

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA The Fall and Original Sin

“But the free gift is not like the trespass . . . For just as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous . . . where sin increased, grace abounded all the more . . .” (Romans 5:15, 29, 20b)

Insight

Who has helped you realize, name, and grapple with a sin or a sinful situation? How did they do that?

Everyone in Hank’s extended family was walking on eggshells. They all lived near one another, and the annual family reunion was just around the corner. But no one wanted to admit that they were all living under a cloud because Aunt Jane and Grandma weren’t talking to each other anymore.

Nobody knew what caused the rift, but it was having a disastrous effect on the family as everyone began to take sides. That is until Hank’s mom, Julia, decided to phone both Aunt Jane and Grandma.

Because Julia took the risk and confronted the family situation, reconciliation ensued. The family breathed a sigh of relief and—like everyone else—Hank looked forward to the reunion with anticipation rather than dread.

For Reflection . . .

Behind the sin of our first parents lies the seductive voice of a fallen angel called Satan. Satan’s power is not infinite; God’s power is. And God will prevail over sin and evil.

Why is sin so seductive?

Tragic though it might initially be, was there ever a time in your life or the life of someone close to you where great good resulted from a sin or sinful situation? How did good prevail?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 385–421

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 68–75

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 57–58, 73–78

Church Teaching

Sin Exposed

The reality of the ugly darkness of evil and sin that surrounds our lives and the life of the world is undeniable. Faults and disasters are not always merely due to developmental flaws in people, psychological weakness, terribly informed mistakes, or diminished social structures. Sometimes faults and disasters are the consequences of sin. Sin is freely choosing to turn our back on God’s love and doing or saying something that we know is evil. Sin is our choice to abuse the freedom God gives us.

Original Sin and the Fallen Angels

The Bible tells us that sin entered the world through humanity’s choice, not God’s. Our first parents made the choice to follow their own will rather than follow God’s command (see Genesis 3:1–13).

Sacred Scripture and Tradition attest that the fall of the angels underlies the Fall of our first parents. Satan—initially a good angel—rebelled against God, seeing himself as “better” (see 2 Peter 2:4).

Tempted by Satan, Adam and Eve fell from grace. They lost original holiness and their place in the garden God prepared for them. They became subject to death, and sin became present in the world. The consequences of this Original Sin affect every person born into the world.

Superabundant Grace

Christ is the “new Adam,” who offers us Salvation and Redemption and restores what was lost by Original Sin. In Christ, God bestows upon us blessings and graces that far exceed the deprivation caused by Satan’s rebellion and our participation in that rebellion.