



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

09 June 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Grace *\grās*

Unmerited divine assistance given; freely given; God's favor that comes sacramentally, situationally, and habitually. Saint Paul identifies Jesus as the "grace of God" and sees grace as operating in the many charisms that build up the church.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-grace>

CONTEXT

Grace does not work like a penny in a slot machine. Grace will move you only when you want it to move you, and only when you let it move you.

—Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

The gift of grace increases as the struggle increases.

—Saint Rose of Lima

Grace is uncontrollable, arbitrary to our senses, apparently unmerited. It's utterly free, ferociously strong, about as mysterious a thing as you could imagine. First rule of grace: grace rules.

—Brian Doyle

WHY IT MATTERS

Sin separates us from following in the way designed by God for our happiness. Grace makes it possible for us to find our way back to that divine path. The gift of grace empowers us to live in communion with God both in this world and in the world to come.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Grace is participation in the life of God. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life. The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify us (CCC 1997-99).

RELATED WORDS

Sanctify | Gift of the Holy Spirit | Charism

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What is grace?

The simple definition of **grace** is God's favor. But what it means to receive such benevolence is demonstrated in boundless ways.

How do we "get" **grace**, or know it when it's operating? We recognize **grace** in the divine mercy, forgiveness, and rescue at work in our lives. The church's sacraments are ways in which we acquire **grace**. Church fathers went so far as to say that sacraments "divinize" us: God becomes flesh so that flesh can share in God's immortality.

Saint Augustine proposed that **grace** heals and liberates our sin-inclined wills so we can do the will of God. Without **grace**, we're literally lost. Saint Thomas Aquinas envisioned **grace** as elevating us to a higher level of union with God. Thomas Merton saw **grace** as the antidote to the "death dance" in our blood. However you define **grace**, it comes to us unmerited and free of charge. God doesn't "owe" us **grace** even if we're saintly every moment of the day. But like any gift that comes in a pretty package, **grace** is not fully received if we don't open the gift and make use of it.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-grace>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

MEMORIAL OF SAINT BARNABAS, APOSTLE (JUNE 11)

Help is on the way

Saint Barnabas earned his name—which means "son of encouragement"—because of his work for the early Christian community, taking the recent convert Saint Paul under his wing, representing the original apostles at Antioch, and with Paul going on missions to the Gentiles.

READINGS: Acts 11:21B-26; 13:1-3; Matthew 5:13-16 (580 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/061124.cfm>). "When he arrived and saw the **grace** of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all."

FAITH IN ACTION

Barnabas was willing to do his part, whether leading or supporting others. How can you be a daughter or son of encouragement today?