



# PERFECTED IN GRACE:

LENTEN REFLECTION FOR THE TASTE PROGRAM – FEB 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2024

# Opening Prayer

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (1 John 9-13)



PERFECTED IN GRACE



# THEOSIS

For the Son of God became man so that  
we might become God (St. Athanasius)



# DEIFICATION

For those in whom the Spirit dwells are  
divinized (St. Athanasius, yet again!)



FULL OF GRACE



# PERFECTED IN GRACE

After all, perfection in  
grace is our deification

# Perfected in Grace

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- ▶ *Feb 15<sup>th</sup> - The Lord is With You*
- ▶ *Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> – Those in whom the Spirit Dwells*
- ▶ *Feb 29<sup>th</sup> – Life in Christ; Life in the Spirit*
- ▶ *March 7<sup>th</sup> – At the Service of Communion*
- ▶ *March 14<sup>th</sup> – More Perfectly Bound to the Church*
- ▶ *March 21<sup>st</sup> – The Source and Summit of Christian Life*

# The Lord is With You

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- ▶ *A little more about deification*
- ▶ *The transforming power of grace*
- ▶ *Mary – full of grace*
- ▶ *Can we be full of grace (like Mary?)*
- ▶ *Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.*
- ▶ *A look at next week*
- ▶ *Questions*

# Partakers of the Divine Nature

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The Word became flesh to make us "partakers of the divine nature": "For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God." **"For the Son of God became man so that we might become God."** "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, **so that he, made man, might make men gods.**"

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 460)

# We Shall be Like Him

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- ▶ His divine power has **granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness**, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and **become partakers of the divine nature**. (2 Pt 1:3-4)
- ▶ See what love the Father has given us, **that we should be called children of God; and so we are**. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, **we are God's children now**; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that **when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is**. And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (1 John 3:1-3)
- ▶ Therefore, **if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation**; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. (2 Cor 5:17)

# What this Does Not Mean

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- ▶ We do not add to God
- ▶ We do not pantheistically meld with the universe
- ▶ Not the Mormon doctrine of “exaltation” (cease being human and instead become gods).
- ▶ Not just a change in how we behave (it’s a change of being – in baptism we become a new creation)



# The Annunciation

# The transforming power of Grace

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- ▶ ... Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call **to become children of God**, adoptive sons, **partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life**. (CCC 1996)
- ▶ **Grace is a participation in the life of God**. ... by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, .... As an "adopted son" he can henceforth call God "Father," in union with the only Son. He **receives the life of the Spirit** who breathes charity into him and who forms the Church. (CCC 1997)
- ▶ ... **It depends entirely on God's gratuitous initiative**, for he alone can reveal and give himself. ... (CCC 1998)
- ▶ 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 it**. It is the **sanctifying or deifying grace received in Baptism**. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification (CCC 1999)

**Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation**; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself

# *kecharitōménē*

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- ▶ The verb used by Luke (*charitoun*) is rare in Greek and much more rare in scripture; occurring only two times (Luke 1:28) *kecharitōménē* and (Ep 1:6) *echaritôsen*
- ▶ In each case a form of the verb (*charitóô*) is used. Verbs ending in *óô* are causative – they indicate an action which effects something in the object. Verbs ending in *óô* frequently express the full intensity of the action.
- ▶ The root of *charitóô* being *charis* (*grace*) expresses the idea of a change brought about by grace.

# Chrysostom on *echaritôsen* (Commentary on Ep 1:6)

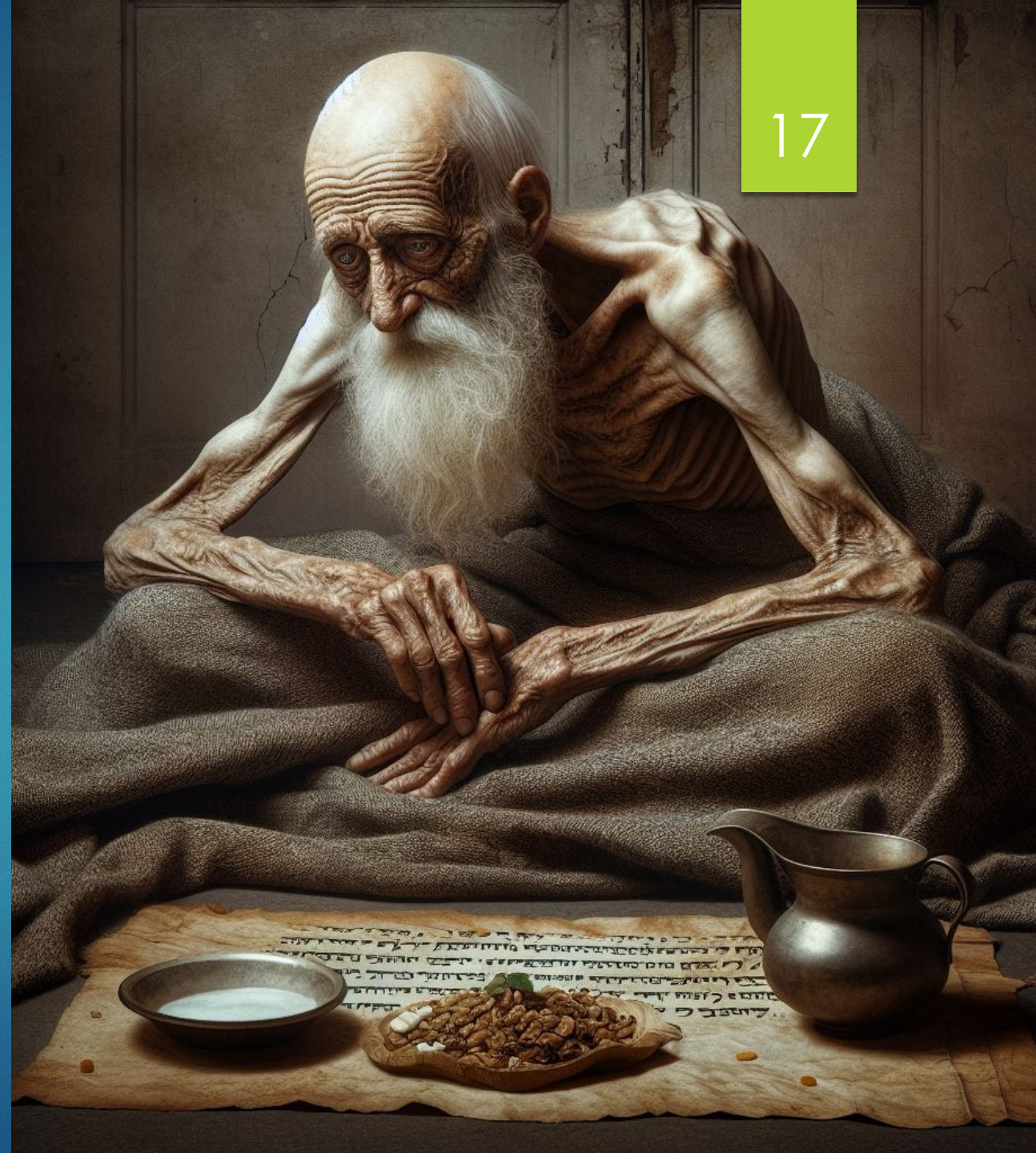
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- ▶ **Ephesians 1:6: to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.**
- ▶ “Which He freely bestowed on us”, he says. He does not say, “Which He has graciously given us”, (*echarisato*) but, “wherein He has shown grace to us”. (*echaritôsen*) That is to say, He has not only released us from our sins, but has also made us fitting objects of His love.

# Chrysostom on echaritôsen (Continued)

It is as though one  
were to take a leper,  
wasted by distemper,  
and disease, by age,  
and poverty, and  
famine ...

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## *echaritôsen Continued*

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... and were to turn him all at once into a graceful youth, surpassing all mankind in beauty, shedding a bright luster from his cheeks, and eclipsing the sun-beams with the glances of his eyes; and then were to set him in the very flower of his age, and after that array him in purple and a diadem and all the attire of royalty.

# Chrysostom on *echaritôsen*

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**“It is thus that God has arrayed and adorned this soul of ours, and clothed it with beauty, and rendered it an object of His delight and love. Such a soul Angels desire to look into, yea, Archangels, and all the holy ones.”**

# What does *kecharitōmēnē* say about Mary?

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- ▶ ***kecharitōmēnē*** the perfect passive participle of ***charitōō***. It denotes one who has been and still is the object of divine benevolence, one who has been favored and continues to be favored by God, one who has been granted supernatural grace and remains in this state
- ▶ ***kecharitōmēnē*** denotes continuance of a completed action
- ▶ **Grace takes away sin** (Ep 1:6-7)
- ▶ Since it is true that Mary was **entirely transformed** by the grace of God, that means that **God has preserved her free from sin.**

# What does all of this say about us?

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- ▶ Can we be full of grace like Mary?
- ▶ **No:** Mary was graced at the moment of her conception. The grace she received was the total fulfillment of all God's grace for her according to His plan. We don't even have sanctifying grace at our conception (Mary did). Nor at our conception, do we have the many other graces God has planned for us (these unfold throughout our life).
- ▶ It's already too late for us to be full of grace like Mary.

# What does all of this say about us?

22

- ▶ Can we be full of grace like Mary?
- ▶ **Yes:** Each and every human is not only made in the image and likeness of God, but in the Order of Grace we (the baptized) are grafted on to Christ and partake of the divine Nature. We have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – we become a new creation. There is, for each of us, a fullness of the grace that God has planned for us. A fullness, a perfection, a completeness.
- ▶ From her conception, Mary had that fullness of grace. God willing, we make it to heaven, we will be filled, perfected, completed in grace.

# What does all of this say about us?

23

- ▶ Can we be full of grace like Mary?
- ▶ **No:** Although we make it to heaven (God willing) and are filled, perfected, completed in grace, the fullness of my grace is not like the fullness of Mary's grace. My vocation(s), my charism(s), my grace(s) - the being that I am as a finished work - will not be the same as Mary. I will be what God has made me to be.
- ▶ Can we be full of grace like Mary? No; and we won't even be full of grace like each other.

# The Three Pillars of Lent Powered by Grace!

- ▶ Prayer – Communion with God. Let your prayer really focus on the indwelling of the Spirit.
- ▶ Almsgiving – Acts of Self-sacrificial love for the good of neighbor and the love of God.  
(Continuously seek almsgiving that is alive with divine life – the divine life God shares with you.)
- ▶ Fasting – Detaches us from self-love and from love of the world (each of which quell the indwelling of the Spirit).

# Next time: Those in Whom the Spirit Dwells

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- ▶ A deeper look at Theosis, at deification – more support from scripture and testimony from the church fathers
- ▶ A look at baptism and how it begins the process of deification

*Questions?*