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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DOCTRINE OF GRACE

Catechism of the Catholic Church References

Grace: 1996–2005, 2021–24
Grace Conferred by the Sacraments: 1127–29, 1131
Sanctifying Grace: 35, 683, 1250, 2022

Actual Grace: 2000
Merit: 2006–11

Scripture References

Sanctifying Grace: 2 Pet 1:4; Jn 1:12, 18; 3:5; 1 Jn 3; 1 Pet 1:23

Summary of Lesson Content

Lesson 1

Grace is necessary for salvation.

Grace is a supernatural gift from God. It is a share in God's own divine life.

Lesson 3

We receive sanctifying grace through the seven sacraments. They are the ordinary channels of grace.

The seven sacraments are Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and the Anointing of the Sick.

Lesson 2

Man is conceived with original sin and born without grace. (There are two exceptions: Jesus and Mary.)

Sanctifying grace makes us adopted children of God. Mortal sin removes the life of grace from our souls.

The theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity.

Lesson 4

Actual graces are inspired opportunities to do good and to grow in holiness.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: DOCTRINE OF GRACE

LESSON ONE: GRACE

Aims

- The students will learn that grace is necessary for salvation.
- They will learn that grace is a supernatural gift from God and a share in God’s own divine life.

Materials

- *Activity Book*, p. 49
- Optional:
• “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #443

Begin

- Begin class by having a student read the definition of grace: The free gift God gives us by which he helps us to reach heaven.
- It is of the utmost importance that the students learn that they can be saved only by remaining in the state of grace. Our purpose on earth is to know, love, and serve God so that we can attain the vision of God in heaven. To do this, we must
- receive grace, keep grace, grow in grace, and die in the state of grace. Only with grace can we reach our goal of eternal life with God in heaven.
- You may review the loss of grace through original sin. We are all stained with original sin at birth. Jesus won grace for us by his death and Resurrection. We receive grace through Baptism.

Develop

1. Read paragraphs 1–3.
2. What is grace? Grace is a supernatural gift that God, because of his free benevolence, bestows on men for their eternal salvation. Grace can be considered in two ways:
 - Sanctifying grace, the life of God in our souls by which we are made children of God, and without which we cannot go to heaven.
 - Actual grace, a transient help of God enlightening the mind and strengthening the will to do good and to avoid evil.
3. Grace is a supernatural gift. This means that it is above the nature of man (he has no right to it; he does not have grace naturally within him or even within his reach). Grace is entirely a gift from God. Review that although grace cannot be seen, it is real (though air cannot be seen, we breathe it).
4. Man has free will and can cooperate with grace. Grace perfects nature. We must exercise our spiritual muscles and become strong in virtue. We must choose to receive the sacraments and to receive and grow in grace. Grace is effective and transforms man in God’s image and likeness. We choose to live in the state of grace; we also choose to remove the life of grace in our soul (through mortal sin). We choose to go to heaven or hell by our actions. Our thoughts, words, deeds, and omissions determine our ability to receive, sustain, and reject grace, which determines our eternal reward.
5. Have the students think of analogies for grace to explain the necessity of grace to their fellow students. Saint Augustine uses the analogy of a raging river and a man who must cooperate by staying in a boat. Grace is the current that carries us down the river. Man can reject grace by dropping an anchor or attaching himself to something on shore.

Reinforce

1. Have the students work on *Activity Book* p. 49 (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 165).
2. The students may work on the Memorization Questions and Words to Know from this chapter (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 161).
3. The students should discuss that it is grace that gives value to our good works. The merit we receive from good works is due first to the grace of God and only secondly to our work.
4. You may parallel the life of grace with a sport, such as football. Grace is the football. You get the ball and try to advance toward the end zone for a touchdown. Without the football, you cannot have a touchdown. You can fumble the ball (through sin) and intercept the ball (with the Sacrament of Penance). Every Eucharist is a first down!

Conclude

1. Teach the students to sing “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #443.
2. End class by leading the students in praying Eternal Rest (see the facing page).

PART THREE

God Shares His Life

CHAPTER 13

Doctrine of Grace

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8:11

We have learned that God created each one of us to know, love, and serve him on earth, and to live with him forever in heaven. This is the purpose of our lives. So it is very important that we learn *how* to do these things as best we can.

But this is an impossible task for us. How can we, who have been separated from God because of original sin, reach the greatness of heaven? We cannot! That is, we cannot unless God comes to our help with his **grace**.

Grace is a supernatural gift from God given to us through Jesus Christ. It is called **supernatural** because it is far above our natural human powers. It is even above the powers of God’s greatest creatures, the mighty angels! It is called a free *gift* because it is something we do not have a right to and something we cannot merit on our own. God gives it to us simply because he loves us.

mother Mary, who received grace at the moment of her conception in her mother’s womb.

Sanctifying grace makes us holy and pleasing to God; it makes us his adopted children and temples of the Holy Spirit. It enables us to live in heaven. This is why it is called God’s greatest gift to us. There is only one thing that can ever take this gift away from us: mortal sin.

Sanctifying grace gives us a share in God’s life. There are different kinds of life in the world. A living tree has *plant life* by which it can grow, blossom, and bear fruit. A dog has *animal life* that makes it better than a tree. It can see, hear, and move about. People have *human life* that allows us to think, to love, and to communicate ideas. But God’s life which comes to us in grace is the greatest of them all, for with it we can live in heaven. Without it we cannot.

Along with giving us a share in God’s life, sanctifying grace gives us three supernatural virtues: faith, hope, and charity. We will learn about these in the next chapter.

We receive sanctifying grace in the seven sacraments of the Church. Baptism first gives this new life to our souls and Confirmation

God’s Greatest Gift: Sanctifying Grace

Because of original sin all of us are conceived without the gift of grace in our souls. There have been only two exceptions: Jesus, who being God is always full of grace, and his

PELAGIANISM

Pelagianism is an ancient heresy that denies the necessity of grace. Pelagius, the teacher of the heresy, denied original justice and original sin, saying that the state of Adam and Eve before the fall is the same as the state of a child who has not yet sinned. Therefore, Adam and Eve suffered from concupiscence and could have died before they had sinned. Adam’s sin, then, is reduced to mere bad example, and Christ’s death on the Cross is denied any atoning power, becoming nothing more than a good example to counter Adam’s bad example. In that case, salvation is simply the result of our own good works and we have no need of grace. This heresy was denied by Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint Jerome, and the ecumenical council of Ephesus.

MISTAKEN GRACE

On the opposite extreme from Pelagianism, some people have taught that salvation rests solely on grace to the detriment of free will. In the extreme, proponents of this belief claim that there are some whom God has predestined to salvation and they will be saved no matter what they do, while those not predestined to salvation will go to hell regardless of their faith and works. Such a belief denies the love, justice, and mercy of God and ignores free will. Instead, we must understand the union between grace and free will. As Saint Augustine says: “he who completes his work by cooperating with our will began by working so that we might will it,” and “we also work, but we are only collaborating with God who works, for his mercy has gone before us.”

ETERNAL REST PRAYER

- V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.
- R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.
- V. May the souls of the faithful departed,
- through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
- R. Amen.

Preview

In the next lesson, the students will learn about sanctifying grace.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: DOCTRINE OF GRACE

LESSON TWO: SANCTIFYING GRACE

Aims

- The students will learn that man is conceived with original sin and born without grace. (There are two exceptions: Jesus and Mary.)
- They will learn that sanctifying grace makes us adopted children of God. Mortal sin removes the life of grace from our souls.
- They will learn that the theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity.

Materials

- *Activity Book*, p. 50
- Optional:
 - “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #443

Begin

- Discuss that we were all born with original sin. In fact, since the Fall, only two people have existed without original sin—Jesus and Mary. We refer to Mary’s conception without sin as the Immaculate Conception. Mary was conceived without
- original sin and preserved from sin throughout her life. Mary’s grace at her conception was the grace won by Christ on the Cross.

Develop

1. Read paragraphs 4–7.

2. Review the hierarchy of creation. (See Chalk Talk on the facing page.) Inanimate objects (e.g., rocks and metal) do not have life. Plants have life—they can grow and bear fruit. Animals are greater than plants—they can grow, move around, reproduce, and learn. Men are above all animals—they are rational beings with immortal souls. They can grow, relocate, reproduce, reason, learn, laugh, love, live in relationships, and worship. Angels are spiritual beings with eternal life. They are rational and have free will. God is the giver of all life and, indeed, he is life itself.

3. Sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift that heals and perfects our imperfect human nature. Sanctifying grace is a gift from God that draws us more deeply into his heart. This grace is a real participation in the divine nature (cf. 2 Pet 1:4; Jn 1:12; 3:5, 18; 1 Jn 3; 1 Pet 1:23). Grace, the seed of glory, is destined to blossom perfectly in heaven.
4. Sanctifying grace sanctifies the soul. A soul in the state of grace is free from mortal sin and has the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Sanctifying grace also gives supernatural beauty to the soul. Sanctifying grace makes one a friend and child of God and an heir to the Kingdom of Heaven. Through sanctifying grace, man becomes a living temple of the Holy Spirit.

5. A Catholic’s primary duty is to retain and develop a relationship with God through sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace cannot exist in a soul in mortal sin. If we confess our sins in the Sacrament of Penance, God who is ever-faithful will forgive us our sins and renew sanctifying grace within us. If one dies in mortal sin he will receive eternal damnation. All who die in the state of grace inherit heaven.

Reinforce

- 1. Have the students work on *Activity Book* p. 50 (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 165).
- 2. The students may work on the Memorization Questions and Words to Know from this chapter (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 161).

Conclude

- 1. Lead the students in singing “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #443.
- 2. End class by leading the students in praying Eternal Rest (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 157).

CHAPTER 13

Doctrine of Grace

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8:11

We have learned that God created each one of us to know, love, and serve him on earth, and to live with him forever in heaven. This is the purpose of our lives. So it is very important that we learn *how* to do these things as best we can.

But this is an impossible task for us. How can we, who have been separated from God because of original sin, reach the greatness of heaven? We cannot! That is, we cannot unless God comes to our help with his **grace**.

Grace is a supernatural gift from God given to us through Jesus Christ. It is called **super-natural** because it is far above our natural human powers. It is even above the powers of God’s greatest creatures, the mighty angels! It is called a free *gift* because it is something we do not have a right to and something we cannot merit on our own. God gives it to us simply because he loves us.

mother Mary, who received grace at the moment of her conception in her mother’s womb.

Sanctifying grace makes us holy and pleasing to God; it makes us his adopted children and temples of the Holy Spirit. It enables us to live in heaven. This is why it is called God’s greatest gift to us. There is only one thing that can ever take this gift away from us: mortal sin.

Sanctifying grace gives us a share in God’s life. There are different kinds of life in the world. A living tree has *plant life* by which it can grow, blossom, and bear fruit. A dog has *animal life* that makes it better than a tree. It can see, hear, and move about. People have *human life* that allows us to think, to love, and to communicate ideas. But God’s life which comes to us in grace is the greatest of them all, for with it we can live in heaven. Without it we cannot.

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We receive sanctifying grace in the seven sacraments of the Church. Baptism first gives this new life to our souls and Confirmation

God’s Greatest Gift: Sanctifying Grace

Because of original sin all of us are conceived without the gift of grace in our souls. There have been only two exceptions: Jesus, who being God is always full of grace, and his



strengthens it. The other sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, deepen this life of God. Penance gives it back to us if we have lost it by mortal sin. Anointing prepares us for physical and spiritual healing or the grace of a happy death.

The Gift of Actual Grace

Another kind of grace gives us all of the day-to-day help that we need in order to do good and avoid evil. **Actual graces** come to us in the form of inspirations that enlighten our minds or move our wills. Some examples of actual graces are the desire to pray or to read the Bible, and the urge to help someone who is sick or who needs help with homework. Whenever we say “yes” to these desires and carry out the good works they suggest, we become better Christians and more pleasing to God.

Without the help of actual graces we could not avoid sin or do good works for others. These graces help us to treat other people with respect and show us the way to live a good Christian life.

Words to Know:

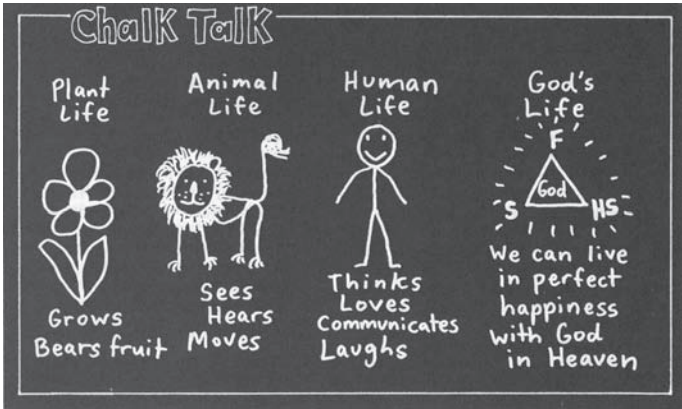
grace supernatural
sanctifying grace actual grace

SANCTIFYING GRACE

Sanctifying grace is a wonderful gift because it gives us a share in God’s life and draws us ever more closely into the union and mystery of God. It is like marriage—the longer one is married, the more deeply one understands the sacrament and grows in love with his spouse. Receiving sanctifying grace is like a wedding; the more we respond to grace, the more our holiness and love will grow.

Sanctifying grace is like a telescope because it helps us to see with the eyes of faith things we could not normally see. With sanctifying grace, we can see God’s love for us, Jesus’ presence in the Eucharist, etc. In this way, grace helps us to choose to live a holy life and to be sanctified in union with God.

CHALK TALK: HIERARCHY OF CREATION



Preview

In the next lesson, the students will learn about the sacraments as channels of grace.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: DOCTRINE OF GRACE

LESSON THREE: CHANNELS OF GRACE

Aims

The students will learn that we receive sanctifying grace through the seven sacraments. They are the ordinary channels of grace.

They will learn that the seven sacraments are Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and the Anointing of the Sick.

Materials

- *Activity Book*, p. 51
- Optional:
 - “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #443

Begin

Review that Christ won grace for us by his life, death, and Resurrection. He is the source and giver of all grace. He founded the Church to continue his work of teaching and sanctifying on earth. Sanctification requires grace. Thus,

Christ instituted seven sacraments and entrusted them to the Church to be the ordinary channels of grace. By receiving the sacraments, we may become holy and faithful followers of Christ.

Develop

1. Read paragraph 8.
2. Review the seven sacraments, and how they are channels of grace.

Sacraments of Initiation:

 - Baptism: Sanctifying grace is first infused into the soul; the door is opened to all other sacraments.
 - Confirmation: The sacrament by which we receive completion of the grace given to us in Baptism. Grace is poured into the soul with a special gift of strength from the Holy Spirit so that one can live more perfectly as a Christian.
 - Eucharist: This sacrament contains Christ, the source of all grace, substantially present. The Holy Eucharist is food for the soul. It strengthens us. It intimately unites us with God himself, allowing us to enter more deeply into the mystery of his life.

Sacraments of Healing:

 - Penance: Grace, which was lost as a result of sins committed after Baptism, is restored to the soul. Penance gives us grace and strength to overcome sin.

Sacraments of Service:

 - Anointing of the Sick: This sacrament gives the strength and grace we need to live (and suffer) according to God’s will. The Anointing of the Sick gives grace to unite us forever with God in heaven.
 - Matrimony: This sacrament unites a man and a woman together in a relationship that bears witness to Christ’s love for the Church—it is life giving. The spouses become ministers of grace for one another.
 - Holy Orders: This sacrament configures a man to Christ and gives him the power to continue the apostolic ministry as a bishop, priest, or deacon.
3. Review additional ways to grow in grace:
 - Living virtuously and doing good works (building habits that make us strong in the life of grace)
 - Prayer (asking God to share his grace with us)

Reinforce

1. Have the students work on *Activity Book* p. 51 (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 165).
2. The students may work on the Memorization Questions and Words to Know from this chapter.
3. The sacraments are necessary for the life of grace. Have the students write a paragraph on this topic. The students may make a plan of action, describing ways they can live lives of grace.
4. The students may research the lives of various saints and discuss how they modeled holy lives filled with grace.

Conclude

1. Lead the students in singing “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #443.
2. End class by leading the students in praying Eternal Rest (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 157).

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Doctrine of Grace

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Romans 8:11

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strengthens it. The other sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, deepen this life of God. Penance gives it back to us if we have lost it by mortal sin. Anointing prepares us for physical and spiritual healing or the grace of a happy death.

The Gift of Actual Grace

Another kind of grace gives us all of the day-to-day help that we need in order to do good and avoid evil. **Actual graces** come to us in the form of inspirations that enlighten our minds or move our wills. Some examples of actual graces are the desire to pray or to read the Bible, and the urge to help someone who is sick or who needs help with homework. Whenever we say “yes” to these desires and carry out the good works they suggest, we become better Christians and more pleasing to God.

Without the help of actual graces we could not avoid sin or do good works for others. These graces help us to treat other people with respect and show us the way to live a good Christian life.

Words to Know:

grace supernatural
sanctifying grace actual grace

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- Q. 91** *What is sanctifying grace?*
Sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift which abides in our soul and makes us holy, children of God, and heirs of heaven (CCC 1999).
- Q. 95** *If sanctifying grace is lost by mortal sin, how can it be restored?*
Sanctifying grace lost by mortal sin can be restored by receiving the Sacrament of Penance (CCC 1468).
- Q. 96** *Is sanctifying grace necessary to go to heaven?*
Yes, sanctifying grace is necessary to go to heaven (CCC 1023).

CHALK TALK: GROWING IN GRACE



Preview

In the next lesson, the students will learn about actual grace.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: DOCTRINE OF GRACE

LESSON FOUR: ACTUAL GRACE

Aims

The students will learn that actual graces are inspired opportunities to do good and to grow in holiness.

Materials

- *Activity Book*, p. 52
- Thimble, glass, bucket, water
- Optional:
 - “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #443

Begin

Sometimes we need additional help to give us the “boost” (desire or inclination) to do the right thing. God provides this assistance all the time. Often we do not recognize or heed this help, but it is there for us to receive. Have the students discuss ways God prompts them to do good and avoid evil. For example:

- When passing a church, God inspires us to pray or to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament
- Seeing your mother helping your brother do homework, you know to set the table or help get supper ready
- We are called to sacrifice something good as a penance
- We feel the need to visit someone who is lonely

Develop

1. Read paragraphs 9 and 10.
2. Actual grace is a temporary supernatural act of God to move man to do good, avoid evil, and become holier. This grace internally and directly enlightens the intellect and strengthens the will.
3. Why is grace necessary? The Church teaches that, “for every salutary act internal supernatural grace of God (gratia elevans) is absolutely necessary” [Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1960), 229]. Grace is essential for the beginning of faith and for salvation, for the performance of salutary acts, for final perseverance, and for avoiding all venial sins.
4. Actual grace is what accompanies our works to make them meritorious. It is a supernatural gift that God freely gives to us. God wills all men to be saved; thus, it can be understood that he gives all sufficient grace to observe his commandments, enough grace for conversions, and the grace necessary for innocent unbelievers to achieve eternal salvation.
5. Sometimes it seems like some people get more grace than others. Saints, for example, seem to have a superabundance of grace, and we often think we need an apparition or a miracle to aspire to be a saint. How wrong we are! We are all called to be saints! God gives us all the grace necessary—we simply need to respond to God and receive the grace he offers us. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux tells us that God wants to fill each of us with grace. All of us have different capacities for love, and whether we are like a thimble, a bucket, or a lake, when we are filled to the brim, we cannot hold any more. (You may demonstrate this by filling a thimble, glass, and bucket full of water.) God knows our needs and capacities. He gives us enough grace to be filled, to be a saint, and to be perfectly happy forever with him in heaven.

Reinforce

1. Have the students work on *Activity Book* p. 52 (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 165).
2. The students may work on the Memorization Questions and Words to Know from this chapter. They may also prepare for the quiz.
3. When we are in the state of grace, responding to actual grace merits us rewards in heaven. Actual graces help us to build up our treasury. When we are in mortal sin, no good act we do will build up this treasure; these acts only will have human value. However, if we are in the state of grace, good acts can have human and eternal rewards! This is a special gift from God.
4. To be sure the students understand the differences between them, play a game comparing actual and sanctifying grace. Call out a grace and have students identify it as either actual or sanctifying.

Conclude

1. Lead the students in singing “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #443.
2. End class by leading the students in praying Eternal Rest (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 157).



strengthens it. The other sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, deepen this life of God. Penance gives it back to us if we have lost it by mortal sin. Anointing prepares us for physical and spiritual healing or the grace of a happy death.

The Gift of Actual Grace

Another kind of grace gives us all of the day-to-day help that we need in order to do good and avoid evil. **Actual graces** come to us in the form of inspirations that enlighten our minds or move our wills. Some examples of actual graces are the desire to pray or to read the Bible, and the urge to help someone who is sick or who needs help with homework. Whenever we say “yes” to these desires and carry out the good works they suggest, we become better Christians and more pleasing to God. Without the help of actual graces we could not avoid sin or do good works for others. These graces help us to treat other people with respect and show us the way to live a good Christian life.

Words to Know:

grace supernatural
sanctifying grace actual grace

76

- Q. 94** *What is sanctifying grace?*
Sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift which abides in our soul and makes us holy, children of God, and heirs of heaven (CCC 1999).
- Q. 95** *If sanctifying grace is lost by mortal sin, how can it be restored?*
Sanctifying grace lost by mortal sin can be restored by receiving the Sacrament of Penance (CCC 1468).
- Q. 96** *Is sanctifying grace necessary to go to heaven?*
Yes, sanctifying grace is necessary to go to heaven (CCC 1023).

SAINT AUGUSTINE, DOCTOR OF GRACE

Saint Augustine lived from 354 to 430 and served as bishop of the North African city of Hippo. Christianity had recently become legal in the Roman Empire and the Church enjoyed freedom she had never known before. However, with the end of persecution a flood of heresies began to attack the Church. Saint Augustine himself followed the heresy called Manichaeism before converting to Christianity. While a bishop, Saint Augustine wrote and preached copiously about the true Faith and refuted many heresies. His writings against the Pelagians formulated the doctrine of grace as understood by the Church today, and he ranks with Saint Thomas Aquinas as one of the greatest Doctors of the Church.

PRAYER OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

In his *Confessions*, the story of his journey from atheism to Manichaeism to Christianity, Saint Augustine writes: “Too late did I love Thee, O Beauty, so ancient, and yet so new! Too late did I love Thee. For behold, Thou wert within, and I without, and there did I seek Thee; I, unlovely, rushed heedlessly among the things of beauty Thou made. Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee. Those things kept me far from Thee, which, unless they were in Thee, were not. Thou called, and cried aloud, and forced open my deafness. Thou didst gleam and shine, and chase away my blindness. Thou didst exhale odors, and I drew in my breath and do pant after Thee. I tasted, and do hunger and thirst. Thou didst touch me, and I burned for Thy peace” (X, 27).

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux was born in France in 1090. He was the reformer of the Cistercian order. He wrote many works and sermons. One of these, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, is about the doctrine of grace. In this work he looks to Saint Augustine’s teaching on grace as his guide.

Preview

In the next lesson, the students’ understanding of the material covered in this chapter will be reviewed and assessed.

TEACHER'S NOTES