

Looking to Christ, Our Resurrection

3rd Wednesday in Advent—December 16, 2020

Introduction

We continue our examination of the Apostles' Creed with the Third Article on this Third Wednesday in Advent.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The theme for the week is Joy. So, we are looking for Joy in Christ in this Article of Sanctification. This Article focuses on the Holy Spirit and what He does for us. Where do we find Christ here?

What Is Sanctification?

We begin by understanding Sanctification. Sanctify means “to make holy.”

We read in **1 Thessalonians 5:23**, *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* In answer to the question, “Besides faith, what else does the Holy Spirit create in you by the Gospel?” The **Explanation of the Catechism** says, *The Holy Spirit sanctifies me in the true faith, that is, by faith He works a renewal of my whole life—in spirit, will, attitude and desires—so that I now strive to overcome sin and do good works (sanctification in the narrow sense).* So, Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit makes us holy.

The Process of Sanctification

We see how the Holy Spirit does this work in the rest of the Creed.

The Holy Christian Church

The **church** is where the Holy Spirit does the work of Sanctification. He works through the **GOSPEL**, the means of grace – **WORD** and **SACRAMENT**. The Church is where we receive these means of grace. The Spirit plants the seed of His fruit (**Galatians 5:22-23**) and encourages Christian growth, as well as working forgiveness of sins and strengthening our faith when we hear the **WORD** and receive the **SACRAMENT**.

The Communion of the Saints

Another name for the Church, **the communion of the saints**, stresses the oneness we have in Christ, the fellowship of the family of God. The Spirit molds our lives as we interact with each other in worship, fellowship, education, service, and ministry.

Forgiveness of Sins

Bringing me to faith in Christ (Explanation Q. 156) is the first step in Sanctification. This is when we first receive **forgiveness of sins**. Our *[Baptism] indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever (Catechism).*

Resurrection of the Body

The **resurrection of the body** takes place at the end of time. While we are in these mortal bodies, we will never be sinless. But, when we are resurrected and given a new body, our Sanctification will be made complete. This is where we find the joy that sees us through this fallen world with all its pain, sickness, fear, trials, and temptations.

Life Everlasting

Life everlasting is what Jesus promises to all who believe in Him (read **John 11:25-26**). This is the goal of every Christian, available to us because our Sanctification qualifies us to enter heaven and spend eternity with God.

The Resurrection

This life is a journey, and the destination for the Christian is eternal life with God. We finally reach that goal at the resurrection. As Paul says, (read **1 Corinthians 15:13-20**). Our hope, our peace, and our joy are all in the future—a future ordained by God, purchased by the blood of Christ, and won by His resurrection. We find joy when we **LOOK TO CHRIST, OUR RESURRECTION**.

*The peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
