

THE SEVEN DEADLY  
SINS & HEAVENLY VIRTUES

PASTOR'S CLASS  
APRIL 24 2022



WRATH (IRA)

## WRATH

- ✿ Wrath is a sin which infests the soul. Wrath, or hatred if you will, is an acid within the soul that eats away at the heart until there is almost nothing left.” – St. John Cassian himself refers to it as a “deadly poison.”
- ✿ “No matter what provokes it, anger blinds the soul’s eyes, preventing it from seeing the Sun of righteousness.”<sup>2</sup> (St. John Cassian)



## WRATH

✿Matthew 5:22 — But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire.

## WRATH

✿ GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340–1400),  
“The Parson’s Tale”

✿ “For envy blinds the heart of a man and anger troubles a man; and acedia makes him heavy, thoughtful, and peevish. Envy and anger cause bitterness of heart; which bitterness is the mother of acedia, and takes from a man the love of all goodness. Then is acedia the anguish of a troubled heart; and as Saint Augustine says, ‘It is the sadness of goodness and the joy of evil.’”

# WRATH

HUGH OF ST. VICTOR (1096–1141), *De sacramentis christianae fidei*

☀ “The rational soul in its health is a strong and sound vessel. . . . When the vices enter into it, they spoil . . . and corrupt it in this way:

† through pride it becomes blown up,

† through envy it dries out,

† through wrath it cracks,

† through acedia it breaks.”

## WRATH

☼ “Anger, in particular seems close to a professional vice in contemporary ministry. Pastors are angry at their leaders for not leading and their followers for not following. They are angry at those who do not come to church for not coming and angry at those who do come for coming without enthusiasm. They are angry at their families, who make them feel guilty, and angry at themselves for not being who they want to be. This is not an open, blatant, roaring anger, but an anger hidden behind a smooth word, the smiling face, and the polite handshake. It is a frozen anger, an anger which settles into a biting resentment and slowly paralyzes a generous heart. If there is anything which makes the ministry look grim and dull, it is this dark, insidious anger in the servants of Christ.” *The Way of the Heart — Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry* HarperOne, 1981, pp. 23-24



## WRATH

✿ Abba Arsenius — “If, wishing to correct another, you are moved to anger, you gratify your own passions. Do not lose yourself to save another.”

✿ Abba Agatho — said: “Even if an angry man were to revive the dead, he would not be pleasing to God because of his anger.”



## SINS & CORRESPONDING VIRTUES

Wrath / *Ira*

Patience /  
*Patentia*

Justice, Forgiveness  
& Mercy

The traditional meaning of the virtue of Justice is, “giving to everyone what you owe them.” The NT instructs us to “owe no one anything except that you love them.” Justice is thus linked with the twinned virtues of forgiveness and mercy.

# JUSTICE

Justice is the virtue which aids us in maintaining workable human relationships - and in a larger sense, a workable human community. Justice allows us to give each and every person what they are due - or what they deserve, and by doing so preserves peace and harmony between people.

*sum cuique* - "to each his due." — Thomas Aquinas

## FORBEARANCE

**Matt. 7:12** “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

**Luke 10:27** He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” 28 And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”





ENVY (INVIDIA)

## ENVY

✿ Saint Thomas Aquinas explains, “... [Another person’s] good may be reckoned as being one’s own evil, in so far as it conduces to the lessening of one’s own good name or excellence.”

✿ (Summa Theologiae II-II, Q. 36, A. 1, resp.).

## ENVY

- ☼ God at Sinai — the *last* rule is “Stop envying/coveting!”
- ☼ Ex. 20:17 You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.



## SINS & CORRESPONDING VIRTUES

*Envy / Invidia*

**Kindness /  
*Humanitas***

**Faith (as trust),  
neighborly kindness**

Envy assumes the  
resources (both  
decision to trust  
at Sinai are, in fa  
no longer in c  
neighbors we l  
heart, mind, soul,

## FAITH

**Faith** — [Faith is] “ . . . a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely-given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” — John Calvin

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SLOTH (ACEDIA)

## SLOTH / ACEDIA

✿ JEAN-CHARLES NAULT, OSB (b. 1970), “Acedia: Enemy of Spiritual Joy” Acedia . . . is a profound withdrawal into self. Action is no longer perceived as a gift of oneself, as the response to a prior love that calls us. . . . It is seen instead as an uninhibited seeking of personal satisfaction in the fear of “losing” something. The desire to save one’s “freedom” at any price reveals, in reality, a deeper enslavement to the “self.” There is no longer any room for an abandonment . . . to the other or for the joy of gift; what remains is sadness or bitterness within the one who distances himself from the community and who, being separated from others, finds himself likewise separated from God.

## SINS & CORRESPONDING VIRTUES

Sloth / *Acedia*

Diligence /  
*Industria*

Fortitude, Diligence,  
Ethics

Fortitude & diligence seem obvious enough. “Ethics” as an opposing virtue derives from the attribute of sloth/acedia which leads you to fail to care enough to ask “what is the ethical mandate of the moment?”



# FORTITUDE

This is the virtue that allows us to face difficulties well.

Life is hard. It requires patience, and resilience, and perseverance.

Fortitude is often thought of synonymously with "bravery" or "courage." It is the capacity to endure hardships well and to risk much - persevering in the pursuit of what is right.

The quintessential expression of this virtue has often been the "lay down one's life."

## FORTITUDE

John 15:11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. 12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you."

## FORTITUDE

Fortitude — This virtue is not about praising or glorifying suffering. Suffering is not good and must be avoided when possible.

However, much suffering is unavoidable and the virtue is to embrace and endure that suffering with grace.

To be in a meaningful and committed relationship with another is to place oneself squarely in the path of suffering. [e.g. A parent with a child. A child with a sick or aging parent.]