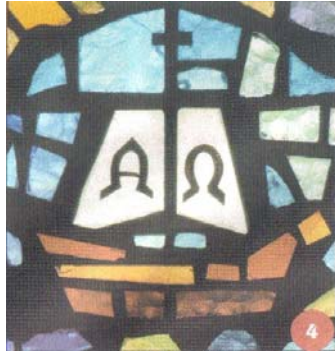


## Theology for Beginners - Grace & the Theological Virtues

### Overview

Catholics often talk about grace and virtue but may not fully understand how important it is in our spiritual journey. This session will help explain this importance.



### Grace

Grace is God's presence within us and there are actually two kinds of Grace. The first is called "**habitual grace**" which is the state of sanctifying grace. This is the grace, which helps us to live and act in keeping God's call to us. The second is called "**actual grace**" which is divine help or God's intervention given for performing these acts.

Grace is the presence in you of a living God's dynamic spirit, which helps us to live an abundant inner life that shares in the divine nature of God. As a result, you live a "graced" life that is Godly and good. Grace transforms your life and its direction. When we pray the Hail Mary we declare that she is "full of grace" (Luke 1:26-27) – which is the goal for all of us.

We do not earn grace, but it is freely given to us by God for what we do. I like to think that we spend our time on this earth building up the grace, which is what we carry with us to heaven. Refer to **CCC#1996-2005** for more about grace.

### The Theological Virtues

Before you get too excited about the words "*theological virtues*" there is nothing complicated about these virtues. Simply put - they are **Faith, Hope and Charity**. These virtues are the very foundation of Christian

moral activities. They help Christians to live a relationship with the Holy Trinity.

### Faith

Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe that there is a living God who has revealed his truths to us. By faith, mankind commits himself to do God's will and must bear witness to it. It also recognizes that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26).

### Hope

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire to reach the Kingdom of God and that eternal life is our goal. In this way, we place our trust in God and do not rely upon our own strengths.

### Charity

Charity (or Love) is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. What this means is that show this love for God in the way that we act towards all of God's creation - both man and nature. Jesus commands us that we love one another as he has loved us.

Keep in mind that when we speak of "love" we do so in the manner of God's love sometimes called "**agape**". This differs from the passionate love between a man and a woman in that it transcends it.

Saint Paul spoke often about love and declared that without love he is nothing (1 Corinthians 13:13). This means that all of the virtues are animated and inspired by charity. Charity upholds, transcends and purifies the human abilities and raises them to the supernatural perfection of divine love.

Refer to **CCC#1812-1828** for more about virtues.

Note: when used, **CCC#XXX** refers to the paragraph number of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.