

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

- Sloth, according to Damascene (De Fide Orth. ii, 14) is an oppressive sorrow, which, to wit, so weighs upon man's mind, that he wants to do nothing; ...Hence sloth implies a certain weariness of work, ...sloth is a "*sluggishness of the mind which neglects to begin good.*"
- Now this sorrow is always evil, sometimes in itself, sometimes in its effect. For sorrow is evil in itself when it is about that which is good ... if it (sloth) so oppresses man as to draw him away entirely from good deeds. ...it is evil on two counts, both in itself and in point of its effect. Consequently it is a sin, for by sin we mean an evil movement of the appetite, as appears from what has been said above. ST II-II, 35, 1
- Wherefore any sin which by its very nature is contrary to charity (which is the very life of God in us) is a mortal sin by reason of its genus. ...the movement of sloth is sometimes in the sensuality alone, by reason of the opposition of the flesh to the spirit, and then it is a venial sin, whereas if it reaches to the reason, which consents in the dislike, horror, and detestation of the divine good...it is a mortal sin ST II-II, 35, 3

Sloth/Acedia: Sin of **Omission**



- Sloth is more than laziness
- Sloth is not a spectacular sin...omission rather than commission...yet rejecting the presence of God, refusing the joy of love...Joy is not merely a passive feeling. It is an act of the will. It is rejoicing... Frankly [God] I don't give a damn!
- When we are just too lazy emotionally (or physically) to exert effort toward the good that is present and perceived, that is the sin of sloth, but it is only venial not mortal. It is a kind of cowardice, an unreasonable fear of difficulties and pains.



Letter from Snakebite



And that's where we have them now. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of them never once in their live get up from bed in the morning with the thought that the forthcoming day will involve a battle in the greatest war of all, and that their Commander is sending them on a mission only they can accomplish. Instead, they think of their planet not as a battlefield but a bathtub.

Be sure to keep the water tepid. At the right moment, we pull the plug. What delight to contemplate their surprise and terror as they discover they can go down the drain!

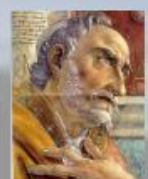
Peter Kreeft

- *Sloth is a far greater problem in our advanced, sophisticated, complex, bored and jaded time...*
- *We fear terrorism from without more than relativism within*
- *"Oppressive sorrow" reigns in the most advanced places such as Harvard and Scandinavia where clinical depression and suicide abound*
- *Paradoxically, sloth reigns most in our technologically busy world where leisure has been abolished and life has been programmed and scheduled down to the last detail*
- *Dislike, horror, and detestation of the divine good is mortal sin because it is Hellish. That is probably what makes Hell Hell: that God, and what God is made of (truth, goodness, beauty, holiness) is hated*
- *Many saints were made out of passionate sinners --- the angry, the hating, the lustful, the cynical; but none were ever made out of the slothful*

Some thoughts on Sloth

from Peter Kreeft

- *Examples of Sloth*
 - *Refusal to rouse oneself and move toward the good even when the good is present and recognized*
 - *Not jumping into the pool to save a baby from drowning*
 - *Not getting out of your warm, comfortable bed on a cold winter morning to go to mass*
 - *Not inquiring of God what He wants you to do*
 - *(Stupidest of all) Not inquiring whether or not God even exists; drifting*



Zeal/Diligence → Antidote to Sloth

Zeal, whatever way we take it, arises from the intensity of love. For it is evident that the more intensely a power tends to anything, the more vigorously it withstands opposition or resistance. Since therefore love is "a movement towards the object loved," as Augustine says (QQ. 83, qu. 35), an intense love seeks to remove everything that opposes it. ST I, II, 22, 4



- Assert energy, effort into your spiritual life
- Get off the spiritual couch
- Have a genuine "adventure"
- *Love is not soft and squooshy; it is hard as a diamond* Peter Kreeft



Sloth



- How is the hectic paced reality of modern life, which may even wear us out, yet serve as a sign of significant sloth in our time and culture?
 - What are some of the attachments which lead us toward spiritual sloth?
 - Do I recognize my vocation, mission, at this particular stage in my life?
- If time permits:
- What are some of the ways (perhaps small ways) that you have found which address the challenge of sloth in modern life

Avarice and Covetousness



- **External goods** (material possessions) come under the head of things useful for an end, as stated above (II-II:117:3 I-II:02:1). Hence it must needs be that man's good in their respect consists in a certain measure, in other words, that man seeks, according to a certain measure, to have external riches, in so far as they are necessary for him to live in keeping with his condition of life. Wherefore it will be a sin for him to exceed this measure, by wishing to acquire or keep them immoderately. This is what is meant by covetousness, which is defined as "immoderate love of possessing." It is therefore evident that covetousness is a sin ST, II-II, 118, 1

- Sins are seated chiefly in the affections: and all the affections or passions of the soul have their term in pleasure and sorrow, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. ii, 5). ...Such is covetousness: for the covetous man takes pleasure in the consideration of himself as a possessor of riches. Therefore covetousness is a spiritual sin. ST II,II 118, 6

Avarice as a Spiritual Sin



Avarice: ...for money, but also for knowledge and high places, when prominence is immoderately sought after...

- Sins take their species from their objects, as stated above (I-II:72:1). Now the object of a sin is the good towards which an inordinate appetite tends. Hence where there is a special aspect of good inordinately desired, there is a special kind of sin. Now the useful good differs in aspect from the delightful good. And riches, as such, come under the head of useful good, since they are desired under the aspect of being useful to man. Consequently covetousness is a special sin, forasmuch as it is an immoderate love of having possessions, which are comprised under the name of money, whence covetousness [avaritia] is denominated. ST, II-II, 118, 2



Avarice as the Seeking of Power



- *We love money so much because it can buy anything---houses, cars, food, police protection, the best medical services, political influence...sex, though not love (i.e. prostitutes); and even the fake ecstasy of drugs, though not real ecstasy. Money is like the sky; it's spread over everything, i.e. every thing.* Peter Kreeft

The Daughters of Covetousness/Avarice

- The daughters of covetousness are the vices which arise therefrom, especially in respect of the desire of an end. Now since covetousness is excessive love of possessing riches, it exceeds in two things. For in the first place it exceeds in retaining, and in this respect covetousness gives rise to "insensibility to mercy," because, to wit, a man's heart is not softened by mercy to assist the needy with his riches [See II-II:30:1]. On the second place it belongs to covetousness to exceed in receiving, and in this respect covetousness may be considered in two ways. First as in the thought [affectu]. On this way it gives rise to "restlessness," by hindering man with excessive anxiety and care, for "a covetous man shall not be satisfied with money" (Ecclesiastes 5:9). Secondly, it may be considered in the execution [effectu]. On this way the covetous man, in acquiring other people's goods, sometimes employs force, which pertains to "violence," sometimes deceit, and then if he has recourse to words, it is "falsehood," if it be mere words, "perjury" if he confirm his statement by oath; if he has recourse to deeds, and the deceit affects things, we have "fraud"; if persons, then we have "treachery," as in the case of Judas, who betrayed Christ through covetousness. ST, II-II, 118, 8



Generosity



Liberality or Generosity

- 1. Liberality is a virtue, for it puts to good use the things that might be used for evil purposes-such, for instance, as money or other material things.
- 2. And, indeed, liberality deals, first and foremost, with money. A liberal man is an open-handed man, who is ready to "liberate" money from his own possession, and thus shows that he is not inordinately attached to it.
- 3. The proper act of liberality, therefore, consists in making good use of money. Liberality demands that one's debts be paid, and that suitable gifts be made. Merely to be careless with money, neglecting to save what is needed to meet expenses and to have the means of making gifts, is not liberality.
- 4. Parting with money by giving it to others is a greater act of virtue than parting with it in fulfilling one's own desires, that is, spending it on oneself. The liberal man is praised for *giving*.
- 5. Liberality seems to be allied with justice, even though it gives more than is strictly due. Therefore, it is reckoned by many as a part of justice, that is, a virtue connected with justice but not having equal scope with it.
- 6. Liberality is a gracious and notable virtue, but it is not the greatest of virtues. Summa of the Summa 117

Share practical ways in which you have done these.

- Corporal Works of Mercy:

- To feed the hungry
- To give drink to the thirsty
- To clothe the naked
- To give shelter to travelers
- To visit the sick
- To visit the imprisoned
- To bury the dead

- Spiritual Works of Mercy:

- To instruct the ignorant.
- To counsel the doubtful.
- To admonish the sinners.
- To bear patiently those who wrong us.
- To forgive offenses.
- To comfort the afflicted.
- To pray for the living and the dead.