

## *Lecture Five: The Seven Deadly Sins*

1. Original Justice and the Preternatural Gifts (CCC ##374-379)
  - a. Grace of God: His Gift of the Holy Spirit
    - i. Made us God's children
    - ii. Allowed us a share in His life and love
  - b. Integrity
    - i. Our intellect and our passions existed peacefully in harmony
    - ii. feelings didn't fight against what the mind knew to be true
  - c. Bodily Perfection
    - i. There was no disease or death
2. Original Sin (CCC ##396-421)
  - a. Turned away from God in disobedience
  - b. Failed to trust Him, and disregarded his loving plan for our happiness, in order to get what we wanted
  - c. Consequences
    - i. We lost grace – lost God's life giving Spirit within us
    - ii. Our Bodies became subject to disease and death
    - iii. We lost integrity
      1. We have disordered emotions, passions
      2. concupiscence: inclination to sin
      3. The passions war against the intellect and each other
3. The Enslavement of Sin
  - a. As human beings, made in the image and likeness of God, we were made for Love
    - i. Love is to be able to give ourselves, to share ourselves completely with another
    - ii. But in order to give ourselves, we must first be able to say that we are in possession of ourselves
  - b. But what if you and I are not in possession of ourselves?
    - i. What if we can't control our own desires?
    - ii. These addictions take away our freedom
      1. If I don't control my desires, they're going to control me
      2. If I don't have self-mastery, I can't really love (myself, or anyone else), and so I'll never be happy
4. The 7 Deadly Sins: Pride, Anger, Envy, Lust, Gluttony, Avarice, Sloth
  - a. Pride (CCC ##1866, 2094, 2540)
    - i. Four Kinds of Pride (St. Gregory)
      1. Thinking that one's good is from oneself
      2. Thinking that one's good is from God, but is owed to one as a reward.
        - a. "I really deserve this."
      3. Claiming excellence not possessed
      4. Despising others and wishing to seem the exclusive possessor of what one has

- ii. Where do we see pride in our own lives? Josemaria Escriva gives a good list:
  - 1. Always wanting to get your own way; Thinking that what you do or say is better than what others do or say; arguing when you are not right; arguing when you are right but with bad manners or insisting stubbornly; giving your opinion without being asked, when charity does not demand you to do so; despising the point of view of others; not being aware that all the gifts and qualities you have are on loan [**from God**], feeling anxiety and fear (a lack of trust); Speaking badly about yourself, so that they may form a good opinion of you; making excuses when rebuked; being hurt that others are held in greater esteem than you; refusing to carry out menial tasks; seeking or wanting to be singled out; dropping words of self-praise in conversation, or words that might show your wit or skill, or your professional prestige; being ashamed of not having certain possessions.
- iii. Being excessively self-conscious can also be a form of pride
- iv. Vanity
  - 1. Why do we do what we do?
    - a. To gain the praise of others?
    - b. To be thought well of?
    - c. Human respect?
    - d. The craving for the good opinion of others?
    - e. To be anxious that others may not think highly of me for: Physical traits, Mental ability, Accomplishments, Holiness?
- b. Anger (CCC #2302)
  - i. Can be Just Anger: the movement to correct an evil – anger motivates us to end some injustice
  - ii. However, we know our anger is unjust when it:
    - 1. Is inappropriate for the situation
      - a. the anger is too long, or too intense
    - 2. Seeks to hurt others, to get revenge, to protect our egos, to show our importance, or our power
      - a. this stems from a selfish self-love
- c. Envy (CCC #2539)
  - i. Envy is sorrow, sadness or resentment at another person's good fortune, and the immoderate desire to acquire it for oneself, even unjustly
    - 1. There are two sides of the envy-coin
      - a. sad at someone else's good
      - b. pleased at someone else's evil
        - i. we see this in things like gossip: you're so eager to spread the word of another's downfall
  - ii. If we love our neighbor, we will be united with him in love
    - 1. then we will see every good thing for him as a good thing for ourselves

2. C.S. Lewis: (God) “wants to bring the man to a state of mind in which he could design the best cathedral in the world, and know it to be the best, and rejoice in the fact, without being any more (or less) or otherwise glad at having done it than he would be if it had been done by another.”
- d. Lust
- i. There is a proper and good order of Sexual Desire and Pleasure
    1. It is good to desire union with the beloved
    2. It is appropriate that there be an accompanying pleasure when that desire is fulfilled
  - ii. Lust is to simply Use the other person
  - iii. Disregard to the good of the other (or of oneself) in order to get what you want
  - iv. How can I tell if I’m lusting?
    1. Am I *really* thinking about the happiness of the other person, or simply gratifying myself?
  - v. Lust can take place in two ways
    1. Before marriage
      - a. Fornication
        - i. Includes impure acts besides intercourse
      - b. Pornography / Looking at others impurely
        - i. don’t have to be touching someone to use them for your own pleasure
      - c. Masturbation
    2. After marriage
      - a. Still can have adultery, pornography, masturbation
      - b. There can also be a selfish, pleasure-seeking, use of one’s own spouse
      - c. focus is not on giving to the other (love), but getting what one wants
  - vi. Immodesty
    1. Women need to ask themselves, as they look at their clothes (or lack thereof!!): “What response are these clothes designed to encourage?”
    2. Women possess a strong desire to be wanted, desired
      - a. Nothing wrong with this, in itself
      - b. But by whom do you want to be desired?
        - i. by God?
        - ii. by a loving, respectful man?
        - iii. or by anyone who likes your body?
- e. Gluttony: Excess in Food or Drink
- i. It’s not just how *much* you eat (although it can be that)
    1. It can also be how picky you are, how attached you are to a certain kind of food

2. C.S. Lewis *Screwtape Letters*: “What do quantities matter, provided we can use a human belly to produce querulousness (being grouchy), impatience, uncharitableness, and self-concern?”
- ii. Drunkenness
    1. We are made in the divine image, we have the nobility, the unbelievable dignity of being like God
    2. Now, suppose an artist painted a beautiful picture, one that he put his very heart and soul into, and he gave it to a friend as a loving gift, and then, right there in front of him, this friend spat on the picture and wrinkled it up into a ball. How would the artist feel?
      - a. That’s what we do when we become drunk
- f. Avarice
    - i. Disordered love of getting and possessing
      1. money
      2. goods
      3. position
      4. knowledge
    - ii. It is the desire for satisfaction and fulfillment in the possession of things
    - iii. Find security in things, rather than in God.
  - g. Sloth
    - i. The vice of laziness
    - ii. Acedia: someone who is bothered by the greatness to which God has called him, because it involves so much work
      1. Pieper: “He would prefer to be less great in order to avoid the obligation of greatness.”
      2. Wishes that God hadn’t asked him to be a child of God, because of the effort it demands
        - a. Why couldn’t God have left me alone? This is such a pain in the neck!
    - iii. Now, we may be guilty of sloth even if we appear to be very busy
      1. Our constant activity can really be a distraction, to keep us from doing those things that will really bring us into union with God
      2. After all, there’s nothing more difficult than trying to perfect ourselves, and grow in holiness
      3. So too, we can be lazy in spiritual matters, if we use worldly things to distract us, no matter how busy we may seem

Recommend Reading:

Frank Sheed, *Theology for Beginners*, Chapter 10  
 Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology*, Chapter 8