

DEADLY SINS—LIVING VIRTUE

Gluttony

The Nature of Man

“The LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being” (Gen 2:7).

- Union of Body and Soul (CCC 365 ff.)
 - the soul is the *form* of the body: it is because of the spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body
 - this union between body and soul forms a single human nature.
 - the body shares in human dignity
 - Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good (CCC 2288).
- Nature of the soul: Three parts.
 1. **Reason:** God created man a rational being, conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own actions. (CCC 1730)
 2. **Will:** Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one’s own responsibility. (CCC 1731)
 3. **Appetites: The Passions** (CCC 1763-68)
 - movements of the sensitive appetite that incline us to act or not to act in regard to something felt or imagined to be good or evil.
 - natural components of the human psyche; they form the passageway and ensure the connection between the life of the senses and the life of the mind.
 - in themselves, neither good nor evil. morally qualified only to the extent that they effectively engage reason and will.
 - Passions are said to be voluntary, either because they are commanded by the will, or because the will does not place obstacles in their way.

Original Justice (CCC 374-377)

- The first man was not only created good, but was also established in friendship with his Creator and in harmony with himself and with the creation around him . . .
- Our first parents . . . were constituted in an original “state of holiness and justice.” This grace of original holiness was “to share in . . . divine life.”
- By the radiance of this grace all dimensions of man’s life were confirmed. As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die.

- The “mastery” over the world that God offered man from the beginning was realized above all within man himself: mastery over self.

Effects of Original Sin (CCC 400 ff.)

- By our first parents’ sin, the devil has acquired a certain domination over man, even though man remains free.
- The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed: the control of the soul’s spiritual faculties over the body is shattered.
- life according to the flesh (CCC 2516)
 - We experience a tension between body and soul that is the result of sin
 - Original sin created in man the heritage of a predisposition to live only such a life, together with a legacy of death.

Forms of Gluttony (CCC 2289-91)

- Overemphasis on the body
- Use of drugs
- Abuse of alcohol
- Abuse or overuse of food and drink
 - eating between meals
 - overeating at meals
 - delicacy and pickiness

Offspring of Gluttony (*The Ladder*, 14)

1. fornication
2. hardness of heart
3. sleepiness
4. dirty thoughts and impurity
5. laziness, dullness of sense
6. talkativeness, familiarity, (inappropriate) jesting and facetiousness, foolish mirth
7. contradiction, stubbornness, contempt, disobedience, hardness of heart
8. boastfulness, audacity
9. love of worldly things,
10. impure prayer, distracted thoughts
11. despair.

Fighting the Evil

- Overemphasis on the body: “Morality rejects a neo-pagan notion that tends to promote a cult of the body”
- Use of drugs: “The use of drugs, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense.”
- Abuse of alcohol: moderation and sobriety
 - Limits to Freedom — Addictions (CCC 1734-42)
 - human freedom is limited and fallible

- freedom makes man responsible for his acts to the extent that they are voluntary
- imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified
- “For freedom Christ has set us free” (Gal 5:1).
- Abuse or overuse of food and drink
 - eating between meals: wait for the appointed time
 - overeating at meals: be content with a slender diet
 - delicacy and pickiness: don’t ask for anything special

Necessity of Self-Control

- Control your appetites before they control you. . . (*The Ladder*)
- Temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will’s mastery over instincts, and keeps desires within the limit of what is honorable. (CCC 1809)
- Asceticism and penance help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart. (CCC 2043)
- Mortification
 - deny ourselves fattening foods
 - then foods that warm us up
 - then whatever happens to make our food especially pleasant.
- “The whole point lies in mortifying the *razionale* [understanding] . . . since perfection consists in leading captive our own will and following that of our superiors.” (St Philip)
 - necessity of discretion
 - hospitality
 - obedience

“For it is no external adversary that we must fear. The foe is within us, and every day we wage an inner war. Once it has been conquered, everything that is outside will be weakened and all things will be subdued and subjected to the soldier of Christ. We shall not have an adversary outside of us to be afraid of if what is within us has been overcome and has yielded to the Spirit.”

St John Cassian, *The Institutes*
V.xxi.1.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: “Man” (nn. 355–384); “Man’s Freedom” (nn. 1730–1748); “Respect for health” (nn. 2288-2291).

St. John Cassian. The Institutes. Book Five: “The Spirit of Gluttony”. Translated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P. Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, Number 58. New York: The Newman Press, 2000.

St. John Climacus. The Ladder of Divine Ascent. Step Fourteen: “On Gluttony”. Translated by Colm Lubheid and Norman Russell. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982.

John Paul II. A Catechesis on the Creed. Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1996. Volume One: *God, Father and Creator*. “God the Creator” (pp. 195-238).

John Paul II. Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan. Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997. “St. Paul’s Teaching on the Human Body” (pp. 191-232).

Lewis, C.S. The Problem of Pain, especially Chapter Four: “Human Wickedness”, and Chapter Five: “The Fall of Man”. [First published 1940.] San Francisco: Harper, 2000.

Lewis, C.S. The Screwtape Letters, especially “Letter 17”. [First published 1942.] San Francisco: Harper, 2000.

Please refer also to the general reading list provided with the course outline.