



MEETING: 3 AUG 2023

Council was called to order at: 6:30 pm by GK Robb McBurney

Prayer was offered by: Robb McBurney

Pledge of Allegiance

The Minutes of the previous meeting: Motion to approve last meeting's minutes passed. Minutes posted online to Council's website.

Faith Director Report: by Dan Wagner (see attached)

The Grand Knight reported as follows:

- Robb expects to have a busy year. He expects to have one on one meetings with officers to discuss plans for the year.
- We are going to try to use FlockNotes for communications in the Council.
- 8/13 is the Fr. McGiverny Mass at Our Lady of the Hills. Let Robb know if you intend to attend.
- We expect to have an exemplification in the coming week.
- Robb is working with St Thomas Moore to set up a Sunday Supper. We may be needed on 9/3. Robb will let us know the date.
- There will be a ministries fair on 10/15 to coincide with the starting of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the parish.
- The Biergarten will be on Friday, 11/3. The Mass of Remembrance will also be that weekend: we will do the reception. We expect tickets to remain at \$50 and hope to increase the ticket limit beyond last year's limit of 100, as our fears of too many people coming and staying the entire 2 hours were not realized.
- Wreath sales will be done in November – Robb will talk to the facilitators of this event.
- On 11/27 we will help with a food drive for St. Vincent de Paul. We will be handing out bags to the parishioners after all Masses.
- We want to have a blood drive this year.
- We are going to do Columbus Hope again this year. It has been several years since we did something for them. Robb is considering ideas to make it more successful and has attended a workshop given by Columbus Hope. We expect to do a collection after Mass one weekend.
- In the latest update from the State Council, we have been notified we will participate in the next phase of the COR groups. The name comes from the Latin "heart speaks to heart". This is a small group Bible study; we would like to do it and help men of the parish become involved. Prior to COVID the parish was busy almost every day with various Bible study groups and we would like to get back to that. The parish will set up a nice small study room in the Blossom Street house.
- The National Council has rolled out a new 5-part series "Into the Breach". The news release is attached. National also wants us to participate in the National Eucharist Revival on a parish level.
- The draft budget will be put on the website for us to review. The budget will be voted on at the September meeting.
- It is time to do an audit in the next several weeks. Robb will speak to the trustees about this.
- COVID seems to be on the increase. Robb encourages us to be careful.
- We have a new District Deputy, Daniel Diaz, who will address us tonight.

Financial Report: by Dan Wagner/Robbie Wiggs (see attached)

- Checking balance: \$13,192.12
- Savings balance: \$1,107.28
- CD balance: \$2,014.46
- CD balance: \$2,013.02
- CD balance: \$2,013.68
- Vouchers: vouchers for total of \$3,263.75
- Receipts: receipts for total of \$7,196.00



Dan has been reappointed for another 3-year term as Financial Secretary.
Robbie discussed a new funds availability policy from TD Bank. This should have little effect on us.

Membership Report: by Robb on behalf of Dave McGlaulin

- We need to set up an Exemplification for our two new members, David Batchelder and James Ewing. According to Robbie, James Ewing has already had his 1st-3rd degrees.
- There are several prospective members and two transfer members who may join.

Youth Report:

- n/a

Pro-Life Report:

- n/a

Report of Fourth Degree: by Robbie Wiggs

- There was an installation of officers and dinner this month, attended by 30-40 people.
- Volunteer opportunities are available for later in the year, volunteers don't need to be 4th degree.
- There will be a Thanksgiving dinner provided at Christopher Towers
- The Soldier's Dinner for soldiers on base will be held during the holidays.
- Robbie shared an OSHA document on dealing with the heat over the summer and encourages us to be aware.

Trustees' Report:

- n/a

The Insurance Agent reported as follows:

- n/a

The District Deputy reported as follows:

- Our new District Deputy, Daniel Diaz, attended and introduced himself.
- He moved here about 4 years ago from Montana after time in the Navy. He was born Catholic and his father and grandfather were Knights. As an Eagle Scout he appreciates our commitment to the troop.

Chaplain's Message:

- n/a

Unfinished business was taken up and disposed as follows:

- n/a

New business was taken up and disposed as follows:

- n/a

Lecture Reflection: by Bob Nerbun (see attached)

Knights in Distress:

- Please keep the following Brothers and family members in your prayers: Frank Toth, Bill Jones, Rick Gleissner, William Gatling, Bernard Corbett, Lagaré Kopack, Alberto Alvarez, Jim Corbett, the Faithful Navigator of the 4th Degree
- Today is the anniversary of the death of Allison Corbett. We are asked to remember her and Jim.

Closing prayer was offered by: Robb McBurney at 7:30pm.

Attest.



Mitch Michaelis
Mitch Michaelis
Recorder

Knights of Columbus Council #12554
3 August 2023

Faith Director's Report

We continue in Ordinary Time.

August 4 First Friday
August 5 First Saturday – Mass at 8:30 AM
August 6-7 The Transfiguration of The Lord
I Care, I Share Weekend
August 15 The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – a Holy Day of Obligation
Masses: 7:30 AM, (9:00 AM School,) 12:15 PM, 6:00 PM
12:15 PM Mass livestreamed
August 19-20 Second Collection : Disaster Relief

A look ahead:

Sept 1 First Friday
Sept 2 First Saturday – Mass at 8:30 AM
Sept 2-3 I Care, I Share Weekend
Second Collection : The Catholic University of America

Thursday, August 10 is the first day of School at St. Joseph (noon dismissal)

Friday, August 11 is also a noon dismissal for the School

Beginning Sunday, August 13, the Nursery will be open for both the 8:00 and 10:30 AM Masses.

CCD begins Sunday, September 10. Additional volunteers are needed!

Adoration, in the Adoration Room, on Tuesdays following morning Mass (8:00 AM – 12:00 noon); Benediction at 12:15 PM.



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 2, 2023

Contact: communicationsdept@kofc.org

Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly Encourages Knights of Columbus to Grow in Their Calling to Be ‘First in Faith and Charity’ at 141st Supreme Convention

Striving to be first in faith and charity will point the world to Jesus Christ

ORLANDO, Florida — The Knights of Columbus 141st Supreme Convention continued today as Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly encouraged the more than 2,300 Knights and their families, members of the Catholic hierarchy and special guests in attendance to grow in their calling to be “First in Faith and Charity” in their parishes, homes, communities and around the world.

“It’s a pleasure to celebrate another great year. We had a year of faith in action and heroic charity,” said the supreme knight. “We stepped up in so many ways — all 2 million Knights of Columbus.”

Supreme Knight Kelly continued, “We donated \$185 million to charity and devoted 49 million hours to volunteer service. We protected Catholic families with a record \$121 billion of life insurance in force. And around the world, we rose to meet the biggest challenges — from saving unborn children to supporting the people of Ukraine. I’m grateful to God for the way he has worked among us and through us, and as we look back at the past year, I am confident Father McGivney is proud of us.”

First in Faith

Supreme Knight Kelly reminded guests that Father Michael McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus with one mission: to follow Christ.

“And he called us to fulfill it through faith and charity,” said the supreme knight. “For Father McGivney and the first Knights, faith and charity went hand in hand. They knew that spiritual poverty and material poverty both diminish human dignity — and both demand a strong response.”

The supreme knight stated that the Order’s mission is more urgent than ever today, as our culture is growing more hostile to the Catholic faith. He noted, “The two institutions that are most essential to human flourishing — the family and the Church — are facing mounting threats.”

In response to these growing threats to the family and the Church, the supreme knight challenged Knights to remain committed to the Order's mission and point the world to Jesus Christ.

"In this new era, forming Catholic men must be our top priority," he said. "If we get the man right, we get everything right — the marriage, the family, the parish, the community. We need men who say 'yes' to their God-given vocation."

In an effort to strengthen Catholic men and help them grow in prayer, faith formation and fraternity, Supreme Knight Kelly announced a new initiative called *Cor*, which he described as "a game changer."

The name "*Cor*" is inspired by the motto of John Henry Cardinal Newman: *Cor ad cor loquitur*, or "heart speaks to heart." In fact, *Cor* is the Latin word for "heart," which in turn is the root of the word "courage" in English.

The Knights have continued to create a number of resources to help Catholic men grow in their faith and that can be used at *Cor* meetings, including the new *Men of the Word Bible Study* program. Men of the Word — one of the first resources of its kind for Catholic men — offers an examination of God's plan for men by studying the core Gospel message in Scripture. In particular, Men of the Word shows how the message of the Gospel, the Good News that Jesus proclaimed, needs to be heard and lived by men today.

"This Bible study will bring Scripture alive, and it has the power to transform our lives," said the supreme knight.

Also debuting is a new video series on marriage, family and fatherhood called *Into the Breach: The Mission of the Family*. This five-part series proclaims the truth and beauty of the Catholic vision of family life and seeks to inspire viewers to live this vision.

Episodes will examine the place of the Catholic family in a post-Christian culture; the nature of marriage; the gift of children, forgiveness and healing in family life; and how to raise a faithful family.

As Supreme Knight Kelly noted, there is an urgent need in the Church for this video series. A recent poll found that only a third of Catholic parents care if their children keep the faith (Pew Research Center, January 2023, *Parenting in America Today*.)

"A relationship with Christ is the greatest gift we can offer the next generation," said the supreme knight. "The Knights of Columbus has a duty to help parents grow in their faith and pass it on to their children. Our new video series will help."

In addition, the Knights of Columbus is a major sponsor of the National Eucharistic Revival, supporting the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in their effort to renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist.

In May 2024, one of the National Eucharistic Revival's four cross-country processions will start in New Haven, Connecticut, at the tomb of Blessed Michael McGivney, "America's Parish Priest." The processions will culminate in Indianapolis, Indiana, for the National Eucharistic Congress in July 2024.

First in Charity

Supreme Knight Kelly then encouraged the Knights to use their faith to drive their charitable work by again turning to the mission established by Blessed Michael McGivney for guidance.

"Reaching new depths of faith will take us to new heights of charity," he said. "Father McGivney showed us the way. His love for Christ led him to care for widows and orphans. Last year, in countless ways, we channeled our faith into charity."

The Knights' key worldwide charitable endeavors from the past year include:

- Providing more than \$33 million to aid persecuted Christians in the Middle East
- Standing with Catholics in Indigenous communities through the Order's Native Solidarity initiative, and by honoring the 10-year anniversary of Kateri Tekakwitha's canonization at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C.
- Providing mobility to those in need, marking the 20th anniversary of the Order's wheelchair initiative
- Directing more than \$5.3 million in the wake of natural disasters
- Continuing the Order's enduring commitment to support priests and seminarians with scholarships
- Contributing over \$21 million to Special Olympics
- Bringing blankets and food to the homeless and communities in cities such as Puebla, New Mexico, and Angers, France
- Continuing the Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids program, which will donate its one-millionth coat to a child in need this winter

Supreme Knight Kelly also provided an update of the Knights' largest-ever relief effort — the Ukraine Solidarity Fund — which was established within 36 hours of Russia's invasion. Today, the Ukraine Solidarity Fund has raised over \$21 million dollars to assist Ukrainian refugees — mostly women and children — and their families. As a result, more than 9,000 Knights in Ukraine and Poland have distributed 7.2 million pounds of food, 3.6 million pounds of care packages, 85,000 pounds of medications and more to those affected by the war.

Supreme Knight Kelly then explained how the Knights' support for the Ukrainian people continues to expand, such as through its new partnership with the Pontes Foundation, which protects Ukrainian women and girls from human trafficking.

"The Knights of Columbus is fighting human trafficking for a simple reason," said the supreme knight. "As Catholic men, we protect vulnerable women and children. Every human being is made in God's image. And no human being should ever be bought or sold."

In addition to faith and charity, Supreme Knight Kelly recalled that since the Order's founding, Knights have fought to defend freedom, human dignity and equal justice wherever they live. He noted that today, religious liberty is especially under threat — to the point where the Order's beliefs are being labeled as "hate speech."

Supreme Knight Kelly said, "Let me be clear: There is nothing hateful about the sanctity of marriage, the reality of biological sex, or the humanity of the unborn child. And the Knights of Columbus will never apologize for defending the truth!"

Insurance & Investments

Supreme Knight Kelly also congratulated the achievements of the Knights' insurance and investments divisions.

"As Catholic men, we all have a duty to protect families," he said. "Father McGivney built the Knights around this truth. And he charged us with caring for widows and orphans through our life insurance program."

Knights of Columbus Insurance continues to earn superior ratings from AM Best (A+) and Standard & Poor's (AA+). And, for the second consecutive year, *Forbes* has recognized Knights of Columbus Insurance as one of America's best life insurance companies.

The Knights of Columbus also strives to be first in Catholic finance. Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors empowers Catholics to invest according to their faith and today manages more than \$2.3 billion for Catholic families, religious communities and dioceses.

Additionally, individuals and families have entrusted more than \$100 million to the Knights of Columbus Charitable Fund, allowing them to support charitable causes that fully uphold the Catholic faith.

Defending the Culture of Life

The past year also witnessed many milestones as the Knights again stepped up in defense of the culture of life.

Last year, Supreme Knight Kelly announced a new pro-life initiative called ASAP (Aid and Support After Pregnancy) and challenged Knights to raise \$5 million for pregnancy centers and maternity homes. "We didn't meet that goal — we exceeded it, by more than \$1 million!" the supreme knight announced.

Additionally, the Knights have now donated 1,745 ultrasound machines to pro-life pregnancy centers, helping mothers see their babies and choose life.

Supreme Knight Kelly also acknowledged the 50th anniversary of the March for Life. This year, the Knights co-hosted the first-ever "Life Fest" event with the Sisters of Life, which drew over 4,000 high school and college students.

“As I marched with my brother Knights in January, I felt a renewed sense of hope,” said the supreme knight. “It came, in large part, from the people who filled the streets in every direction. Our movement is young and passionate and filled with energy. And we have justice on our side. My hope hasn’t dimmed since then. In fact, it’s grown even stronger.”

Supreme Knight Kelly reminded the Knights, however, that the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* does not mean the end of the pro-life movement. The fight for the defense of life is far from over and will now continue in the states.

A New Era of Impact

Supreme Knight Kelly’s address also highlighted major milestones in the Order’s growth. Today, the Order has more than 2 million members around the world in 16,672 councils.

He applauded the Knights on reaching new generations and setting the stage for a “new era of impact.”

“Why do we continue to grow? Why, at a time when the Catholic Church faces serious demographic challenges, is the Order expanding year after year?” the supreme knight asked his guests. “I believe the reason is simple. In this age of mediocrity, the Knights of Columbus invites men to greatness; to sacrifice themselves for the good of others; to commit to a higher call with a band of brothers; and to stand strong in the breach, side by side, instead of being swept away by the culture, one at a time.”

About the Knights of Columbus

In 1882, Blessed Michael McGivney, a young parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut, founded the Knights of Columbus to serve the needs of a largely immigrant Catholic community. What began as a small fraternal benefit society has since grown into the world’s premier lay Catholic men’s organization, with more than 2 million members in over 16,000 local councils. As one of the world’s leading international charitable organizations, Knights around the world donated approximately 48 million service hours and nearly \$154 million for worthy causes in their communities in 2021. The Knights of Columbus also offers extensive life insurance products to members and their families. Knights of Columbus currently has more than \$121 billion* of life insurance in force and was named by Forbes as one of America’s Best Insurance Companies 2023. In addition, the Knights offers investment services in accord with Catholic social teaching through its wholly owned subsidiary Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, which holds more than \$26 billion in assets under management. Based on the founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity, the Knights of Columbus is committed to strengthening Catholic families and parishes and to practicing faith in action through service to all in need. To learn more or to join the Knights of Columbus, please visit kofc.org/join.

*As of March 31, 2023

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GET



Accounts

Good evening,
ST JOSEPH K OF C COUNCIL .

Deposits

TD CONVENIENCE CHECKING x9128	\$13,192.12 >
BUSINESS SAVINGS x8694	\$1,107.28 >
BUSINESS 6 MONTH CD x8147	\$2,014.46 >
BUSINESS 9 MONTH CD x7238	\$2,013.02 >
BUSINESS 12 MONTH CD x7436	\$2,013.68 >
Total	\$20,340.56

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Knights of Columbus Council #12554
3 August 2023

Financial Secretary's Report

Monthly Report
30 June 2023

Receipts:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------|
| 1. Dues (1 member) | \$ 36.00 |
| 2. Rifle Raffle | \$7,160.00 |

TOTAL -----
\$7,196.00

Vouchers:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. Jeff Godby : 3 Rifles | \$3,147.00 |
| 2. Dan Wagner: Tickets (\$99.00) and CC Charges (\$17.75) | \$ 116.75 |

TOTAL -----
\$ 3,263.75

Monthly Report
July 2023

No financial activity in July, 2023

Monthly Report
August 2023

Receipts:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------|
| 1. Dues (1 member) | \$ 36.00 |
|--------------------|----------|

TOTAL -----
\$ 36.00

Vouchers:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. K of C Supreme (per capita) | \$ 200.00 |
| 2. Troop 100 (Rifle Raffle Proceeds) | \$4,446.25 |

TOTAL -----
\$4646.25

August 2023 Lecture to the K of C Council 12554 - Lecture on What Catholics Believe About Faith and Works by Jimmy Atkins Senior Apologist for Catholic Answers

“Protestants believe in faith alone, while many erroneously say Catholics believe in faith and works.” You hear this all the time. ... If you tell a typical Evangelical, “You believe in faith alone, but we Catholics believe in faith and works,” you will cause him to think that the Catholic Church teaches something that, **in fact, it says is false**. Here’s why . .

The justification connection

The discussion of faith and works doesn’t take place in a vacuum. It occurs in a specific context—the doctrine of justification. The New Testament uses the word justification to refer to one of the things that God does for us by his grace. Unfortunately, there is considerable disagreement about what justification involves. The way typical American Evangelicals use the term, when God justifies someone, he declares that person’s sins forgiven and proclaims the person righteous. This occurs at the beginning of the Christian life, when a person first turns to God. As far as it goes, this description is accurate. Catholic Theology would say that there is more to justification than that, but it is true that at the beginning of the Christian life God forgives a person’s sins and declares him righteous.

Faith alone

When Protestants use the phrase “faith alone,” they are describing how we are justified. The idea is that in order to come to God, be forgiven, and be declared righteous, you don’t need to do anything to earn your place before God except have faith in Jesus Christ. In practice, Protestants give different meanings to the “faith alone” formula. Lutherans, for example, don’t see the idea that baptism grants salvation as conflicting with this. In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther asks, “What does baptism give? What good is it?” His answer: “It gives the forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, just as God’s words and promises declare.”

Various Protestants—including some Calvinists, Anglicans, Methodists, and others—believe baptism plays a role in salvation, but others sharply disagree. Some—particularly Baptists—claim that if baptism were to play a role in salvation, it would violate the “faith alone” formula. They thus understand this formula in a way that excludes baptism. This is the most common position in American Evangelicalism. Regardless of how they interpret the “faith alone” formula, there is one thing that Protestants agree would violate this formula: Works. “Works”—whatever they may be—are precisely the thing that the “faith alone” formula is meant to exclude.

[... note that most Evangelicals understand the term to mean “good works” (feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, etc.). Some understand it even more broadly to mean anything that you do. Both groups commonly envision works as somehow earning our place before God. Faith and works? ...

Remember: Protestants use the term justification to refer to an event at the beginning of the Christian life where God forgives us and declares us righteous. As a result, a Protestant will think that the Catholic is saying that we need to do works in order to come to God and be forgiven. ...

The Council of Trent on Justification

Following the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Church held an ecumenical council in the Italian city of Trent to deal with the theological questions that were being debated. The Council of Trent issued the Decree on Justification (DJ), which set forth the Catholic position on the subject. In the heat of the times, Protestant leaders painted the Council of Trent as a great villain that simply reiterated the Church's false teachings and its false gospel. That characterization is still found today in a lot of Protestant literature on the subject. [especially at PP at Middleburg plaza here in Columbia]

But if you read what Trent says, you find it actually denies much of what is attributed to it. This is the case with the idea that we need to earn our place before God by doing works—particularly at the beginning of the Christian life when we are first justified. According to Trent, “none of those things that precede justification, whether faith or works, merit the grace of justification. ‘For, if by grace, it is not now by works, otherwise,’ as the Apostle says, ‘grace is no more grace’” ...

When we come to God and are justified, it happens without any merit on our part. Neither our faith nor our works—nor anything else—merits justification. Trent thus denies the very thing our Protestant brethren fear it asserts—and that we lead them to believe if we tell them simply that we believe in “justification by faith and works.” ...

Given how common the “justified by faith and works” language is in some Catholic circles, the idea that we should be careful using it with Protestants may seem unfamiliar. “Isn't the language we use when summarizing our beliefs about justification?” [Yet even though many] Catholics use this as a kind of top-level summary of justification, ... you don't find the magisterium—the Church's teaching authority—using it that way.

If you go through Trent's Decree on Justification, or the section on justification in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1987-1995), you won't find the phrase “faith and works.” And you won't find the word works at all in the Catechism's section on justification. This may be surprising, but the fact that the magisterium does not express its teaching in this way is a signal that we need to look more closely at what it says. What about James 2:24? A key question at this point is how the magisterium handles James 2:24, which says that we are “justified by works and not by faith alone.”

In popular discussions, this verse is often presented to Protestants as if it proves that we are justified by faith and works, with nothing more to be said. Confronted with this claim, the Protestant may respond, “But that's not the kind of justification that James is talking about.” Before dismissing this claim, a Catholic should be aware of one thing: The magisterium agrees with it. At least, the magisterium doesn't quote James 2:24 in connection with the justification that occurs at the **BEGINNING** of the Christian life. Instead, it refers it to something else.

Growth in righteousness

Earlier we mentioned that Protestants tend to conceive of justification [a single] event that occurs at the beginning of the Christian life where we are forgiven and declared righteous by God, and we said that this understanding is true as far as it goes. But in the Catholic view, there is **MORE TO JUSTIFICATION THAN THIS.**

In the first place, God doesn't simply declare us righteous. He also makes us righteous in

justification. Thus the Council of Trent defined justification as “**NOT ONLY A REMISSION OF SINS BUT ALSO THE SANCTIFICATION AND RENEWAL OF THE INNER MAN**” (DJ 7). So at the beginning of the Christian life, God forgives our sins and gives us the gift of righteousness. But he’s not done with us. He wants us to grow in righteousness over the course of the Christian life, and, if we cooperate with his grace, we will. Catholic Theology refers to this **GROWTH IN RIGHTEOUSNESS USING THE TERM JUSTIFICATION, SO, IN CATHOLIC LANGUAGE, JUSTIFICATION ISN’T SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS JUST AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. IT HAPPENS OVER THE COURSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.**

The righteousness connection

The reason the Church refers to this growth in righteousness as a form of justification is a little unclear in English. This is because the English vocabulary draws on both German and Latin roots. As a result, the same underlying concept can appear under more than one English term. That’s the case with righteousness and justice. They are two different words in English, but they both represent the same underlying term in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, etc. As a result, you sometimes see Catholic works in English translated so that they speak of God giving us the gift of “justice” (i.e., righteousness), of us growing in justice, and thus of us being further justified.

This sounds unusual in English, and both Protestant and Catholic scholars have lamented that we don’t have the vocabulary to say things like “God gives us the gift of righteousness, we grow in righteousness, and thus we are further righteoused.” As a result, we have to keep in mind the way that righteousness and justification are related.

Trent on James

This leads us to what the Council of Trent had to say about James 2:24. After discussing the justification that occurs at the beginning of the Christian life, Trent quotes several passages from St. Paul on how Christians grow in virtue by yielding our bodies to righteousness for sanctification. It states that by good works we “increase in that justice received through the grace of Christ and are further justified” (DJ 10).

It is in the context of this growth in righteousness—and in this context only—that Trent quotes James 2:24: “Do you see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only?” Trent thus relates James’s statement not to the initial justification that occurs when we first come to God but to the growth in righteousness that occurs over the course of the Christian life. Thus, a Protestant objecting that James is talking about a different kind of justification than the one the Protestant has in mind would be correct. **James isn’t saying that you need to do good works in order to be forgiven. And neither is the Catholic Church.**

From a Protestant point of view

If this were explained to many Protestants, they would likely be somewhat relieved and somewhat perplexed. They would be relieved to hear that the Catholic Church doesn’t teach that we need to do good works to come to God and be justified, and they would be relieved to hear that the Catholic Church relates James 2:24 to later events in the Christian life.

On the other hand, they’d likely still have some differences, at least on the level of terminology.

Though Protestants acknowledge that God sanctifies and renews the inner man when one is initially justified, they don't tend to include this under the term justification. Instead, they treat it as a separate but simultaneous event. And, although they acknowledge that by cooperating with God's grace and doing good works we grow in righteousness as Christians, they don't use the term justification for this process, either.

An open-minded Protestant might say, "Well, we don't use the term justification that way, and we might not agree about the interpretation of particular verses, but we can acknowledge that what Catholics are saying here is true, even if they express it differently." Still, such a Protestant might wonder how far we can agree. He might ask: "Didn't Trent condemn 'faith alone' with an anathema?"

The anathema

Canon 9 from Trent's Decree on Justification states: "If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, so that he understands that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema." This is widely misunderstood.

One reason is that the term anathema is often glossed in Protestant circles to mean something like "damned by God," and the canon is represented as condemning Protestants to hell. It isn't. At that time in history, the term anathema referred to a form of excommunication that could be imposed by a Church court for certain serious offenses. It was performed with a special ceremony, and its purpose was to motivate people to repent. When they did repent, it was also lifted with a special ceremony. It was seldom imposed and was eventually abolished.

The anathema did not sentence people to hell, it did not take effect automatically, it was never applied to all Protestants as a group, and it doesn't apply to anyone today. The use of the term does, though, imply an authoritative rejection of the "faith alone" formula—when it is used to mean a specific thing.

The canon doesn't say, "If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, let him be anathema." Instead, it rejects a particular use of the formula, whereby someone "understands that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will."

Trent is therefore concerned to reject "faith alone" when it's used to say that you don't need to in any way cooperate with God's grace, that a merely intellectual faith would save you. And that's correct. Merely agreeing with the truths of the theology is not enough to be saved. As James puts it: "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder" (James 2:17).

A Catholic "faith alone"?

If Trent didn't reject all uses of "faith alone," could the formula have an acceptable use from a Catholic point of view? It might come as a surprise, but quite a number of the Church Fathers used it. Even Thomas Aquinas used it. ...

Since the time of the Council, Catholic theologians have explored the senses in which the formula might be compatible with Catholic teaching. Specifically, they have pointed out that the theological virtue of charity (the supernatural love of God) unites us to God, and so, if one has faith combined with charity, then one has “faith working through love,” which is what Paul says counts in Christ. That kind of faith, which Catholic theologians refer to as “faith formed by charity,” would—of itself—unite one to God spiritually.

Benedict XVI on “faith alone”

This understanding has been endorsed by the papal magisterium. Pope Benedict XVI taught: “Luther’s phrase ‘faith alone’ is true, if it is not opposed to faith in charity, in love. Faith is looking at Christ, entrusting oneself to Christ, being united to Christ, conformed to Christ, to his life. And the form, the life of Christ, is love; hence to believe is to conform to Christ and to enter into his love. So it is that in the Letter to the Galatians in which he primarily developed his teaching on justification St. Paul speaks of faith that works through love. It thus seems that the “faith alone” formula can have an acceptable meaning. Does this mean that [we] Catholics should start using it?”

Reasons for caution

There is a big difference between it being possible for a formula to be given an acceptable meaning and it being prudent to use it in common practice. There are several reasons why Catholics should not do the latter.

First, the formula is not the language that Scripture uses to describe how we are justified. The phrase “by faith alone” appears only once in the New Testament, in James 2:24, where it is rejected. Using this formula, whatever meaning it is given, creates an automatic tension with the language that Scripture itself uses, and that’s bound to cause confusion.

Second, the formula is inherently open to confusion. In common speech, the term faith is a synonym for belief. When coupled with the word alone and used to describe the method of our justification, it communicates to most people the erroneous idea that we can be saved by intellectual belief alone—the view that Trent rejected.

Third, though there are precedents for its use in Catholic history, it is not the primary or even a common way that Catholic theology expresses itself on justification.

Fourth, the magisterium does not use the expression on a regular basis. If you look in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, **YOU WILL NOT FIND IT**. Neither will you find it used regularly in other magisterial documents. There are a handful of such documents that acknowledge that the formula can have a Catholic sense, but there are none that use it regularly or recommend that Catholics use it.