

Discerning
Truth in the midst of *Error*

Part Two: **Exposing Error**

in

Catholicism

#4 – What is the Spiritual Condition of Mankind?

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(C.=Catholicism, A&E=Adam & Eve)

- From the scriptures the original condition of mankind in the garden was:
- Perfect, complete, fulfilled, Adam created in the image of God and knew only good.
- Tempted by Satan with independence from God, self rule, to be gods.
- When A&E chose to sin they died spiritually immediately and completely.
- This total depravity and absolute inability was passed onto all mankind.
- Spiritual death led to eventual physical death and then eternal death.
- Hopelessness plagues helpless mankind from birth on, unless God does something.

What does C. say about the original spiritual condition of our first parents?

- C. affirms A&E's original perfection and sinlessness and their subsequent fall.
 - Q. How could a perfect God create man who is by nature sinful? I know we all have free will, but why would not God create beings that are for the most part holy and not sinful? (catholic.com Q&A)
 - A. Man was not created sinful by nature. God created man entirely holy and sinless. Our sinful condition is not the result of God's creative work, but is a historical consequence of our abuse of free will. Free will means that even though our first parents were entirely sinless and enjoyed the life of original grace, they were still capable of choosing to be otherwise and forfeiting of the life of grace—and that's just what they did. We, their offspring, are conceived and born bereft of this life, spiritually dead, in original sin. Even when we are spiritually reborn in baptism, we remain affected by concupiscence or tendencies toward sin as a result of having been conceived in original sin. However, all of this is the result not of some defect in God's creative work, but of the self-chosen circumstances into which our race fell in the very beginning.
- C. teaches that A&E's fall caused a level of spiritual deadness, passed onto all.
- C. teaches that Adam & Eve enjoyed a state of original grace or sanctifying grace.
 - God chose to create man in what is called the state of elevated nature, in which our first parents were endowed with sanctifying grace as a gift not just to them but to their posterity. Unfortunately, they lost this gift for themselves and for us, and so now we are born deprived of sanctifying grace. This has consequences. While original sin itself is the deprivation of sanctifying grace, it also carries with it a fallen and corrupt nature, which is the stain of original sin. (catholic.com)
- C. teaches that A&E's sin caused man to be deprived of something good.
- Deprived of this state of original grace mankind is born in a state of original sin.
- The state of grace that A&E had is what all of mankind needs to be restored unto.
- C.'s teaching regarding salvation has to do with restoring sinners to that lost state.

- To be in the state of grace equals salvation but does NOT equal complete justification.
- **Rom.5:1-2** Biblical justification = legal declaration of complete righteousness.
- Biblical result: peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...and confident hope.
- When guilty sinners are legally declared righteous and pure by God in Christ...
- Peace and sure hope with no fear of the eternal sentence the sinner deserves.
- In C. there is no basis of confident peace or sure hope.
- C. teaches a process of justification, the sinner cooperates over time.
- Being in a state of grace is simply the beginning of the justification process...
- C. goes off track in the area of the totality of depravity of man as we will see.

Categories of Sin – Original Sin

- There are at least two major categories of sin in Catholicism. Original & Personal.
- C. teaches that original sin is a contracted condition...a state of being.

CCC (Catechism of the Catholic Church)

403 Following St. Paul, the Church has always taught that the overwhelming misery which oppresses men and their inclination towards evil and death cannot be understood apart from their connection with Adam's sin and the fact that he has transmitted to us a sin with which we are all born afflicted, a sin which is the "death of the soul".²⁹¹ Because of this certainty of faith [De Fide], the Church baptizes for the remission of sins even tiny infants who have not committed personal sin.

404 How did the sin of Adam become the sin of all his descendants? The whole human race is in Adam "as one body of one man".²⁹³ By this "unity of the human race" all men are implicated in Adam's sin, as all are implicated in Christ's justice.

404 cont. Still, the transmission of original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand. But we do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature. By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state.

- Adam lost his state of original holiness and justice for himself and all of mankind.

404 cont. It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. And that is why original sin is called "sin" only in an analogical sense: it is a sin "contracted" and not "committed" - a state and not an act.

- Original sin is not Personal sin and is only a contracted condition.

- Mankind lacks the original state of grace which C. claims they can restore.

405 Although it is proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called concupiscence". Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.

- Every person is born in Original sin. But original sin does not equal total depravity.
- It is only a wounding. A downgrade toward weakness and inclination toward evil.
- C. rejects the doctrine of the Total Depravity and Absolute inability of Man.
- Spiritually wounded but left with enough freedom to be and do good. Rom.3, Eph.2
- Only thing needed is the "life of Christ's grace" to get the goodness juices flowing.
- C. claims that only they can dispense what is needed for restoration to state of grace.
- This in some ways reminds me of the beliefs of the Myu tribe – Soul Substance.

406 The Church's teaching on the transmission of original sin was articulated more precisely in the fifth century, especially under the impulse of St. Augustine's reflections against Pelagianism, and in the sixteenth century, in opposition to the Protestant Reformation. Pelagius held that man could, by the natural power of free will and without the necessary help of God's grace, lead a morally good life; he thus reduced the influence of Adam's fault to bad example. The first Protestant reformers, on the contrary, taught that original sin has radically perverted man and destroyed his freedom; they identified the sin inherited by each man with the tendency to evil (concupiscentia), which would be insurmountable. [total depravity] The Church pronounced on the meaning of the data of Revelation on original sin especially at the second Council of Orange (529) and at the Council of Trent (1546).

- Pelagianism – man is spiritually alive and free. Total Depravity – man is spiritually dead with a will that is in absolute bondage. C. comfortably takes the middle ground.

407 The doctrine of original sin, closely connected with that of redemption by Christ, provides lucid discernment of man's situation and activity in the world. By our first parents' sin, the devil has acquired a certain domination over man, even though man remains free.

Categories of Sin – Personal

- C. teaches that original sin, the deprivation of original state of grace, infects everyone.
- C. claims to be able to counteract original sin and dispense the needed state of grace.
- This can be done with infants thru baptism, of course, but also to adults who convert.
- Afterwards they must constantly deal with the stain of original sin.
- These sins are considered Personal sins and are divided into Mortal & Venial sin.
- Both kinds of sins must be taken care of in the confessional booth constantly.

Mortal Sin

- Mortal sin is the more serious sin and is dealt with by the sacrament of reconciliation.
- The sacrament of reconciliation is confession to the priest and doing penance.
- True mortal sin has the ability to cause someone to lose the state of grace.

1855 Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him. Venial sin allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it.

1856 Mortal sin, by attacking the vital principle within us - that is, charity - necessitates a new initiative of God's mercy and a conversion of heart which is normally accomplished within the setting of the sacrament of reconciliation: [confession and penance]

When the will sets itself upon something that is of its nature incompatible with the charity that orients man toward his ultimate end, then the sin is mortal by its very object . . . whether it contradicts the love of God, such as blasphemy or perjury, or the love of neighbor, such as homicide or adultery. . . . But when the sinner's will is set upon something that of its nature involves a disorder, but is not opposed to the love of God and neighbor, such as thoughtless chatter or immoderate laughter and the like, such sins are venial.

1857 For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent."

1858 Grave matter is specified by the Ten Commandments, corresponding to the answer of Jesus to the rich young man: "Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother." The gravity of sins is more or less great: murder is graver than theft. One must also take into account who is wronged: violence against parents is in itself graver than violence against a stranger.

1859 Mortal sin requires full knowledge and complete consent. It presupposes knowledge of the sinful character of the act, of its opposition to God's law. It also implies a consent sufficiently deliberate to be a personal choice. Feigned ignorance and hardness of heart do not diminish, but rather increase, the voluntary character of a sin.

- If you truly believe something is okay that the Bible calls sin – you can be excused.
- So, in essence, God's justice is subject to man's understanding of his justice.

1860 Unintentional ignorance can diminish or even remove the imputability of a grave offense. But no one is deemed to be ignorant of the principles of the moral law, which are written in the conscience of every man. The promptings of feelings and passions can also diminish the voluntary and free character of the offense, as can external pressures or pathological disorders. Sin committed through malice, by deliberate choice of evil, is the gravest.

1861 Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back. However, although we can judge that an act is in itself a grave offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justice and mercy of God.

- Mortal sin causes a reversal of inclusion in Christ's kingdom and eternal death in hell.
- The one who commits mortal sin has to confess and do acts of penance to pay for sin.

1440 Sin is before all else an offense against God, a rupture of communion with him. At the same time it damages communion with the Church. For this reason conversion entails both God's forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church, which are expressed and accomplished liturgically by the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

- Sin is an offense against God and the church, God's representative here on earth.

1446 Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as "the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace."

- Salvation in C. is never sure. It's something that can be lost and regained many times.
- Practical righteousness while living in the state of grace is the salvation process in C.
- Sin is not paid in full by Christ alone. By Christ & the continuing cooperation of sinner.
- B/c full sanctification is not possible; the sinner will spend time after this life continuing to pay for sin. Hundreds or thousands of years in purgatorial purification.
- You can be hastened through purgatory by loved ones having special masses for you.
- Obviously NOT the same as how we understand sin to be dealt with in the scriptures.

Venial Sin

- Venial sins must be confessed at least once a year and do not affect eternal standing.
- Venial sins do affect cooperation & progress toward full justification & purity in life.
- Therefore Venial sin can determine length of stay in purgatory before fit for heaven.

1862 One commits venial sin when, in a less serious matter, he does not observe the standard prescribed by the moral law, or when he disobeys the moral law in a grave matter, but without full knowledge or without complete consent.

- Venial sin can be any sin, even mortal sin minus full knowledge or complete consent.

1863 Venial sin weakens charity; it manifests a disordered affection for created goods; it impedes the soul's progress in the exercise of the virtues and the practice of the moral good; it merits temporal punishment. Deliberate and unrepented venial sin disposes us little by little to commit mortal sin. However venial sin does not break the covenant with God. With God's grace it is humanly repairable. "Venial sin does not deprive the sinner of sanctifying grace, friendship with God, charity, and consequently eternal happiness."¹³⁴

While he is in the flesh, man cannot help but have at least some light sins. But do not despise these sins which we call "light": if you take them for light when you weigh them, tremble when you count them. A number of light objects makes a great mass; a number of drops fills a river; a number of grains makes a heap. What then is our hope? Above all, confession.

Summary:

- A&E were created and then given original grace and justice. AKA sanctifying grace.
- When A&E sinned it was personal sin but passed a state of original sin on to mankind.
- C. claims to be able to remove the state of original sin by baptism.
- At baptism they dispense the state of grace, restoring sinners to original condition.
- In the state of original sin mankind is not dead but only wounded and free to do good.
- The stain of original sin or tendency to sin causes venial & mortal sin to be committed.
- Mortal sin causes the death of sanctifying grace and loss of salvation.
- Venial sins do not affect salvation but will increase length of purgatorial purification.
- Sins of all kinds must be confessed to priest & then atoned for by sinner thru penance.
- Christ initiated justification, sinners must cooperate & complete justification process.
- Paying for sin in purgatory will finish justification process b/4 sinners can enter heaven.