

Sin and Vice

Divine Perspective on Sin and Vice:

- God intended us to be free to choose Him. He always had the remedy – mercy – when we abused freedom through sin.

In Relation to:

- Trinity – Sin is a refusal of communion with the Blessed Trinity. It is a radical possibility of human freedom.
- Church – Jesus entrusted to the Church the means to forgive sins. She gives us all we need in order to be converted from sin and restored to grace.
- Paschal Mystery – In the Paschal Mystery, Christ died for our sins to reconcile us to God.
- Dignity of the Human Person – Sin is a turning away from the heights of greatness to which we are called. By sin, we turn the incredible powers we have received away from their intended goal and become enslaved to our sinful desires.

Theological Virtues:

- Seeing with Faith – Faith enables us to understand the break with God's plan that sin represents and the seriousness of the disorder it causes. When we see this, we can live with our eyes on supernatural realities, not on earthly ones.
- Abiding with Hope – God has given us all the tools to deal with sin. We gain confidence in the battle for holiness and in repentance for sin.
- Burning with Charity – We realize that our identity is not our sin. I have an incredible influx of love when I realize that God loved me even when I was in my sins, and that I am not identified solely with my sins. I can see that I am not my sin, and I am free to love more.

Scripture and Essentials:

- 1) God created us for relationship with Himself and gave us freedom so that we could love Him (CCC 356, 358, 386, 396, 1773).
 - a) Ps 81:13-16: God longs to fill us with good things.
 - b) All that is of God is good, true, noble, and lovely – fullness of life. This is what God calls us to and anything less is a sin. (Phil 4:8 – Think about whatever is true, good, lovely, and excellent.)
 - c) God's goodness radiates in us when we seek Him first and order our priorities so that we might find Him.
 - d) Sin is a choice of something other than God.

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- e) By sin, we abuse our freedom, reject this relationship, and disown our heavenly Father (1 Jn 5:18; Lk 15:11-13; 1 Jn 3:8-10).
- 2) Sin is choosing something else in place of God and not according to His Will (CCC 387, 1440, 1739, 1849, 1850).
 - a) God allows us to refuse the good He wants to give us (Ps 81:11-12). He allows us to refuse to listen to Him.
 - b) Choosing to do evil leads to a shallow life (Wis 2:6-24).
 - c) The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are what we choose instead (1 Jn 2:16).
 - d) Sin is always first and foremost an offense against God. It is a turning away from Him (Ps 51:1-4).
 - e) Sin also defies right reason (the use of our intellect).
- 3) Sin is a refusal to live in Communion with God; by sinning we summon death (CCC 396-97, 1855-1864, 1871, 1872, 1874, 1875).
 - a) Sin summons death (Wis 1:16).
 - b) The prodigal son longs to eat the swine's pods (Luke 15: 14-17).
 - c) Mortal Sin is the death of the soul (1 Jn 5:16-17).
 - d) The joy of obedience to God is natural to His children. Without it, we cannot have eternal life with Him (Mk 10:17-19; Gal 5:19-21).
 - e) When we refuse to act as His children, we lose our inheritance of grace and glory (Luke 15:14-17; Rom 6:21).
 - f) Mortal sin completely destroys the life of grace in us and kills charity in our hearts. Venial sin only wounds that life of grace (1 Jn 5:16-17; 1 Jn 3:14; 1 Cor 6:9-11).
 - g) Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the "unforgiveable sin" of refusing to repent. It is to choose hell over life with God (Mt 12:31).
 - h) Hardness of heart to God's call to repentance increases our guilt (Rom 2:5; Sir 5:5-7).
 - i) God made it clear that death was the original penalty for sin. All sin doubts that God's word is true and refuses to trust Him (Gen 3:2-5; Rom 6:23; Rom 5:12; Wis 1:12-2:5).
- 4) Deliberately choosing sin enslaves us to sin. Through sin, we become less free to do and to enjoy what is good (CCC 401, 405, 538-40, 1733, 1865, 1866, 1876, 2846-49).
 - a) Every choice of "not God" has ramifications. It is a covenant with death (Rom 6:16, 22; Eph 5:1-5).
 - b) Repeatedly choosing sin creates a vice, or a habit of sin, which inclines us to sin (Sir 5:4).

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- c) The seven capital sins (capital meaning head sins from which all the others flow) are the roots of sin in our life. They are pride, envy, anger, sloth (acedia), avarice, lust, and gluttony.
 - d) Humbly knowing our weakness helps us to look to God for strength when we are tempted (Jas 1:13-15; Lk 4:1-13; Heb 4:15).
 - e) Sin always appears as a kind of good. We need our conscience, formed by the Word of God and the Church, so that we can understand what is truly good.
- 5) Even when we are dead in our sins, God's mercy runs out to meet us and embraces us in Christ (CCC 545, 604, 605, 1427, 1428, 1439, 1441, 1443, 1847, 1848, 1870).
- a) All have sinned and are in need of God's mercy (1 Jn 1:8-9).
 - b) In the face of sin, God offers to restore man to grace (Is 53:6; Rom 11:32; Rom 3:23-24).
 - c) God seeks us. Our conversion is itself His own work (Gen 3:8-9; Lk 15:1-10).
 - d) Christ calls us to repentance and draws us to God (Mk 1:15).
 - i) He showed sinners God's love by seeking them out (Mk 2:17).
 - ii) By grace, He draws us back to the Father (Jn 12:32; Jn 6:44).
 - iii) He forgives us our sins (Mk 2:3-12).
 - e) Realizing the horror of our sins moves us to turn to God to receive grace (Ps 51:5-9; Lk 15:18-20).
 - f) Encounter with His love changes us, so that we receive salvation. We love God in return (Lk 19:5-10; Lk 7:38-50).
- 6) The debt for sin – death – could not be paid by us, so Jesus took our place to restore us to the Father (CCC 598, 602, 603, 613, 615, 617, 827, 976, 979, 983, 1440, 1444-46, 1851, 1873) (Heb 12:2-4; Ps 49:7-9; 1 Jn 2:2; Ps 81:6-7; Is 53:5; 2 Cor 5:21).
- a) He overcomes our disobedience by His obedience, restoring us to paradise (Heb 5:8-9; Lk 23:39-43).
 - b) He entrusts the grace of forgiveness He won for us to His Church. We receive this grace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Jn 20:21-23).
 - i) The Church is His body. Her ministers are ambassadors for Him (2 Cor 5:18-20).
 - ii) Our sin harms the Church, so we must also be reconciled to her (Eph 4:25).
- 7) By Grace, God not only restores what we lost through sin, but raises us to new heights in His Son (CCC 978, 979, 1425, 1426, 1430-38, 1472, 1473, 1853) (Eph 1:7-8; 1 Jn 3:2; 1 Jn 5:20; Rom 8:12-14; 1 Pet 1:22).

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- a) Our hearts must be transformed in order to love God and keep His commandments (Mt 15:18-19; Ez 36:26-27; Ps 51:10-19).
- b) Baptism renews our nature and calls us to a new way of life (Rom 6:4; Eph 4:22-24)
- c) God calls us to holiness of life (2 Tim 1:9).
- d) To become what He made us to be, we must put to death our sinful habits and desires (Rom 8:12-14; Col 3:5-7).
 - i) By acts of penance, we affirm our love for God, combat our weakness, and purify our hearts (Jas 4:8; Joel 2:12-13).
 - ii) Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are the traditional ways the Church practices penance. They combat all that is “of the world” in us (Mt 6:1-6; 1 Jn 2:16).