

FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

October 8, 2023

CATHOLICISM 101 – WEEK 6: WHAT IS THE CHURCH AND WHAT IS HER MISSION?

The topic for this upcoming week in Catholicism 101 is, “What is the Church and what is her mission?” In short, the mission of the Church is the salvation of souls.

Well that was easy.

But how do souls get saved? When Christ died on the cross, He merited the forgiveness of our sins, but that does not mean everyone suddenly went automatically to heaven. The graces to become truly just are available to us, but it’s a process, and we are free to accept or reject the graces Christ has won for us.

So what does the process look like? You begin with faith. You have to believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ. It should be fairly evident that without this first step, the whole process of justification is a non-starter. If you don’t believe that there is a God whose honor your sins have offended, then you’re not going to be too concerned with being reconciled to Him. If you don’t believe that your sins really are wrong, you’re probably not going to be too concerned with repenting from them and becoming good. And if you don’t believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God, you won’t be interested in receiving the graces that He’s offering to you, including the gift of sanctifying grace which makes heaven possible.

Once you have faith, then it’s time for repentance. You begin the long arduous process of turning away from sin. You start to see sin in its proper light, as something seriously wrong and offensive to God. Once you understand that, you begin taking the steps to break those habits that lead you to sin. It can be a long haul, but over time you build up moral and spiritual strength. If you keep at it, with the grace of God, you really can turn away from all sin, even venial sin.

Finally, you receive sanctifying grace through baptism or through confession if you’re already baptized. Through baptism and confession the Holy Spirit dispenses the graces Christ won for us on the cross. Our souls which were made dead by sin are brought by to life through Christ’s merits and we are put into what we call a state of grace.

We might stumble and fall many times in the course of our life, but so long as our lives end in a state of grace, we reach heaven. The Church exists to help us on the way. She teaches us the faith and shows us the way to heaven. She holds the graces entrusted to her by Christ to help us along the way as we go from being sinner to being saints. She does this not just for those already within her bounds, but for the whole world. The goal in the end is to get all people walking on the narrow way through the gates of heaven.

–Joe Moreshead

[Watch the recorded class here.](#)

