



The Catechism of the Catholic Church – 22nd November 2023

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Speaking about one important implication of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception St Maximilian Kolbe felt that it might explain why one third of the angels in heaven fell from grace. He wrote, "When he had created the angels, God willed that they should spontaneously give him proof that they would always and everywhere accomplish his will. He revealed to them the mystery of the incarnation and announced that one day he would call into existence a human creature made of body and soul, a creature that he would raise to the dignity of Mother of God." Kolbe maintains that when they heard about the future Immaculate Conception of Mary, who would be the mother of the incarnate Son of God, some angels rebelled. They realized that although Mary would be a human being with a material body, she would be elevated above their status as spiritual archangels and angels. When they realized this, they envied and resented Mary's future status, dignity and role – and said in pride to God "we don't accept this; we will not serve on these grounds," so they lost their place in heaven and were cast down to earth (Rev 12:2).

Speaking about original and personal sin St John Paul II said in his encyclical, *Lord and Giver of Life*, that ultimately it is only the Spirit that can lead a person into the truth about original sin. In a key passage in par 33, he wrote: "According to the witness concerning the beginning of sin in its original reality takes place in man's will - and conscience - first of all as disobedience, i.e., as opposition of the will of man to the will of God. This original disobedience presupposes a rejection, or at least a turning away from the truth contained in the Word of God, who creates the world." The Pope said that we can endorse original sin by our own shortcomings. They have three characteristics

1. A turning away from God
2. A closing up of human freedom to him
3. A certain opening of the human mind and will to Satan, the father of lies.

The pontiff went on to say in par 37, that as a result of sin the following consequences are predictable: "The truth about man becomes falsified: who man is and what are the impassable limits of his being and freedom. This anti-truth is possible because at the same time there is a complete falsification about the truth about who God is. God the creator is placed in a state of suspicion, indeed of accusation, in the mind of the creature. For the first time in human history there

appears the perverse genius of suspicion." The Pope then went on to say that due to the influence of Satan the father of lies, "throughout the history of humanity there will be a constant pressure on man to reject God." The Pope thought that this is evident in modern atheism which suggests that belief in God alienates human beings from their deepest selves and from their freedom and autonomy. It is worth noting that in the Greek version of the Bible the word for sin is *hamartia*. It literally means, "to miss the mark," like an arrow that fails to hit the target. There are three basic usages for *the word sin*.

1. It is sometimes used to mean acts of sin "by omission or commission in thought and feeling or in speech and actions" as in Rom 5:12, "all have sinned."
2. It is sometimes applied to the fall of man from original righteousness that resulted in humanity's innate propensity for sin, that is original sin. For example, as in Romans 3:9, everyone is "under the power of sin."
3. A third application concerns the "weakness of the flesh" and the free will to resist sinful acts, "For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing" (Rm 7:19).

While sin is viewed as a disaster in the bible, from Genesis onward, God promises to intervene in a merciful and redemptive way. That promise reached its highest fulfilment in the death and resurrection of Jesus. "O happy fault that gained for us such a redeemer." St Paul said in Rm 5:20-21, "where sin increased, God's grace increased much more. 21So then, just as sin ruled by means of death, so also God's grace rules by means of righteousness, leading us to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."