

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

[1] General Audience of October 8, 1980 (sections from the full text); Section 43, *Man and Woman He Created Them*

[2] Saint Augustine; Paul Thigpen; *A Dictionary of Quotes from the Saints*; page 213 [3] John 10:10 [4] Pope Benedict XVI

[5] Saint John Bosco; Paul Thigpen; *A Dictionary of Quotes from the Saints*; page 214

[6] Fr. John Hardon; *Modern Catholic Dictionary*; page 533

[7] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* - 1866

[8] Fr. John Hardon; *Modern Catholic Dictionary*; page 232

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Gospel Reading – Matthew 5:17-37 – Roman Missal

Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ will be answerable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny. You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna. It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce. But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife – unless the marriage is unlawful – causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow. But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by earth, for it is his footstool; not by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.”

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Spiritual Reading

From Pope John Paul II[1]

It seems that the moral evaluation of concupiscence (of “looking to desire”), which Christ calls “adultery committed in the heart,” depends above all on the personal dignity of the man and the woman. This holds for those who are not joined in marriage and – perhaps even more so – for those who are husband and wife. Adultery “in the heart” is not committed only because the man “looks” in the way at a woman who is not his wife, but precisely because he looks in this way at a woman. Even if he were to look in this way at the woman who is his wife, he would commit the same adultery “in the heart. The man who “looks” in the way described in Matthew 5:27-28 “makes use” of the woman, of her femininity, to satisfy his own “drive.” Even if he does not use her in an external act, he has already taken such an attitude in his interior when he makes this decision about a particular woman. Adultery “committed in the heart” consists precisely in this. A man can commit such adultery “in the heart” even with his own wife, if he treats her only as an object for the satisfaction of drives.

Be Human: No Less, No More (Part I) - Lesson and Discussion

“I have come not to abolish but to fulfill”

This lesson is focused on Gluttony and Lust

In the Gospel reading, Jesus is teaching about two of the seven deadly sins, lust and anger. He helps us understand what it means to be a human with dignity, neither depriving ourselves (no less) nor living in excess (no more). Jesus is the perfect example of what it means to be fully human since He was without sin. “All sin is a kind of lying.”[2] When we sin, we are not living our humanity to its fullest. By not imitating Jesus, we are lying to others and ourselves.

How is our humanity linked to sin? How does Jesus rescue our humanity? Jesus says, “The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”[3] The thief, Satan, seeks to steal, kill, and destroy our humanity; Jesus came so that we might have life and have it to the fullest, He comes to fulfill and perfect every human desire. The Church teaches that grace does not destroy nature but rather builds upon and perfects nature. “The Faith does not mean an alienation from any culture for any people because all cultures await Christ and are not destroyed by the Lord. In fact, they reach their maturity.”[4] As humans, we have basic desires and we long for these desires to be fulfilled and to reach maturity.

God has given man basic desires and when lived out to the fullest, they bring enjoyment. Christ and the Church are not against enjoyment, but they know that true joy comes from living life according to the will of God. “Enjoy yourself as much as you like – if only you keep from sin.”[5] We are called to the virtue of temperance, which “regulates every form

of enjoyment that comes from the exercise of a human power or faculty.”[6] The seven deadly sins strip us from true enjoyment and are examples of when the desires of man are not lived out to the fullest but rather are diminished or in excess. The seven deadly or capital sins are pride, avarice, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony, and sloth.[7] In 1943, psychologist, Abraham Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs that all men have. The needs include basic needs: food, sex, safety/security, love/belonging, and esteem/self-actualization. The needs or desires should be kept in moderation, and when they swing to one side (neglect) or the other (excess), the seven deadly sins occur. In modern society, the swing is on the side of excess.

The basic need of food – Eating disorders / Gluttony

We will start with the basic need of food. Food is good and maintaining a certain weight in proportion to our height and activity is healthy. When we choose not to eat food for the purpose of attaining a certain body type is a sin because we are neglecting our bodies. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit because God chooses to dwell within us, think about every time you receive Communion. God created us as beings that are sustained by eating food, we are not meant to starve ourselves.* This is disordered and we call it so, such is the case of anorexia. Anorexia is a sin because a person is depriving themselves of the good of food. Remember a sin is always a deprivation of a good or an excess of a good. The sin of gluttony is an “inordinate desire for the pleasure connected with food or drink. This desire may become sinful in various ways: by eating or drinking far more than a person needs to maintain bodily strength.”[8] Intoxication or getting drunk falls under the capital sin of gluttony because it is excessive drinking of alcohol. For our spiritual journey here on earth we have to feed on the Bread from Heaven, the Holy Eucharist. When we don’t rely on The Most Blessed Sacrament we starve ourselves spiritually. Fortunately, we can never over-fill ourselves with God. *Please note that an eating disorder is different than fasting, both are the conscious decision not to eat, however, the purpose of each are opposite. With an eating disorder, the purpose of not eating is to remove the desire for food so one can lose weight and appear more attractive to the world. With fasting, we choose not to eat for the purpose of detaching ourselves from worldly desires and focusing instead on God.

The basic need of sex – Anti-life and anti-marriage / Lust for sexual pleasure

Sex is good and reproduction is needed to continue as a race. God created sex for the unity of a married couple and for the procreation of children. When we deny ourselves the true meaning of sex, we are depriving ourselves of unity and life. To not follow God’s plan for sex is to adopt an attitude in which life (children) is not welcome. We see this through the use of contraception and abortion. We also lose the sacredness of unity and marriage and can begin to believe that unity between two people is impossible. The sin of lust is sexual pleasure sought for the sake of pleasure alone. Sex is therefore not for unity and procreation but becomes like any sensual pleasure a series of sensations, which can lead to addiction, misuse and habitual sin.