Catholic Catechism

Part III - LIFE IN CHRIST

Section 1 – Man’s Vocation: Life in the Spirit

Article 7 - The Virtues

Article 8 – Sin

CCC pages 443 - 458
What are Virtues?

Detail from *The School of Athens* by Raphael Sanzio
Plato and Aristotle gave us the philosophy of the natural virtues. Aristotle holds his *Nicomachean Ethics*, one of the greatest works of ethics.
Virtues are good habits, that is, they give us a disposition to perform good actions.
What are Virtues?

Our actions as human beings are not simply a sequence of disconnected choices.

We develop or acquire interior dispositions or habits, which incline us to perform particular kinds of actions.

When these habits are good we call them virtues.
Virtues

Assertiveness   Friendliness   Peacefulness
Caring         Generosity      Perseverance
Cleanliness     Gentleness     Purposefulness
Commitment     Helpfulness     Reliability
Compassion     Honesty        Respect
Confidence     Honor          Responsibility
Consideration  Humility       Self-discipline
Cooperation     Idealism       Service
Courage        Integrity      Tact
Courtesy        Joyfulness     Thankfulness
Creativity      Justice        Tolerance
Detachment      Kindness       Trust
Determination   Love           Trustworthiness
Diligence       Loyalty        Truthfulness
Enthusiasm      Moderation     Understanding
Excellence      Modesty        Unity
Flexibility     Orderliness     
Forgiveness     Patience        

The 12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Kindness  Modesty  Patience  Peace  Charity  Chastity  Self-Control  Goodness  Faithfulness  Gentleness  Joy  Generosity
7 GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Wisdom
Understanding
Counsel
Fortitude
Knowledge
Piety
Fear of God
Cardinal Virtues

• Supernatural habits.
• Help us achieve heaven.

• Cardinal = “hinge”
  – All our good actions depend on or “hinge” upon these virtues.
  – Practicing these virtues makes us virtuous.
Prudence

• Gives us power to:
  – make right decisions.
  – judge what is good.
  – choose the right means of attaining the good.
• **Natural** prudence: might indicate the best way to earn money.

• **Supernatural** prudence: indicates the best way to get to heaven and help others get there.
Model of Prudence

- St. Maria Goretti
  - True good: heaven
  - The right way to get there: avoid mortal sin
Justice

• Gives us power to:
  – respect the rights of others.
  – give others what is due to them.

• Since we owe God sincere worship, we offer Him true worship, from the heart.

• We owe our parents obedience and respect, so that is what we give them.
Justice

- **Natural**: the work of a civil court.
- **Supernatural**: attending Sunday Mass, worshipping God who saved us from our sins.
Model of Justice

• St. Thomas More
  – “I am the king’s good servant, but God’s first.”
Fortitude

• Gives us power to:
  – pursue the good.
  – face difficulty and danger with peace and courage.

• Courage to do the right thing when it is hard.

• Strength to do the right thing in everyday circumstances.
Fortitude

- **Natural**: athletic training
- **Supernatural**: suffering martyrdom
Model of Fortitude

• St. Pancras
  – Like all martyrs, he practiced fortitude.
  – Refused to deny Jesus, even though he was afraid of being killed.
Temperance

• Gives us power to:
  – control ourselves.
  – Direct our desires.

• Each sense has an attraction (watch exciting TV shows, listen to music...).
• Our senses are good and creation is good, but we must order them according to God’s will.
Temperance

- **Natural**: might include dieting to lose weight.
- **Supernatural**: offering up food as a penance.
Model of Temperance

- St. Dominic Savio
  - Promised God that he would never commit mortal sin.
  - Kept this promise because he consistently practiced temperance.
In addition to the cardinal virtues, there are three virtues which are unique to the Christian life of grace after Baptism.

These are the ‘supernatural’ (or ‘theological’) virtues of faith, hope and charity.
The Theological Virtues are gifts of God through grace.

(Scott P. Richert)
Theological Virtues

Theological virtues are rooted in God and reflect God’s presence in our lives.

The 3 Theological virtues are the following:
  a) Faith
  b) Hope
  c) Love (Charity)
Faith, Hope and Love mean:

Faith in God
Hope in God
Love of God and neighbor for God’s sake

The Christian is prudent, just, courageous, and temperate out of faith in God, hope in God and love of God.

The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. (CCC 1813)
Faith

Faith is the virtue by which we recognize that God exists and that God’s very existence holds moral implications for us. Faith is believing in God and being faithful to him.

Faith requires openness and trust. Faith-in-action involves trying to discover what is God’s will and then acting accordingly.
Hope

Hope is trusting in God, in everything that Christ has promised, and in the help of the Holy Spirit. Hope is intimately tied to responsibility. It is future oriented and means taking seriously the consequences of our actions. Jesus provides hope that, no matter how hopeless our current circumstances appear and despite trials and setbacks, in the end all will be well.

“Never Give up!”
Love

Love is the theological virtue representing the core of the Christian moral life. Love is the virtue that places concern for God, manifest especially through concern for others, above everything else.

The Catechism defines love in the words of the medieval theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas, “To love is to will the good of another.”
Love (cont.)

Every other virtue that we might practice represents some dimension of love: every time we practice a virtue, we are giving expression to love. Pretty much love is the core virtue and when we practice any virtue, we are practicing love.

Moral laws are norms for love: moral principals are the principles of love. Sin indicates a failure to love.

Moral decision making is the process of practicing the art of love.
Different Kinds of Love for Different Relationships

- Family Love
- Friendship
- Eros
- Agape
Love of a parent for a child, a child for a parent, spouses for each other and relatives for one another.
Friendship

Deep, tender affection which exists between friends. Friendship includes shared interests as well as mutual trust and enjoyment of one another’s company.
Eros

Passionate human love which can exist between a man and a woman. Eros always seeks union and thus includes sexual love.
Agape

Conscious choice to will the good of another. It is not a feeling. This Christian love treats all with kindness no matter what they may have done to us, no matter whether we like them or they like us. This is the love that the Holy Spirit enables us to have for others.
Spiritual

1. Instruct the ignorant.
2. Admonish sinners.
4. Forgive offenses willingly.
5. Counsel the doubtful.
6. Comfort the afflicted.
7. Pray for the living and the dead.

Corporal

1. Feed the hungry.
2. Give drink to the thirsty.
3. Clothe the naked.
4. Shelter the homeless.
5. Visit the sick.
6. Visit the imprisoned.
7. Bury the dead.

not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord.
Deuteronomy 8:3

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.
Matthew 25:35-36
Read the following scripture. Insert the name of someone in place of the word “love”.

Then read it again and replace the word “love” with your own name.
1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.
An expert in the law tested Jesus with this question, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"

Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."

And the second is like it:

'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments."

(Matthew 22:35-40)
Love vs. Fear

- Life is like a clay vessel filled with a kind of holy love, abundant with divine grace, overflowing with goodness and beauty.
  - Life is not a simple choice between love and hate, with everything sketched out in black and white.
- Life is a choice between love and fear.
- The spiritual opposite of love is not hate. The opposite of love is fear.
- Fear that there is a limit to love, to goodness. Fear of confronting a mystery that is essentially unknowable. Fear of letting go, of losing control, of letting others get too close, of living with a sense of godliness.
What are the principal virtues?

Charity is lost if grace is lost through mortal sin. It is restored by means of Confession.

Charity is the supernatural virtue of heaven, “So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

1 Cor 13:13

Charity touches the divine and distributes her fruits to others.
How do we achieve the virtues?

Central detail of *The Seven Deadly Sins* by Bosch

It is only with Christ at the centre of our lives that we can achieve the virtues.
To some extent, a person can acquire the natural virtues through the personal discipline of repeated good actions and a well-ordered life.
How do we achieve the virtues?

In our fallen condition, however, it is not possible to achieve complete human perfection by our own efforts. It is only the perfection given by grace, by means of the sacraments and prayer, which also enables us to achieve the true cardinal virtues.
Virtues are good habits, that is, they give us a disposition to perform good actions.

The four cardinal virtues are prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice. The three supernatural virtues are faith, hope and charity.

It is only the perfection given by grace, by means of the sacraments and prayer, which also enables us to achieve the true cardinal virtues.
What are Vices?

The Seven Deadly Sins by Bosch
What are Vices?

Vices are evil habits; that is, they give us a disposition to perform evil actions.

KEY DEFINITION
SIN

- is a deliberate thought, word, deed or omission contrary to the eternal law of God.” CCC 1849-1854.
What are Vices?

We sometimes develop vices which incline us to perform evil actions.

These normally involve excess or deficiency in pursuing what is good.
The most well-known and traditional list of vices is called the **seven deadly sins** or **vices**.
The seven deadly vices

These vices are called deadly because of their poisonous effects on the human soul, the difficulty that is often experienced in eradicating them, and the ease with which they lead to mortal sin.

They are also called *capital sins*, because they give rise to many other kinds of sins by those who commit them.
Each of these vices has, as a remedy, a contrary virtue linked to the cardinal virtues. The vices may promise an easier life but they ensnare and enslave us. The virtues may seem difficult, but they lead to our true freedom and happiness as human beings.

*Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue.*

2 Peter 1:5
**PRIDE**

Ascribing an excellence to oneself that one does not possess, or believing one is the cause of one's own excellence, or desiring to be singularly great, despising everyone else.

**HUMILITY**

Recognizing that we are created by God and in need of his love and help; enabling us to form a true opinion of ourselves, disregard shallow popularity and be free from self-obsession.
The vices and their remedies

ENVY
A grieving or sorrow for the goods and blessings given to others, insofar as their gifts differ from or surpass our own.

FRATERNAL CHARITY
A gratitude for the gifts and talents of others and a desire that each and every person reaches his or her full potential.

ADMIRATION
The vices and their remedies

**ANGER**
A violent passion to inflict revenge on others, to the point of clouding one’s reason and usurping God’s judgment.

**MEEKNESS**
A self-control inspired by God’s clemency, which allows us to master our emotions when attacked or wronged.

FORGIVENESS
The vices and their remedies

**SLOTH**
A laziness, spiritual torpor or oppressive sorrow that prevents us from doing what we can achieve and should do.

**DILIGENCE**
An eagerness to do what is needed inspired by the zeal of divine love, making even difficult tasks achievable.

**ZEAL**
Avarice
A disordered desire for riches and possessions, to the point of acting contrary to the love of God and neighbour.

Generosity
A generosity towards others in sharing God’s gifts, bringing personal contentment with whatever we possess.

The vices and their remedies
The vices and their remedies

GLUTTONY
A disordered desire to consume food and drink too sumptuously, too much, too hastily, greedily or even too ‘daintily’ (that is, being obsessed about its excellence).

TEMPERANCE
A good order in desiring the pleasures of taste and touch, inspired by respect for oneself as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

ASCETICISM
The vices and their remedies

LUST
A disordered craving for sexual pleasure leading to abuses of the body and mind, addictions and destructive effects on families and society.

CHASTITY
A proper use of our sexuality. Chastity guards our hearts and minds from evil influences, gives us freedom and allows us to love God and others purely.
Summary

• Vices are evil habits; that is, they give us a disposition to perform evil actions.

• The most well-known and traditional list of vices is called the seven deadly sins or vices. These vices are pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony and lust.

• Each of these vices has, as a remedy, a contrary virtue linked to the cardinal virtues. The virtues may seem difficult, but they lead to our true freedom and happiness as human beings.
Select one or more of the following:

- Discuss some ways in which people today manifest the seven deadly vices.

- Discuss some of the ways in which we can avoid vice.

Activities Menu  Concluding Prayer
Select one or more of the following:

- Read some articles from recent newspapers and magazines. Note any instances of actions or ideas which reveal any of the seven deadly vices.

- The pictures of the deadly vices in this presentation come from Bosch’s *The Seven Deadly Sins* (15th century). Think about and note down what images might be used to represent these sins today.
And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5: 3-10
Act of Contrition

Oh my God,

I am heartily sorry for having offended You,
And I detest all my sins because of Your just punishment,
But most of all because I have offended You, my God,
Who are all good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace,
To sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin.

Amen.