

Draw Closer to God and He will Draw Closer to You

Detest Your Sins

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Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

He came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So, he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."

What is sin?

SIN: An offense against God as well as a fault against reason, truth, and right conscience. Sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the eternal law of God. In judging the gravity of sin, it is customary to distinguish between mortal and venial sins. (CCC Glossary)

Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; **it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity.** It has been defined as "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law. (CCC 1849)

SIN: As an act is the free decision of the whole personality against the will of God. **The sinner keeps his sin in darkness, to hide it from himself.** (c.f., Dictionary of Theology, K. Rahner/H. Vorgrimler)

How serious is sin?

If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. There is such a thing as deadly sin, about which I do not say that you should pray. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not deadly. (1 John 5:16,17)

CCC 1856 - Mortal sin, by attacking the vital principle within us — that is, charity — necessitates a new initiative of God's mercy and a conversion of heart which is normally accomplished within the setting of the sacrament of reconciliation:

When the will sets itself upon something that is of its nature incompatible with the charity that orients man toward his ultimate end, then the sin is mortal by its very object ... whether it contradicts the love of God, such as blasphemy or perjury, or the love of neighbor, such as homicide or adultery. ... But when the sinner's will is set upon something that of its nature involves a disorder, but is not opposed to the love of God and neighbor, such as thoughtless chatter or immoderate laughter and the like, such sins are venial. (St. Thomas Aquinas, STh I-II,88,2, corp. art)

How Serious is Venial Sin?

The smallest sin is enough to damn us if we do not repent. (cf. St. John Vianney, Sermon on Repentance)

"One venial sin can cause as much damage to the soul as a mortal sin, albeit not in respect to guilt or eternal punishment. Venial sin deprives the soul of grace, and without grace the soul is like a body without a spirit. Venial sin extinguishes the fervor of charity, and without charity, there can be no love for God. Venial sin weakens the power of resistance against mortal sin, and without the grace of God, the soul is easily led into mortal sin. Thus, venial sin, while not depriving the soul of divine friendship, makes it more difficult to preserve that friendship, and consequently, should be abhorred above all evils." (Saint Alphonsus Liguori)

The Catholic Church holds it better for the sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail, and for all the many millions on it to die of starvation in extremist agony, as far as temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say, should be lost, but should commit one single venial sin, should tell one willful untruth, or should steal one poor farthing without excuse. (John Henry Cardinal Newman, Lectures on Anglican Difficulties (1852) Lecture 8)

Sin darkens the mind, distorts the will and suffocates the heart. (from Psalm 36)

Sin speaks to the sinner in the depths of his heart. There is no fear of God before his eyes.	He so flatters himself in his mind that he knows not his guilt. In his mouth are mischief and deceit. All wisdom is gone.	He plots the defeat of goodness as he lies on his bed. He has set his foot on evil ways, he clings to what is evil.
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How does sin affect us?

On the effects of sin on the intellect: "Sin creates a proclivity to sin; it engenders vice by repetition of the same acts. This results in perverse inclinations which cloud conscience and corrupt the concrete judgment of good and evil. Thus sin tends to reproduce itself and reinforce itself, but it cannot destroy the moral sense at its root." (CCC 1865)

The Seven Capital (deadly) Sins

Pride: An inordinate love of self, an exaggerated self-esteem leading to haughtiness, ambition, and contempt of others.

Avarice: An inordinate love of worldly possessions and the desire to hoard wealth and material goods.

Envy: Resentment or sadness at another's good fortune, or joy at another's misfortune.

Wrath: Strong and uncontrolled feelings of anger and hatred that often result in uncharitable words or actions.

Lust: An inordinate craving for sexual pleasure that is disconnected from a loving, committed relationship.

Gluttony: An excessive and disordered consumption of food and drink.

Sloth: A spiritual or physical laziness or neglect of duties and responsibilities.

The Theological Virtues

Faith: Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith 'man freely commits his entire self to God.'

Hope: Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises.

Love (Charity): Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

The Cardinal Virtues

Prudence: The virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it.

Justice: The moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor.

Temperance: The moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods.

Fortitude: The moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life.