes we are, but in reality, the actual grace is always there to choose the good. Although sometimes we like to say, like little kids, “*the devil made me do it*”; in reality, **the devil can’t make us do anything** because of the reality of actual grace. Let’s remember to ask our Guardian Angel, our Blessed Mother Mary, and our favorite Saints to assist us in being open to God’s actual graces at each moment of each day, which flows from real prayer throughout the day and becoming ever more sensitive to God’s will.

3. **Graces of State:** Finally, we need to consider the graces God gives us depending on our state in life. If we are **married**, we receive special graces to help us carry out our marital and parental duties with love and devotion. Similarly, a **priest** is given special graces to carry out his sacred responsibilities, as well as a **consecrated religious**. Someone who is **single** or is **widowed** is given graces to live well that state in life. The key to tapping into these graces of state is to call to mind how God has worked in our life. *If we are married to call to mind when we took our vows before the altar of God, for better or for worst. As a priest, to call to mind the day of his ordination when he promised to give my his totally to God and the Church. Similarly, a religious when he or she made their life-long vows to God.* The graces of state give us that extra push to persevere during difficulties in our vocation and enable us not to “throw in the towel” and give up. Let us ask God daily to deepen our Faith and help us to be docile to all the graces He wants to give us in this life, for **the extent the Life of Grace is in our soul will determine where we are in eternity** – for there the hidden graces, of this earthly life, leads finally to the Beatific Vision of the Blessed Trinity! God bless you. †