

**Paul, Divine Foreknowledge, and Predestination
(17th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)**

Romans 8:28-30—God Predestined those he Justified

²⁸ We know that *in everything God works for good with those who love him*, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son*, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30)

1. Foreknowledge: “foreknow” (Greek *pro-ginōskō*)—to “know” in “advance” (8:29)

O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar...
Even before a word is on my tongue,
lo, O Lord, you know it altogether. (Psalm 139:1-4)

2. Predestination: “predestine” (Greek *pro-ORIZŌ*)—to “decide” in “advance” (8:29)

Then Job answered the LORD:
“I know that *you can do all things,*
and that *no purpose of yours can be thwarted.* (Job 42:1-2)

3. Conformed: “change” in “accord with” (Greek *sym-morphos*) (8:29; cf. Phil 3:20-21)

The Living Tradition

Thomas Aquinas: “[A]ll things work together unto good for us” [Rom 8:28] To realize this we should consider that *whatever happens in the world, even if it be evil, accrues to the good of the universe*; because, as Augustine says in the *Enchiridion*: “*God is so good that he would permit no evil, unless he were powerful enough to draw some good out of any evil.*” However, the evil does not always accrue to the good of that in which it is. Thus, the death of one animal accrues to the good of the universe... although it does not accrue to the good of that which ceases to be; (Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans* no. 696; trans. F. Larcher)

Catechism: *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] For the sake of accomplishing his plan of salvation, God permitted*

the acts that flowed from their blindness. (CCC 600)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (17th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

1. Have you ever pondered the mystery of God’s omniscience and foreknowledge of all things?

2. Did you know that Paul and the Catholic Church affirm the reality of “predestination”? What does the Church teach about predestination in CCC 600?

For Further Reading

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans* (trans. F. R. Larcher, O.P.; eds. J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón; Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012).
2. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11 (ed. Philip Schaff; repr.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994).