

Living in truth series.

The Life of Grace by Fr. John Edwards S.J.

The life of Grace is absolutely vital for intelligent living in this life and to getting to heaven and avoiding hell in the next. It is the most important gift I could ever have, and its loss would be the greatest disaster. Our religion is nearly incomprehensible if we do not know about it.

What does the Bible say about it?

A lot. It's bad to try to argue from "proof texts", but here are some basic thought-provokers: "I am the Way; the truth and the life"; "no man can enter into the kingdom of God unless birth comes to him by water and from the Holy Spirit; "if anyone eats my bread and drinks my blood, lives continually in me, and I in him"; "he has chosen us out, in Christ... marking us out... to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ". "Christ is your life". (Jn. 14:6; 3:5; 6:40,52,57; Eph. 1:4-6; Col. 3:3)

What exactly is it?

It is a share in the very life of God himself (a created share: it makes us "adopted" children - we are not identified with God!). It is already the life we need to live in heaven; it is the equipment we need to endure, let alone enjoy, infinite Goodness, Truth and Beauty, outside space and time, for all eternity. It is a share in the Life of Jesus, earned for us at a great cost. The technical term for it is "Supernatural Grace" (that is: grace or gift which is above all nature; it is something we cannot earn and it is over and above our deserts). To have it is to be "in a state of Grace".

What does it do?

As said, it enables us to enter and enjoy heaven. (Without it, we would find it unendurable - it would in fact be hell.) Right now, because it is Christ's life, the Father responds to it, and every single action we do draws from him a "reward". This we get in heaven. From God's point of view, it is important that we are in a state of Grace, since all that we do which is not sinful, impregnates the world with His redemptive work.

How do we get it; can we lose it?

We get it normally through baptism. We lose it through mortal sin (that is, if we give full and deliberate consent to something against God's will in a serious matter). We regain it through a deep love-sorrow, which is his gift. This love-sorrow is always given if we receive the sacrament of reconciliation properly.

Do we feel its presence? Not normally.

Do only Catholics have it?

No, otherwise only Catholics would get to heaven. But it certainly comes in some way through the Church - which is of course Christ's Body and which does His redeeming work.

What else?

A very great deal. But notice two things especially. First, the life of grace comes through the gift of Jesus, is a share in his own life. And he got his life from Mary - that was the way God planned it. Our Lady has a vast part to play in our own state of Grace, in receiving it and keeping it.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, give me the gift of faith. Even if it's the size of a mustard seed, instil deep within me the gift of faith, because even with this small amount of faith I can move mountains. Send the Holy Spirit to stir up that faith within me for me to practice it, to protect it, to learn to love it, and to read and study about it. Train me in the way of faith making sure of what I hope for and certain about what I do not see. Help me to live by faith, not by sight. Establish me in the obedience that comes from faith, a living faith that is always accompanied by action and good works. Lord Jesus, when my faith is tested, find me ready to accept and embrace it so that perseverance may develop and become ever stronger in my life. May this perseverance make me mature and complete, lacking nothing, that I might be pleasing to You and useful in helping my brothers and sisters and all peoples along the way. Amen ...

U got to believe by Fr Stan Fortuna CFR

Copyright Francescoproductions, 2004

Used with permission.

Young people building the Culture of Life
www.communityofgrace.org.uk