

Justification and the “New Perspective” on Paul¹

Introduction: What is the New Perspective on Paul?

1. “New Perspective”: Coined by Protestant Scholars
 - a. N. T. Wright, 1978 Tyndale Lecture (Anglican Bishop)
 - b. James D. G. Dunn, 1982 article (Church of Scotland minister)
 - c. E. P. Sanders, 1977 volume (American ‘postliberal’ Protestant)
2. What’s at Stake for Protestantism

Cornelius Venema: At stake is nothing less than the gospel itself, the church’s proclamation of the good news of salvation in Christ. [...] The new perspective ultimately offers a different gospel than that to which the Reformation bore witness.²

Carl Trueman: The current revision of the doctrine of justification as formulated by advocates the so-called New Perspective on Paul is nothing less than a fundamental repudiation not just of that Protestantism which seeks to stand within the creedal and doctrinal trajectories of the Reformation but also of virtually the entire Western tradition on justification from at least as far back as Augustine.³

Paul Zahl: Rejection of the Reformation... is a big plank of the New Perspective.⁴

Francis Watson: The Reformation tradition’s approach to Paul is fundamentally wrong.⁵

E. P. Sanders and the New Perspective on Judaism⁶

1. Contemporary Views of Judaism⁷
 - a. Rudolf Bultmann: Judaism as “works-righteousness”
 - b. Bruce Metzger: Legalism and Formalism
2. Covenantal Nomism: describes the fundamental Jewish ‘pattern of religion’

E. P. Sanders: *Covenantal nomism* is the view that one’s place in God’s plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgressions.⁸

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all pages referenced in the text above are from Kent L. Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul: An Introduction* (Eugene: Cascade, 2011).

² Cited in Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 71.

³ Cited in Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 71-72.

⁴ Cited in Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 72.

⁵ Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1 cited in Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 72.

⁶ See E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

⁷ See Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 6-7

⁸ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 75.

4. Implications of Covenantal Nomism

- a. First-century Judaism was not a religion of “earning salvation by works”
- b. Good works are not performed to “*get into*” the covenant but to “*stay in*”

Kent Yinger: “Traditionally, ‘justified by works of the law’ points to Jewish legalism. But if Judaism was not particularly legalistic, what in the world is Paul talking about? ... If the gospel is not fundamentally about grace (Christian) versus works (Judaism), what is it about?”⁹

James Dunn and the New Perspective on Paul¹⁰

1. Redefining “Works of the Law” (Greek *ergōn nomou*) (Gal 2:11-16)

- a. Not Jewish legalism (Traditional Protestant view)
- b. But “Badges of Jewish Identity”: Circumcision, Food-Laws, Sabbath (20)

James Dunn: What then is Paul attacking when he dismisses the idea of being justified ‘by works of the law’? ... As to the immediate context, the most relevant factor is that Galatians 2.16 follows immediately upon the debates, indeed the crises, at Jerusalem and at Antioch which focused on two issues—at Jerusalem, circumcision; at Antioch, the Jewish food laws with the whole question of ritual purity unstated by clearly implied. Paul’s forceful denial of justification by works of law is his response to these two issues. *His denial that justification is from works of law is, more precisely, a denial that justification depends on circumcision or on observation of the Jewish purity and food taboos.* We may justifiably deduce, therefore, that by ‘works of law’ Paul intended his readers to think of *particular observances of the law like circumcision and the food laws.*¹¹

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls: only other use of “works of the law” in ancient literature:¹²

The Dead Sea Scrolls: “Now, we have written to you some of *the works of the Law* (Hebrew *miqtsat ma’asei ha-Torah*), which we think are good for you and for your people... (4QMMT C 26; trans. E. Tigchelaar and Garcia-Martinez)
Subject: Purity of liquids; Impurity of bones and animal hides; Skin diseases; Keeping away from Gentiles; Blind and deaf not allowed in Temple, etc.

3. What then is the Central Question for Paul?¹³

- a. Not “How may I, a sinner, find a gracious God?” (Martin Luther)
- b. But “Who belongs to the people of God?” (Paul)
- c. Or “How may Gentiles take part in God’s saving grace to Israel?”

⁹ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 15.

¹⁰ See James D. G. Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” in *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990 [orig. 1982]), 183-214. See also James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), for a collection of Dunn’s essays on the subject.

¹¹ Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” 191.

¹² I owe this point to John Bergsma, *The Dead Sea Scrolls for Catholics* (Catholic Productions, www.catholicproductions.com).

¹³ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 23-24.

N. T. Wright and the New Perspective on Paul¹⁴

1. Shift in Emphasis on Soteriology and Narrative Theology of Paul:
 - a. Less about Salvation of Sinful Individuals
 - b. More about God's plan of salvation for "all creation through Israel" (28)
 - c. Pushes story of salvation back to the Sin of Adam (Gen 1-11)
 - d. Emphasizes Abraham as conduit of blessing for whole world (Gen 12)
 - e. Emphasizes resulting problem of continuing "exile" (Deut 28:63-64)
2. Wright's Critique of the Reformer's Reading of Paul:

N. T. Wright: Many people, including many supposedly 'Pauline' Christians, would say, off the cuff, that the heart of Paul's teaching is 'justification by faith'. What many such people understand as the meaning of this phrase is something like this. People are always trying to pull themselves up by their own moral bootstraps. They try to save themselves by their own efforts; to make themselves good enough for God or for heaven. This doesn't work; one can only be saved by the sheer unmerited grace of God, appropriated not by good works but by faith. This account of justification owes a good deal both to the controversy between Pelagius and Augustine in the early fifth century and to that between Erasmus and Luther in the early sixteenth century. ...I shall suggest that this popular view of 'justification by faith', though not entirely misleading, does not do justice to the richness and precision of Paul's doctrine, and indeed, distorts it at various points.¹⁵

N. T. Wright: What then, are the "works of the law" by which one cannot be "justified"...? Again, the context [of Gal 2] is pretty clear. they are the "living like a Jew" of Galatians 2:15, the separation from "Gentile sinners" of Galatians 2:15. They are not, in other words, the moral "good works" which the Reformation tradition loves to hate.¹⁶

Exegetical Issues with the New Perspective¹⁷

1. Works of the Law (Gal 2:16)
 - a. Traditional Protestantism: Jewish legalism/works righteousness
 - b. NPP: circumcision, food-laws, Sabbath observance
2. Curse of the Law (Gal 3:10-13)
 - a. Traditional Protestantism: burden of Jewish legalism, perfectionism
 - b. NPP: no uniform answer; no "deficiency in Law itself"¹⁸

¹⁴ See N. T. Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 (1978): 61-88. See also N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic 2009); idem, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); idem, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); idem, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993). Above all, see the forthcoming trilogy, N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 3; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013); idem, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013); idem, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul 1978-2013* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013).

¹⁵ Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 113.

¹⁶ Wright, *Justification*, 116-117.

¹⁷ See Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 47-70.

3. Works-Righteousness for Abraham (Rom 4:1-5)
 - a. Traditional Protestantism: works-righteousness; ‘wages’ for good-works
 - b. Works of the Law = circumcision doesn’t seem to work here
 - c. NPP: no uniform interp.; *initial* justification vs. *final* justification¹⁹
4. Grace vs. Good Works in Disputed Pauline Letters
 - a. Saved by Grace through Faith, not Works (Eph 2:8-9)
 - b. Saved according to Grace not Works (2 Tim 1:9)
 - c. Saved by Mercy not by “Works of Righteousness” (Titus 3:5)
 - d. Traditional Protestantism: these are ‘works-righteousness’ texts
 - e. NPP: “strangely silent”; these are ‘non-Pauline’ so no addressed²⁰

Protestant Theological Issues with the New Perspective

1. Denial of Protestant Reformation²¹
 - a. Lutheran branch (Martin Luther)
 - b. Reformed branches (John Calvin)
2. Denial of Sola Fide: justification by Grace Alone through Faith Alone²²
3. Denial of Forensic Justification²³
 - a. Reformers: Imputed Righteousness
 - b. Catholics: Infused Righteousness
 - c. NPP: Participation in Christ (Albert Schweitzer, E. P. Sanders)
4. Creeping Salvation by Works back into Theology²⁴
5. Denial of Assurance of Salvation²⁵
6. NPP Blurs Distinction between Roman Catholic and Protestant Soteriology

Kent Yinger: Discussions between Lutheran and Roman Catholics over justification point to a blurring of sharp Reformational distinctive and a readiness to speak of convergence²⁶. The NPP moves in the same direction. Covenantal nomism and NPP versions of salvation seem closer to Roman Catholic views than to Luther’s. They certainly highlight the role of obedience more than “by grace alone through faith alone would seem to do.”²⁷

7. Sliding Back into Synergism²⁸
 - a. Monergism: God does everything, we do nothing
 - b. Synergism: God saves and we cooperate with grace (cf. Phil 2:12)
8. Denial of Individual Salvation: overemphasis on collective/cosmic salvation²⁹

¹⁸ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 56.

¹⁹ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 67.

²⁰ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 68.

²¹ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 72.

²² Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 73.

²³ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 74-76.

²⁴ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 78.

²⁵ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 79.

²⁶ See here esp. the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

²⁷ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 81.

²⁸ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 82.

²⁹ Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 83-84.

The Catholic Doctrine of Justification and the Letters of Paul

1. Justification and Divine Sonship

Council of Trent: Justification as Divine Sonship

[T]he justification of a sinner... [is] *a transition from the state in which man is born a son of the first Adam to the state of grace and adoption as sons of God* (Rom 8:15) through the second Adam, Jesus Christ our Savior. (Council of Trent, Decree on Justification, Chapter 4)

St. Paul on Justification, the Holy Spirit, and Divine Sonship (Romans 8)

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you... If Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, *your spirits are alive because of righteousness/justice* (Greek *dikaosyne*)... You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but *you have received the spirit of sonship*. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that *we are children of God*. (Romans 8:9-10, 15-16)

Council of Trent: Because of Original Sin, Neither Nature or Law Justify

The holy council declares that for a correct and clear understanding of *the doctrine of justification it is necessary that each one admits and confesses that all men, having lost innocence through the sin of Adam, “became unclean”, and, according to the apostle, were “by nature children of wrath”* (Eph 2:3), *as the council taught in its decree on Original Sin*. So completely were they the slaves of sin and under the power of the devil and death that *not only the Gentiles by means of the power of nature but even the Jews by means of the letter of the law of Moses were unable to liberate themselves and to rise from that state*, even though their free will, weakened and distorted as it was, was in no way extinct. (Decree on Justification, Chapter 1).

St. Paul on Justification by Faith apart from Works of the Law (Gal 2)

But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party... But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?” We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that *a man is not justified by works of the law* (Greek *ex ergōn nomou*) *but through faith in Jesus Christ* (Greek *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou*), even we have believed in Christ Jesus, *in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified*... I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose. (Galatians 2:11-21)

2. Grace, Faith, Works, and Initial Justification

Catholic Doctrine: No One Can Merit the *Initial* Grace of Justification

The council, moreover, declares that *in adults the beginning of justification must be attributed to God's prevenient grace through Jesus Christ*, that is, to his call addressed to them *without any previous merits of theirs*. Thus, those who through their sins were turned away from God, awakened and assisted by his grace, are disposed to turn to their own justification by freely assenting to and cooperating with that grace. In this way, God touches the heart of man with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, but man himself is not entirely inactive while receiving that inspiration, since he can reject it; and yet, without God's grace, he cannot by his own free will move toward justice in God's sight. (Council of Trent, Decree on Justification, Chapter 5)

Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, *no one can merit the initial grace* of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2010)

St. Paul on the Initial Grace of Justification through Faith and Not Works

And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so *we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind*. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—*by grace* (Greek *charis*) *you have been saved*—and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. *For by grace* (Greek *tē chariti*) *you have been saved through faith* (Greek *dia pisteōs*); *and this is not your own doing, it is the gift* (Greek *to dōron*) *of God—not because of works* (Greek *ouk ex ergōn*), *lest any man should boast*. For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus for good works* (Greek *epi ergois agathois*), which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:1-10)

The Council of Trent on Initial Justification as Pure Grace

When the apostle [Paul] says that man is justified “through faith” and “gratuitously” (Rom 3:22, 24) those words are to be understood in the sense in which the Catholic Church has held and declared them with uninterrupted unanimity, namely, that *we are said to be justified through faith because “faith is the beginning of man's salvation,” the foundation and root of all justification*, “without which it is impossible to please God” (Heb 11:6) and *to come into the fellowship of his sons*. And we are said to be justified gratuitously because *nothing that precedes justification, neither faith nor works, merits the grace of justification*; for “if it is by grace, it is not longer on the basis of works; otherwise (as the same apostle says) grace would no longer be grace” (Rom 11:6). (Council of Trent, Decree on Justification, Chapter 8)

3. Grace, Faith, Works, and Sanctification

Council of Trent: Justification Not only Forgiveness but Sanctification

Justification... is not only the remission of sins but the sanctification and renewal of the interior man through the voluntary reception of grace and of the gifts, whereby from unjust man becomes just, and from enemy a friend... (Council of Trent, Decree on Justification, Chapter 7)

In this way, therefore, the justified become... “renewed (as the apostle says) every day” (2 Cor 4:16), that is, “by putting to death the members of their flesh” (Col 3:5), and using them as “instruments of righteousness” unto sanctification by observing the commandments of God and of the Church. *When “faith is active along with works” (cf. James 2:22), they increase in the very justice/righteousness they have received through the grace of Christ and are further justified... (Decree on Justification, Chapter 10)*

The Catechism: Justification entails Sanctification over Time

By giving birth to the “inner man,” *justification entails the sanctification of his whole being ... Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life. (Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 1995, 2010)*

St. Paul on Justice for Sanctification (Rom 6)

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of *obedience, which leads to righteousness* (Greek *hypakoēs eis dikaiosynē*)... Just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to *righteousness for sanctification* (Greek *dikaioynē eis hagasmon*) (Rom 6:15-16, 19)

St. James on Justification by Works and Not by Faith Alone (James 2)

*What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But some one will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you shallow man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by works, and the scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness”; and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works (Greek *ex ergōn dikaioutai anthrōpos*) and not by faith alone (Greek *ouk ek pisteōs monon*). (James 2:14-24)*

4. Grace, Works, and “Assurance of Salvation”

Council of Trent: Against Absolute “Assurance of Salvation”

Even though it is necessary to believe that sins are not forgiven and never have been forgiven except gratuitously by the divine mercy on account of Christ, nevertheless... *it must not be asserted that those who are truly justified should unhesitatingly determine within themselves that they are justified and that no one is absolved from his sins and justified unless he believes with certainty that he is absolved and justified and that absolution and justification are brought about by this faith alone, as if whoever lacks this faith were doubting God's promises and the efficacy of Christ's death and Resurrection.* For just as no devout man should doubt God's mercy, Christ's merit, and the power and efficacy of the sacraments; so also, whoever considers himself, his personal weakness, and his lack of disposition may fear and tremble about his own grace, since no one can now with a certitude of faith that cannot be subject to error that he has obtained God's grace. (Decree on Justification, Chapter 9)

St. Paul on the Possibility of Losing the Grace of Justification (Rom 11, 1 Cor 9-10)

Note the kindness (Greek *chrēstotēs*) and severity of god; severity towards those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, *provided you continue in his kindness, otherwise you too will be cut off.* (Romans 11:22)

Now these things happened to them [the wilderness generation] as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come. *Therefore let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall* (1 Corinthians 10:1-12)

Excursus: Can Anything Separate Us From Christ? (Rom 8, 1 Cor 6)

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* As it is written, "For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. *For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 8:32-39)

Council of Trent: the Loss of the Grace of Justification through Mortal Sin

Those who through sin have forfeited the grace of justification they had received can be justified again, when, awakened by God, they make the effort to regain through the sacrament of penance and by the merits of Christ the grace they have lost. This manner of justification is the restoration of the sinner that the holy Fathers aptly called “the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck of lost grace” (Tertullian). For Christ Jesus instituted the sacrament of penance for those who fall into sin after baptism, when he

said, “Receive the Holy Spirit; who sins you forgive, they are forgiven...” (John 20:22). *Hence it must be taught that the repentance of a Christian after his fall differs vastly from repentance at the time of baptism.* It includes not only giving up sins and detesting them, or “a broken and contrite heart” (Ps 51:17), but also their sacramental confession or at least the desire to confess them when a suitable occasion will be found and the absolution of a priest; it also includes satisfaction by fasts, almsgiving, prayer, and other pious exercises of the spiritual life, not indeed for the eternal punishment that, together with the guilt, is remitted by the reception or the desire of the sacrament, but for the temporal punishment, which, as Sacred Scripture teaches is not always entirely remitted, as is done in baptism, to those who ungrateful to the grace of God they have received, have grieved the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph 4:30) and have not feared to violate the temple of God (cf. 1 Cor 3:17). Of this form of repentance it is written: “Remember from what you have fallen; do penance, and perform the works you did at first” (Rev 2:5); and again: “Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation” (2 Cor 7:10). (Decree on Justification, Chapter 14)

5. The Fruit of Justification: Grace, Merit, and Good Works

Council of Trent: the Merit of Good Works as the Fruit of Justification

Jesus Christ himself continually infuses strength into the justified, as... the vine into the branches (John 15:5); this strength always precedes, accompanies, and follows their good works, which, without it, could in no way be pleasing to God and meritorious. *Therefore, we must believe that nothing further is wanting to the justified for them to be regarded as having entirely fulfilled the divine law in their present condition by the works they have done in the sight of God; they can also be regarded as having truly merited eternal life, which they will obtain in due time, provided they die in a state of grace* (cf. Rev 14:3)... Thus, neither is our justice considered as coming from us (2 Cor 3:5), nor is God’s justice disregarded or denied (Rom 10:3); for *the justice that is said to be ours because we become just by its inheritance in us is that of God himself, since it is infused in us by God through the merit of Christ...* Nevertheless, a Christian should never rely on himself or glory in himself instead of in the Lord (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17), whose goodness toward all men is such that *he wants his own gifts to be their merits.* (Council of Trent, Decree on Justification, Chapter 16)

The Catechism on Our Merits as Pure Grace

The charity of Christ is the source in us of all our merits before God. Grace, by uniting us to Christ in active love, ensures the supernatural quality of our acts and consequently their merit before God and before men. *The saints have always had a lively awareness that their merits were pure grace.*

St. Therese of Lisieux: After earth's exile, I hope to go and enjoy you in the fatherland, but I do not want to lay up merits for heaven. I want to work for your love alone. . . . In the evening of this life, I shall appear before you with empty hands, for I do not ask you, Lord, to count my works. All our justice is blemished in your eyes. I wish, then, to be clothed in your own justice and to receive from your love the eternal possession of yourself. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2011)