



MEETING SEVEN
THE CALL TO TEMPERANCE

INTRODUCTION

Temperance means rational self-restraint. Our reason *Human* tells us to be moderate in our desire, our passion. Basically this natural temperance is rooted in self-preservation. If we are unrestrained we will harm ourselves in one way or another.

The virtue of temperance is the *supernatural habit* by which our reason, illuminated by faith, moderates our inclinations to the pleasures of the senses, especially those of taste and touch.

EXEMPLAR: HYACINTH BESSON, O. P.

Hyacinth Besson was born Jean Bapiste Besson early in the 19th century in Besascon, France. He born into the wealthy and pious environment of his grandfather's chateau, shortly after the death of his father who had been killed in battle. When Jean was still a little boy, the grandfather died, the family fortune was lost and his mother had to go to work to support herself and her only son. Her life revolved around him and the bond between them was very strong.

Jean Bapiste was more interested in art than his studies and was sent to art school. There he met those who had lost their faith and that intensified his faith. He was determined to live a completely Christian life to help counteract the bad examples around him. When he went to Rome to study and begin his career, his mother went with him. They lived in simplicity near a convent He soon met Pere Lacordaire and wanted to help the noted French Dominican bring back religious orders to France. That was impossible at the time, so Jean Bapiste and his friends, under Lacordaire's direction established and artist's guild to work for the sanctification of art and artists and pledged to live the Christian life under the protection of St. John the Evangelist. They made a special effort to help younger members guard against irreligious influences.

While painting a copy of "Our Lady of the Oak" which Pere Lacordaire wanted to have in the first re-established Dominican house in France, the young artist determined he would become a Dominican. He then began to work with Lacordaire and others to bring back the Dominicans to France. The little group was disbanded before they received the habit and the y

were sent to separate novitiates. During the novitiate year, his two closest friends died and the newly named Brother Hyacinth was desolate.

As Hyacinth began his studies for the priesthood, he resolved never again to paint unless under obedience to do so. Apparently he considered its appeal as a rival to his vocation. The young Dominican was ordained in 1843 and did not get to return to France until 1845. His painting preceded him in a place of honor in the, first French house to be re-established, but he grieved at the loss of his mother who had died in France before he could return.

His priestly life in France was a quiet full one during which he gave missions, retreats, and served the poor and during the cholera epidemic, served those who were ill.

He was recalled to Rome by Fr. Jandel to help restore regular observance and the spirit, membership and finances of the Order which had fallen on hard times in each of these areas. Under obedience, he with a laybrother companion began a series of murals for the Convent of St. Sixtus. Painting was now no longer a rival; it was an expression of his meditation. It is said that he was so engrossed in his work, he did not notice when Pius IX came to watch him work until the laybrother pointed out the Pontiff to the painter.

In 1854, as prior of Santa Sabina, he began painting the murals there of the life of St. Dominic. He then went to Armenia to work among the newly re-established missions, which were being harassed by the Turks. A plague broke out; he tended all in need, whether they were Christian, Nestorian or native chieftains and by his compassion, he did much to break down prejudices. Painting what he had seen during these years was his great desire; instead, he had to return to France to try to mediate between Frs. Jandel and Lacordaire who were both old friends and who were on opposite sides of the question whether observance should be strict or moderate. He managed to resolve the problematic question and keep the friendship of both men.

Fr. Hyacinth returned to the Near East to try, once more, to protect and strengthen the role of the missionaries there. He hoped to die a martyr's death, but, instead, died of typhoid in 1861. He was buried by the Chaldean monks since his own brethren were too ill to perform the rites.

Fr. Hyacinth is a model of temperance, among many other virtues since he learned to discipline his love of beauty and its appeal to him in order to pursue what was most important to his vocation. When his art could be more freely and fully at the service of that vocation, it flourished and is still to be seen at Santa Sabina in Rome.

THEOLOGY

It is important to understand that a human being is a complex creature. The mind or reason loves the pleasure of reasoning, thinking, chewing on ideals as; the spirit has the pleasure of loving God, other creatures and, in a certain way, things, We love a picture or a token that reminds us of someone or that makes us happy; the body has the pleasure of the five senses, What we hear or see or smell and, especially, of what we taste and feel, pleases us.

Scholars can nicely and clearly divide up all these areas of a human being in sections and subsections so that we, students, may understand more clearly the nature of our being and of our various pleasures.

The human being, alive and functioning, does not separate all these parts out. We, as we live are a mix of forces, Ideas, desires within us and coming in on all sides to us.

How can we, in the light of this mix and in the light of our faith and desire for heaven and love of God, keep order and harmony within to face better ourselves and the world without?

The virtue of temperance enables us to control our desires, our concupiscible appetites that are strong within us, so that we are not overwhelmed. The two strongest desires that give us the most delightful, delectable pleasures are those of taste and touch; secondarily, the other senses work with these two to give us pleasure.

The demands of our bodies to conserve our own life and to keep our species going are strong. These demands, these urges are God-given to preserve the individual and the human race and how lovely that the urges are encased in giving us pleasure. But precisely because they are so deep-seated, so strong within our human nature, the urges, the desires can make unreasonable demands to be satisfied. The fall of original sin does not make things easier for our efforts to moderate, to control.

The virtue of temperance does! The virtue of temperance enables us to place the desires on the scale of what is reasonable according to the light of faith, our particular vocation and the circumstances of our own life. The virtue enables us to use these urges, these functions to preserve life and the species, and enjoy the concomitant pleasures for an honest and a supernatural end.

Weighing all these elements in balance, the virtue of temperance enables us to recognize both the strong attraction and the possibility that we may go beyond reasonable limits in our pleasure and so the virtue leads us to mortification or “killing” of a part of us to gain better control of self, of desires and thus, having greater security in facing the forces from within and from without.

ST. THOMAS LISTS THE VICIES OPPOSED TO TEMPERANCE AS:

1. Intemperance or excess in enjoyment of the sense of taste and touch it is not the worst human vice but it can denigrate us to a bestial level.
2. Insensibility or avoiding those pleasures which are necessary for self or species preservation. If we give up anything it must be for a good, justifiable reason or cause, not for the fascination of “seeing if I can do it”.

St. Thomas gives the integral parts of temperance, the parts that enable us to practice the virtue as:

1. The sense of shame or a praiseworthy sense of fear of disgrace or embarrassment if we do something base. This sense of shame is a passion because there is a change in the body – blushing or a chill or choking and we have a horror of what we have done. The more virtuous a persons is before whom we are embarrassed, the greater is the degree of our shame. The same is true when we are embarrassed before friends, family or those with whom live. Those who are evil have no sense of shame, but rather boast of what they do. The young who are moderately virtuous have the greatest sense of shame; the very old or the very virtuous usually can avoid shame but they do feel shame very strongly if they have done something disgraceful.
2. The sense of honor or a love of appreciation for the spiritual beauty and dignity connected with the practice of temperance. We avoid what is base, ugly and mean. We enjoy what is given to us by God to enjoy as a child of God and used in accord with our dignity as a human being.

The subjective parts of the virtue of temperance refer to the sense of taste: the virtues of abstinence and sobriety; and the sense of touch: the virtues of chastity, purity and virginity.

TASTE

The virtue of abstinence is that which enables us to use nourishment in the degree in the degree needed for health and for the needs of the supernatural order. I may abstain from butter because of the cholesterol in it and that is natural abstinence; I may abstain from butter because I love it and I want to abstain from it as a matter of atonement. The most common examples of the virtue of abstinence are those noted in the law of the Church or the recommendations made to particular groups or individuals within the Church. The opposing vice is gluttony.

The virtue of sobriety means moderation in any matter; more recently, it is mostly applied to moderation in alcoholic, intoxicating drinks. The rapidity with which one can lose self-control or can become dependent makes such drinking the object of a special virtue. The drinks are not evil in themselves but may become so to a particular person or in particular circumstances. The opposing vice is drunkenness.

TOUCH

The virtue of chastity moderates the desire for sexual union according to the necessities of life judged by faith enlightened reason. Conjugal chastity is the complex interplay of partner's desires and needs that demands much from either or both partners at given times. Chastity for those who are not married is absolute. It is absolute because the marital act is for the mutual support of the spouses and for procreation. If one is not married, one has no spouse, therefore no need for the mutual support. Since spouses make the basis of the simplest social unit the family, procreation should be within that basic unit.

The virtue of purity is related to those acts that lead to sexual union and is very much related to one's state in life, judged by faith-enlightened reason. The vice opposed to purity and chastity is lust. Lust exists in both thought and desire as an internal vice. As an external vice, it concerns acts against purity and, essentially, means the lust to "get one's way" without regard to the other or it means the use of unnatural ways for gratification.

The virtue of virginity is the will to abstain perpetually from all voluntary sexual pleasure and it is ratified by a vow. If the vow is taken for a supernatural motive, it is objectively a more excellent state than matrimony by Church teaching. Far more important is how we live in either state and how much we practice charity for that virtue is the real measure of our sanctity.

THE RELATED PARTS OF TEMPERANCE AS GIVEN BY ST. THOMAS ARE:

1. **Contenance** or the ability to resist passion when the occasion arises. It is strengthened by recognizing the first signs of passion and overcoming them. The opposing vice is incontinence.
2. **Meekness** or the moderation of anger. Meekness is not timidity or cowardice. It is using the anger according to right reason. The meek person is in control of self and uses the particular situation to maintain his or her own dignity and to channel the anger into positive good. The vice that is opposite to meekness is anger; either the anger that has no self-restraint and becomes rage or the anger that is revenge.
3. **Clemency** or the attempt to mitigate a punishment for a fault in a reasonable way. The virtue stems from a sweetness or gentleness of spirit. It is a not pardon which is complete

remission, rather clemency should be motivated by kindness not by a desire to please. The vices opposed to clemency are hardheartedness, cruelty or pleasure in inflicting punishment or on the other hand, leniency that violates the principles of justice when mitigating punishment.

4. **Modesty** concerns the internal and external movement of the person or the clothing worn so that either the movement or the dress or both reflect the dignity of one's state in life and position in society. Modesty helps the person to acquire the following virtues: humility which moderates the desire to look for one's excellence; studiousness that moderates the desire for knowledge so that it is pursued not for curiosity, but for a good purpose, and modesty which tempers one's actions and clothing to avoid undue attraction.
5. **Humility** is derived from temperance and restrains our desire for excellence and places us as we truly are before God: small sinful creatures. We neither exaggerate our good qualities nor deny the gifts we have received. We subject ourselves to God and see that all that is good within us is from God and see that all that needs perfection within us is our own. Humility is based on truth in our Knowledge of self and what we have received from God and on justice or the demand that we give to God all honor and glory. Humility is the means to make us open to grace and there are many degrees of it. The vice opposed to humility is pride: "The queen and mother of all sins and vices".
6. **Studiousness** that moderates our knowledge by reason so that we study with a well directed purpose. We do not neglect our various duties but do concentrate so that we accomplish what we ought to do. The vices opposed to studiousness are curiosity, which makes us learn about things for no real good or purpose and sloth, which is negligence in study.
7. **Bodily modesty**, which is made up the gestures, movements posture and dress of the person. Modesty prevents us from either being vain or negligent in these areas so as to attract attention to ourselves. Modesty is important for one's individual dignity and for the common good of society. Whether we like it or not, we are first judged by externals and so in trying to live a life of virtue we must try to make ourselves attractive to others so that we can be of service to them. The vices opposed to modesty are affection, rudeness, and most especial vanity.
8. **Recreation**, which is an essential need to recreate or restore both our physical and spiritual selves by diversions from our ordinary routines, duties and obligations. Recreation must be moderated by temperance so that we are neither excessive in what we do or austere in what we refuse to allow ourselves to do. The vices opposed to recreation are precisely these; excessive recreation when we strive hard to achieve and, or austerity when we decide that we can't need something so frivolous as time off and so drive ourselves without mercy.

THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING

The Gift of Understanding enables our intellect to perceive by penetrating intuition natural, speculative and revealed truths. The Holy Spirit Opens us to His gift and we respond as His instrument in ways that otherwise would be completely beyond us. As with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it interacts with the other gifts and brings to perfection the virtues.

The virtue of temperance rests on the cardinal virtues and the Gift of Understanding perfects both faith and temperance enabling us to see truths and, therefore, to know in a clearer way what we must do and what we must avoid in order to be united with God. With the aid of this gift, moderating or controlling our desires, our urges, becomes possible because we know more clearly why we should act (or not act); the gift helps us, then, to be drawn beyond knowledge to an understanding that will motivate our behavior.

The gift enables our faith to pass beyond analysis and synthesis and discursive processes to know intuitively on a supernatural level our relationship to God.

ST. THOMAS LISTS THE EFFECTS OF UNDERSTANDING AS ENABLING US:

1. To see the substance that lays hidden under accidental manifestations. We know God in the Eucharist and hunger and thirst for Him not for the accidents of bread and wine.
2. To see the hidden meanings of Sacred Scripture: the parables, the statements of Jesus are clear and give us deep satisfaction.
3. To see the significance of symbols and figures to that Old and New Testaments bring forth together the life of grace.
4. To see spiritual realities under sensible appearances: the liturgy, the ceremonies bring forth deep realization of God's acts through ours when the gift is present.
5. To be able to contemplate effects in their causes we see relationships in new ways: the Mystical Body, Christ the High Priest. Mary as Co-redemptrix, and the Trinity all make a certain deeply satisfying sense even if they remain mysteries to us.
6. To see causes through their effects. With the Gift of Understanding, we can see God's plan in the events our lives and we can know His love and desire to bring us to Himself.

The vices against the Gift, according to St. Thomas, are:

1. Spiritual blindness that is caused by lust and makes us unable to recognize spiritual things because we are so intent on material or worldly things.
2. Dullness of the spirit sense which is caused by gluttony as we stuff ourselves with the pleasures of the earth

Both of these tend to make us ignore venial sin and make spiritual things seem tedious. We become much more interested in things which appeal to our senses and devote our attention to satisfying them.

We grow in the Gift of Understanding by:

1. The practice of vital faith, relying on ordinary grace, to pray, to study to do penance so that we are open to receive the gift.
2. The practice seeking purity of body and spirit by practicing the virtue of temperance and its allied virtues so that we will be able to draw close and be united in the pure and perfect Lord.
3. The practice of interior recollection so that our spirit is free of worldly distractions and our desires are muted and transformed into being absorbed by God's presence within us.
4. Fidelity to grace and prayer so that we form our lives to be pleasing to God and subject to His will.

5. Invoking the Holy Spirit to call upon His aid so that we understand better His will for us and then ask the grace that we fulfill it.

The Gift of Understanding operates on many levels and the more we seek it, the more we are able to master ourselves or more aptly put, let God give us the way to master ourselves by perfecting temperance. Understanding gives us that mastery; then it can go to work more intensively on building up other virtues within us.

BEATITUDE:

“Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven”

The Persecution of the righteous is a phrase that may mean to some the dream Martyrdom, but that is rarely what martyrdom is about.

The persecutions we suffer are to be suffered because of what we believe. They are meaningless, though they may be real suffering unless they are rooted and united to the redemptive suffering of Christ. We become righteous or holy to the extent that we imitate the Lord, share His suffering, receive His love and share that love with others, becoming as He was, the loving Son doing the Father's will for the redemption of sinners.

For most of us, the persecutions we suffer will not be heroic; we will not be written up in the news or the martyrology nor will we be a spot on the TV, news. Our persecutions are those inflicted on us by those around us: neighbor, friend and family, and those we inflict on ourselves. They are, for the most part, the dumb or stupid warfare of the fights between our desires and what we know, we deeply understand by the light of the Holy Spirit; we are to be and to do.

Our persecutions will most likely be like the attacks of gnats or mosquitoes, sneaking up on us, biting us and leaving us both wondering and somewhat wounded. Wounded in that we hurt, wondering, “how did that happen?” “What can I do to get away from these pests?” “How can I protect myself from another attack?”

The kingdom of heaven will only be ours when, having united ourselves to Christ in mind and heart, we suffer the various onslaughts, that beset us along our pilgrim way. We endure temptations, we moderate what might give us real pleasure, we avoid evil and we accept who we are. We understand that we are weak, sinning persons whom God loves, redeems and sanctifies. The more deeply we understand that love and redemption, the more deeply the kingdom of heaven will live within us now. A sense of joy, God's joy, is ours, and sharing it with others deepen and enriches the joy within us.

The persecutions, whatever they are, then become the means to love more deeply, to share more deeply the Cross of Christ. As we share that cross as fully as it is God's plan us, we will share, too, its glorification and, by His grace, the kingdom of heaven will be ours.

HOMEWORK

**YEAR TWO
LESSON SEVEN**

<u>DAYS</u>	<i>SCRIPTURE</i>	<i>CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH</i>	<i>DOMINICANA</i>
FIRST WEEK			
MONDAY	Proverbs 22-23	2585-2589	
TUESDAY	24	2590-2597	
WEDNESDAY	25-26	2598-2606	
THURSDAY	27-28	2607-2615	
FRIDAY	29	2516-2622	
SECOND WEEK			
MONDAY	30-31	2623-2628	
TUESDAY	Isaiah 1-2	2629-2633	
WEDNESDAY	3-4	2634-2638	
THURSDAY	5-6	2639-2643	
FRIDAY	7-8	2644-2649	
THIRD WEEK			
MONDAY	9-10	2650-2655	
TUESDAY	11-12	2656-2662	
WEDNESDAY	13-14	2663-2669	
THURSDAY	15-16	2670-2672	
FRIDAY	17-18	2673-2682	
FOURTH WEEK			
MONDAY	19-20	2683-2690	
TUESDAY	21-22	2691-2696	
WEDNESDAY	23-24	2697-2704	
THURSDAY	25-26	2705-2708	
FRIDAY	27-28	2709-2715	

On a separate piece of paper briefly outline your thoughts or questions on the articles you have read for your homework, to be turned in next time we meet