

Lukewarmness: The Devil in Disguise

Venial Sin

- The Lord has taken our sins and defects into account; however, this should not be a motive for complacency.
- A person does not fall into the state of Lukewarmness because of any one particular defeat, but of a gradual acceptance of sin.
- A key difference between mortal sin and venial sin is the disposition of the person involved. Venial sin does not deprive one wholly of the life of grace and of friendship with God; it is not a free and conscious decision to do what is gravely wrong. No human action, however evil it might appear to be, can be a mortal sin in the strict formal sense, with all the grave consequences that implies, unless the action is done with an awareness that it is evil and a willingness to do it despite that.
- The consequences of venial sin:
 - A loss of many graces from the Holy Spirit,
 - Has the effects of diminishing the fervor of our charity,
 - Weighs down our progress in the interior life,
 - Makes it harder for us to practice the virtues,
 - Predisposes a person to mortal sin,
 - Makes a person insensitive to things divine,
 - Prevents a greater increase of glory for all eternity.
- The fight against venial sin:
 - We need to avail ourselves of supernatural weapons, human desire is not sufficient,
 - We must be determined to ask God for a greater sensitivity to sin, and a deeper sense of sin,
 - We must have confidence in the Lord's promise to hear our prayers,
 - We must foster a personal commitment to reparation, contrition, and piety.
- Effects on the soul:
 - Same as a wound on the body,
 - Everyone seeks to avoid bodily injuries,
 - If we are wounded, we get taken care of as soon as possible,
 - While physical wounds heal on their own at times, spiritual wounds do not heal with time. The soul is healed only by contrition.
 - Spiritual wounds are not just personal wounds, but have an effect on those around us and society in general,
 - Contrition always attracts God's mercy. Merely excusing ourselves does nothing to heal our wounds.
 - True sorrow for our sins does not mean we have to feel emotional pain. Sorrow is an act of the will, not an outburst of emotion.
 - We must face Christ. Contrition serves to strengthen our friendship with God. This is why our errors should not make us discouraged, but allow us to renew our encounter with Christ.

- Biblical Examples;
 - Peter
 - Judas
 - Nicodemus
- Application to the rule of life:
 - It is critical to practice the daily Examen as a means of becoming more sensitive and aware of venial sins that appear only as “weaknesses.”

Love for Frequent Confession

- Who will repair us?
 - The story of the violinist.
 - We are poor instruments that are frequently out of tune.
 - We try to tune ourselves, but to our own pitch. We must allow God to tune us. He has perfect pitch! We must allow God to play us; he is the virtuoso.
 - Sometimes he acts directly on the soul, at other times through the sacraments.
 - He also acts through the agency of other persons, events, and so on.
 - It is in the Sacrament of Penance that the Lord restores us to the life of grace. In this sacrament the Lord repairs and tunes us.
- Frequent confession and the fight against Lukewarmness:
 - As a result of a good and frequent confession, lukewarmness will not be able to take root in us.
 - Confession compels us to look at ourselves seriously to look at our sins and faults.
 - Confession helps us to apply ourselves with full determination to improving our lives.
 - The direction of our confessor urges us anew with encouragement to continue along the way of virtue.
 - The grace of the Sacrament of Penance depends upon our disposition. Like the sun which radiates equally, it warms some things more than others.
- What is a “good” confession? (St. Thomas Aquinas)
 - Simple, pure, faithful, frequent, clear, discrete, voluntary, without boasting, integral, secret, sorrowful, prompt, firm, self-accusatory, disposing one to obedience.
 - We should say what has to be said without becoming unduly wordy.
 - We must do our best to avoid impersonal confessions, ones that are vague, wordy and full of generalities.
 - Confession should renew our sense of hope.
 - Repeated sin should be dealt with as water to a ship. When it comes, keep bailing!
- Application to our rule of life:
 - Regular monthly confession ensures the grace that is necessary to both avoid sin and to overcome our habitual weaknesses.