

Redeemed, Ransomed, Justified, Sanctified, Saved, Glorified

As Catholic Christians we ought to be keenly aware that our Baptism has regenerated our natural lives such that they can be described by the set of words which are the title of this column. These words are the new life borne of the grace that is given in Baptism. But what do they mean?

In truth, most of us probably live our faith lives without focusing on these terms or considering what they mean. The all encompassing hope is to make it to the blessedness of Heaven and, of course, to avoid the pains of Hell.

I suppose we could think of sin as a sort of spiritual cancer. The cancer threatens to take over the life of the person if it is not put in check and ultimately destroyed or removed. After diagnosis, hopefully the doctor will declare a good prognosis accompanied by a sense of confidence in the available treatment. The sense of hope which follows may be likened to redemption; a way is opened to healing.

When the plan for treatment is enacted by the doctor, some combination of surgery, radiotherapy, and/or chemotherapy is applied in order to save the body from being overrun, invaded and choked off by the mutant cells and tissues. If remission follows all of this treatment, one could speak of having been “saved” from the disease and now having a body which is restored to right order; one that is “justified” with the definition of “health.”

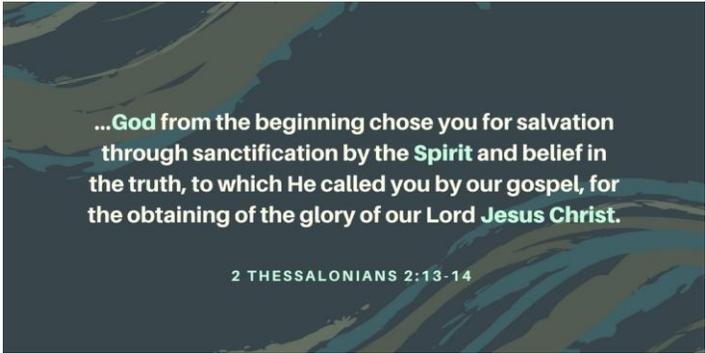
If one really wants to stretch the analogy to its absolute limits, being made a “whole” person as a result of treatment would correlate to “sanctification.”

I used the dreadful disease of cancer to correlate with sin in order to underscore

the seriousness with which we treat the matter in our faith. We take our cues from the Lord who said, *“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea,”* (Mk 9:42).

Ransomed and redeemed are essentially synonymous terms which direct our gaze to the Crucified Lord. In the words of the writer of The Letter to the Hebrews, *“[Christ] entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal salvation.”* The sense here is that of the debt being paid to release us from bondage. Our lives were purchased at the price of Christ’s sacrificial death.

Justification is a term related to the foregoing in that it has a juridical/legal overtone. Something is “justified” when things line up properly; when there is a proper correspondence with what is true and right. Christ’s act of perfect obedience and faith, from within our human nature, set things right between us and God. We are now properly aligned with the possibility of salvation through no merit of our own.



...God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-14

To be saved, sanctified and glorified is to have made a positive response with our lives to Jesus’ gift. By making of our lives a resounding ‘yes’ to him, we are assured of our salvation. It is as good as done! Yet, we all know that we struggle with rebellious hearts and with sin; thus, *“we work our salvation in fear and trembling,”* (Phil 2:12).