Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas
Angelic Doctor & Our Guide on this Journey

•Grant O Merciful God that I might ardently desire, prudently examine, truthfully acknowledge, and perfectly accomplish what is pleasing to Thee for the Praise and Glory of Thy Name. Amen
Seven Deadly Sins/Seven Lively Virtues

• Letting Your Mind Help You Become a Saint!
Your first step must be not to attack his will but to weaken his mind. Even though the will is nearer to the center of the soul, and is the thing our Enemy wants to possess most of all, yet it grows out of the mind, as a plant grows out of the ground. If we can poison the soil, we can stunt the plant.... Americans separate theology from morality, mind from will, so much that we can infiltrate their minds --- without their even suspecting our presence --- much more successfully than we can commandeer their wills. ... They believe the absurd dogma [the world’s, not the Church’s] that a man’s thoughts are his sacred property, property that not even the Enemy has rights over. Though they are relativists, they think of “freedom of thought” as an absolute.

- *The Snakebite Letters*, p. 15 Peter Kreeft
Prayer: the beginning of Conversion

- In prayer God enables man to approach Him once more (implies estrangement). Most people live so estranged from God that prayer's first task must be to make them aware of their distance from God; in contrition that opens the heart they ought to try to bridge the abyss which separates them from God; they are to begin their prayer by bringing to a halt the movement that estranges them from God and so turning back toward Him. Prayer is first-of-all a conversion. Adrienne von Speyr

- Moving from embarrassment, defensiveness, and brittleness toward the comfort and relishing known as sweet penitence
  - When awareness of our sin brings a joy of revelation; an opportunity to grow closer to Him
Living in a State Of (Continual) Conversion

Authentic knowledge of the God of mercy, the God of tender love, is a constant and inexhaustible source of conversion, not only as a momentary interior act but also as a permanent attitude, as a state of mind. Those who come to know God in this way, can live only in a state of being continually converted to him. They live, therefore, in a state of conversion and it is this state of conversion which marks out the most profound element of the pilgrimage of every man and woman on earth. Pope St. John Paul II Dives in Misericordia, 13
• Virtue
  • A habitual and firm disposition to do the good. The moral virtues are acquired through human effort aided by God's grace; the theological virtues are gifts from God. **CCC 1803**

• Vice
  • A habit acquired by repeated sin in violation of the proper norms of human morality. The vices are often linked with the seven capital (deadly) sins. Repentance for sin and confession may restore grace to a soul, but the removal of the ingrained disposition to sin or vice requires much effort and self-denial, until the contrary virtue is acquired. **CCC 1866**
God expects Perfection?! ... of Charity

- For a thing to be evil, one single defect suffices, whereas for it to be good... it is not enough for it to be good in one point only, it must be good in every respect.... If the will be good from its intention of the end, this is not enough to make the external action good. ST I-II, 20, 2

- There is an inherent oneness between motive and act, whether good or evil. Peter Kreeft
  - (In spite of our attempts to separate even for the proper purpose of self-examination)
7 Deadly Sins
Tradition holds these sins to be especially dangerous (deadly) vices.
Soul-deadening opposites to the soul-enlivening (lively) virtues commended in the Beatitudes.
Current Codification by St. Gregory the Great 6th century.

7 Lively Virtues
An Introduction to the Antidotes
Self-Knowledge so that we “...can see God” Fr. Marie Eugene
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Deadly Sin</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fruit of the Deadly Sin</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Beatitude)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pride</strong>: Self-assertion and selfishness</td>
<td>(Poverty of Spirit; and selflessness)</td>
<td>Humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Envy</strong>: Resents another’s happiness</td>
<td>(Mourning, shares another’s unhappiness)</td>
<td>Kindness/Admiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Wrath</strong>: Wills harm and destruction</td>
<td>(Meekness, which refuses to harm, Peacemaking, which prevents destruction)</td>
<td>Gentleness/Forgiveness/Temperance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sloth</strong>: Refusal to exert the will toward the good even when it is present</td>
<td>(Hunger and thirst for righteousness, passionate desire for good)</td>
<td>Diligence/Zeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Avarice</strong>: Greed, selfish reach to grab and keep for oneself</td>
<td>(Mercy; the reach to give/share with others, even the undeserving)</td>
<td>Generosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Gluttony</strong>: Wants to consume an inordinate amount of worldly goods</td>
<td>(Persecuted; deprived of even ordinate necessities)</td>
<td>Asceticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lust</strong>: Dissipates and divides the soul, desiring every attractive body</td>
<td>(Purity of Heart, centers and unifies the soul, desiring the one God alone)</td>
<td>Chastity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definitions:** Vices are Defects in the Will → Sin is always found in the Will (Beatitudes/Virtues)
The Mind and the Will; Sins are: Always found in the Will → The Mind Matters → It allows us to see things truthfully

- To see the Universe right, we must see it as God-bathed. Frank Sheed
- To use the intellect in religion is to seek to see what is there
- Sins of the Mind, always Egoism, the greater of the deadly sins → Sins of the Body are lesser, but are still Deadly
  - Chief Fruit of Original Sin is Omnipresent Egocentrism Fr. Thomas Dubay
- Sin is always an assertion of self against reality Frank Sheed
- Sin follows the line (path) of least resistance toward the deficiencies of life Frank Sheed
- Deadly, Capital because they "engender (generate) other sins and vices..." CCC 1866
  - They don't stop there...
- Indeed light is the joy of the mind, as warmth is the joy of the will. Frank Sheed
There is a charm about the forbidden that makes it unspeakably desirable. — Mark Twain

Are We as Bad as All That? ....

• The need for Self-knowledge for the sake of obtaining God
  • Through introspection (limited)
  • Through revelation (takes us to the very roots of sin)

• To receive his mercy, we must admit our faults  CCC 1847 from 1 Jn. 8-9
  • If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 Jn. 8-9
Church as Realist

• I have sinned through my own fault in my thoughts and in my words in what I have done and what I have failed to do (Penitential Rite)

• Sanity points toward Sanctity
  • Having a firm grip on reality; the reality behind the "real" world

• Purity is the “...direction of one’s energy to God with no admixture of self”
• A certain participation of Happiness can be had in this life: but perfect and true Happiness cannot be had in this life. This may be seen from a twofold consideration.

• First, from the general notion of happiness. For since happiness is a "perfect and sufficient good," it excludes every evil, and fulfills every desire. But in this life every evil cannot be excluded. For this present life is subject to many unavoidable evils; to ignorance on the part of the intellect; to inordinate affection on the part of the appetite, and to many penalties on the part of the body; as Augustine sets forth in De Civ. Dei xix, 4. Likewise neither can the desire for good be satiated in this life. For man naturally desires the good, which he has, to be abiding. Now the goods of the present life pass away; since life itself passes away, which we naturally desire to have, and would wish to hold abidingly, for man naturally shrinks from death. Wherefore it is impossible to have true Happiness in this life.

• Secondly, from a consideration of the specific nature of Happiness, [namely], the vision of the Divine Essence, which man cannot obtain in this life... ST I-II, 5, 3

Is Happiness attainable in this life?

• Don’t confuse Happiness with Comfort!

• Expect the world to be like Heaven and it will feel like hell. Expect it to be Purgatory and it will feel like Heaven. The two most salient facts about Purgatory are pain and hope, suffering and meaning. It’s labor, travail, childbirth. It’s hard work, but it’s much more meaningful and fulfilling than pointless leisure. It’s even happier, even though it’s not more comfortable. Peter Kreeft
The Structure of Human Happiness: *The First Floor,*

*Foundation, Stairway of Sanctity, ...*

**Human, Cardinal, Natural Virtues**

- Prudence:
  - Practical Wisdom
- Temperance
  - Moderation, Self-Control
- Justice
  - Giving others their Due
- Fortitude
  - Beyond inner strength to Loving what is Good despite the cost
The Top Floor; Beyond mere Human Happiness
Faith, Hope, and Charity; the Theological Virtues

• ...man’s happiness is twofold....One is proportionate to human nature... which man can obtain by means of his natural principles (powers) (the cardinal virtues). The other is a happiness surpassing man’s nature and which man can obtain by the power of God alone, by a kind of participation in the Godhead, about which it is written (2 Pet. 1: 4) that by Christ we are made partakers of the divine nature. ST I-II, 62, 3
Our Guide; Thomas Aquinas; the Soft-Hearted Zealot  *(Narnian image)*

• **Four proximate effects may be ascribed to love,** [namely] **melting** (of its presence), **enjoyment** (of its presence), **languor** (sadness at its absence), and **fervor** (zeal to make it present)

• **Of these, the first is melting,** which is opposed to freezing. For things that are frozen are closely bound together so as to be hard to pierce; but it belongs to love that the appetite is fitted to receive the good which is loved inasmuch as the object loved is in the lover, as stated above. Consequently the freezing or hardening of the heart is a disposition incompatible with love, while melting denotes a softening of the heart, whereby the heart shows itself to be ready for the entrance of the beloved.  ST I-II, 28, 5
Questions for Discussion

• How (in what ways) are you seeking to grow during this Lenten season?

• What about this subject matter made you choose this small group topic/format?

• What do you hope to gain by this exploration of deadly virtues and lively vices?

• Homework: 2 Parts → In anticipation of next weeks topic
  • Look for examples of the deadly vice of pride or the lively virtue of humility in the public sphere
  • Daily Self-examination: look at examples of each in your own life