

Jim's Notes
June 6, 2007
The Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians
Ephesians 1:3-4

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

Paragraph 600: To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of "predestination", he includes in it each person's free response to his grace: "In this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place" (Acts 4:27-28; cf. Psalm 2:1-2). For the sake of accomplishing his plan of salvation, God permitted the acts that flowed from their blindness (cf. Matthew 26:24; John 18:36; 19:11; Acts 3:17-18).

Paragraph 1037: God predestines no one to go to hell (Matthew 7:13-14); for this, a willful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end. In the Eucharistic liturgy and in the daily prayers of her faithful, the Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want "any to perish, but all to come to repentance" *Lumen Gentium* 49,3; Matthew 22:13; cf. Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 25:13, 26, 30, 31-46): Father, accept this offering from your whole family. Grant us your peace in this life, save us from final damnation, and count us among those you have chosen (cf. Council of Orange II, AD 529; Council of Trent, AD 1547).

Council of Orange II (AD 529):

According to the Catholic faith we believe this also, that after grace has been received through baptism, all the baptized with the help and cooperation of Christ can and ought to fulfill what pertains to the salvation of the soul, if they will labor faithfully. We not only do not believe that some have been truly predestined to evil by divine power, but also with every execration we pronounce anathema upon those, if there are [any such], who wish to believe so great an evil. This, too, we profess and believe unto salvation, that in every good work we do not begin, and afterwards are helped by the mercy of God, but He Himself, with no preceding good services [on our part], previously inspires us with faith and love of Him, so that we may both faithfully seek the sacraments of baptism, and after baptism with His help be able to perform those [acts] which are pleasing to Him. So very clearly we should believe that the faith -- so admirable -- both of that famous thief, whom the Lord restored to his native land of paradise [Luke 23:43], and of Cornelius the centurion, to whom the angel of the Lord was sent [Acts 10:3], and of Zacheus, who deserved to receive the Lord Himself [Luke 19:6], was not from nature, but a gift of God's bounty. (DS 397 [III. Predestination])

Council of Trent (1547):

If anyone shall say that the grace of justification is attained by those only who are predestined unto life, but that all others, who are called, are called indeed, but do not receive grace, as if they are by divine power predestined to evil: let him be anathema [meaning "excommunicated"]. (DS 1567)

Vatican Council II (1964):

The eternal Father, in accordance with the utterly gratuitous and mysterious design of his wisdom and goodness, created the whole universe, and chose to raise up men to share in his own divine life- and when they had fallen in Adam, he did not abandon them, but at all times held out to them the means of salvation bestowed in consideration of Christ, the Redeemer, "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" and predestined before time began "to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). He determined to call]l together in a holy Church those who should believe in Christ. Already present in figure at the beginning of the world, this Church was prepared in marvelous fashion in the history of the people of Israel and in the o]d Alliance.[1] Established in this last age of the world, and made manifest in the outpouring of the Spirit, it will be brought to glorious completion at the end of time. At that moment. as the Fathers put it, all the just from the time of Adam, "from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect"[2] will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church. (*Lumen Gentium, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: 1,2*)

Predestination:

The act of foreordaining by which from eternity God decrees whatever will do in time. The term particularly refers to the act of his providence which destines certain human beings for salvation. God knows from all eternity whether or not an individual will be saved, and from eternity he has decreed those graces by which a person is saved, including the grace of final perseverance. But man is free whether he does good or evil. God does not positively predestine anybody to Hell or to sin (which is the teaching of Predestinarianism). He has foreseen the wickedness of the damned and has foreordained their punishment, but, none the less, he has a real will for their salvation, and he offers them the grace of conversion which they freely reject. Since God knows whether an individual will be saved or not, there is objective certainty about the fact. But man can never (except by a rare private revelation) be subjectively certain of his predestination, though he should have a very sure hope in God's mercy. (*A Catholic Dictionary*, Donald Attwater, gen. ed. [New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1941], s.v. "Predestination").