

Lecture 30- Doing What Lies in You: The Sacramental System

How real is history? Is it just an enormous soup, so full of disparate ingredients that it is uncharacterizable? Is it true, as Emil Cioran has remarked, that history proves nothing because it contains everything?

Thomas Cahill, How the Irish Saved Civilization, p. 5

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:8-10

Assigned Reading

The Story of Christianity—No reading assignment for this lecture

Key Terms

Sacrament, grace, merit

Objectives

- List and describe the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic church
- Compare and contrast the Roman Catholic view of grace during the Medieval period to that of Augustine

Class Prayer

“Save me, Lord, king of eternal glory, you who have power to save us all. Grant that I may long for, do and perfect those things which are pleasing to you and profitable for me. Lord, give me counsel in my anxiety, help in time of trial, solace when persecuted, and strength against every temptation. Grant me pardon, Lord, for my past wrongdoing and afflictions, correction of my present ones, and deign also to protect me against those in the future. Amen.”

From an 11th century prayer

Doing What Lies in You: The Sacramental System

I. Baptism—Forgiveness

II. Confirmation

III. Eucharist—Strength

A. Infrequent

B. Transubstantiation

C. _____ only (doctrine of concomitance)

D. Celebration of masses for the dead

IV. Penance—A New Beginning (“second plank”)

A. Contrition

B. Confession

C. Absolution

D. Satisfaction

E. Indulgences

1. Treasury of merit (14th century)

2. Extended to purgatory (15th century)

V. Relics and Pilgrimages—Help!

The pilgrim in William Langland's *Piers Ploughman* carries his bag and begging bowl "and souvenirs were pinned all round his hat—dozens of phials of holy oil, scallop-shells from Galicia, and emblems from Sinai. His cloak was sown all over with devices—Holy Land crosses, cross-keys from Rome, and a Saint Veronica handkerchief across the front—to let everyone know how many shrines he had seen.

VI. Mary and the Saints—More Help!

- A. The saints
- B. The Virgin Mary

VII. Extreme Unction—Last Help!

VIII. Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory?

IX. Two Important Questions

A. How do we get started?

1. Grace GOD'S GRACE + OUR WORKS = SALVATION

Is this really a message of grace?

Thomas Aquinas: "God pre-ordained to give glory because of merit, and...He pre-ordained to give grace to merit glory." (*Summa* 1, 23, 5)

2. Merit

BUT: WORKS + GRACE = BETTER

- a. Doing _____
- b. Semi-merit (congruent merit)
- c. Moral cooperation
- d. Full merit (condign merit)

A character in *Flesh and Blood* by the modern French novelist Francois

Mauriac: "Is the gift of grace arbitrary? They say that one make oneself worthy of it by prayer. If one turns the handle the right way, all the rest will follow. But the turning of the handle implies an antecedent grace...a vicious circle!"

B. How do we know that we have done our best?

- 1. Try harder!
- 2. No peace—no certainty

"The Christian way after baptism became one of self-effort and self-suffering, without that assured confidence in the redeeming work and suffering of Christ in which the New Testament encourages us to trust." (Philip Hughes)

X. "Percentage Theology" (this point is not on the CD)

Words of the Protestant layman at the judgment concerning his earlier Catholic training (according to Calvin): "They [the Catholic teachers] indeed preached of thy clemency towards men, but confined it to those who should show themselves deserving of it. They, moreover, placed this desert in the righteousness of works, so that he only was received into thy favor who reconciled himself to Thee by works. Nor, meanwhile, did they disguise the fact, that we are miserable sinners, that we often fall through infirmity of the flesh, and that to all, therefore, thy mercy behooved to be the common haven of salvation; but the method of obtaining it, which they pointed out, was by making satisfaction to Thee for offenses. Then, the satisfaction enjoined was, first, after confessing all our sins to a priest, suppliantly to ask pardon and absolution; and, secondly, by good to efface from thy remembrance our bad actions. Lastly, in order to supply what was still wanting, we were to add sacrifices and solemn expiations. Then, because Thou wert a stern judge and strict avenger of iniquity, they showed how dreadful thy presence must be. Hence they bade us flee first to the saints, that by their intercession Thou mightest be rendered exorable and propitious

Calvin: God is "the author of spiritual life from beginning to end...Let us not divide between Him and us what He claims for himself alone." (*Institutes* 2, 3, 6)

XI. Was Anybody Saved?

“When medieval Christians knelt in prayer, stood to sing their redeemer’s praises, spoke as a dying man to dying men, or as a mother to the children about her knees, the words and thoughts that came were what Luther and Zwingli and Calvin wove into Reformation creeds.”

Thomas Martin Lindsay

Questions for Consideration

How much of modern Catholicism do we find in this medieval scene?

For Further Study

Read the scripture text for today’s lecture and critique what you learned today based on that and other verses.