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Institute of Catholic Culture: Educational Program on Original Sin

St. Timothy Catholic Church, Chantilly, VA

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CCC 385: “The revelation of divine love in Christ manifested at the same time the extent of evil and the superabundance of grace. We must therefore approach the question of the origin of evil by fixing the eyes of our faith in him who alone is its conqueror.” CCC 387: “Only in the knowledge of God’s plan for man can we grasp that sin is an abuse of the freedom that God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving him and loving one another.”

At the end of a sermon on the Ascension, St. Leo the Great says, “For today not only are we confirmed as possessors of paradise, but have also in Christ penetrated the heights of heaven, and have gained still greater things through Christ’s unspeakable grace than we had lost through the devil’s malice. For us, whom our virulent enemy had driven out from the bliss of our first abode, the Son of God has made members of Himself and placed at the right hand of the Father” (Sermon 73.4).

Peccatum Originale Originans (the act of Adam’s personal sin)

Gen 3:1-24

CCC 374: “The first man was not only created good, but was also established in friendship with his Creator and in harmony with himself and with the creation around him, in a state that would be surpassed only by the glory of the new creation in Christ.” CCC 376: “By the radiance of this grace all dimensions of man’s life were confirmed. As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die. The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman, and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called ‘original justice.’”

CCC 390: “The account of the fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place at the beginning of the history of man. Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault committed by our first parents.”

CCC 396: “The ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that man, being a creature, must freely recognize and respect with trust. Man is dependent on his Creator and subject to the laws of creation and to the moral norms that govern the use of freedom.

CCC 398: “In that sin man *preferred* himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good. Constituted in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully ‘divinized’ by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to ‘be like God,’ but ‘without God, before God, and not in accordance with God’ (cf. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*).”

CCC 400: “The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed: the control of the soul’s spiritual faculties over the body is shattered; the union of man and woman becomes subject to tension, their relations henceforth marked by lust and domination. Harmony with creation is broken: visible creation has become alien and hostile to man. Because of man, creation is now subject ‘to its bondage to decay.’ Finally the consequence explicitly foretold for this disobedience will come true: man will ‘return to the ground,’ for out of it he was taken. *Death makes its entrance into human history.*”

The Protoevangelium—Gen 3:15

The Exsultet: “*O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!*”

Peccatum Originale Originatum (the state of deprivation found in fallen human nature)

Rom 5:12-21

CCC 403: “Following St. Paul, the Church has always taught that the overwhelming misery which oppresses men and their inclination toward 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.’ Because of this certainty of faith, the Church baptizes for the remission of sin even tiny infants who have not committed personal sin.”

CCC 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 toward God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.”

CCC 2515: “Etymologically, ‘concupiscence’ can refer to any intense form of human desire. Christian theology has given it a particular meaning: the movement of the sensitive appetite contrary to the operation of the human reason. The apostle St. Paul identifies it with the rebellion of the ‘flesh’ against the ‘spirit.’ Concupiscence stems from the disobedience of the first sin. It unsettles man’s moral faculties and, without being in itself an offense, inclines man to commit sins.”

CCC 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. Original sin entails ‘captivity under the power of him who thenceforth had the power of death, that is, the devil’ (cf. Council of Trent: DS 1511). Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action, and morals.”

CCC 1263: “By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishments for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam’s sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.”

CCC 1264: “Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an inclination to sin that Tradition calls *concupiscence*, or metaphorically, ‘the tinder for sin’ (*fomes peccati*); since concupiscence ‘is left for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ’ (cf. Council of Trent: DS 1515).”

St. Thomas Aquinas: Why do the baptized suffer? Incorporation into Christ; spiritual fight; goal of eternal life.

Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus* (1854): “The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.”

St. Augustine (d. 430), the anti-Pelagian writings, such as: *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin, On Marriage and Concupiscence, Against Two Letters of the Pelagians*

Second Council of Orange (529), *Acta*

St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), *Summa Theologiae* I, qq. 94-102 (Original Justice); *Summa Theologiae* I-II, qq. 81-85 (Original Sin), *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 1, a. 4 (Did God become incarnate more to remedy actual sins than original sin?); *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 69, a. 3 (Does baptism take away the penalties of the present life?)

Council of Trent, “Decree concerning Original Sin” (1546)

Pope Pius XII, *Humani Generis* (1950)