

QUESTION 86

The Effect of Penance as regards the Remission of Mortal Sins

Next we have to consider the effect of penance. And, first, with respect to the remission of mortal sins (question 86); second, with respect to the remission of venial sins (question 87); third, with respect to the return of dismissed sinners (question 88); fourth, with respect to the restoration of the virtues (question 89).

On the first topic there are six questions: (1) Are mortal sins taken away through penance? (2) Can they be removed without penance? (3) Can one mortal sin be remitted without another? (4) Does penance take away the sin even while the individual remains deserving of punishment (*remanente reatu*)? (5) Do the remnants of an individual's sins remain? (6) Is the taking away of sin the effect of penance insofar as it is a virtue or insofar as it is a sacrament?

Article 1

Are all sins taken away through penance?

It seems that not all sins are taken away through penance (*per poenitentiam non removeantur omnia peccata*):

Objection 1: In Hebrews 12:17 the Apostle says that Esau “did not find a place for penance, even though he had looked for it with tears”—which a Gloss explains as meaning that “he did not find a place of pardon and blessing through penance.” And 2 Maccabees 9:13 says of Antiochus that “this wicked man used to pray to the Lord, from whom he was not going to receive mercy.” Therefore it does not seem that all sins are taken away through penance.

Objection 2: In *De Sermone Domini in Monte* Augustine says, “So great is the fall that belongs to that sin”—viz., when an individual, after coming to the knowledge of God through the grace of Christ, resists fraternity and by the torches of envy fights against grace itself—“that he is unable to submit to the humility of begging, even if he is forced by his bad conscience to acknowledge and announce his sin.” Therefore, it is not the case that every sin can be removed through penance.

Objection 3: In Matthew 12:32 our Lord says, “He who speaks against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come.” Therefore, it is not the case that every sin can be remitted through penance.

But contrary to this: Ezekiel 18:22 says, “I will not remember any more all the iniquities that he has perpetrated.”

I respond: There are two ways in which it could happen that a sin was unable to be removed through penance: in one way, because the individual could not repent of the sin; in the other way, because penance was not able to wipe away the sin.

It is in the *first way* that the sins of the demons, as well as the sins of damned men, cannot be wiped away. For their affections are confirmed in evil, with the result that sin cannot displease them insofar as it carries guilt, but instead displeases them only insofar as it carries the punishment which they are suffering and by reason of which they have some repentance, albeit a fruitless repentance—this according to Wisdom 5:3 (“Doing penance and groaning for anguish of spirit”). Hence, penance of this sort is accompanied not by any hope for forgiveness, but by despair. However, a sin such as this cannot belong to a man who is still in this life (*hominis viatoris*) and whose free choice is flexible with respect to good and evil. Hence, it is erroneous to claim that there is a sin in this life that an individual cannot repent of. First of all, because free choice would thereby be destroyed. Second, because such a sin would detract from the power of grace, by which the heart of any sinner can be moved to repentance—this

according to Proverbs 21:1 (“The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, and He will turn it whichever way He wants to”).

Now it is likewise erroneous to claim that, in the *second way*, there is some sin that cannot be remitted through genuine repentance. First of all, because this claim is incompatible with the divine mercy, of which Joel 2:13 says that “[God] is gracious and merciful, and rich in mercy, and repents of evil.” For God would in a way be conquered by man if a man wanted a sin to be deleted that God did not want to delete. Second, because this claim detracts from the power of Christ’s passion, through which penance, like the other sacraments, operates. For we read in 1 John 2:2 that “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” Hence, one should reply that, absolutely speaking, every sin in this life can be deleted through penance.

Reply to objection 1: Esau was not genuinely repentant. This is clear from the fact that he said, “The days will come to mourn my father, and I will kill Jacob my brother” (Genesis 27:41).

Similarly, Antiochus was not genuinely repentant, either. For he was sorrowful about his past sin not because of God’s having been offended by it, but because of the bodily infirmity that he was suffering from.

Reply to objection 2: This passage from Augustine should be understood in following way: “The fall that belongs to that sin is so great that the individual is not able, i.e., not *easily* able, to submit to the humility of begging—in the sense in which we say that an individual “cannot be healed” when he cannot be *easily* healed.” Yet this is possible by the power of God’s grace, which sometimes even turns men “into the depths of the sea,” as Psalm 67:23 says.

Reply to objection 3: As Augustine explains in *De Verbis Domini*, the word or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is *final impenitence*, which is an unpardonable sin, because there cannot be forgiveness of sins after the end of this life.

An alternative reply is that if by blasphemy against the Holy Spirit one means a sin that is done out of fixed malice, then either (a) it is the very blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that is being said not to be remitted, i.e., *easily* remitted, because it does not carry within itself a reason for its being excused, or else (b) this is because an individual is punished for such a sin both in this world and in the next world, in the way we explained in the Second Part (ST 2-2, q. 14, a. 3).

Article 2

Can a sin be forgiven without penance?

It seems that a sin can be forgiven without penance (*sine poenitentia peccatum remitti possit*):

Objection 1: God has no less power with respect to adults than with respect to children. But He forgives children their sins without penance. Therefore, adults, too.

Objection 2: God does not bind His power to the sacraments. But penance is a certain sacrament. Therefore, sins can be forgiven by the divine power without penance.

Objection 3: God’s mercy is greater than man’s mercy. But a man sometimes forgives an offense against himself even if the other man is not repentant; hence, in Matthew 5:44 our Lord commanded, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.” Therefore, *a fortiori*, God forgives men who are not repentant for an offense against Himself.

But contrary to this: In Jeremiah 18:8 the Lord says, “If that nation ... repents of the evil it has done, I, too, will repent of the evil that I thought to do to it.” And so, conversely, it seems that if a man does not do penance, God will not forgive its offense.

I respond: It is impossible for an actual sin that is mortal to be remitted without penance, if we are

speaking about penance insofar as it is a virtue. For since sin is an offense against God, God remits sin in the same way that He remits sin committed against Himself. But an offense is directly opposed to grace or favor (*direct opponitur gratiae*); for by the very fact that an individual is said to have offended another, he repels that other from his grace or favor. Now as was established in the Second Part (ST 1-2, q. 110, a. 1), the difference between God's grace or favor and a man's grace or favor is that a man's grace or favor does not cause but instead *presupposes* the goodness, whether genuine or apparent, in the man who is favored, whereas God's grace *causes* the goodness in the man who is favored, because God's good will, which is understood in the name 'grace', is the cause of created good. Hence, it can happen that a man forgives someone for an offense by which he has been offended without any change in that individual's will, but it cannot happen that God forgives someone for an offense [against Himself] without any change in that individual's will.

Now the offense of a mortal sin proceeds from the fact that a man's will is turned *away from* God by being turned *toward* some changeable good (*ex hoc quod voluntas hominis est aversa a Deo per conversio ad aliquod bonum commutabile*). Hence, what is required for the remission of an offense against God is that the man's will be changed in such a way that it is turned *toward* God, along with (a) the hatred of its previous orientation (*cum detestatione praedictae conversionis*) and (b) the intention of amending that orientation (*cum proposito emendae*). But this pertains to the nature of penance insofar as it is a virtue. And that is why it is impossible for a sin to be forgiven someone without penance insofar as it is a virtue.

On the other hand, the sacrament of penance, as was explained above (q. 84, a. 1, ad 2, and a. 3), is brought to completion through the role of the priest who binds and looses. God can forgive a sin without this—in the way that, as we read in John 8:11, Christ forgave the adulterous woman, and in the way that, as we read in Luke 7:47-48, He forgave the sinful woman. Yet their sins were not forgiven them without the virtue of penance; for as Gregory says in a homily, "Through grace He drew inwardly"—i.e., toward penance—"the ones whom He received outwardly by His mercy."

Reply to objection 1: In the case of children there is only *original sin*, which, as was established in the Second Part (ST 1-2, q. 82, a. 1), consists not in a *disordered act of the will* (*non consistit in actuali deordinatione voluntatis*) but in a sort of *habitual disorder of the nature* (*in quadam habituali deordinatione naturae*). And so sin is remitted in their case with an change in the *habits* (*cum habituali immutatione*)—though not a change in the *acts*—through the infusion of grace and the virtues. By contrast, in an adult, in whom there are *actual sins*, which consist in disordered *acts* of the will, the sins are not remitted, even in baptism, without a change effected by penance in the *acts* of the will.

Reply to objection 2: This argument goes through for penance insofar as it is a sacrament.

Reply to objection 3: God's mercy has more power than a man's mercy in that it moves a man's will in the direction of doing penance—something that a man's mercy cannot do.

Article 3

Can one sin be remitted through penance without another?

It seems that one sin can be remitted through penance without another (*possit per poenitentiam unum peccatum sine alio remitti*):

Objection 1: Amos 4:7 says, "I rained upon one city, and upon another city I did not rain; one part was rained upon, and the part that I did not rain upon withered." In *Super Ezechiel* Gregory, commenting on this, says, "When he who hates his neighbor breaks himself of other vices, rain falls on one part of the city, and the other part remains arid; for there are those who, when they cut back on some vices, perdure

more firmly in others.” Therefore, one sin can be remitted through penance without another.

Objection 2: In commenting on Psalm 118:1 (“Blessed are the undefiled ...”), Ambrose says, “The first consolation is that God does not forget His mercy; the second consolation comes with His punishment where, even if belief (*fides*) is lacking, the punishment makes satisfaction and lifts one up.” Therefore, an individual can be lifted up from some sin even while the sin of unbelief remains.

Objection 3: If two things are such that it is not necessary for them to exist together, then the one can be taken away without the other. But as was established in the Second Part (*ST* 1-2, q. 73, a. 1), sins are not connected, and so one of them can exist without another. Therefore, one of them can be remitted through penance without another.

Objection 4: Sins are debts which we seek to be relieved of when we pray in the Lord’s prayer, “Forgive us our debts.” But sometimes a man forgives one debt without another. Therefore, God can likewise forgive one sin through penance without another.

Objection 5: It is through God’s love that men’s sins are loosed—this according to Jeremiah 31:3 (“I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you toward me, taking pity on you”). But there is nothing to prevent God from loving a man in one respect and being offended by him in another respect, in the way that He loves a sinner with respect to his nature and hates him with respect to his sin. Therefore, it seems possible for God to remit one sin through penance without another.

But contrary to this: In *De Poenitentia* Augustine says, “There are many whom it pains to have sinned, but not completely; for they hold back certain things in which they find delight, not taking into account that our Lord freed the man who was simultaneously deaf and dumb from the demon, thereby teaching us that we are never healed unless it is from all sins.”

I respond: It is impossible for one sin to be remitted through penance without another:

First of all, because a sin is remitted insofar as an offense against God is removed through grace. Hence, it was established in the Second Part (*ST* 1-2, q. 109, a. 7 and q. 113, a. 2) that no sin can be remitted without grace. But every mortal sin is contrary to grace and excludes it. Hence, it is impossible for one sin to be remitted without another.

Second, because, as has been shown (a. 2), a mortal sin cannot be remitted without genuine penance, which involves leaving the sin behind insofar as it is contrary to God—something that is common to all mortal sins. But where the line of reasoning is the same, the result is the same. Hence, an individual cannot be truly penitent if he repents of one sin and not another. For if this sin displeased him because it is contrary to a God who is loved above all things, which is required by the nature of true penance, then it would follow that he is repenting of all his sins. Hence, it follows that it is impossible for one sin to be remitted without another.

Third, because this would be contrary to the perfection of the mercy of God, whose “works are perfect,” as Deuteronomy 32:4 puts it. Hence, whomever He has mercy on, He has total mercy on. And this is a point Augustine makes in *De Poenitentia*, “It involves a sort of impiety and unbelief to look for half a pardon from Him who is just and justice itself.”

Reply to objection 1: The quote from Gregory should be understood as having to do not with the *remission of sin*, but with the *cessation of the act*, since sometimes an individual who is used to committing several sins leaves one behind but not another. To be sure, this happens with God’s assistance, but such assistance does not reach the point of remitting the sin.

Reply to objection 2: In this passage from Ambrose ‘belief’ (*fides*) cannot be taken for the faith by which an individual believes in Christ; for as Augustine says in commenting on John 15:22 (“If I had not come and had not spoken to them, they would not have sin,” viz., the sin of unbelief), “For this is the sin which contains all others.”

Instead, ‘belief’ is being taken here for ‘being conscious of’, because it sometimes happens that the punishments that an individual patiently undergoes gain for him the forgiveness of a sin that he is not

conscious of.

Reply to objection 3: Even though sins are not connected as regards the *turning toward a changeable good*, they are nonetheless connected as regards the *turning away from the unchangeable good*—something that all mortal sins share in. And it is from the latter that one derives the notion of an offense that has to be removed through penance.

Reply to objection 4: A debt involving an exterior thing, e.g., money, is not contrary to the friendship by which the debt is remitted. And so one debt of this kind can be remitted without another.

However, the debt that belongs to a sin is indeed contrary to friendship. And so one sin or offense of this kind cannot be remitted without the other. Likewise, it seems ridiculous for an individual to seek pardon from a man for one offense and not another.

Reply to objection 5: The love by which God loves a man's nature is not ordered toward the good of glory, which a man is prevented from gaining through each mortal sin. By contrast, the love involved in grace, through which the remission of sin is effected, orders a man toward eternal life—this according Romans 6:23 (“God’s grace is eternal life”). Hence, the two lines of reasoning are not similar.

Article 4

Does an individual remain deserving of punishment after his sin has been remitted through penance?

It seems that after his sin has been remitted through penance, an individual does not remain deserving of punishment (*remissa culpa per poenitentiam, non remaneat reatus poenae*):

Objection 1: Once the cause is removed, the effect is removed. But sin (*culpa*) is the cause of one's deserving punishment (*causa reatus poenae*), since the reason why an individual is deserving of punishment is that he has committed sin. Therefore, when his sin is remitted, he cannot remain deserving of punishment.

Objection 2: In Romans 5:15ff. the Apostle says that Christ's gift is more efficacious than sin. But by sinning a man simultaneously incurs guilt and a debt of punishment (*poenae reatum*). Therefore, *a fortiori*, through the gift of grace both the guilt and the debt of punishment are simultaneously removed.

Objection 3: The remission of sins is effected in penance through the power of Christ's passion—this according to Romans 3:25 (“... whom God has put forth as a propitiator through faith in His blood ... for the remission of former sins”). But as was established above (q. 48, a. 2 and q. 49, a. 3), Christ's passion is sufficient to make satisfaction for all sins. Therefore, one does not remain deserving of punishment after the remission of his sin.

But contrary to this: 2 Kings 12:13-14 reports that after David, now penitent, had said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord,” Nathan replied to him, “The Lord has also taken away your sin; you will not die. However, the son who has been born to you will surely die.” And this, as is explained in the same place, was a punishment for the sin he had committed. Therefore, one remains deserving of punishment after his sin has been forgiven.

I respond: As was established in the Second Part (ST 1-2, q. 71, a. 5), in a mortal sin there are two aspects, viz., (a) *a turning away from the unchangeable good* (*aversio ab incommutabili bono*) and (b) *a disordered turning toward a changeable good* (*conversio ad commutabile bonum inordinata*).

Thus, on the part of the *turning away from the unchangeable good*, it is the debt of eternal punishment that a mortal sin acquires, so that an individual who has sinned against the eternal good is punished eternally (*in aeternum puniatur*).

Again, on the part of the *turning toward a changeable good*, insofar as it is disordered, a mortal sin

likewise accrues a debt of some punishment, since the disorder of a sin is not brought back to the order of justice except through a punishment. Indeed, it is a matter of justice that an individual who has indulged his own will more than he ought to have, should endure something that is contrary to his will, since it is in this way that a balance will be restored; hence, Apocalypse 18:7 says, “As much as she glorified herself and gave herself over to wantonness, give her that much torment and mourning.” However, since the turning to a changeable good is finite, a mortal sin is not on this score such that an eternal punishment is fitting for it. Hence, if there is a disordered turning toward a changeable good without a turning away from God, as occurs in the case of venial sins, then it should be punished with a temporal punishment rather than with an eternal punishment.

Therefore, when a [mortal] sin is remitted through grace, the soul’s turning from God is eliminated insofar as the soul is joined to God through the grace. Hence, as a result, the debt of eternal punishment is simultaneously eliminated. But a debt of some temporal punishment can remain.

Reply to objection 1: A mortal sin has both aspects, i.e., both (a) a turning away from God and (b) a turning toward some created good; however, as was established in the Second Part (*ST* 1-2, q. 71, a. 6), a turning away from God is like the *form* here (*est ibi sicut formale*), whereas the turning toward a created good is like the *matter* here (*est ibi sicut materiale*).

Now when the form of any given thing is removed, the species is eliminated—as, for instance, when the form *rational* is removed, the species *human being* is eliminated. And so by the very fact that a mortal sin is said to be remitted, what is taken away is (a) the mind’s turning away from God, along with (b) the debt of eternal punishment.

However, what is *material* remains, viz., the disordered turning toward a created good, for which the individual deserves a temporal punishment (*debetur reatus poenae temporalis*).

Reply to objection 2: As was established in the Second Part (*ST* 1-2, q. 111, a. 6), it belongs to grace to *operate* in a man by justifying him from sin, and it belongs to the man to *cooperate* in acting in an upright way. Therefore, the remission of sin and of the debt of *eternal* punishment belongs to *operating* grace, whereas the remission of the debt of *temporal* punishment belongs to *cooperating* grace, viz., insofar as the man, with the help of God’s grace, is absolved even from the debt of temporal punishment by patiently enduring the punishments.

Therefore, just as the effect of *operating* grace is prior to the effect of *cooperating* grace, so, too, the remission of sin and *eternal* punishment is prior to the full absolution from *temporal* punishment. For both effects are from grace, but the *first* effect is from *grace alone*, whereas the *second* effect is from *grace together with free choice*.

Reply to objection 3: Christ’s passion is of itself (*de se*) sufficient to eliminate the whole debt not only of eternal punishment, but also of temporal punishment—and depending on the manner in which a man participates in the power of Christ’s passion, he receives absolution from the debt of punishment as well.

Now in baptism a man participates totally in the power of Christ’s passion, inasmuch as through water and the Spirit he dies along with Christ to sin and is regenerated in Him to new life. And so in baptism a man receives remission of the debt of all punishment. By contrast, in [the sacrament of] penance he receives the power of Christ’s passion in accord with the mode of his own acts, which, as was explained above (q. 84, a. 1, ad 1), are the matter of penance in the way that water is the matter of baptism. And so it is not immediately through the first act of penance, by which sin is remitted, that the debt of all punishment is remitted, but instead after all the acts of penance have been completed.

Article 5

Is it the case that when a mortal sin is remitted, all the remnants of sin are eliminated?

It seems that when a mortal sin is remitted, all the remnants of sin are eliminated (*remissa culpa mortali, tollantur omnes reliquiae peccati*):

Objection 1: In *De Poenitentia* Augustine says, “Our Lord never cured anyone whom He did not totally liberate; for instance, He made a man whole on the sabbath by curing his body from every infirmity and his soul from every contagion.” But the remnants of sin have to do with the infirmities that belong to sin. Therefore, it seems impossible for the remnants of sin to remain once the sin has been remitted.

Objection 2: According to Dionysius in *De Divinis Nominibus*, good is more efficacious than evil, since what is evil does not act except in the power of what is good. But by sinning a man simultaneously contracts the entire infection of sin. Therefore, *a fortiori*, by repenting he is likewise freed from all the remnants of sin.

Objection 3: The work of God is more efficacious than the work of man. But through the exercise of human works aimed at a good, the remnants of the contrary sin are eliminated. Therefore, the remnants of sin are all the more eliminated through the remission of sin, which is a work of God.

But contrary to this: In Mark 8:22ff. we read that a blind man made to see by our Lord was at first restored to imperfect sight and says, “I see men as though they were trees walking about.” Then his sight was perfectly restored, so that he saw everything clearly. But giving sight to the blind signifies liberating the sinner. Therefore, after the first remission of sin, by which the sinner is restored to spiritual sight, the remnants of some past sin still remain in him.

I respond: On the part of its disordered *turning toward a changeable good*, a mortal sin causes a certain *disposition* in the soul, or even a *habit* if the act is frequently repeated. Now as was explained above (a. 4, ad 1), the guilt of a mortal sin is remitted insofar as the *turning away from God* is eliminated by grace. But even though what there is on the part of the *turning away* has been eliminated, nonetheless, what there is on the part of the *disordered turning toward* can still remain, since, as was said above (a. 4, ad 1), the latter can exist without the former. And so there is nothing to prevent its being the case that after the sin is remitted, there remain dispositions caused by the previous acts, and these dispositions are called the remnants of sin. However, they remain weakened and diminished, so that they do not dominate the man—more in the manner of *dispositions* than in the manner of *habits*, in the way that the stimulant to sin (*fomes*) likewise remains after baptism.

Reply to objection 1: God cures the whole man completely, but (a) sometimes *all at once*—in the way that He immediately restored Peter’s mother-in-law to complete health, so that “she arose and served Him,” as we read in Luke 4:39—and (b) sometimes *gradually*, as was explained above concerning the blind man who was made to see in Mark 8.

So, too, spiritually, He sometimes turns the heart with such a rousing movement that all of a sudden it attains complete spiritual health—with not only the sin having been forgiven, but also with all the remnants of sin having been eliminated; this is clear in the case of [Mary] Magdalene in Luke 7:47ff. On the other hand, sometimes He first remits the sin through *operating grace* and afterwards gradually removes the remnants of sin through *cooperating grace*.

Reply to objection 2: Sometimes sin immediately induces a weak disposition, as when it is caused by a single act, whereas sometimes it induces a stronger disposition, caused by many acts.

Reply to objection 3: Not all the remnants of sin are removed by a single human act, since, as is explained in *Categories* 8, “A vicious man by doing better works will make a modicum of progress so as to become better, but if these exercises are multiplied, he will reach the point of being good by means of

an acquired virtue.” By contrast, God’s grace does this much more efficaciously, whether by one act or by many acts.

Article 6

Is the remission of sin an effect of penance insofar as it is a virtue?

It seems that the remission of sin is not an effect of penance insofar as it is a virtue (*remissio culpae non sit effectus poenitentiae secundum quod est virtus*):

Objection 1: Penance is called a virtue insofar as it is the principle of a human act. But human acts do not bring about the remission of sin, which is an effect of operating grace. Therefore, the remission of sin is not an effect of penance insofar as it is a virtue.

Objection 2: Certain other virtues are more excellent than penance. But the remission of sin is not said to be the effect of any other virtue. Therefore, it is likewise not an effect of penance insofar as it is a virtue.

Objection 3: The remission of sin comes only from the power of Christ’s passion—this according to Hebrews 9:22 (“... without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”). But as was explained above (a. 4, ad 3 and q. 62, a. 5), penance insofar as it is a sacrament operates in the power of Christ’s passion, as do the rest of the sacraments. Therefore, the remission of sin is an effect of penance not insofar as it is a virtue, but insofar as it is a sacrament.

But contrary to this: What is properly a cause of a given thing is that without which the thing cannot exist; for every effect depends on its cause. But as was explained above (a. 2 and q. 84, a. 5, ad 3), the remission of sin can come from God without the sacrament of penance, though not without penance insofar as it is a virtue. Hence, God remitted the sins of penitents even before the time of the sacraments of the New Law. Therefore, the remission of sin is an effect of penance insofar as it is a virtue.

I respond: Penance is a virtue insofar as it is a principle of certain human acts. But human acts which come from the part of the sinner behave as the matter in the sacrament of penance (*materialiter se habent in sacramento poenitentiae*), and every sacrament produces its effect not only by virtue of its *form*, but also by virtue of its *matter*; for as was established above (q. 60, a. 6, ad 2), a unified sacrament comes from the two of them. Hence, just as, in baptism, the remission of sin is effected not only by virtue of its *form*, from which even the water itself receives its power, so, too, the remission of sin is an effect of penance—more principally, to be sure, (a) by the power of the keys that the ministers possess, and, as was established above (q. 84, a. 3), it is from the ministers that what is formal in the sacrament is received, but also, secondarily, (b) by the power of those acts of the penitent that belong to the virtue of penance, yet only to the extent that those acts are in some sense ordered toward the keys possessed by the Church. And so it is clear that the remission of sin is an effect of penance insofar as penance is a virtue, but, more principally, it is an effect of penance insofar as penance is a sacrament.

Reply to objection 1: As was explained in the Second Part (*ST* 1-2, q. 111, a. 2 and q. 113), the effect of operating grace is the justification of a sinner (*iustificatio impii*). As is explained in the same place, in this justification there is not only an infusion of grace and the remission of sin, but also a movement of free choice with respect to God, which is an act of formed faith, and a movement of free choice with respect to sin, which is an act of penance. Yet these human acts are there as effects of operating grace produced simultaneously with the remission of sin. Hence, the remission of sin, even though it is an effect of operating grace, does not occur without an act of the virtue of penance,.

Reply to objection 2: As has been explained (*ST* 2-2, q. 113, a. 4), in the justification of a sinner there is not only an act of penance, but also an act of faith. And so the remission of sin is posited as an

effect not only of the virtue of penance, but also, and more principally, as an effect of [the virtues of] faith and charity.

Reply to objection 3: An act of the virtue of penance is ordered toward Christ's passion both through faith and through its relation to the keys of the Church. And so it is in both these ways that it is a cause of the remission of sin (*causat remissionem culpae*) by the power of Christ's passion.

Reply to the argument for the contrary: An act of the virtue of penance is such that without it the remission of sin cannot be effected, insofar as it is an inseparable effect of grace, through which sin is principally remitted and which likewise operates in all the sacraments. And so one can thereby conclude only that grace is a more principal cause of the remission of sin than is the sacrament of penance.

Yet notice, as was explained above (q. 84, a. 7, ad 1-2), that the sacrament of penance in some sense existed in the Old Law and in the natural law.