

# VICES AND VIRTUES

## Pride

Pride is the desire to be above the rest purely for the power or pleasure of being above the rest. It sets a man in competition with God and with others. To see oneself as more than what we truly are, then God and others become less than what they truly are. The result is a self-centeredness which replaces God as the center of life with oneself.

Pride may also take the form of thinking too little of oneself. This is timidity, shyness or self-consciousness known as pusillanimity.

**Humility** is man's estimation of himself according to truth, and that is almost all there is to it.

Live in Reality / Humility

1. I am not God; I am not and never will be perfect
2. I cannot control all things: But He can
3. I can rely on him and live in complete dependence upon God
4. I do not have all gifts, all wisdom, all power
5. I am God's son or daughter
6. I possess great dignity, worth, skills and experience
7. I can do great things for God and for others

## Envy

*Envy is resentment or sadness at another's good, or pleasure at another's misfortune*

1. *Sadness at someone else's good.* If the success or blessings of your friend, family member, neighbor, or even competitor displeases you, it is clear you suffer to some degree from envy;
2. *Pleasure at someone else's misfortune.* We tear others down to raise ourselves up with gossip, an eagerness to spread the word of another's downfall; this is why we love dirty laundry.

As C.S. Lewis wrote, 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."

## Goodwill, Humility and Abandonment to the Providence of God

1. Goodwill
  - a. Want good for others: even competitors, even enemies
  - b. Think good of others: give them the benefit of the doubt, make excuses for them
  - c. Speak well of others: every person has the right to a good reputation
2. Humility
  - a. I don't have all the gifts, but I have some
  - b. God has a place and purpose for me – trust His plan
3. Abandon yourself to God's Providence
  - a. He guides everything to the best

## Anger

Anger is the God given emotion to resist and resent evil. When faced with evil, will we respond to evil with good or will we respond to evil with evil causing greater harm?

**Meekness** is not weakness: It is a calm strength in the midst of the storm that controls and directs the passion and energy of anger, channeling it to work for good.

**Patience** channels anger to give us the energy

1. To endure an evil without becoming evil ourselves
2. To accept the suffering and offer it to God to help Him rescue souls from hell

## Sloth is not simply laziness

Sloth is being bothered by the greatness to which God has called us because it involves so much work or a change of lifestyle. The slothful man would prefer to be less great in order to avoid the obligation of greatness.

**Diligence and a Rule of Life:** Take stock of our schedule. Time is one of our most valued commodities, and we should spend it in a way that reflects our values and priorities. Getting the Lord's Day right is the first and most important step, but we still have six other days to order correctly. Faith, family, work, and other pursuits are like ingredients that need to be added at the right time and in the right measure to make a tasty dish. If we don't take the time to read and follow the recipe, the ingredients won't come together in the way we'd like.

## Greed

Greed is a *disordered love of getting and possessing*. Although this might involve mere money, it can also take the form of an excessive desire for position, knowledge, and other goods. It is the desire for satisfaction and fulfillment in the possession of things which tries to find security in worldly realities, rather than in God. When we fail to trust that God will provide our daily bread then we seek to grab all that we can and store it up for a rainy day. We see greed manifested in:

1. Consumerism that replaces union with God as the goal of life with the getting and possessing of material goods.
2. An eagerness and carelessness in living beyond one's means
3. A failure to tithe 10% to the Church and other charitable organizations

### **Simplicity, Trust, Generosity:**

1. Living more simply
2. Practice abandonment to God's providence – His guidance and care
  - a. If we do our best to fulfill our responsibilities then God will provide
3. Give generously – the widows mite – out of your want rather than your abundance.

## Gluttony

**Gluttony:** Eating and drinking for solely for the sake of pleasure, comfort, and escape

- Eating too much
- Eating too little because we are too picky / self-absorbed
- Eating for the wrong reason: bored, stressed, pleasure seeking

*Drunkenness*, (a grave sin, which if done so knowingly and willingly becomes a mortal sin.

- Drunkenness impairs the intellect and will lowering us to the level of an animal driven by instincts and appetites.
- Drunkenness ruins the good of friendship.

**Temperance:** moderates the attraction of the pleasures of the senses and provides balance in the use of created goods. (don't do what is wrong even when you really want to.)

# Lust

*Lust* is to use the other person as an object to get what I want. We conquer lust with true love.

Men tend to use women for Physical gratification while women may use men for emotional gratification, in other words, the desire to be wanted, cherished, or provided for.

How can I tell if I am lusting? Examine your motivation: Are you giving yourself for the good of the other? Or is your motivation physical pleasure or to be wanted and cherished?

**Chastity:** Chaste is the heart that loves without looking for reward.

*Love* is a gift of self to do what is good for the other. We say to the other, "I want your good."

Practice wanting and doing good for the other rather than using them to get what we desire.

## How to Identify One's Predominate Fault

It is likely that you see yourself in all seven of these vices or deadly sins. While we may fall into all of these at times the great spiritual masters tell us that we all are dominated by one or two of these deadly sins. Since it is impossible to battle on all fronts all the time we would be better served to eliminate the deadly sin that predominates. Method to identify and eliminate one's predominant fault:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit in prayer to show you your greatest weakness
2. Make a daily examination of conscience to see which of the deadly sins you fall into habitually
  - a. Seek wise counsel from someone who knows you well and can be honest
  - b. Seek the mercy and grace to come through the Sacrament of Reconciliation to overcome your predominant sin.
3. Make a firm resolution to practice the opposite virtue repeatedly.