



Draw Close to God and He Will Draw Close to You: Detest Your Sins

LENTEN REFLECTION FOR THE TASTE PROGRAM – MARCH 9TH, 2023

Opening Prayer

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Have mercy on me, God, have mercy on me. In you I seek refuge. In the shadow of your wings I seek refuge till harm pass by. I call to God Most High, to God who provides for me. May God send help from heaven to save me, shame those who trample upon me. May God send fidelity and mercy. I must lie down in the midst of lions hungry for human prey.

Their teeth are spears and arrows; their tongue, a sharpened sword. Be exalted over the heavens, God; may your glory appear above all the earth. They have set a trap for my feet; my soul is bowed down; They have dug a pit before me. May they fall into it themselves! My heart is steadfast, God, my heart is steadfast.

I will sing and chant praise. Awake, my soul; awake, lyre and harp! I will wake the dawn. I will praise you among the peoples, Lord; I will chant your praise among the nations. For your mercy towers to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Exalt yourself over the heavens, God; may your glory appear above all the earth. (Psalm 57)

Draw Close to God and He will Draw Close to You

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- ▶ *Feb 23rd - Return to Me: turning to the Lord*
- ▶ *March 2nd - Be Converted: All about “conversion”.*
- ▶ *March 9th - Detest Your Sins: Seeing our sins for what they are.*
- ▶ *March 16th – Rejoice: A break from the heavy topic of sin. It’s time to rejoice.*
- ▶ *March 23rd – From Death to Life: This week follows “Detest your sins”. A deeper look at what death and life really are.*
- ▶ *March 30th – Embracing the Cross: That’s right we’re going to embrace our cross, not just carry it. I’m not trying to one-up Jesus, but when we see our cross for what it really is, we won’t want to ever put it down.*

A Brief Recap

- *Awareness of sins bring contrition – a heart broken to pieces lying on the ground – there arises a Godly Sorrow that causes us to turn to God. (Not going to beat ourselves up – we are not our focus; God is.)*
- *God's grace abundantly flows, and we respond to that grace.*
- *This leads to conversion. (Repentance happens in a moment, but conversion is ongoing).*
- *We grow more in love with God, see Him more for who He is. In humility we see ourselves more for who we are. We are being transformed; we are being converted.*

(Remaining in this conversion is an ongoing act of faith.)

Detest Your Sins – This Talk

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- An increased love of God gives us a clearer view of our sins.
- What is sin? How serious is it?
- The effects of sin
 - Darkens mind, will, and heart
 - Gives us an appetite for sin
 - Destroys virtue and charity
- Now that we hate are sins (more than ever), how do we fight them?
 - Examination of conscience: rooting out the deadly stuff.
 - Fight sin with virtue
- There's hope! Next time: Sin cannot triumph over Jesus!

How can we become more aware of our sins?

LIKE KING DAVID – IT IS BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION.



How can we become more aware of our sins?

LIKE THE PRODIGAL SON – WE COME TO OUR SENSES. (THIS IS ACTUAL GRACE; GOD HELPS US SEE OUR SIN)





How can we become
more aware of our sins?

**LIKE ZACCHAEUS – A TRANSFORMING
ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST**

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

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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."

When we encounter Christ, we see who we are supposed to be

Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, **fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.** (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22)

What is Sin?

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- ▶ 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?

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- ▶ 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?

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- ▶ 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 extremest 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)

How does sin affect us?

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Sin darkens the mind, distorts the will and suffocates the heart

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.
(c.f., Psalm 36)

How does sin affect us?

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"**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)

Bit by bit, sin tries to make us like Satan

Battling Sin

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- ▶ Pray! Pray that God help you to know your sins. Pray for God's grace to help keep you from sin.
- ▶ Frequent the sacrament of Penance.
- ▶ Examination of conscience in light of the capital sins and in light of the virtues.
- ▶ Exercise sin "self-awareness".
- ▶ Remember these little phrases:
 - ▶ **Sin darkens the mind, distorts the will and suffocates the heart.**
 - ▶ **Sin, even the venial sins, tries to make me like Satan**

Examination of Conscience

In the light of Capital 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.

Examination of Conscience

In the light of 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.

Examination of Conscience

In the light of 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.

Hope

**Christ has defeated
sin and death**



Summary

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- ▶ Conversion transforms us and leads us to Christ.
- ▶ Christ reveals us to ourselves.
- ▶ We recognize our sins and how sin tries to make us like Satan.
- ▶ We battle sin with God's help.
- ▶ We battle sin by examining its deadly roots.
- ▶ We battle sin by examining the virtues it opposes.
- ▶ Next week: Rejoice! A glimpse of Easter joy.

Questions?