

DEADLY SINS

LIVING VIRTUE

*Then God said,
"Let us make man
in our image,
after our likeness.*

*Let them have dominion
over the fish of the sea,
the birds of the air, and
the cattle, and over all
the wild animals and all
the creatures that crawl
on the ground."* . . .



*God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and
multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have
dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of
the air, and all the living things that move on the
earth."*

Genesis 1:26. 28.

Divine Providence

Jesus asks for childlike abandonment to the providence of our heavenly Father, who takes care of his children's smallest needs.

God is the sovereign master of his plan. But to carry it out he also makes use of his creatures' cooperation.



Catechism, 305, 306.

Divine Providence

To human beings God even gives the power of freely sharing in his providence by entrusting them with the responsibility of “subduing” the earth and having dominion over it.



Catechism, 307.

Divine Providence

In the beginning, God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them, master them by labor, and enjoy their fruits.

The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race.



Catechism, 2402.

Private Property

The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race. However, the earth is divided up among men to assure the security of their lives, endangered by poverty and threatened by violence.

The appropriation of property is legitimate for guaranteeing the freedom and dignity of persons and for helping each of them to meet his basic needs and the needs of those in his charge.

It should allow for a natural solidarity to develop among men.

Solidarity

The principle of solidarity . . . is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood.

Solidarity is manifested in the first place by the distribution of goods and remuneration for work. It also presupposes the effort for a more just social order where tensions are better able to be reduced and conflicts more readily settled by negotiation.

Solidarity

On coming into the world, man is not equipped with everything he needs for developing his bodily and spiritual life. He needs others.

Differences appear tied to age, physical abilities, intellectual or moral aptitudes, the benefits derived from social commerce, and the distribution of wealth. The “talents” are not distributed equally.

Solidarity

These differences belong to God's plan, who wills that each receive what he needs from others, and that those endowed with particular "talents" share the benefits with those who need them.

These differences encourage and often oblige persons to practice generosity, kindness and sharing of goods; they foster the mutual enrichment of cultures.

Stewardship

Goods of production—material or immaterial—such as land, factories, practical or artistic skills, oblige their possessors to employ them in ways that will benefit the greatest number.

Those who hold goods for use and consumption should use them with moderation, reserving the better part for guests, for the sick and the poor.

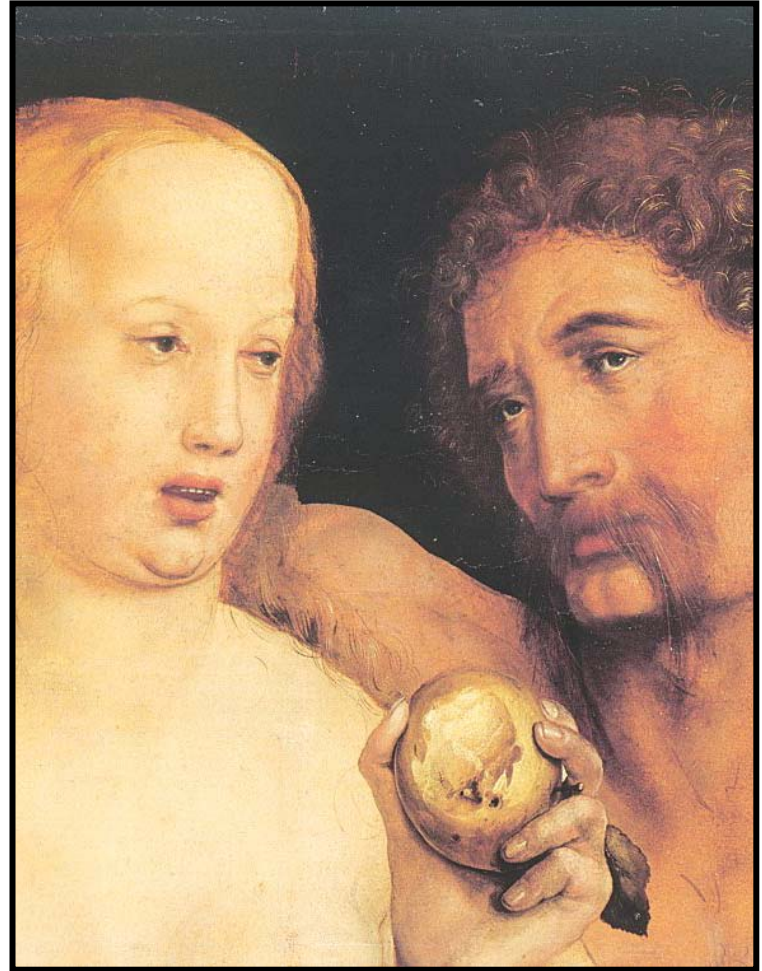
Stewardship

“In his use of things man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as himself.”

Effects of Original Sin

By our first parents' sin, the devil has acquired a certain domination over man, even though man remains free.

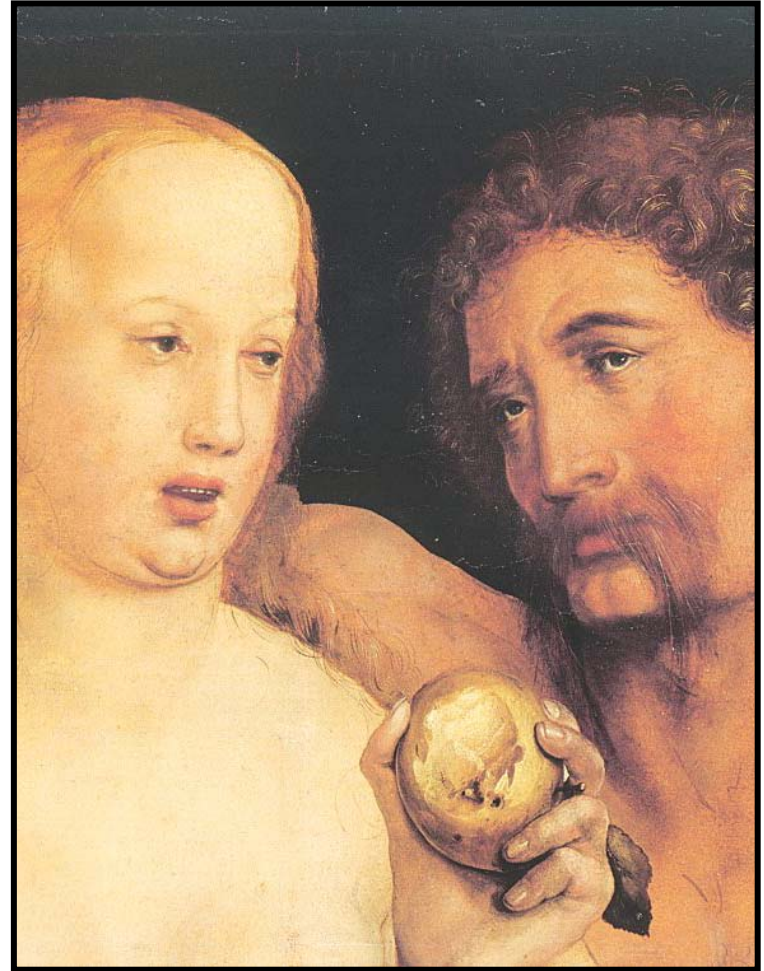
Original sin entails "captivity under the power of . . . the devil."



What now?

Concupiscence stems from the disobedience of the first sin.

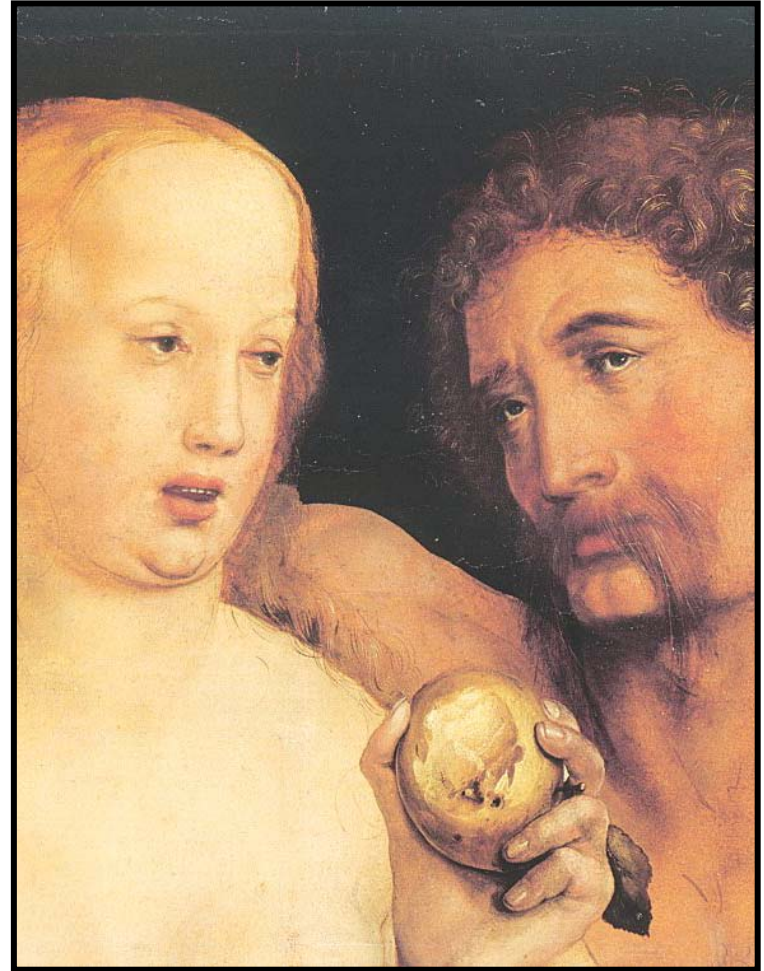
It unsettles man's moral faculties, and, without being itself an offense, inclines man to commit sins.



What now?

Tradition identifies a “triple concupiscence that subjugates [men and women] to:

1. the pleasures of the senses
2. covetousness for earthly goods
3. self-assertion contrary to the dictates of reason.”



Catechism, 377. Cf. 1 Jn 2:16.

Greed and Avarice

The tenth commandment forbids *greed* and the desire to amass earthly goods without limit.

It forbids *avarice* arising from a passion for riches and their attendant power. It also forbids the desire to commit injustice by harming our neighbor in his temporal goods.

Avarice

Avarice is a worship of idols and is the offspring of unbelief.

It makes excuses for infirmity and is the mouthpiece of old age.

Avarice

This disease arrives later and comes upon the soul from outside.

St John Cassian, *The Institutes*, VII.ii.

Let the young man be on guard against the flesh and the old man against avarice, and we shall all be saints together.

The Pattern of Avarice

1. It begins by making him concerned about a very small sum and sets out for him certain [justifications] for keeping it for himself.
2. When he has eventually made the money that he wanted, he is . . . tortured with how to double it, and he is uncertain as to where to put it or to whom to entrust it.
3. Then he is distracted with . . . what to buy with it. . . . When money increases the frenzy of covetousness intensifies.

The Pattern of Avarice

4. Then he has forebodings of a long life, a feeble old age . . . that, if not provided for by quite a large sum when he is young, will not be able to be endured when he is old.
5. All his thoughts are preoccupied with gain. . . . His faith disappears whenever there glitters some hope of gain. For its sake he does not shudder to commit a crime of lying or perjury or theft, nor to break faith, nor to be filled with the guilty fury of wrath . . .

Offspring of Avarice

Avarice is said to be the root of all evil (1 Tim 6:10) and it is so because it causes

- hatred
- theft
- envy
- separations
- hostility
- stormy blasts
- remembrance of past wrongs
- inhuman acts and even murder

Offspring of Avarice

The seventh commandment forbids *theft*, that is, usurping another's property against the reasonable will of the owner.

There is no theft if consent can be presumed or if refusal is contrary to reason and the universal destination of goods. This is the case in obvious and urgent necessity when the only way to provide for immediate, essential needs (food, shelter, clothing) is to put at one's disposal and use the property of others.

Offspring of Avarice

Any form of unjustly taking and keeping the property of others is against the seventh commandment:

- deliberate retention of goods lent or objects lost;
- business fraud
- paying unjust wages
- forcing up prices by taking advantage of the ignorance or hardship of another

Offspring of Avarice

The following are also morally illicit:

- speculation in which one contrives to manipulate the price of goods artificially
- corruption in which one influences the judgment of those who must make decisions according to law
- appropriation and use for private purposes of the common goods of an enterprise
- work poorly done
- tax evasion
- forgery of checks and invoices
- excessive expense and waste

Offspring of Avarice

Games of chance (card games, etc.) are not in themselves contrary to justice.

They become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of others. The passion for gambling risks becoming an enslavement.

Unfair wagers and cheating at games constitutes grave matter.

Legitimate Business Practices

Promises must be kept and *contracts* strictly observed to the extent that the commitments made in them are morally just.

A significant part of economic and social life depends on the honoring of contracts . . .

Contracts are subject to *commutative justice* which regulates exchanges between persons and between institutions in accordance with a strict respect for their rights.

Legitimate Business Practices

Commutative justice obliges strictly; it requires safeguarding property rights, paying debts, and fulfilling obligations freely contracted.

Without commutative justice, no other form of justice is possible.

The Church's Social Teaching

1. Any system in which social relationships are determined entirely by economic factors is contrary to the nature of the human person and his acts.
2. A theory that makes profit the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity is morally unacceptable.
3. A system that “subordinates the basic rights of individuals and of groups to the collective organization of production” is contrary to human dignity.
4. Regulating the economy solely by centralized planning (communism) perverts the basis of social bonds; regulating it solely by the law of the marketplace (capitalism) fails social justice, for “there are many human needs which cannot be satisfied by the market.”

*Catechism, 2423;
Gaudium et spes, 65.2; Centesimus annus, 34..*

Avoiding Avarice

All sins are highly displeasing to God, but above all sensuality and avarice, which are very difficult to cure.

Experience shows that men given to carnal sins are converted sooner than those who are given to avarice.

Avoiding Avarice

As easily as it can be watched out for and rejected, it becomes that much more dangerous than all the others and is that much more difficult to get rid of once there has been neglect and it has been let into the heart.

Avarice takes shape . . . by the decision of a corrupt and evil will alone.

Detachment

Jesus enjoins his disciples to prefer him to everything and everyone, and bids them “renounce all that [they have]” (Mk 8:35) for his sake and that of the Gospel.

The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

Detachment

It is impossible for a person who has been overcome by the desire for a small sum of money . . . not to be set ablaze at once by the fire of a still greater desire.

This madness is stopped not with wealth but with poverty . . . For the madness of covetousness is that it always wants more than whatever a person can accumulate.

Detachment

All Christ's faithful are to "direct their affections rightly, lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect charity by the use of worldly things and by an adherence to riches which is contrary to the spirit of evangelical poverty."

Detachment

This is not to say that one must ignore temporal affairs entirely, for they are to be managed with a prudent and commendable solicitude in accordance with the circumstances of the individual.

Such management of temporal affairs is completely in harmony with the divine will, and is in no way at variance with our inner peace of soul and spiritual advancement.

Detachment

Let persons in the world sanctify themselves in their own houses, for neither government positions, professions nor labor is any hindrance to the service of God.

Detachment

The ownership of any property makes its holder a steward of Providence, with the task of making it fruitful and communicating its benefits to others, first of all his family.

Family Responsibilities

Parents' respect and affection are expressed by the care and attention they devote to bringing up their young children and *providing for their physical and spiritual needs.*

The fourth commandment reminds grown children of their responsibilities toward their parents. As much as they can they must give them material and moral support in old age and in times of illness, loneliness or distress.

Detachment

He who wishes for anything but Christ does not know what he wishes.

He who asks for anything but Christ does not know what he is asking.

He who works, and not for Christ, does not know what he is doing.

Detachment

A thing, attractive and esteemed by the world, should be regarded as more insignificant than the dirt under your feet.

It falls infinitely short of what heaven promises, whither you should aspire with all your heart, despising the world's foolish interests.

Detachment

To make ourselves detached from the things of the world, it is a good thing to think seriously of the end of them, saying to ourselves:

“And then? . . . And then?”

Voluntary Poverty

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing.

"Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."



At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Matthew 6:26, 28, 30.

Voluntary Poverty

We ought to seek to be detached from the things of the world . . . because to possess these things without a real necessity for them renders a man incapable of any spirituality.

When a man has to buy anything, he ought not to do so because he is moved by an attachment to the thing, but from want and necessity, for it will never do to buy attachments.

Voluntary Poverty

This virtue we shall not be able to maintain unsullied if . . . we are not . . . satisfied with the food and clothing that we have.

St John Cassian, *The Institutes*, VII.xxix.

In our clothes we ought . . . to love poverty, but not filthiness.

The Maxims of St Philip Neri

Voluntary Poverty

We ought to desire to be in such a condition as to be in need of [a dollar] and not be able to get it.

Voluntary Poverty

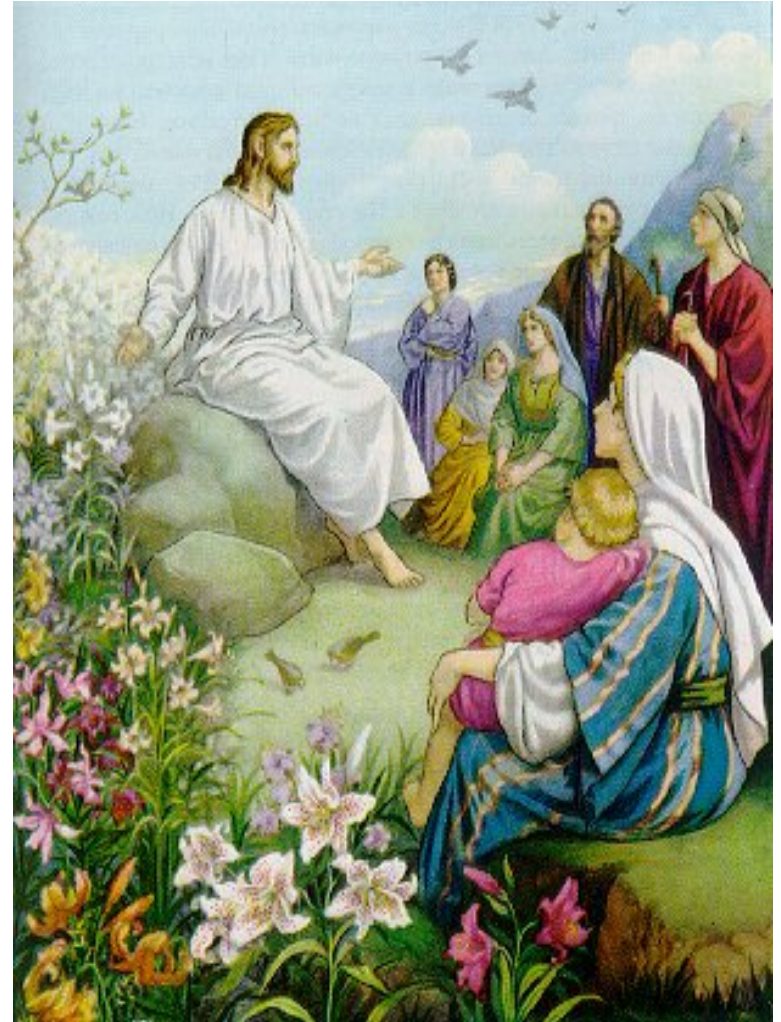
Poverty is resignation from care. It is life without anxiety and travels light, far from sorrow and faithful to the commandments.

The [voluntarily] poor [person] is lord of the world. He has handed all his cares over to God . . . If he lacks something he does not complain . . . and he accepts what comes his way as if from the hand of the Lord.

Voluntary Poverty

“Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

“Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. . . . If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?”



Matthew 6:26, 28, 30.

Love for the Poor

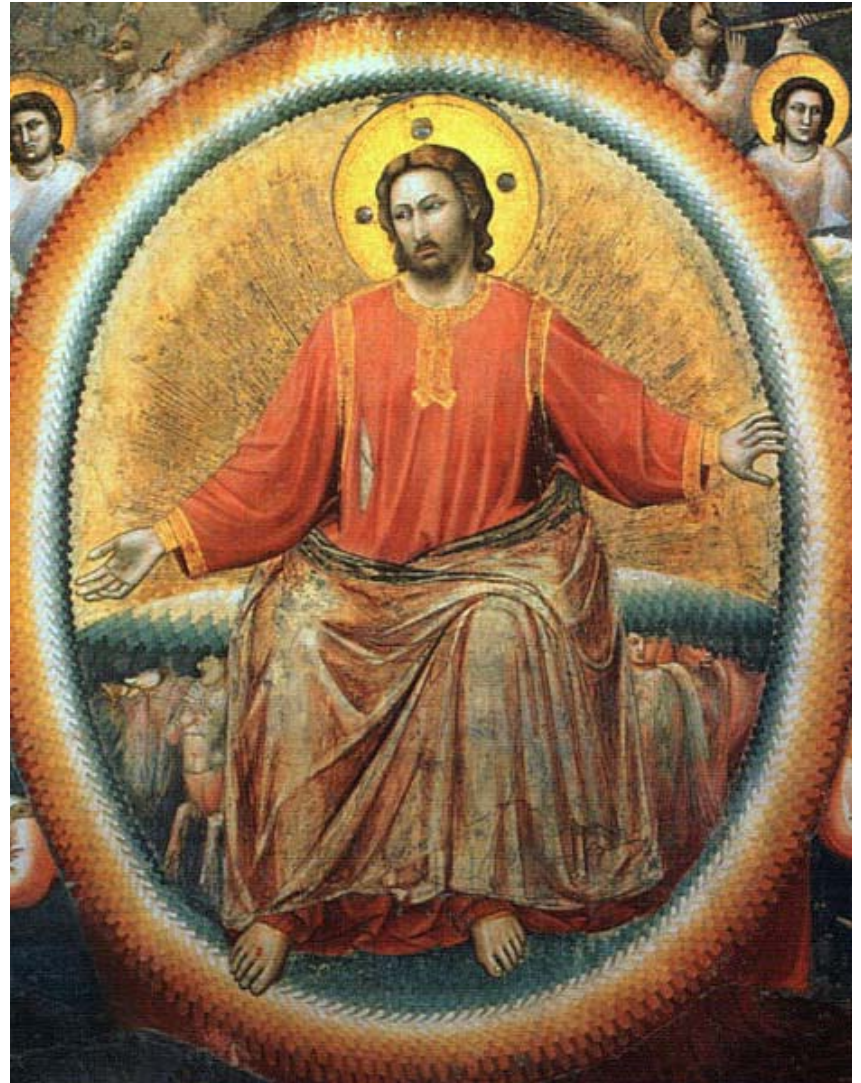
God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them.

It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones.

Voluntary Poverty

And the king will say
to them in reply,

“Amen, I say to you,
whatever you did for
one of these least
brothers of mine, you
did for me.”



Matthew 25:40.

Love for the Poor

Love for the poor is incompatible with immoderate love of riches or their selfish use.

“Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs.”

Catechism, 2445, 2446
St John Chrysostom, *Homily on Lazarus, 2.5.*

Love for the Poor

The *works of mercy* are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.

Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.

Love for the Poor

He who feels that the vice of avarice has got hold of him should not wish to observe fasts . . . but to give alms.

Take care that others may rather have of yours than you of theirs, because a spiritual man must rather give than have.

I have learned, in whatever situation I find myself, to be self-sufficient.

I know indeed how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need.

I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me.

Still, it was kind of you to share in my distress. You sent me something for my needs, not only once but more than once. It is not that I am eager for the gift; rather, I am eager for the profit that accrues to your account.

I have received full payment and I abound. I am very well supplied because of what I received from you. . . .

My God will fully supply whatever you need, in accord with his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father, glory forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer to Saint Michael

Saint Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.

Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the
devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,

O prince of the heavenly host,
by the power of God cast into Hell
Satan and all the evil spirits.

that prowl throughout the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.