

Beliefs on Justification

How do unrighteous sinners become righteous (i.e., justified)
so that they may inherit eternal life?

PROTESTANT	CATHOLIC
1. Our justification is by God’s grace apart from works. The Protestant doctrine of justification is mostly similar to the Catholic belief regarding initial justification.	1. Our justification is due to God’s grace. Our initial justification is without any type of works. (CCC 1996, 1998, 2003, 2010)
2. Faith <i>alone</i>	2. After initial justification, faith works through love, plus Baptism (gifts of grace).(CCC 1814, 1987, 1991–92, 1997, 2017, 2020)
3. A momentary act	3. An ongoing transformation, yet with a distinct beginning. (CCC 1987, fn.35; 1988–89; 1990; 2000) Only initial justification is a momentary act. Afterward the friends of God are able to increase the justice received. (Trent 6.10, Canon 24)
4. No “works” (connected to justification)	4. After initial justification, good works (by the power of the Holy Spirit) are necessary. (CCC 1813–15, 1991)
5. Justification is a legal declaration of “not guilty” (with no inward change)	5. Justification <i>makes us inwardly righteous</i> (not just declared righteous). There is a momentous inward change produced by grace. (CCC 1989–90, 1992, 1999, 2023)
6. Sanctification is distinct from and subsequent to justification	6. Sanctification (being made holy) is a vital part of justification. (CCC 1989, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2019)
7. Adoption is distinct from justification	7. Adoption and participation in Trinitarian life (i.e., sharing in the life of God) is a vital part of justification. (CCC 1813, 1996–97, 2021)

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