

- “...not one [sparrow] falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted.”
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- The omniscience of God is something that is often a stumbling block both to believers and potential believers.
- But His omniscience is a constant theme throughout all of scriptures.
- We read in 1 Chronicles: “...the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every plan and thought.” (1Chr 28:9)
- Jesus says “Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known.”
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- Our difficulties with that idea are several, primarily:
  - Does this negate the concept of free will?...that our actions are predetermined?
  - How can any being possibly know every thought of billions of people...hear every prayer, know every deed that we do?
- If that doesn’t blow your mind sufficiently, St. Thomas Aquinas says that not only does God know every deed that we do and will do, but He knows everything it was possible for us to do!
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- As to the first question, no; free will is NOT negated. If we had no free will, then reward/punishment by God would be completely arbitrary and unjust—like a small child with toy figurines.
- Yes, God knows our whole life’s history already...but we don’t—and thus we choose to act within or outside the will of God with every action that we do—every action or inaction in accord with the good...or not.
- This gets into the ideas of predestination and pre-determinism. We are predestined in the sense that God knows our ultimate destination—Heaven or Hell—but we are not predetermined, simply following a pre-programed path without free choice or free will.

- Think of it as ourselves on a trail learning the way, but God on the mountain and sees the entirety of the trail.
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- But God gives us sufficient grace to never sin...but it is our free decision to cooperate with that grace...or not.
- And merit is not sourced in the movement toward charity; even our desire to be charitable comes from God.
- Rather, personal merit is rather in the measure by which we cooperate with God's grace in reacting to those charitable opportunities placed in our path.

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- We understand God to be infinite and omniscient, but we nevertheless try to squeeze Him into our own human limitations... and thus the disbelief in thinking that He can know every thought, every deed, every prayer, every hair on our heads.
  - We unconsciously think: "Even the smartest human could not approach that, so how can God?" Or, in the thoughts of the somewhat less humble: "I couldn't know that; how can God?"
  - But God is in no way subject to human limitation in His intellect and understanding.
  - As Creator of all, He would have had to know all...else, whence did it come? Every particle of creation is—and must be—a stroke of His artist's brush, else it would not exist.

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- In order to put some limitations on God, modernists tend to be more comfortable with a Deist idea—God as a type of watchmaker, building the watch and setting it in motion to run on its own.
  - The ideas are a bit more advanced than in the past, citing the apparently random genetic mutations for evolution, or the uncertainty principles in quantum mechanics, and the like.

- The error in this is assuming God as part of the universe rather than existing above. Assuming He's a drive gear rather than the designer and builder, which is incorrect.

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- So how does this affect us in our day-to-day?
  - Simple; understand Jesus' comments here as literal...that God knows all that we do or not do...say or not say...and act in our lives accordingly.
  - As we read in the book of Sirach: *"Before a man are life and death, and whichever he chooses will be given to him."*
  - But it continues: *"For great is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power and sees everything; his eyes are on those who fear him, and he knows every deed of man. He has not commanded any one to be ungodly, and he has not given any one permission to sin."* (Sirach 15:17-20)
  - ...setting up St. Paul's later statement: *"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."* (1 Corinthians 10:13)
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  - God knows all that we do...and so, do well!
  - Learn from Jesus today when He says: "Fear no one!"...for Man cannot harm the soul of anyone who refuses to allow his soul to be harmed...or rather, to harm his own soul.
  - Yes, Christians in the world will always have times when we feel like Jeremiah in our first reading: *"I hear the whisperings of many...All those who were my friends are on the watch for any misstep of mine."* But, as our responsorial psalm declared: *"I have become an outcast to my brothers, a stranger to my children, Because zeal for your house consumes me..."*

- And that is why we must always keep before us the knowledge of God's love, and as Jeremiah says: "*But the LORD is with me, like a mighty champion...*"
- ...and we go forth with courage rather than timidity...to be steadfast and faithful in remaining with Him in all that we do...for from Him is our salvation. From Him is the eternal good. And from Him is our eternal life.

Reading 1  
Jer 20:10-13

Jeremiah said:

“I hear the whisperings of many:

‘Terror on every side!

Denounce! let us denounce him!’

All those who were my friends

are on the watch for any misstep of mine.

‘Perhaps he will be trapped; then we can prevail,

and take our vengeance on him.’

But the LORD is with me, like a mighty champion:

my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph.

In their failure they will be put to utter shame,

to lasting, unforgettable confusion.

O LORD of hosts, you who test the just,

who probe mind and heart,

let me witness the vengeance you take on them,

for to you I have entrusted my cause.

Sing to the LORD,

praise the LORD,

for he has rescued the life of the poor

from the power of the wicked!”

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35

**R. (14c) Lord, in your great love, answer me.**

For your sake I bear insult,

and shame covers my face.

I have become an outcast to my brothers,

a stranger to my children,

Because zeal for your house consumes me,

and the insults of those who blaspheme you fall upon me.

**R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.**

I pray to you, O LORD,

for the time of your favor, O God!

In your great kindness answer me

with your constant help.

Answer me, O LORD, for bounteous is your kindness;

in your great mercy turn toward me.

**R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.**

“See, you lowly ones, and be glad;

you who seek God, may your hearts revive!

For the LORD hears the poor,

and his own who are in bonds he spurns not.

Let the heavens and the earth praise him,  
the seas and whatever moves in them!"  
**R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.**

Reading II  
Rom 5:12-15

Brothers and sisters:  
Through one man sin entered the world,  
and through sin, death,  
and thus death came to all men, inasmuch as all sinned—  
for up to the time of the law, sin was in the world,  
though sin is not accounted when there is no law.  
But death reigned from Adam to Moses,  
even over those who did not sin  
after the pattern of the trespass of Adam,  
who is the type of the one who was to come.

But the gift is not like the transgression.  
For if by the transgression of the one the many died,  
how much more did the grace of God  
and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ  
overflow for the many.

Gospel  
Mt 10:26-33

Jesus said to the Twelve:  
"Fear no one.  
Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed,  
nor secret that will not be known.  
What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light;  
what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.  
And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul;  
rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy  
both soul and body in Gehenna.  
Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin?  
Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge.  
Even all the hairs of your head are counted.  
So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.  
Everyone who acknowledges me before others  
I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.  
But whoever denies me before others,  
I will deny before my heavenly Father."