

How to Be a Good Catholic



R. J. M. I.

By

The Precious Blood of Jesus Christ,
The Grace of the God of the Holy Catholic Church,
The Mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Our Lady of Good Counsel and Crusher of Heretics,
The Protection of Saint Joseph, Patriarch of the Holy Family,
The Intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel
and the cooperation of

Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

To Jesus through Mary

*Júdica me, Deus, et discérne causam meam de gente non sancta:
ab hómine iníquo, et dolóso érue me*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Return ye every man from his wicked way, and make your ways good.
...Make straight the path for thy feet, and all thy ways shall be established.
Decline not to the right hand, nor to the left; turn away thy foot from evil.
(Jeremias 35:15; Proverbs 4:26-27)

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Most Catholics Go to Hell

Being Catholic is the first and necessary step toward salvation, but it is not the only one. As a Catholic, your salvation is not guaranteed. Just as good works without the Catholic faith is dead (cannot give you eternal salvation), the Catholic *“faith without works is [also] dead.”* (Ja. 2:26)

Jesus says that only few men attain eternal salvation. He says, *“Enter ye in at the narrow gate... How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!”* (Mt. 7:13-14) These few men are only Catholics. The Athanasian Creed of 361 infallibly teaches that *“Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all, keep the Catholic faith.”*¹

But not all Catholics will be saved. Jesus also says that only few Catholics attain eternal salvation. Commanding His disciples to evangelize, He says, *“Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage [evangelize]. And his servants going forth into the ways gathered together all that they found, both bad and good, and the marriage was filled with guests [good and bad Catholics]. And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment [a bad Catholic]. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness [hell]: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called [Catholics], but few are chosen [saved].”* (Mt. 22:9-14) Jesus, speaking of the Catholic congregation at Sardis, says, *“Thou hast a few names...which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white because they are worthy.”* (Apoc. 3:4) That is why St. Paul tells Catholics to *“work out your salvation in fear and trembling,”* (Phil. 2:12) and St. Peter says, *“If the just man [a good Catholic] shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”* (1 Pt. 4:18)

Imprimatured Book: Few Are Saved: “One day Saint John Chrysostom, preaching in the cathedral in Constantinople and considering these proportions, could not help but shudder in horror and ask, ‘Out of this great number of people, how many do you think will be saved?’ And not waiting for an answer, he added, ‘Among so many thousands of people, we would not find a hundred who are saved, and I even doubt for the one hundred.’ What a dreadful thing! The great Saint believed that out of so many people, barely one hundred would be saved; and even then he was not sure of that number. What will happen to you who are listening to me? Great God, I cannot think of it without shuddering! Brothers, the problem of salvation is a very difficult thing; for according to the maxims of the theologians, when an end demands great efforts, few only attain it.”

You should now have an idea of how very, very, very few Catholics attain eternal salvation! This truth ought to rid you of any false confidence and make you aware of the fact that every day you live, your salvation is in danger. Dear Catholic, if every day you do not sincerely work, by God’s grace, to obtain salvation, you will lose it. Salvation, then, comes only by faith and persevering labor. Jesus says, *“Labour... for that which*

¹ See RJMI book *The Salvation Dogma*.

endureth unto life everlasting.” (Jn. 6:27) St. Paul says, *“Labour as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”* (2 Tim. 2:3) *“We labour, whether absent or present, to please him.”* (2 Cor. 5:9) *“Being mindful of the work of your faith and labour and charity, and of the enduring of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (1 Thess. 1:3) And St. Peter says, *“Wherefore, brethren, labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election. For doing these things, you shall not sin at any time.”* (2 Pt. 1:10) The solicitude of the devils for our destruction should make us solicitous in laboring for salvation. For Catholics to gain eternal life, St. Paul says that they must finish and win the race for the salvation of their immortal souls. He says, *“Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.”* (1 Cor. 9:24) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, “It is true in our case many obtain the crown for which we strive, but everyone is in danger of losing it and so must use all his endeavors to obtain it.”

Bad and Fallen-Away Catholics Are on the Road to Hell

Insincere conversions

Jesus compares insincere converts to seeds that fall upon shallow ground. He says, *“Some [seeds] fell upon a rock: and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away because it had no moisture. ...Now they upon the rock are they who when they hear receive the word with joy: and these have no roots; for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away.”* (Lk. 8:6, 13) Because of an insincere heart, the seeds (the Word of God, the Catholic faith) do not fall into the depth of the ground (the heart) but only its perimeter; thus it has no root and quickly withers. Therefore, if your conversion is not sincere, you will soon commit a mortal sin. You will mortally sin against the moral commandments and become a bad Catholic, or against the faith and become a heretic, or against charity and become a schismatic. In the latter two cases you would become a fallen-away Catholic, which means you are outside the Catholic Church and no longer Catholic.

Many converts and other Catholics are insincere

Sadly, in the history of God’s Catholic Church, many converts, if not most, were insincere. Shortly after St. Paul had converted many people in a town, he exhorted them to remain faithful because many had become bad or fallen away. His Galatian converts were quickly seduced by Judaizing heretics who attempted to make the New Law void by bringing the converts and other Catholics under the Old Law. St. Paul, exhorting the Galatians, says, *“O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth, crucified among you?”* (Gal. 3:1)

Almost all of St. Paul’s converts in Asia Minor became bad or fell away, having been led astray by the leading men. St. Paul says, *“Thou knowest this, that all they who are in Asia are turned away from me: of whom are Phigellus and Hermogenes.”* (2 Tim. 1:15-16) A Catholic commentary on this passage indicates that these two leaders were

insincere converts. It says, “These two, whom St. Paul says were the chief of those in Asia Minor, who had departed from the faith, had become his followers by deceit.”

St. Paul speaks of two other leaders who fell away and subverted others. He says, *“Their speech spreadeth like a canker, of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus, who have erred from the truth...and have subverted the faith of some.”* (2 Tim. 2:17-18)

He warns St. Timothy, bishop of Ephesus, that many under Timothy’s care would fall away. He says, *“There shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables.”* (2 Tim. 4:3-4)

St. Paul warns his bishops that after his death bishops and laymen would fall away and the bad bishops would draw their flocks away after them. He exhorts the bishops to *“Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Spirit hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God... I know that after my departure ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”* (Acts 20:28-30)

And St. Peter, the first pope, warns the whole flock (bishops, priests, and laymen) to beware because many among them are bad or fallen-away Catholics. He says, *“But there were also false prophets among the people [laymen], even as there shall be among you [bishops and priests] lying teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition and deny the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their riotousnesses, through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”* (2 Pt. 2:1-2)

So we see that at the birth of the Church, when one would expect all to remain faithful because of the first-hand knowledge many had of Jesus and the Apostles and the miracles they performed, many, nevertheless, were bad or fallen away. And this pattern, Catholics becoming bad or falling away, has been repeated during the whole New Covenant era. Even during one of the most joyous times of the liturgical year, Resurrection time, when converts are being brought into the Church by baptism or abjuration and Catholics have confessed their sins and done rigorous penance during Lent, there is an underlying, sobering sadness evoked by the experience of many past converts and repentant sinners who quickly became bad or fell away:

Imprimatured Book: “There may be persons who believe in and acknowledge Jesus, yet whose hearts are not changed. Oh the hardness of man’s heart! Sinners and worldlings are now crowding round the confessional; they have faith and they confess their sins, but the Church has no confidence in their repentance! She knows that in a very short time they will have relapsed into the same sinful state in which they were before they went to confession. These souls are divided between God and the world, and she trembles as she thinks on the danger they are about to incur by receiving Holy Communion without the preparation of a true conversion.”

This behavior is not unique to the New Covenant era. Many, if not most, of God’s chosen people during the Old Testament era were bad or fallen away. We know what happened in the days of Noe when almost all men were bad, except Noe and his family of seven. And after the flood most of God’s chosen people during the Old Covenant era were also bad or fallen away. After having witnessed the most stupendous miracles, most of the Israelites, waiting at the bottom of Mount Sinai for Moses to return with the Ten Commandments, fell away from God. Speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, God says, “I

see that this people is stiffnecked... Arise, and go down from hence quickly: for thy people, which thou hast brought out of Egypt, have quickly forsaken the way that thou hast shewn them..." (Deut. 9:13, 12) They fell away from God quickly in spite of all the miracles they had recently witnessed.

Just before Moses died and before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, Moses told them that many of them would become bad or fall away. He said, *"Take this book [deposit of faith and morals], and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God that it may be there for a testimony against thee. For I know thy obstinacy and thy most stiff neck. While I am yet living and going in with you, you have always been rebellious against the Lord: how much more when I shall be dead? Gather unto me all the ancients of your tribes, and your doctors, and I will speak these words in their hearing, and will call heaven and earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death you will do wickedly and will quickly turn aside from the way that I have commanded you: and evils shall come upon you in the latter times, when you shall do evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him by the works of your hands."* (Deut. 31:26-29)

These Israelites could have accused Moses of presumption for having no proof to base his accusation upon because they all claimed to be good Israelites and had not yet committed any public sins. But Moses had two proofs: God, who reads all hearts, told Moses that most of the Israelites would rebel: *"And the Lord said to Moses: Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and this people rising up will go a fornicating after strange gods in the land to which it goeth in to dwell: there will they forsake me, and will make void the covenant which I have made with them... I know their thoughts, and what they are about to do this day before that I bring them into the land which I have promised them. ...For I will bring them into the land, for which I swore to their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey. And when they have eaten and are full and fat, they will turn away...and will despise me, and make void my covenant."* (Deut. 31:16, 21, 20) And even if God had not told Moses, experience proves that most of God's chosen people do not remain faithful, as Moses witnessed himself in their many rebellions against him, which he testified to when he told the Israelites, *"For I know thy obstinacy and thy most stiff neck. While I am yet living and going in with you, you have always been rebellious against the Lord: how much more when I shall be dead?"* (Deut. 31:27)

During the reign of the good King Josias, the book of the law that was lost for 100 years was found in the first Temple, which was being repaired. When the king read it to the people, they then knew for certain why God had severely punished them, for they had broken His law. The king vowed to obey all that was written in the book and demanded the same of the people, and they obeyed. They abjured, confessed their sins, and made a profession of faith by promising to obey all that was written in the book, all of God's commandments. We read from the second book of Paralipomenon: King Josias said to the priests: *"Go, and pray to the Lord for me, and for the remnant of Israel, and Juda, concerning all the words of this book which is found: for the great wrath of the Lord hath fallen upon us because our fathers have not kept the words of the Lord to do all things that are written in this book. ...And he called together all the ancients of Juda and Jerusalem, and went up to the house of the Lord, and all the men of Juda, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites, and all the people from the least to the greatest. And the king read in their hearing, in the house of the Lord, all the words of the book. And standing up in his tribunal, he made a covenant before the Lord to walk*

after him, and keep his commandments, and testimonies, and justifications with all his heart, and with all his soul, and to do the things that were written in that book which he had read. And he adjured all that were found in Jerusalem and Benjamin to do the same: and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of the Lord the God of their fathers. And Josias took away all the abominations out of all the countries of the children of Israel: and made all that were left in Israel, to serve the Lord their God. As long as he lived they departed not from the Lord the God of their fathers.” (2 Par. 34:21, 29-33) While King Josias was speaking these words, even though the people abjured and professed the faith, he knew they would quickly fall away after his death because a prophetess had said so beforehand: *“Olda the prophetess...answered them [the priests]: Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel: Tell the man [King Josias] that sent you to me: Thus saith the Lord: Behold I will bring evils upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, and all the curses that are written in this book which they read before the king of Juda. Because they have forsaken me and have sacrificed to strange gods to provoke me to wrath with all the works of their hands, therefore my wrath shall fall upon this place and shall not be quenched. But as to the king of Juda that sent you to beseech the Lord, thus shall you say to him: Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel: Because thou hast heard the words of this book, and thy heart was softened, and thou hast humbled thyself in the sight of God for the things that are spoken against this place and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and reverencing my face hast rent thy garments and wept before me: I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. For now I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be brought to thy tomb in peace: and thy eyes shall not see all the evil that I will bring upon this place and the inhabitants thereof. They therefore reported to the king all that she had said.” (2 Par. 34:22-28)*

Indeed, after the people had abjured and seemed sincere, and after King Josias had died, *“The chief of the priests and the people wickedly transgressed according to all the abominations of the Gentiles, and they defiled the house of the Lord which he had sanctified to himself in Jerusalem. And the Lord the God of their fathers sent to them, by the hand of his messengers, rising early and daily admonishing them, because he spared his people and his dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused the prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, and there was no remedy.” (2 Par. 36:14-16)* So we see that once again God’s chosen people, who had recently abjured and confessed their sins, rebelled and became bad.

The culmination of their punishment was exile for most into Babylon and the destruction of the Temple, as Jeremias had prophesied. Jeremias then warned the few that remained to stay in the land of Juda, to submit to the yoke of Babylon, and to go not into Egypt for help. At first the people vowed to obey the word of God as spoken by Jeremias: *“They said to Jeremias the prophet: Let our supplication fall before thee, and pray thou for us to the Lord thy God for all this remnant, for we are left but a few of many, as thy eyes do behold us. And let the Lord thy God shew us the way by which we may walk, and the thing that we must do. And Jeremias the prophet said to them: I have heard you; behold I will pray to the Lord your God according to your words, and whatsoever thing he shall answer me I will declare it to you and I will hide nothing from you. And they said to Jeremias: The Lord be witness between us of truth and faithfulness if we do not according to everything for which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us. Whether it be good or evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee, that it*

may be well with us when we shall hearken to the voice of the Lord our God. Now after ten days, the word of the Lord came to Jeremias. And he called...all the people from the least to the greatest. And he said to them: Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your supplications before him: If you will be quiet and remain in this land, I will build you up and not pull you down; I will plant you and not pluck you up, for now I am appeased for the evil that I have done to you. ...If you set your faces to go into Egypt and enter in to dwell there: The sword which you fear shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine whereof you are afraid shall cleave to you in Egypt and there you shall die. ...This is the word of the Lord concerning you, O ye remnant of Juda: Go ye not into Egypt; know certainly that I have adjured you this day.” (Jer. 42:2-7, 15-16, 19)

Even though the people seemed sincere and willing to obey God’s command, Jeremias knew they would not. Just after speaking the above words, Jeremias told the people, *“You have deceived your own souls, for you sent me to the Lord our God, saying: Pray for us to the Lord our God; and according to all that the Lord our God shall say to thee, so declare unto us and we will do it. And now I have declared it to you this day, and you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God with regard to all the things for which he hath sent me to you. Now therefore know certainly that you shall die by the sword, and by famine, and by pestilence in the place to which you desire to go to dwell there. ...And it came to pass, that when Jeremias had made an end of speaking to the people all the words of the Lord their God...all the proud men made answer, saying to Jeremias: Thou tellest a lie; the Lord our God hath not sent thee, saying: Go not into Egypt to dwell there...and all the people obeyed not the voice of the Lord to remain in the land of Juda. ...And they went into the land of Egypt, for they obeyed not the voice of the Lord.”* (Jer. 42:20-22; 43:1-2, 4, 7) O, how fickle men are! Not only from one year to the next, or one month to the next, but even from one hour to the next they change their hearts. As Jeremias had prophesied, God destroyed the people after they entered the land of Egypt.

Moses, King Josias, and Jeremias knew, not only from God but also from experience, that most of God’s chosen people are bad no matter how good they think they are. Dear reader, can you not see the pattern, most of God’s chosen people proclaiming their faithfulness and obedience to God and thinking they are good while harboring rebellious sentiments in their hearts that eventually become manifest by evil deeds. Now you know why St. John, when speaking of those who professed belief in Jesus, said, *“Many believed in his name, seeing his signs which he did. Jesus did not trust himself unto them...for he knew what was in man.”* (Jn. 2:23-25)

Catholic Commentary on Jn. 2:23: **“Unto them:** The Fathers generally understand these words to refer to those who believed in him... Though they believed in him, he did not trust himself to them because he knew them. He knew their weakness, their inconstancy, their unsteadiness. He knew they would abandon him on the first occasion and that his Passion, his cross, his doctrines, would be a subject of scandal.”

Hence, Jesus did not completely trust even the apostles, although eleven of them were ultimately of good will. What, then, is to be said of the others, the majority? *“If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”* (1 Pt. 4:18)

Take heed, recent converts and other Catholics, to these examples from the Old and New Testament eras. Just because you think you are a good Catholic does not mean you are. You could be a bad or fallen-away Catholic. King Solomon wisely teaches that *“Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred... Who can say: My heart is clean, I am pure from sin? ...There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness. ...There is a way that seemeth to a man right, and the ends thereof lead to death.”* (Ectes. 9:1; Prv. 20:9, 30:12, 16:25) Sadly, these words applied to Solomon himself. He disobeyed God’s commandments by not bridling his lust, which ultimately led him into sins against the faith, sins of idolatry. He went from being a good to a bad and then to a fallen-away Israelite. St. Paul did not know for certain if he himself was a good Catholic. He said, *“I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet I am not hereby justified.”* (1 Cor. 4:4)

Catholic Commentary on 1 Cor. 4:4: **“I am not conscious:** This great apostle of the Gentiles, though conscious to himself of no breach of duty, still does not dare to call himself just. ...If this privileged apostle was afraid to form any judgment of his own heart and thoughts, whether they were pure or not,... how presumptuous are they who dare to pronounce on their election and predestination!”

Invalid Council of Trent, Decree on Justification: “Rash presumption of predestination is to be avoided. No one, moreover, so long as he lives in this mortal state, ought so far to presume concerning the secret mystery of divine predestination, as to decide for certain that he is assuredly in the number of the predestined (Can. 15), as if it were true that he who is justified either cannot sin any more (Can. 23), or if he shall have sinned, that he ought to promise himself an assured reformation.”²

Oh, but how many so-called Catholics in these latter days of the Great Apostasy arrogantly and presumptuously believe they are saved and will not bear with anyone who denounces them for their mortal sins. Yeah, most are so bad that they deny the very Catholic obligation to denounce sin and sinners, or follow a heretical theology that makes this duty impossible. As a result, they believe they are so good and so saved that they are above reproach. That is a sure sign of pride and reprobation. Dear reader, avoid these people like a deadly plague if you want a hope to save your soul!

And even if you are a good Catholic, you must constantly be on guard so that you do not become a bad or fallen-away Catholic, as happens with most of God’s chosen people. St. Paul feared that he would become a castaway if he did not mortify his body and thus subdue his flesh. He said, *“I chastise my body and bring it into subjection lest perhaps when I have preached to others I myself should become a castaway.”* (1 Cor. 9:27) Even though he was a good Catholic, he knew that if he disobeyed this one commandment of God, physical acts of mortification, his flesh would rule him and lead him into mortal sin and thus he would become a bad or fallen-away Catholic.

Dear reader, examine your conscience honestly and with humility in the light of all of God’s commandments to see if you are a good, bad, or fallen-away Catholic. God’s grace and this book will help you do that.

² *Invalid Council of Trent*, On Justification, Chap. 12; D. 805.

Bad motives cause insincere conversions

Insincere hearts, being ruled by bad motives, cause insincere conversions. *“Thou camest to the Lord wickedly, and thy heart is full of guile and deceit.”* (Eccus. 1:40) What, then, are some of these bad motives? Some people want miracles or signs-and-wonders while not intending to obey all of God’s commandments. Some only want consolations and comforts while not intending to carry the cross, to suffer by acts of penance and mortification. Some, like those who join social clubs, join the Catholic Church primarily for human companionship while not intending to make God their primary and, if necessary, only companion. Some want to please their Catholic relatives while not really wanting to become Catholic. Some, like Simon Magus, want fame, fortune, or power. Some, because of vanity and pride like the Pharisees, want to appear holy before men while not doing the work and having the true dispositions that make men holy. Some want to continue sinning while quelling their guilty consciences by abusing the sacrament of penance and the Holy Mass. And some, the lazy and slothful, want the Catholic Church to do all the work for them, thinking they can be saved by the mere fact that they are Catholics without having to work out their salvation. And some infiltrate the Church to subvert Her.

Sincere Catholics could become insincere

Even sincere Catholics could fall and become insincere and thus have the same bad motives and commit the same mortal sins as insincere converts. God, speaking through the prophet Ezechiel, says, *“The justice of the just shall not deliver him in what day soever he shall sin... Yea, if I shall say to the just that he shall surely live, and he, trusting in his justice, commit iniquity: all his justices shall be forgotten, and his iniquity, which he hath committed, in the same shall he die.”* (Ez. 33:12-13) Kings Saul and Solomon started out sincere and highly chosen by God; yet they fell away and became insincere, as did many others.

Jesus says, *“Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.”* (Lk. 12:48) That is why St. Peter teaches that Catholics who become bad are worse than sinners who were never Catholic. He speaks of a sincere Catholic who becomes insincere by falling into mortal sin. He says, *“For if flying from the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they be again entangled in them and overcome, their latter state is become unto them worse than the former. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them. For that of the true proverb has happened to them: The dog is returned to his vomit; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”* (2 Pt. 2:20-22)

Bad Catholics, If Not Punished, Cause Scandal

Bad Catholics, if not punished, scandalize God, His Church, other Catholics, and non-Catholics. Bad Catholics profess that they know the Catholic God, but in their hearts and actions they deny Him. Jesus says, *“This people honoureth me with their lips, but*

their heart is far from me.” (Mk. 7:6) St. Paul says, “*They profess that they know God; but in their works they deny him, being abominable and incredulous and to every good work reprobate.*” (Titus 1:16) God, speaking through King David, says, “*But to the sinner God hath said: Why dost thou declare my justices and take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hast hated discipline and hast cast my words behind thee. If thou didst see a thief, thou didst run with him; and with adulterers thou hast been a partaker.*” (Ps. 49:16-18) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, “The world is full of such hypocrites, who have God in their mouths but not in their hearts.”

Besides having committed sins that made them bad Catholics, they also sin by causing scandal if their sins are public. They scandalize God, His Catholic Church, other Catholics, and non-Catholics.

Scandalize God and His Church

The worst crime caused by the scandal of bad Catholics is blasphemy by giving God and His Catholic Church a bad name in the eyes of others. If the sins of bad Catholics go unpunished, non-Catholics will think that the Catholic God and His Church authorize, encourage, and defend sin and sinners.

Scandalize other Catholics

The scandal of bad Catholics also endangers the salvation of other Catholics, especially children. Jesus says, “*Whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me: it were better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck, and he were cast into the sea.*” (Mk. 9:41) St. Paul refers to public sins and sinners as leaven that corrupts the whole lump. He says, “*It is absolutely heard that there is fornication among you [Catholics] ...know you not that a little leaven corrupteth the whole lump?*” (1 Cor. 5:1-6) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, “Your glorying is not good when you suffer such a scandal among you... A little leaven corrupteth the whole mass; a public scandal, when not punished, is of dangerous consequence.”

Scandal would arise if a public fornicator were not publicly and properly denounced and punished; and, as a result, fornication would spread throughout the Catholic community. Catholics would begin to think it is not a sin or at least not a serious sin; and, even worse, God would withdraw His grace from the community for allowing His name to be blasphemed by not properly denouncing and punishing the sinner. The same applies to all public sins.

Scandalize non-Catholics

“The thing you do is not good: why walk you not in the fear of our God, that we be not exposed to the reproaches of the Gentiles our enemies?”
(2 Esdras (Nehemias) 5:9)

The scandal of bad Catholics also prevents the conversion of non-Catholics. A good-willed non-Catholic, one who is wholeheartedly searching for the true God and striving to live by the law upon his heart, would never convert to a God or a Church that he

perceives authorizes, encourages, and defends sins that violate the law upon his heart or is hypocritical by not practicing what He or it teaches.

St. Paul teaches that the scandal of bad Catholics caused by sins such as adultery dishonors and blasphemes the God of the Catholic Church in the eyes of non-Catholics, thus prohibiting their conversion. He says, “*Thou art called a Jew [Catholic] and retest in the law [Catholicism] and makest thy boast of God [the God of the Catholic Church] ...being instructed by the law ...Thou that sayest men should not commit adultery, committest adultery. Thou that makest thy boast of the law, by transgression of the law dishonourest God. (For the name of God through you is blasphemed among the Gentiles [non-Catholics])*” (Rom. 2:17-18, 22-24) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, “[Rom. 2:24] The apostle here repeats the reproaches which the prophets had repeated so often before, that the Jews, by the contrast between their lives and the sanctity of their religion, had been the cause of that religion and worship becoming the ridicule and laughing-stock of the Gentile world. ...Which also bears very heavy upon many Christians of present day; who by their profession believe the truth of the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic faith, but by their conduct belie the same, leading lives unworthy of pagans.”

For example, a pagan who keeps the law in his heart shames and accuses the bad Catholic who does not. It gives non-Catholics the occasion to say, “Look how much better that pagan is than that Catholic adulterer who says he has the true God and religion. From the looks of it, the pagan who does not commit adultery has the true God and true religion, not that Catholic adulterer.” As a result, the God of the Catholic Church and the Catholic religion are ridiculed in the eyes of non-Catholics. Priests should be holy, that they may give glory and not dishonor to that God whose ministers they are: *They shall be holy to their God, and shall not profane His name.* (Lev. 21:6) ...By bad priests, who are his ministers, Jesus Christ is covered with shame. St. John Chrysostom says, that of unholy priests the Gentiles might say, “What kind of a God have those that do such things? Would he bear with them if he did not approve of their conduct?” Were the Chinese or the Indians to see a priest of Jesus Christ leading a scandalous life, they might say, “How can we believe that the God whom such priests preach is the true God? Were he the true God, how could he bear with them in their wickedness without being a party to their crimes?”

Scandal is prevented if the Church's laws are obeyed

The Church infallibly teaches that bad Catholics who cause scandal must be publicly and properly denounced and punished, which includes properly avoiding them until they confess their sins and amend their lives. St. Jude says, “*Execute judgment upon all, ...reprove all the ungodly for all the works of their ungodliness.*” (Jude 1:15) St. Paul says, “*Them that [publicly] sin, reprove before all.*” (1 Tim. 5:20) “*Mark them who make dissensions and offences...and avoid them.*” (Rom. 16:17) “*Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*” (Eph. 5:11) “*I have written to you, not to keep company if any man that is named a brother [a Catholic] be a fornicator, or covetous, or a server of idols, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such a one, not so much as to eat.*” (1 Cor. 5:11) “*And we charge you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the tradition which they have received of us. ...And if any*

man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and do not keep company with him...” (2 Thess. 3:6, 14) If this is done, then the scandal is eliminated and good would come from it. Instead of Catholics’ sins causing scandal, the proper denunciation and punishment of them gives glory to the Catholic God, His Church, and His religion. It would also edify Catholics and prevent them from becoming infected. And it would also foster non-Catholics’ confidence in the Catholic God, as well as in His Church and religion, and thus aid their conversion when they see that the Catholic God does not authorize, encourage, and defend sin and sinners; instead, He denounces and punishes them. They would also see that He is not a hypocrite because He practices what He teaches; that He is an impartial judge because He justly denounces and punishes all sinners, even His own children, when they sin. For one of the traits of the true God is that He is the respecter of no persons. The Book of Wisdom says, *“For God will not except any man’s person, neither will he stand in awe of any man’s greatness; for he made the little and the great, and he hath equally care of all. But a greater punishment is ready for the more mighty.”* (Wis. 6:8-9) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, “He punishes all as they deserve.” St. Paul says, *“There is no respect of persons with God.”* (Rom. 2:11) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, “God, as a just judge, will not have any respect to their persons, but punishes or rewards both Jews and Gentiles according to their good or bad works.”

When Catholics properly condemn sin and properly denounce and punish sinners, non-Catholics see the light of true Catholicism in relation to its stand against sin and sinners, shedding light upon their evilness, which edifies Catholics and enlightens non-Catholics. This is what St. Paul means when he says, *“But all things that are reprov’d are made manifest by the light; for all that is made manifest is light.”* (Eph. 5:13) In this way, the great evil of sin is made manifest by the light of the truth. Sin and sinners are seen for what they truly are.

Dear reader, do you truly understand the grave obligation of all Catholics to properly condemn sins, properly denounce sinners, properly punish them if possible, and call them to repent? The Catholic Church teaches that “the faithful are bound to profess their faith openly whenever under the circumstances silence, evasion, or their manner of acting would otherwise implicitly amount to a denial of the faith, or would involve contempt of religion, an offense to God, or scandal to their neighbor.” Professing the Catholic faith includes condemning all sins against faith and morals and denouncing all sinners.

If Catholics do not fulfill this obligation when the situation demands it, they not only cause scandal but also share in the guilt of the sin they do not properly condemn and the sinner they do not properly denounce and punish. The *Catholic Catechism* teaches that “We may either cause or share the guilt of another’s sin...by concealment and by silence.” St. John Chrysostom says, “What an evil! Covering up the rottenness of another! For the Lord says that you make yourself a sharer of the retribution that will come to them, and rightly too!”³ For further study, see RJMI books *Sins of Omission* and *On Judging*.

³ “On Respect Due the Church and Sacred Mysteries,” *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, 63:623; *Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, 1955, II:189.

Good Catholics Obey God's Commandments

MOSES:

“Keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways.”
(Deuteronomy 8:6)



JESUS CHRIST:

“Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets.
I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For amen I say unto you, till
heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law
till all be fulfilled.”
(St. Matthew 5:17-18)

I hope you understand that although being Catholic is your first, necessary step on the road to salvation, it is not your only one. There are other steps you must take until the day you die if you want to be saved. Keeping the Catholic faith and living a Catholic life encompass these other necessary steps. The road is long, as long as you live, and the way is straight, as straight as all of God's commandments. Moses says, “*Love the Lord thy God and observe his precepts and ceremonies, his judgments and commandments at all times.*” (Deut. 11:1) King Solomon says, “*Make straight the path for thy feet, and all thy ways shall be established.*” (Prv. 4:26) And Jesus says, “*How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!*” (Mt. 7:14)

If you violate one commandment, it is as if you have violated them all. St. James says, “*And whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all.*” (Ja. 2:10)

Catholic Commentary on Ja. 2:10: “**Guilty of all:** That is, he becomes a transgressor of the law in such a manner that the observing of all other points will not avail him to salvation; for he despises the lawgiver and breaks through the great and general commandment of charity, even by one mortal sin. For all the precepts of the law are to be considered as one total and entire law, and as it were a chain of precepts, where, by breaking one link of this chain, the whole chain is broken, or the integrity of the law consisting of a collection of precepts. A sinner, therefore, by a grievous offence against any one precept, incurs eternal punishment.”

A Catholic who dies with the guilt of one mortal sin will be damned to hell, whether it be for murder, adultery, homosexuality, masturbation, feminism, alcoholism, drug addiction, gluttony, lying, stealing, calumny, detraction, evil thoughts, hatred of men, greed, covetousness, envy, lack of charity, sins of omission, disobedience where obedience is due, etc.

Bad Catholics do not love and know God

Jesus teaches us how to identify Catholics who truly love God among those who say they love Him. He says, *"If you love me, keep my commandments... He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. ...He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. ...If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love."* (Jn. 14:15, 21, 24; 15:10) The love of God and obedience to His commandments are inseparable. God, speaking through Moses, says, *"I am the Lord thy God...shewing mercy...to them that love me and keep my commandments."* (Deut. 5:9-10) Therefore, if a Catholic does not keep all of God's commandments, he does not truly love God no matter how pious or holy he may seem. Jesus also says that only those who keep His commandments are His friends. He says, *"You are my friends if you do the things that I command you."* (Jn. 15:14) The beloved St. John says that you do not even know God if you do not keep all of His commandments. He says, *"And by this we know that we have known him, if we keep his commandments. He who saith that he knoweth him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."* (1 Jn. 2:3-4)

Only Catholics who keep all of God's commandments are a threat to Satan and his fallen angels and his human minions. The Book of the Apocalypse says, *"And the dragon [Satan] was angry against the woman [Mary and the Catholic Church] and went to make war with the rest of her seed [Catholics] who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."* (Apoc. 12:17) Therefore only good Catholics, because they keep all of God's commandments, will win this war, and some as martyrs. Everyone else is under the power of Satan.

Obedience to God's commandments is an eternal decree

Obedience to all of God's commandments has always been required for salvation: Adam and Eve disobeyed only one of God's commandments by eating the forbidden fruit and were cast out of Paradise and sentenced to death.

Abraham was blessed and saved by God because he obeyed all of God's commandments. God said, *"Because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my precepts and commandments, and observed my ceremonies and laws... you shall see Abraham... in the kingdom of God."* (Gen. 26:5; Lk. 13:28)

Moses, speaking for God, promises blessings to those who obey all of God's commandments, and curses to those who do not. He says, *"Keep my commandments and do them. I am the Lord. ...But if you will not hear me nor do all my commandments,... I will set my face against you, and you shall fall."* (Lev. 22:31; 26:14, 17) *"Hear, O Israel, and observe to do the things which the Lord hath commanded thee, that it may be well with thee... Keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways, and fear him... Behold I set forth in your sight this day a blessing and a curse: A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day: A curse, if you obey not the commandments of the Lord your God."* (Deut. 6:3; 8:6; 11:26-28)

Josue, Moses' successor, teaches and enforces this eternal decree. He says, *"Observe attentively, and in work fulfill the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you: that you love the Lord your God, and walk in all his ways, and keep all his commandments, and cleave to him, and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. ...As the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses*

command Josue, and he accomplished all: he left not one thing undone of all the commandments which the Lord had commanded Moses.” (Josue 22:5; 11:15)

Tobias passed this decree to his son. He tells him, *“All the days of thy life have God in thy mind: and take heed thou never consent to sin, nor transgress the commandments of the Lord our God.” (Tob. 4:6)*

Job obeyed this eternal decree. He says, *“I have not departed from the commandments.” (Job 23:12)*

King David repeats this eternal decree in his psalms. He says, *“Blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who search his testimonies, that seek him with their whole heart. For they that work iniquity have not walked in his ways. Thou hast commanded thy commandments to be kept most diligently. ...They are cursed who decline from thy commandments. ...I cried unto thee, save me: that I may keep thy commandments.” (Ps. 118:1-4, 21, 146)*

King Solomon passed this eternal decree to his sons and subjects. God, speaking through Solomon, says, *“My son, keep my words, and lay up my precepts with thee. Son, keep my commandments, and thou shalt live: and my law as the apple of thy eye: Bind it upon thy fingers, write it upon the tables of thy heart. ...Blessed are they that keep my ways.” (Prv. 7:1-3; 8:32)*

Jesus the son of Sirach of Jerusalem, a very wise father, says, *“If thou wilt keep the commandments and perform acceptable fidelity forever, they shall preserve thee. He that believeth God taketh heed to the commandments: and he that trusteth in him shall fare never the worse.” (Eccus. 15:16; 32:28)*

All the prophets proclaimed God’s blessings to those who obey His commandments, and curses to those who do not:

Isaias: *“O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments: thy peace had been as a river, and thy justice as the waves of the sea.” (Isa. 48:18)*

Jeremias: *“Hear ye the words of the covenant, and do them... Cursed is the man that shall not hearken to the words of this covenant... Because you...have not walked in his law, and in his commandments, and in his testimonies: therefore are these evils come upon you.” (Jer. 11:6, 3; 44:23)*

Baruch: *“This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law, that is forever: all they that keep it shall come to life: but they that have forsaken it, to death.” (Bar. 4:1)*

Ezechiel: *“Thus saith the Lord God: Because you...have not walked in my commandments and have not kept my judgments... Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold I come against thee. ...If a man...hath walked in my commandments, and kept my judgments to do truth: he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God.” (Ez. 5:7-8; 18:9)*

Daniel: *“For we have sinned and committed iniquity, departing from thee; and we have trespassed in all things. And we have not hearkened to thy commandments, nor have we observed nor done as thou hadst commanded us that it might go well with us. Wherefore all that thou hast brought upon us, and every thing that thou hast done to us, thou hast done in true judgment: And thou hast delivered us into the hands of our enemies.” (Dan. 3:29-32)*

Amos: *“Thus saith the Lord: For three crimes of Juda, and for four, I will not convert him: because he hath cast away the law of the Lord and hath not kept his commandments.” (Amos 2:4)*

Jesus Christ, the Prophet of prophets, the son of David, the long-awaited Messiah and Redeemer, the Second Divine Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the very Lawgiver Himself, repeated this same eternal decree when He said, *“Do not think that I am come to destroy the law [the Ten Commandments] or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law till all be fulfilled. ...If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”* (Mt. 5:17-18; 19:17) *“Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.”* (Lk. 11:28) *“Going, teach ye all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”* (Mt. 28:19-20)

Jesus compares good Catholics, the blessed workers of true justice, with bad Catholics, the cursed workers of iniquity. He distinguishes between the two by the fruits they produce. Good Catholics obey all of God’s commandments and thus produce good fruit. Bad Catholics do not obey and thus produce bad fruit. Jesus says, *“Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and done many miracles in thy name? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity. Every one therefore that heareth these my words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock. And every one that heareth these my words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.”* (Mt. 7:17-27) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, “Here Jesus Christ shows that it is not sufficient to believe in him and hear his words, but that in order to attain salvation, we must join works with faith; for in this shall we be examined at the last day. Without faith they could not cry out, Lord, Lord. But the strongest faith without the works of justice will not be available to salvation.” Consequently, those who do not keep all of God’s commandments are cursed workers of iniquity who are on the road to hell.

The Apostles, in obedience to their Lord and Master, taught and enforced this same eternal decree. The beloved St. John says, *“Keep his commandments. ...He that keepeth his commandments abideth in him.”* (1 Jn. 2:3; 3:24) St. James, speaking of God’s laws, says, *“Whosoever offend in one point is become guilty of all”* and *“Faith without works is dead.”* (Ja. 2:10, 26) St. Paul says, *“Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”* (Rom. 2:13) *“Cursed is every one that abideth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”* (Gal. 3:10)

The Holy Catholic Church teaches and enforces this eternal decree, obedience to all of God’s commandments, to all future generations until the second coming of Jesus Christ:

Catholic Catechism: “For, as was necessarily the case after Jesus Christ had won our salvation, He left behind Him His Law for the protection and welfare of the human race, under the guidance of which men, converted from evil life, might

safely tend towards God. ‘Going, teach ye all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you’ (Matthew 28:19-20). ‘Keep my commandments’ (John 14:15). Hence it will be understood that in the Christian religion the first and most necessary condition is docility to the precepts of Jesus Christ, absolute loyalty of will towards Him as Lord and King. A serious duty, and one which oftentimes calls for strenuous labour, earnest endeavour, and perseverance! ...By the law of Christ we mean not only the natural precepts of morality and the Ancient Law, all of which Jesus Christ has perfected and crowned by His declaration, explanation, and sanction; but also the rest of His doctrine and His own peculiar institutions. Of these the chief is His [Catholic] Church. Indeed whatsoever things Christ has instituted are most fully contained in His Catholic Church. Moreover, He willed to perpetuate the office assigned to Him by His Father by means of the ministry of the Church so gloriously founded by Himself. On the one hand He confided to her all the means of men’s salvation, on the other He most solemnly commanded men to be subject to her and to obey her diligently, and to follow her even as Himself: ‘He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me’ (Luke 10:16). Wherefore the law of Christ must be sought in the Catholic Church. ...Hence all who would find salvation apart from the Church are led astray and strive in vain.”

One of God’s commandments is that men must obey the Catholic Church if they want to be saved. Hence, only the Catholic Church is the guardian, teacher, and enforcer of all of God’s commandments, which include in addition to the Ten Commandments all of the Church’s other commandments and laws. The very first commandment is to know and faithfully serve the true God, the God of the Catholic Church. Consequently, only Catholics can be obedient to all of God’s commandments and be saved:

Catholic Catechism: “The Commandments of God are the guides which God gives us to show us the road to heaven, like the names written up at the corners of the streets and on guideposts, to point out the way. ... ‘If you love Me, keep My Commandments.’ Nothing is so common among Christians as to say, ‘O my God; I love Thee,’ and nothing more rare, perhaps, than the love of the good God. Satisfied with making outward acts of love, in which our poor heart often has no share, we think we have fulfilled the whole of the precept. An error, an illusion; for see, my children, St. John says that we must not love the good God in word but in deed (1 Jn. 3:18). Our Lord Jesus Christ also says, ‘If anyone love Me, he will keep My Word.’ If we judge by this rule, there are very few Christians who truly love God since there are so few who keep His Commandments. Yet nothing is more essential than the love of God. It is the first of all virtues, a virtue so necessary that without it we shall never get to heaven; and it is in order to love God that we are on the earth.”

Invalid Council of Trent: “The Observance of the Commandments is Necessary: ...No one who has arrived at the use of reason can be justified unless he is resolved to keep all of God’s Commandments. ...If, says Ezechiel, the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all God’s commandments, and do judgment and justice, living he shall live.”

The keeping of all of God’s commandments is how we discern between good, bad, and fallen-away Catholics, between those who truly love God and those who only say they love God. Good Catholics keep all of God’s commandments. Bad Catholics commit mortal sins of immorality or of disobedience to the Church’s disciplinary laws. And fallen-away Catholics commit mortal sins of apostasy, idolatry, heresy, or schism that place them outside the Catholic Church and make them non-Catholics.

Pray Psalm 118.

Sin No More and Be Perfect and Holy

“Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me. To thee only have I sinned and have done evil before thee, that thou mayst be justified in thy words and mayst overcome when thou art judged... Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed; thou shalt wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow. To my hearing thou shalt give joy and gladness, and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice. Turn away thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create a clean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from thy face, and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and strengthen me with a perfect spirit. I will teach the unjust thy ways, and the wicked shall be converted to thee. Deliver me from blood, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall extol thy justice. ...A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (Psalm 50:4-6, 9-16, 19)



“I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: seek thy servant.”
(Psalm 118:176)

To be saved, men must obey all of God’s commandments, which only Catholics can do during the New Covenant era because only they obey the first three commandments by knowing and worshipping the one true God, the God of the Catholic Church, the Most Blessed Trinity.

To obey all of God’s commandments, Catholics must not sin. They must also strive to become perfect and holy, as God is perfect and holy. After the woman who had been caught in adultery confessed her sin to Christ, He told her to “go, and sin no more.” (Jn. 8:11) After Jesus had healed a crippled man, He told him to “sin no more.” (Jn. 5:14) Another Jesus, Jesus the son of Sirach, speaking for God during the Old Covenant era, says, “My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no more.” (Eccu. 21:1)

Sinning no more is just the first step on the road to salvation. God also calls to perfection all men who would be saved. Moses says, “Thou shalt be perfect and without spot before the Lord thy God.” (Deut. 18:13) St. Peter tells Catholics to “be...perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Mt. 5:48) And quoting God, he says, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Pt. 1:16) St. Paul says, “Stand in all things perfect... Be holy and unspotted in his sight.” (Eph. 6:13; 1:4) St. Augustine of Hippo says, “This grace, however, by which strength is made perfect in weakness, leads the predestined and those

called according to the [divine] purpose to the highest perfection and glorification.”⁴ If a Catholic does not strive to be perfect and holy, he will eventually fall into mortal sin.

The apostles, expounding the doctrine of Christ, tell Catholics to sin no more and to be spotless and blameless:

St. Peter says, “*You shall not sin at any time. ...Wherefore, dearly beloved, waiting for these things, be diligent that you may be found before him unspotted and blameless in peace.*” (2 Pt. 1:10; 3:14)

St. Paul says, “*Awake, ye just, and sin not.*” (1 Cor. 15:34) “*What shall we say, then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. For we that are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? ...Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer. ...Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin.*” (Rom. 6:1-2, 6, 13) “*But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints.*” (Eph. 5:3) “*That thou keep the commandment without spot, blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (1 Tim. 6:14) “*Now we pray God, that you may do no evil, not that we may appear approved, but that you may do that which is good... For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. ...This also we pray for, your perfection. ...Brethren, rejoice, be perfect, take exhortation, be of one mind, have peace; and the God of peace and of love shall be with you.*” (2 Cor. 13:7-11) “*Let every one depart from iniquity who nameth the name of the Lord.*” (2 Tim. 2:19)

St. John says, “*Whosoever is born of God committeth not sin.*” (1 Jn. 3:9) “*My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin.*” (1 Jn. 2:1) “*And every one that hath this hope in him, sanctifieth himself, as he also is holy. ...Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not.*” (1 Jn. 3:3, 5) “*We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not: but the generation of God preserveth him, and the wicked one toucheth him not.*” (1 Jn. 5:18)

And the Catholic Church, handing down the doctrine of Christ and His apostles, teaches the same to all future generations:

Catholic Catechism: “Eradicate sin and vice. Nothing should be more important, nothing more preferable to you than to exhort the faithful entrusted to your care so that they, daily more firm and immovable, may persist in the profession of the Catholic faith; avoid the snares, lies, and deceptions of their enemies; advance more quickly in the ways of God’s commandments; and carefully abstain from sin...”

“‘In order that the body of sin may be destroyed, that we may no longer be slaves to sin’ ...Employ all the suitable and necessary means for... the wiping out of sin and the perfecting the saints...”

“We must flee sin, fight against our evil inclinations, and avoid all useless and harmful actions... Catholics must resist evil and master the desires that lead and lure him astray... Do not yield your members to sin to serve iniquity. ...Keep the mastery over your members; yield them not to sin to serve iniquity; do not give your adversary the weapons with which to fight you.”

⁴ *Faith of the Early Fathers*, vol. 3, “Grace and Original Sin,” p. 128.

God's commands are not impossible

So we see that God commands men to sin no more and to be perfect and holy as He is, and He does not make impossible what He commands. Jesus said, *"With God all things are possible."* (Mt. 19:26) *"No word shall be impossible with God."* (Lk. 1:37)

Invalid *Council of Trent*, Decree on Justification: "But no one, how much soever justified, ought to think himself exempt from the observance of the commandments; no one ought to make use of that rash saying, one prohibited by the Fathers under an anathema, —that the observance of the commandments of God is impossible for one that is justified. For God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to pray for what thou art not able (to do), and aids thee that thou mayest be able; whose commandments are not heavy; whose yoke is sweet and whose burthen light. For, whoso are the sons of God, love Christ; but they who love him, keep his commandments, as Himself testifies; which, assuredly, with the divine help, they can do."⁵

If it were impossible for men to stop sinning, then God would be asking men to do the impossible, which would make God a liar, and worse, it would make Him the author of sin for creating men defective, when, in truth, God *"hath made nothing defective."* (Eccus. 42:25) All sin comes from creatures (angels and men), from the abuse of their freewill when they rebel against God by disobedience that is rooted in the sin of pride. The Word of God teaches, *"Pride is the beginning of all sin."* (Eccus. 10:15) *"Error and darkness are created with sinners."* (Eccus. 11:16) *"God made man right, and he hath entangled himself..."* (Ectes. 7:30) After Adam and Eve entangled themselves in sin and lost eternal happiness, God has mercifully given mankind a second chance to regain eternal happiness, to save their souls. This time of mercy ends at death when man's eternal fate, heaven or hell, is sealed forever. *"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment."* (Heb. 9:27) *"If the tree fall...in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be."* (Ectes. 11:3) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, "The state of the soul is unchangeable when once she comes to heaven or hell; and a soul that departs this life in the state of grace shall never fall from grace, as on the other side a soul that dies out of the state of grace shall never come to it." As long as men live, God wills for them to be saved. St. Paul says, *"God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved."* (1 Tim. 2:3-4) God, speaking through the prophet Ezechiel, says, *"Is it my will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways and live?"* (Ez. 18:23) Therefore, not only could God make it possible for men to stop sinning and be saved, He wills that they should do so.

God preserves the godly from sinning

In accordance with God's will that men should sin no more, God also makes it possible for men to remain free from sin. However, only the godly, men of good will, benefit from this protection because they cooperate with God's grace and aid. St. Peter says, *"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly from temptation but to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be tormented."* (2 Pt. 2:9) St. Paul says, *"The Lord hath delivered me from every evil work and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom."* (2 Tim. 4:18) St. Jude, speaking of God, says, *"To him who is able to preserve*

⁵ Invalid *Council of Trent*, Decree on Justification, sess. vi, chap. xi; D. 804.

you without sin, and to present you spotless before the presence of his glory.” (Jude 1:24) Catholics earn this protection from God by desiring wholeheartedly to keep all of His commandments. Jesus the son of Sirach says, *“If thou wilt keep the commandments and perform acceptable fidelity forever, they shall preserve thee.”* (Eccus. 15:16)

Bad Catholics commit mortal sins

Since God wills for all men to be free from sin so that they can be saved, and because *“with God all things are possible”* (Mt. 19:26), God’s grace and aid are sufficient to help men stop sinning and to protect them from falling into sin; consequently, if men sin, it is their own fault and not God’s. Dear reader, open your eyes and ears and know that by God’s grace and aid, and your cooperation, you can stop sinning! God wills it so that you may be saved. Let no man tell you that you cannot stop sinning. Flee from such a perverted, blasphemous liar and tempter as from Satan himself.

When a Catholic falls into mortal sin, it is a manifest sign that he is a bad Catholic, that he is not godly, because *“the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly from temptation”* (2 Pt. 2:9) and *“He will keep the salvation of the righteous and protect them that walk in simplicity. Keeping the paths of justice, and guarding the ways of saints.”* (Prv. 2:7-8) Falling into mortal sin is a sign to the bad Catholic that he has been doing something seriously wrong. His grievous disobedience to one or more of God’s *lesser* commandments has led him into mortal sin. For example, a deficiency in prayer, penance, and mortification; sloth in learning the Catholic faith; sins of omission by not condemning sin and denouncing sinners; tempting God by not avoiding the near occasions of sin; not striving to overcome faults and venial sins; sinning against charity by not properly performing the spiritual or corporal works of mercy; being disobedient to superiors; and being lazy in doing his daily duties—all of these things and more are sins against God’s commandments and will lead a Catholic into mortal sin. Therefore, to re-enter a state of grace and become a good Catholic, he must not only properly confess his mortal sins but also amend his life by discovering and eliminating the source of his problem that led him into mortal sin. If he does not, he will fall again into mortal sin.

Mortal sin

“The soul that sinneth, the same shall die.” (Ez. 18:20) To be saved, Catholics must die without the guilt of mortal sin:

Imprimatured Book: “Many are in hell for a single mortal sin of which they would not repent.”

St. Francis of Assisi: “Unhappy is he who dies in mortal sin.”⁶

Catholic Commentary on Apoc. 21:8: “All that commit mortal sins and repent not shall be damned.”

Catholic Catechism: “Whoever offends God, even by one mortal sin, instantly forfeits whatever merits he may have previously acquired through the sufferings and death of Christ and is entirely shut out from the gate of heaven... It is better to die than commit a mortal sin.”

⁶ Francisci, *Opusc.* T. iii. *Canticum fratrum solis.*

Hence physical death is to be preferred over spiritual death, which is caused by one mortal sin. Only the Catholic Church teaches what God decrees. The Head of the Catholic Church, Jesus Christ, teaches that Catholics who die as mortal sinners go to hell. Jesus says, *“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit [but bringeth forth mortal sins] shall be cut down and shall be cast into the fire. ...And the unprofitable servant [Catholics who die in mortal sin] cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* (Mt. 7:19, 30) On their Judgment Day, Jesus will tell them, *“I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity [mortal sinners]. ...Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.”* (Mt. 7:23, 41) Jesus, speaking to St. John, says, *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”* (Apoc. 21:8)

And the apostles, following their Master, teach the same thing. St. Paul says, *“The wages of sin is death.”* (Rom. 6:23) *“For know you this and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person (which is a serving of idols), hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”* (Eph. 5:5) *“Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God? Do not err: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor liars with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God.”* (1 Cor. 6:9-10) *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God.”* (Gal. 5:19-21) Speaking of bad and fallen-away Catholics, St. Paul says they are *“filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, avarice, wickedness, full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity, whisperers, detractors, hateful to God, contumelious, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without mercy. Who, having known the justice of God, did not understand that they who do such things are worthy of death; and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them.”* (Rom. 1:29-32) St. James says, *“Sin... begetteth death.”* (Ja. 1:15)

Condemning those who commit mortal sins of heresy (heretics), St. Paul says, *“A man that is a heretic...is subverted and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment.”* (Titus 3:10-11) *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.”* (Gal. 1:18) *“I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not Christ our Lord...”* (Rom. 16:17-18)

Dear reader, if you are committing any of these mortal sins listed above or any other mortal sins, you are definitely on the road to hell. Some of these mortal sins, such as idolatry, sorcery, and heresy, also cast offending Catholics outside of the Catholic Church and make them non-Catholics:

Imprimatured Book: “The Church has always regarded as rebels and expelled from the ranks of her children all who held beliefs on any point of doctrine different from her own... St. Augustine notes that other heresies may spring up, to a single one of which should any one give his assent, he is by the very fact cut off from Catholic

unity... 'if any one holds to one single one of these [heresies], he is not a Catholic' (St. Aug., *De Haeresibus*, n. 88)."

Obstinate faults and venial sins lead to mortal sins

Catholics can only be free from mortal sin if they strive to be perfect and holy as God is perfect and holy, which means they must strive to overcome venial sins and faults because obstinate faults lead to venial sins and obstinate venial sins lead to mortal sins. Therefore, a good Catholic obeys all of God's commandments, which means he does not commit mortal sins, he strives not to commit venial sins, he strives to overcome his faults, and he strives to increase in virtue, which he must work at until the day he dies. If he should commit a venial sin or a fault, he confesses his guilt with a firm purpose of amendment. If he does this, then God will continually lift him up when he falls so that he does not fall into mortal sin. "*For a just man shall fall seven times [venial sins and faults] and shall rise again, but the wicked shall fall down into evil [mortal sin].*" (Prv. 24:16) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, "He who is not subject to mortal sin may still be exposed to many failings and venial sins, which do not deprive him of the title of just; whereas the wicked consents to mortal sin, from which he riseth not so easily."

Imprimatured Book: "It is necessary then to labor to avoid faults that are willfully and deliberately committed. It cannot be denied that, except Jesus Christ and his Mother,... all other men, even the saints, have not been exempt at least from venial sins. ...It is true that even spiritual persons are not free from light transgressions; but they daily diminish the number and grievousness of their faults, and afterwards efface them by acts of divine love. Whoever acts in this manner shall acquire sanctity; neither shall his defects hinder him from tending to perfection. Hence be not disheartened by these little faults but rather confess them and amend your ways. If every day we fall several times, it will depend entirely on us to employ every day the means of atoning for our faults and amending our ways. Our sins and faults should humble us and show us how weak we are and how much we need God's grace and help to overcome them. When we are guilty of a sin or fault, we must humble our souls, and confessing our weakness, must endeavor to multiply prayer and to implore the aid of the protecting arm of God against more offenses. Venial sins may be avoided and are seldom or never committed by holy souls who live with the firm and constant resolution rather to suffer death than, with full advertence, to be guilty of a venial violation of God's holy law. To a soul inflamed with the pure love of God, the smallest fault is more intolerable than hell itself. Hence, rather than willfully commit a venial sin, these holy souls would suffer to be cast into an ocean of fire. ...What sin will the sinner dare to call small? For when can it be a slight fault to dishonor God?"

If a Catholic does not confess, atone, and strive to overcome his faults and venial sins, he will eventually fall into mortal sin. Unbridled faults lead to venial sins, and unbridled venial sins lead to mortal sins:

Imprimatured Book: "It is true that even souls devoted to the love of God are not free from all imperfections. But they seek continually to amend their lives by diminishing the number of their defects. But how will the tepid religious, who commits habitual faults, and continues to commit them without remorse or desire of amendment—how, I say, will he be ever able to purify his soul from them, or to escape the danger of falling into mortal sin? Saints have said, 'I have been guilty of many faults but never without scruple and uneasiness of conscience.' Woe to the religious who sins, even venially, with full knowledge and tranquility of soul. As long as a man detests his imperfections, he may hope for amendment; but when he

commits faults without fear or remorse, then he will always go from bad to worse. To say this is a light sin is not a great evil, but to commit it, and take complacency in it, is an evil of great moment, and shall...be severely chastised by God...

“He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little. (Eccus. 19:1) The interpreter applies this passage to the tepid Christian, and says that he shall first lose devotion, and shall afterwards fall, passing from venial sins, which he has disregarded, to grievous and mortal offences. He that is not afraid to offend God by venial faults shall scarcely be exempt from mortal sin. By a just judgment the Lord will permit him that despises minor transgressions to fall into grievous crimes. Trifling maladies, when few, do little injury to health, but when they are numerous and frequent, they bring on mortal diseases. ‘You guard against great faults,’ says St. Augustine, ‘but what do you do in regard to light faults? You have shaken the mountain: take care that you be not crushed by a heap of sand.’ You are careful to avoid grievous falls, but you fear not small ones... We all know that only mortal sin kills the soul, and that venial sins, however great their number, cannot rob the soul of divine grace. But it is also necessary to understand what St. Gregory teaches, that ‘the habit of committing light faults without remorse, and without an effort to correct them, gradually deprives us of the fear of God; and when the fear of God is lost, it is easy to pass from venial to mortal sins.’ ...He that disregards small offences is in danger of general insensibility, so that afterwards he shall feel no horror even of mortal sins. *‘I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot,’* says our Lord, through St. John, to the Bishop of Laodicea. Behold the state of a tepid soul, neither cold nor hot. The tepid person is one that does not dare offend God knowingly and willingly, but is one that neglects to strive after a more perfect life and hence easily gives himself up to his passions. A tepid person is not manifestly cold, because he does not knowingly and deliberately commit mortal sins; but neglecting to seek after the perfection to which he is bound,... he makes little of venial sins, he commits many of them every day without scruple, by lies, by intemperance in eating and drinking, by imprecations, by distraction at prayers, by detractions, by jests opposed to modesty: he leads a life of dissipation in the midst of worldly business and amusements; he cherishes dangerous desires and attachments; full of vainglory, of human respect and self-esteem, he cannot bear a contradiction or a disrespectful word; he neglects mental prayer and is destitute of piety. The defects and faults of a tepid soul are like those light indispositions that do not cause death but that weaken the body in such a manner that a grave malady cannot supervene without destroying the body which has no longer the power of resisting. The tepid Christian is like a sick man who has labored under many light maladies, which, because they are incessant, reduce him to such a state of debility that as soon as he is attacked by any serious disease, that is, by a strong temptation, he has not strength to resist, and falls, but falls with greater ruin...

“Tepidity is like a hectic fever that is scarcely perceived. The tepid man does not see even habitual defects. ‘Grievous faults,’ says St. Gregory, ‘because they are more easily observed, are more readily corrected; but he who disregards light defects continues to commit them, and thus by the habit of despising minor transgressions he shall soon despise grievous sins.’ Besides, mortal sin always excites a certain horror even in habitual sinners, but to the tepid, his imperfections, inordinate attachments, dissipations, love of pleasure or of self-esteem, cause no horror...

“In the Canticles the Lord says: *Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, for our vineyard hath flourished.* Mark the word *foxes*, he does not tell us to catch the lions and tigers, but the foxes. These foxes destroy the vine; they make a multitude of dens, and thus dry up the roots, that is, devotion and good desires, which are the roots of spiritual life. He also says *little*. Why does he tell us to catch the little and not the large foxes? Because the little foxes excite less terror but often do more

mischief than the large ones. For small faults when disregarded impede the infusion of divine graces, and thus the soul remains barren, and is finally lost. How great the evil of venial faults when multiplied and not abhorred? They eat the flowers, that is, they destroy the good desires of advancing in perfection; and when these desires fail, the soul shall always go backward until she finds herself fallen into a precipice from which it will be difficult to rescue her.”

The Devil knows that a saintly man, a good Catholic, cannot be immediately lured into committing a mortal sin. The saintly naturally abhor mortal sins. Consequently, the Devil first preys upon his faults, venial sins, and lack of perfection in virtue:

Imprimatured Book: “The Apostle says, *Give not place to the devil*. (Eph. 4:27) The devil is satisfied when we begin to open the door to him by disregarding small faults, for he shall then labor to open it perfectly by leading us into grievous transgressions. Do not imagine that any one falls at once into ruin. That is, when you hear of the fall of a spiritual soul, do not imagine that the devil has suddenly precipitated her into sin; for he has first brought her into tepidity, and then has cast her into the precipice of enmity with God. Hence St. John Chrysostom says that he knew many persons adorned with all virtues who afterwards fell into tepidity, and from tepidity into an abyss of vice. It is related that a religious once saw in hell a person whom she had regarded as a saint; on her countenance appeared a multitude of small animals, which represented the multitude of defects that she committed and disregarded during life. Of these some were heard to say, *By us you began*; others, *By us you continued*; others, *By us you have brought yourself to hell*...

“Little faults are the more dangerous because they imperceptibly dispose him to ruin. Great sins are less dangerous for the just than these little faults, because the hideous aspect of the former frightens them, while the others insensibly conduct to ruin. Hence St. John Chrysostom has written that celebrated sentence, that we ought in a certain manner to be more careful to avoid light faults than grievous sins: ‘We must use more care to avoid little sins than to avoid great sins; for the latter are already opposed by our nature, and because the former, being small, make us more indolent in our struggles. Since we disregard them, the soul cannot raise itself so generously as to repel them: hence great sins flow from small sins.’ The reason, then, assigned by the saint is, that mortal sins excite a natural horror, but light faults are disregarded and therefore they soon become grievous. And the greatest evil is that small defects that are disregarded render the soul more careless about her spiritual interests and therefore, because she has been accustomed to despise slight offences, they lead her to think little of grievous transgressions...

“It is necessary to impress deeply on your mind that the artifice by which the devil seeks to draw spiritual souls from the service of God is, not to tempt them at first to any mortal sin. In the beginning he is, as St. Francis says, satisfied to hold them in bondage by a single hair; for if he attempted to bind them at once in the bonds of servitude they would fly from him with horror. But fearing not the trammels of a single hair, they are easily led into the snares prepared for their destruction. At first they are caught by a single hair; then they are bound by a slender thread; next by a strong cord; and finally they are chained in their fetters of hell and the slavery of Satan. For example, a religious, after a dispute with some of her Sisters, will at first retain feelings of dislike, and thus is held by a single hair. After a little time she will neither speak to them nor salute them: she is now bound by a slender thread. Next she will begin to injure them by words and deeds, and is fettered by a strong cord: then on the first occasion of provocation she conceives a mortal hatred towards them, and thus puts on the chains of hell and the slavery of the devil. Again, another religious will at first entertain a human affection towards a friend; she then cherishes this affection under the pretext of gratitude: mutual presents follow; they

are succeeded by words of endearment; and by the first assault of passion the miserable soul is bound in the chains of death.”

For instance, it can be said with great confidence that a Catholic who is habitually lazy is in a state of damnation. One can truthfully say that a Catholic husband and father is in a state of damnation if he does not properly provide for his family and home and habitually neglects any of his following Christian duties: ruling his wife and children in a Catholic manner, training and disciplining his wife and children in the Catholic faith and life, providing for the material needs of his family and home by working as a good Christian, maintaining his home and property by doing the man’s work that needs to be done, and doing so without complaining and with joy.

Likewise, one can truthfully say that a Catholic wife and mother is in a state of damnation if she does not properly take care of her family and home and habitually neglects any of her following Christian duties: training her children to be good Catholics, cleaning the house, cooking the meals, cleaning the dishes, washing the clothes, obeying her husband in all things except sin, and doing so without complaining and with joy.

The habitual neglect of any of these Christian duties would inevitably lead to some type of mortal sin and could even be mortally sinful in itself.

Do not tempt God by continuing to sin

“Woe to you, apostate children, saith the Lord,...that you might add sin upon sin.”
(Isaias 30:1)

While God will forgive any sins a penitent sincerely confesses, God only waits so long for him to do so. God’s mercy is only available for a limited time, only as long as God sees some good will in a person. If God sees no good will in a man, He lets him die in his sins and sends him to hell, which is the case with most men. That means before these men died, they already lost God’s favor, His mercy (His saving grace and aid). There is a point when men can commit the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit, known to God alone, in which God’s mercy is no longer available. In these cases God knows that these souls will be eternally obstinate and thus withdraws His saving grace and aid from them. Hence, men must not tempt God by continuing to sin while thinking that they can repent later on. The next mortal sin you commit may be the one that causes God to abandon you eternally:

Imprimatured Book: “According to the words of Scripture, ‘Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight’ (Wis. 11:21). God has fixed for each person the number of the days of his life, and the degrees of health and talent which He will give him; so He has also determined for each the number of sins which He will pardon, and when this number is completed He will pardon no more... But it is necessary to be persuaded that though God bears with us, He does not wait nor bear with us forever... Son, add not sins to those which you have already committed, but be careful to pray for the pardon of your past transgressions; otherwise, if you commit another mortal sin, the gates of divine mercy may be closed against you and your soul may be lost forever... God has promised pardon to all who repent; but He has not promised to wait until tomorrow for those who insult Him. Perhaps God will give you time for repentance, perhaps He will not...”

“Oh! How many miserable sinners...live many years, multiplying sins; but when the number is filled up, they are struck dead and cast into hell! *They spend their*

days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell. (Job 21:13) There are some who spend their time investigating the number of the stars, the number of angels, or the number of years which each one will live. But who can discover the number of sins which God will pardon each individual? We should, therefore, tremble... It may be that God will pardon you no more after the first criminal pleasure which you indulge, after the first thought to which you consent, or after the first sin you commit...

“Some sinners say: But God is merciful. Who, I ask, denies it? [RJMI: But God is also just. “*For mercy and wrath are with him. He is mighty to forgive, and to pour out indignation.*” (Eccus. 16:12) The mercy of God has limits, not according to the sins he will forgive if one sincerely repents and confesses, but to the time he waits for one to repent, confess, and amend his life.] God heals those who have a good will. He pardons sins, but he cannot pardon the determination to commit sin. These sinners say: I am young. You are young; but God counts not years, but sins. The number of sins which God pardons is not the same for all: some he pardons a hundred; others a thousand sins; others he sends to hell after the second sin. How many the Lord condemned to eternal misery after the first sin? St. Gregory⁷ relates that a child of five years, for uttering a blasphemy, was condemned to hell. The Most Holy Virgin revealed to a nun that a girl twelve years old was damned after her first sin. A boy of eight years died after his first sin, and was lost. ...Perhaps some daring sinner may have the temerity to demand an account of God why he pardons some three sins, but not four. In this we must adore the judgments of God and say with the apostle: *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and unsearchable His ways!* (Rom. 11:33) ‘The Lord,’ says St. Augustine, ‘knows whom he spares and whom he does not spare. To those who receive mercy he gives it gratuitously; from those who do not receive mercy, it is justly withheld.’

“The obstinate sinner may say: But I have so often offended God, and he has pardoned me; I also hope he will pardon me the sin which I intend to commit. But, I ask, must God spare you forever because he has not hitherto chastised you? The measure shall be filled up, and vengeance shall come.

“Behold, dear Christian, the advice which your good Lord gives you because he desires your salvation. Son, offend me no more: but from this day forward be careful to ask pardon for your past transgressions. My brother, the more you have offended God, the more you should tremble at the thought of offending him again; for the next sin which you commit may make the balance of divine justice descend, and you will be lost.”

“My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no more;
but for thy former sins also pray that they may be forgiven thee.”
(Ecclesiasticus 21:1)

Sin no more by God’s help and a sincere desire to stop sinning

Dear reader, if you are committing mortal sins and want to be saved, you must sincerely repent and confess your mortal sins and do what you must to sin no more.⁸ Do

⁷ Footnote 1: “*Dial.* 1. 4. c. 18.”

⁸ If you are not Catholic, you must first enter the Catholic Church by abjuration of your heresies and must make a profession of the Catholic faith; only then can you have your sins forgiven by confession because “outside the Catholic Church there is no remission of sins.” Catholics must confess their sins to a Catholic priest because God gave Catholic priests the power to remit sins. Jesus said to the apostles, the first priests of the Catholic Church, “*Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall*

not despair! God does not make impossible your salvation. Jesus Christ is the Divine Physician and Healer who desires and has the ability to free you from all your sins if you should so desire it and also desire to obey all of His commandments. For you cannot overcome or remain free from sin without also desiring to obey all of His commandments.

If you continue to sin, it is your fault, not God's. God promises to give good things to those who sincerely ask for them. Jesus says, *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"* (Mt. 7:7-11) The ultimate good thing is to be free from sin. Therefore, if you do not even ask God to help you stop sinning, you will have no hope to be free from sin. God wishes that we ask Him for the graces necessary for salvation. Even the invalid Council of Trent has declared that God has not commanded impossibilities: He either gives us the proximate and actual graces to fulfill His precepts, or He gives us the grace to ask Him for this actual aid. St. Augustine teaches that "God gives without prayer the first graces, such as vocation to the faith and to repentance; but all other graces, and particularly the gift of perseverance, He gives only to those who ask them."

You will also have no hope to be free from sin even if you do ask God but your request is insincere. St. James says, *"You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss."* (Ja. 4:3) You ask amiss by secretly reserving in your heart a love of your sin and the desire to commit it again. Or, even though you may truly desire to be free from mortal sin, you ask amiss by not also desiring to obey all of God's commandments—for you are like a man who goes to a doctor to be healed but disobeys the doctor by not following all of his instructions. For example, a doctor tells his patient to do all of the following if he wants to be healed: take two pills a day, do not eat sweet foods, and exercise every day. Even though the patient wants to be healed, he will not be healed if he does not obey all of the doctor's commands; for example, if he only takes one pill a day or eats sweet food or does not exercise every day. Likewise, to overcome mortal sin, you must not only desire to be free from mortal sin but you must also desire to obey all of God's commandments:

Imprimatured Book: "A certain author says that in grievous maladies very severe remedies are necessary. If to a sick man in danger of death and unwilling to take medicine because he is not aware of the malignity of his disease, the physician said: 'Friend, you will certainly die unless you take such a medicine,' what would be the answer of the invalid? He would say, 'As my life is in danger, I am ready to obey all your directions.' Dearly beloved Christian, if you are a habitual sinner, I say the same to you. You are very ill; you are one of those invalids who are seldom cured; you are on the brink of perdition. But if you wish to recover from your illness, there is a remedy for you; however, you must not expect a miracle of grace. You must on your part labor hard to take away the occasion of sin, to avoid bad company, to

retain, they are retained." (Jn. 20:23) If no Catholic priest is available, then a Catholic must confess his sins to God with the promise to have his confession confirmed by a Catholic priest at the first opportunity. See RJMI book *Sacraments without a Priest*.

resist temptations by recommending yourself to God as soon as you perceive them; you must adopt the means of salvation by going frequently to confession,⁹ by reading a spiritual book every day, by practicing devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and continually imploring her to obtain for you strength not to relapse into sin. You must do violence to yourself; otherwise the threat of the Lord against obstinate sinners will fall upon you. *You shall die in your sin.* And if you do not adopt these means now that the Lord gives you light, you will scarcely adopt them hereafter.”

To not sin and to be saved, Catholics must pray, do penance, study the Catholic faith, and obey all of God’s commandments. The first three pillars are prayer, penance, and studying the Catholic faith, without which God will not give you the grace to desire to obey all of His commandments nor the help to do so.

Sin no more by fearing your own weakness and trusting in God’s strength

A man can have true repentance, sorrow for sin, and a sincere desire to overcome it, while also fearing that he may not be able to overcome it because of human weakness, especially regarding habitual sins. From a mere human point of view, he cannot see how it is possible for him to stop sinning. This proper fear will cause the penitent sinner to place all his trust and confidence in God and not himself. It will show him how weak he is without God’s grace and assistance, for, in truth, Jesus says, *“For without me you can do nothing.”* (Jn. 15:5) This will cause a true penitent to wholeheartedly turn to God for help.

For instance, without God’s grace and aid, men cannot be chaste. Lust would exert tyrannical rule over them. King Solomon says, *“I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was: I went to the Lord and besought him...with my whole heart.”* (Wis. 8:21) A Catholic commentary on this passage says, “All good must come from God. Chastity cannot be preserved without his aid.”

Imprimatured Book: “We have not strength to practice any virtue, but particularly the virtue of chastity; for we have by nature a strong propensity to the opposite vice. The divine aid alone can enable a man to preserve chastity; but this aid God gives not to those that voluntarily expose themselves to the occasions of sin, or remain in it. ‘He that loveth danger shall perish in it.’ (Eccus. 3:27) ...It is impossible for man by his own strength and thus without aid from God to keep himself chaste; and therefore, in our struggle with the flesh, we must ask the Lord with all the affections of our soul, for the gift of chastity. We should pray to God with our whole heart. Hence St. Cyprian teaches that the first means of obtaining chastity is to ask it of God.”

If you do not even ask God to help you, then there can be no doubt that you want to continue sinning.

At first a penitent sinner, one who truly desires to stop sinning and to obey all of God’s commandments, realizes that by his own efforts he can never stop sinning. The urge to sin is still there and very strong if his sin is habitual. Therefore, the penitent sinner must have faith, blind obedience to God’s promise and ability to free him from his sins. St. John the Baptist, speaking of this promise, says, *“Behold the Lamb of God.”*

⁹ If no Catholic priest is available to confess to, then confess your sins to God with the promise to have your confession confirmed by a Catholic priest at the first opportunity.

Behold him who taketh away the sin of the world.” (Jn. 1:29) St. Peter says, “*You shall not sin at any time.*” (2 Pt. 1:10) The apostle St. John says, “*Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin.*” (1 Jn. 1:17) St. Paul says, “*Christ Jesus hath delivered me from the law of sin and of death. ...For sin shall not have dominion over you. ...Being then freed from sin, we have been made servants of justice.*” (Rom. 8:2; 6:14, 18) And St. Jude says, Jesus “*is able to preserve you without sin and to present you spotless before the presence of his glory.*” (Jude 1:24) The penitent must really believe that Jesus can help him stop sinning in spite of his seeing no human way to overcome it. This belief proves that his faith in Jesus is sincere because he believes that Jesus can do all the things He promised. The penitent must have the faith that Abraham had in God’s promise. “*In the promise... of God, he [Abraham] staggered not by distrust but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God: Most fully knowing that whatsoever he has promised, he is able also to perform.*” (Rom. 4:20-21) This faith motivates the penitent to do what he must according to God’s word to overcome his sins by making a good confession and by proper prayer, penance, mortification, studying the Catholic faith, avoiding the near occasions of sin, good spiritual reading, etc.

Sin no more by hating sin

It is not enough to be indifferent about sin, which indicates a secret love of sin. To overcome sin, you must hate it with a perfect hatred; if not, you will continue to sin.

Imprimatured Book: “And this indeed was the purpose of the merciful Jesus, when He showed His Heart to us bearing about it the symbols of the passion and displaying the flames of love, that from the one we might know the infinite malice of sin, and in the other we might admire the charity of Our Redeemer, and so might have a more vehement hatred of sin, and make a more ardent return of love for His love. ...For, indeed, if anyone will lovingly dwell on those things of which we have been speaking, and will have them deeply fixed in his mind, it cannot be but he will shrink with horror from all sin as from the greatest evil; and more than this he will yield himself wholly to the will of God and will strive to repair the injured honor of the Divine Majesty, as well by constantly praying, as by voluntary mortifications, by patiently bearing the afflictions that befall him, and lastly by persevering in these things until death.”

The first step for some penitent sinners, especially if their sins are habitual, is to move from an open love to a secret love of sin, being neutral (indifferent) toward it, because of the strong pull of their weakened flesh. Even though their motives are not yet proper, God sees their move forward, a desire to not sin that they did not previously have when they sinned recklessly, and thus God would further motivate the penitents to hate sin. If the penitents do not reach this stage, then their desire to stop sinning is not sincere.

Hence to overcome sin, you must ask God to make you hate the sin you openly or secretly love. You must ask Him to make you hate it like dung or some other odious thing. This is what we pray for in the below Miraculous Medal prayers, which I strongly recommend all to pray daily: both sinners, so that they may overcome sin by hating it, and non-sinners, so that they continue to hate sin and remain free from it. I also recommend wearing the Miraculous Medal as a sign of your love and devotion to Mary and to gain her powerful protection. When Mary goes before you, the Devil’s attacks cannot succeed.

Miraculous Medal Prayers



Novena Prayer: O Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus, and our Mother, penetrated with the most lively confidence in thine all-powerful and never-failing intercession, manifested so often through the Miraculous Medal, we thy loving and trustful children implore thee to obtain for us the graces and favors we ask during this novena if they be beneficial to our immortal souls and the souls for whom we pray (*here make your petition*). Thou

knowest, O Mary, how often our souls have been the sanctuaries of thy Son who hates iniquity. Obtain for us, then, a deep hatred of sin and that purity of heart which will attach us to God alone so that our every thought, word, and deed may tend to His greater glory. Obtain for us also a spirit of prayer and self denial, that we may recover by penance what we have lost by sin and at length attain to that blessed abode where thou art the Queen of angels and of men. Amen.

An Act of Consecration to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal: O Virgin Mother of God, Mary Immaculate, we dedicate and consecrate ourselves to thee under the title of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. May this medal be for each one of us a sure sign of thy affection for us and a constant reminder of our duties toward thee. Ever while wearing it, may we be blessed by thy loving protection and preserved in the grace of thy Son. O most powerful Virgin, Mother of our Savior, keep us close to thee every moment of our lives. Obtain for us, thy children, the grace of a happy death so that in union with thee we may enjoy the bliss of heaven forever. Amen.

Recite three times:

V. O Mary, conceived without sin.

R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.

The Miraculous Medal prayer, the Rosary, the Litany of the Saints, the Long Exorcism Prayer, and wearing the Miraculous Medal were the main weapons I used to overcome my mortal sins, some of which were habitual. Some of the other necessary weapons I used were penance, learning the Catholic faith, and avoiding the near occasions of sin. I then added some prayers from the Divine Office and other prayers.

Sin no more by filling the void with good and holy things

Once freed from mortal sin, you must be careful not to fall back into the same sin or some other mortal sin. A great portion of a sinner's life is spent thinking about, plotting, and committing mortal sin and suffering its many consequences. Therefore, when Jesus has delivered you from mortal sin, you must then fill the void in your life that sin and its consequences once occupied. You must fill that void with good and holy things or you will fall back into mortal sin. Obeying all of God's commandments accomplishes this. You must replace sinful thoughts with holy thoughts; sinful friends with holy friends; time spent in sinful places with time spent in good and holy places; time spent reading, listening to and watching sinful things with time spent reading, listening to and watching good and holy things; and bad habits with good habits—Fight like a man! Habit is overcome by habit. Bad habits are overcome by good habits:

Imprimatured Book: "The chief concern of a Christian soul should be to tend to perfection. Saint Paul tells us 'Be ye followers of God, as most dear children.' (Eph.

5:1) This obligation is included in the eternal decree as the one and only means prescribed by God to attain everlasting glory. We are all artists and our souls are blank canvases which we have to fill in. The colors which we must use are the Christian virtues and our model is Jesus Christ, the perfect Living Image of God the Father. Just as a portrait painter who wants to do a good job places himself before his model and glances at him before making each stroke, so the Christian must always have the life and virtues of Jesus Christ before his eyes so that he may never say, think, or do the least thing which is not in harmony with the model.”

To do this, you must fill your mind, heart, soul, and whole life with floods of sincere prayer; with acts of contrition; with holy thoughts by good spiritual reading; with the avoidance of the near occasions of sin; with holy friends; with the spiritual and corporal works of mercy; with the mortification of your flesh and spirit that punishes the sinful pleasures you once indulged in and subdues your concupiscence by crucifying the old, sinful man; and with the Holy Eucharist by attending Mass and public devotions at a Catholic church if one is available (if not, make spiritual communions and do devotions elsewhere).¹⁰ Once you are conformed to God’s will, you will truly love obeying all of God’s commandments. But you must persevere in all these good things until the day you die in order to be saved. *“He that shall endure unto the end, he shall be saved.”* (Mk. 13:13)

Beware of the stoics and thus do not give up your good or acceptable traits

After you convert and become Catholic, do not give up, condemn, or despise the good or acceptable traits you had before you converted. No person is so evil that he does not have some good or acceptable traits. For example, non-Catholics who are evil in many ways and thus on the road to hell may nevertheless have one or more of the following good or acceptable traits: chastity, frugality, good leadership or organizational qualities, an orderly daily schedule, courage to speak the truth even if it means being persecuted, sympathy to the poor and sick, courage and justice to judge and punish evildoers according to the severity of their crimes or other sins, courage to kill people in a just war or criminals worthy of the death penalty, good ranching or farming or medical skills, moderation in drinking alcohol, moderation in gambling, moderation in smoking cigarettes or cigars, love of non-sinful sports, love of non-sinful games, love of hunting, moderation in eating, love of eating good tasting food, love of non-sinful music, love of non-sinful dancing, love of non-sinful recreation, love of non-sinful religious and secular movies, hatred of feminism, hatred of homosexuality, hatred of effeminacy, hatred of drug abuse, hatred of immodesty, hatred of adultery, hatred of stealing, hatred of greed, etc.

Hence after you convert and become Catholic, you must not give up, condemn, or despise the good or acceptable traits you had before you converted except for a time to do penance or if you no longer can or desire to do a good or acceptable thing—for example, if you are sick and thus can no longer do the good work of visiting the sick or assist in feeding the poor or you no longer desire to smoke cigars or watch a sport.

¹⁰ This needs to be mentioned, especially in these days of the Great Apostasy when there are no Catholic priests that I know of in the whole world, because Catholics are banned under pain of heresy from attending Mass at non-Catholic churches and receiving sacraments from non-Catholic priests. See RJMI book *Sacraments without a Priest*.

Catholics not only fast but they also feast. There is a time to do penance and a time not to do penance. A Catholic who fasts when he should feast or does penance when he should not do penance commits sin, as well as a Catholic who feasts when he should fast or does not do penance when he should do penance. A good rule, such as the Rule of Mary's Little Remnant, strikes the right balance between fasting and feasting, between doing penance and not doing penance.

Beware of the nominal Catholic stoics who condemn or despise the good and acceptable things that God has given to mankind. Any so-called Catholics who condemn or despise the good or acceptable things that God has given to mankind condemn God as evil or unacceptable and thus are heretics and not Catholic:

"[God] hath made all things good in their time, and hath delivered the world to their [man's] consideration." (Ectes. 3:11)

"He hath established the good things of every one." (Eccus. 42:26)

"The living God...giveth us abundantly all [good and acceptable] things to enjoy."
(1 Tim. 6:17)

The stoics call unclean what God has made clean. The Bible says, "*What God hath made clean, do not call unclean.*" (Acts 11:9)

The Book of Proverbs condemns both the stoics and the liberals. It says, "*Make straight the path for thy feet, and all thy ways shall be established. Decline not to the right hand, nor to the left: turn away thy foot from evil.*" (Prv. 4:26) On the left hand are the liberals who are lax in their morals and immoderate in their use of good or acceptable things. On the right hand are the stoics who are overly strict and condemn or despise good or acceptable things. Both are equally evil! Neither have true peace and joy because both violate the law upon their heart—the lefties by obstinately committing sins of immorality and sins of overindulgence of good or acceptable things, and the righties commit sin by denying the law upon the heart which impels men to love or accept the good or acceptable things that the righties either condemn or despise. This causes a turmoil and rebellion in the hearts of the lefties and righties, and, in most cases, causes them to fall into other sins of immorality and other sins of heresy or schism:

"God hath given to a man that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he hath given vexation, and superfluous care." (Ectes. 2:26)

Hence neither the lefties nor the righties have true wisdom because "*wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins.*" (Wis. 1:4) Regarding the righties, the Book of Ecclesiastes says, "*Be not over just [over strict]..., lest thou become stupid.*" (Ectes. 7:17) The nominal Catholic lefties got their heresy from the pagan libertine (liberal) philosophers, and the nominal Catholic righties got their heresy from the pagan stoic philosophers (from sects like the Gnostics and Manicheans). It was by the Hellenization of Christianity, then, that nominal Christian lefties and righties began to multiply like a plague, along with their heresies and idolatries. No good Catholic can bear the lefties or the righties, but instead will abhor and flee from them.

At first hard and then easy

If you do these things, you will have replaced habitual bad and evil things with habitual good and holy things. You will have replaced misery and chaos with true joy and

true peace. That is when you will experience the truth of God's word, when Jesus said, "*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.*" (Jn. 14:27) "*My yoke is sweet and my burden light.*" (Mt. 11:30) At first, when you are struggling to overcome sin, especially habitual sins, you will not have this peace, sweet yoke, and light burden because you are still a slave to sin and thus under the power of Satan. Jesus teaches, "*Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin.*" (Jn. 8:34) "The devil," says St. Augustine, "has power over them who despise God's commandments, and he rejoices over this sinister power."¹¹ As long as you are a slave of sin, God's yoke and burden, His commandments, seem sour and heavy. But this is an illusion caused by your sins. It is your sins that are sour and heavy, not God's yoke and burden. Jesus the son of Sirach says, "*There...is nothing sweeter than to have regard to the commandments of the Lord.*" (Eccu. 23:37) "*His commandments,*" says St. John, "*are not heavy.*" (1 Jn. 5:3) To a Catholic that is conformed to God's will, God's commandments are light, sweet, and easy to keep, much like a wild horse or mule that has been tamed. Until tamed, all is sour, heavy, and full of punishing scourges. God, speaking through King David, says, "*I will give thee understanding, and I will instruct thee in this way in which thou shalt go: I will fix my eyes upon thee. Do not become like the horse and the mule, who have no understanding. With bit and bridle bind fast their jaws who come not near unto thee. Many are the scourges of the sinner.*" (Ps. 31:8-10) Only the tamed, those who have conformed themselves to God's eternal truths, are really free. It is "*the truth,*" says Jesus, that "*shall make you free.*" (Jn. 8:32) And that saving truth is found in all of God's commandments; hence, only those who keep them are truly free:

Imprimatured Book: "Worldly people say, 'It is too difficult to save one's soul.' Yet nothing is easier. To observe the Commandments of God and the Church and to avoid the seven capital sins, or, if you like to put it so, to do good and avoid evil: that is all. Good Christians, who labor to save their souls and to work out their salvation, are always happy and contented; they enjoy beforehand the happiness of heaven, they will be happy for all eternity. While bad Christians, who lose their souls, are always to be pitied; they murmur, they are sad, they are as miserable as stones; and they will be so for all eternity. See what a difference! If we wish to save our souls, we must resolve to suffer and to do violence to ourselves. How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away. (Mt. 7:14; 11:12) He who does not violence to himself will not be saved. There is no other remedy. If we wish to do good, we must act in opposition to our rebellious nature. In the beginning, it is particularly necessary to do violence to ourselves in order to root out bad habits and to acquire habits of virtue. When good habits are once acquired, the observance of the divine law becomes easy, and even sweet. When in the practice of virtue a person suffers the first punctures of the thorns with patience and courage, these thorns afterwards become roses."

God's commandments are meant to instill fear in those who are not conformed to the will of God in a hope to move them to repentance; whereas, good Catholics, because they are conformed to the will of God, love His commandments with their whole heart, soul, and mind:

Catholic Catechism: "The...observation...of the Commandment[s] is to be proposed in a very different manner to the spiritual and to the carnal Christian. To the spiritual who is animated by the Spirit of God, and who yields to Him a willing

¹¹ *De Gen. Contra Manich.* ii, 17.

and cheerful obedience, it is, in some sort, glad tidings and a strong proof of the divine goodness towards him. In it he recognizes the care of his most loving God, who, now by rewards, now by punishments, almost compels His creatures to adore and worship Him. The spiritual man acknowledges the infinite goodness of God towards himself in vouchsafing to issue His commands to him and to make use of his service to the glory of the divine name. And not only does he acknowledge the divine goodness, he also cherishes a strong hope that when God commands what He pleases, He will also give strength to fulfill what He commands. But to the carnal man, who is not yet freed from a servile spirit and who abstains from sin more through fear of punishment than love of virtue, (this sanction) of the divine law, which closes each of the Commandments, is burdensome and severe.”

In adoration and thanksgiving to Almighty God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I testify that Jesus Christ through His holy Mother Mary and His saints and the teachings of His Holy Catholic Church has freed me from my many mortal sins. I thank Him for giving me the grace and aid to desire to be free from mortal sins and to make a true act of faith in Jesus’ promise and ability to free me from my sins. For, truly, I now hate with a perfect hatred the sins I once loved, and I pray with fear and trembling that God will preserve me from ever falling into them again. I pray that by God’s grace and aid the Devil’s temptations will continue to fall upon dead ground and thus not take root in my heart. I can truly testify that Jesus has set me free from the abject and miserable slavery of sin and has granted me the true peace He promised to those who obey Him (Jn. 14:27), a peace that is beyond the understanding of the carnal man that I once was, because *“the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand because it is spiritually examined.”* (1 Cor. 2: 14) Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, through His holy Mother Mary, created a new and clean heart in me, as He did for King David. I now hate the old man I once was and love the new man I now am by God’s grace and aid. Truly, without God we are nothing and can do nothing of any true and everlasting worth.

Sin no more by fearing God, hell, and the loss of heaven

Even though the love of God is the ultimate goal of all Catholics, which they need to be saved, they also must fear God. But men cannot know God unless they first know His power and thus fear Him, and only then can they love God. Hence the fear of God precedes the love of God and also precedes wisdom. *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom... The fear of God is the beginning of his love, and the beginning of faith is to be fast joined unto it.”* (Eccus. 1:16; 25:16) Hence, a man cannot have true wisdom, true faith, or a true love of God unless he first fears God.

Jesus said, *“Be not afraid of them who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will shew you whom you shall fear: fear ye him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear him.”* (Lk. 12:4-5) Therefore, it is the fear of God’s judgment and power to send you to hell for the guilt of mortal sin that will prevent you from falling into mortal sin when you are greatly tempted by the Devil and on the verge of committing it. When you are brought to this critical point, it is the fear of God more than the love of God that will prevent you from committing the mortal sin because you are on the verge of losing your proper senses to the passion of mortal sin and thus the love of God, for the moment, is not considered:

Imprimatured Book: “Whoever thinks of hell will not fall into it because in the time of temptation this thought will retain him in his duty. St. Martinian had lived twenty-five years in solitude when God allowed his fidelity to be put to a violent test. A perfidious woman, the courtesan Zoe, came to solicit him to sin. She was disguised as a mendicant, and taking advantage of a rain storm, knocked at the cell of Martinian, begging shelter from him. The holy anchorite could not refuse it in these circumstances. He let the stranger in and having lighted a fire, invited her to dry her garments. But soon the unfortunate woman, casting off the borrowed rags she wore, appeared to the eyes of Martinian in a most brilliant dress and with all her fascinating charms. The servant of God, in the presence of a most dreadful danger, remembered Hell, and drawing near the fire, which was blazing on the hearth, he took off his shoes and plunged both feet into the fire. The pain drew cries from him, but he said to his soul, *‘Alas! My soul, if thou canst not bear so weak a fire how wilt thou be able to bear the fire of Hell?’* The temptation was overcome, and Zoe was converted. Such was the salutary effect of the thought of Hell.

“Another recluse, assailed by a violent temptation and afraid of being conquered, lighted his lamp. Then, to be penetrated vividly with the thought of Hell, he put his fingers into the flame and let them burn there with inexpressible sufferings. *‘Since thou dost wish,’* he said, addressing himself, *‘to sin and accept Hell, which will be the punishment of thy sin, try first if thou shalt have the courage to support the pain of an everlasting fire.’* ...The thought of hell fortifies the weakest. Two [early] Christians, Domnina and Theomilla, were brought before the [Roman] prefect Lysias, who gave them notice of the order to renounce the Faith in order to adore idols. They absolutely refused. Then Lysias had a funeral pyre lighted and the altar to the false gods set up. *‘Choose,’* he said to them, *‘either to burn incense on the altar of our gods or to be yourselves burned in the flames of this pyre.’* They replied, without hesitating a moment: *‘We fear not this burning pile, which will be soon extinguished; the fire we do fear is that of Hell, which never goes out. Not to fall into it, we detest your idols and we adore Jesus Christ.’* They underwent martyrdom in the year 235.

“Caesarius relates that a wicked man, for whom many prayers had been offered, fell sick and died. As he was going to be buried, he came back to life again, and rose up full of strength, but seized with an exceeding alarm. Interrogated concerning what had happened to him, he answered, *‘God has just granted me a signal favor; He showed me Hell, an immense ocean of fire, into which I was about to be plunged for my sins. A delay was accorded to me that I might redeem my sins by penance.’* Thenceforth, this sinner was changed into a different man. He expiated his sins by his prayers, tears, fasts, alms, and studying the Catholic faith. When people would prevail upon him to moderate his religious works, he would reply, *‘I have seen Hell; I know that too much cannot be done to avoid it. Ah, Hell! If all the trees and all the forests were heaped up in a vast pile and set on fire, I would prefer to remain in that burning fire to the end of the world rather than endure for only one hour the fire of Hell.’*

“There was a rich inhabitant of Northumberland, whom the sight of hell changed after a like fashion into a new man. He was called Trithelmus, and he led a worldly life, pretty much like that of the wicked rich man of the Gospel. God, by an exceptional mercy, granted him a vision in which He showed him the eternal pains of the damned. Having come back to himself again, Trithelmus confessed all his sins, distributed all his wealth to the poor, and went into a monastery, where he prayed, did penance, and studied the Catholic faith. In winter he did penance by standing in the freezing water, in summer by enduring the burden of heat and toil, by a regular schedule of fasting and other mortifications to the day of his death. When he was spoken to about diminishing his penances, he would reply, *‘If you had seen, like me, the pains of Hell, you would talk otherwise.’*”

It is not that the love of God does not also prevent Catholics from sinning. Indeed, this is the best, the most powerful and necessary thing that prevents Catholics from sinning. A Catholic who has a perfect love of God will not be brought to the verge of committing mortal sin. A perfect love of God includes the fear of God.

The first thing necessary, then, for all those who want to be saved is the fear of God. A mortal sinner cannot even hope for God's mercy and thus be free from his sins until he fears God. *"His mercy is from generation unto generations to them that fear him."* (Lk. 1:50) If you are on the verge of committing a mortal sin, you must fear God by thinking of the hell that He will send you to if you commit it. Jesus the Son of Sirach teaches, *"In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."* (Eccus. 7:40) Yea, remember that if you do not serve God well, thy last end is hell; if you serve Him well, thy last end is heaven. You would also do well to contemplate the eternal joys of heaven that you would forfeit by dying in mortal sin. This will also strongly deter you from committing mortal sin when you are greatly tempted, for this also redounds to the fear and power of God because only He has the power to send you to hell or heaven.

St. Paul, speaking of the glories and delights of heaven, says, *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."* (1 Cor. 2:9):

Imprimatured Book: "When the soul has once entered into the happy kingdom of God, there will be nothing to molest it. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away. And He that sat on the throne said: *Behold I make all things new.* (Apoc. 21:4) In heaven there is no infirmity, no poverty, no distress; there are no longer the vicissitudes of days and nights, nor of cold and heat; but a perpetual day always serene, an eternal spring always delightful. There are no persecutions; no envy. In that kingdom of love, all love one another tenderly; and each rejoices in the good of the other as if it were his own. There are no fears because the soul, being confirmed in grace, can no longer sin nor lose her God. Behold I make all things new. Everything is new; everything gives consolation and content. The sight will be filled with delight in beholding this city of perfect beauty. How delightful the view of a city in which the streets are of crystal, the palaces of silver, the ceilings of gold, and all adorned with festoons of flowers! Oh! How much more beautiful the city of paradise! How splendid the appearance of these citizens, who are all clothed in royal robes; for, as St. Augustine says, they are all kings. How delightful must it be to behold Mary, who will appear more beautiful than all paradise! But what must it be to see the Lamb of God, the Heavenly Spouse, Jesus! The aromas are more pleasant than anything on earth. The ear will be delighted with celestial harmony. St. Francis once heard from an angel a single stroke on a violin, and almost died through joy. What then must it be to hear the whole choir of saints and angels chanting the glories of God! *They shall praise Thee forever and ever.* (Ps. 83:5) What must it be to hear Mary praising God! As the singing of the nightingale surpasses that of all other birds, so the voice of Mary is far superior to that of all the other saints. In a word, in heaven are found all the delights which can be desired.

"But the joys we have been hitherto considering are the least of the blessings of heaven. The good which constitutes heaven is God himself, the Sovereign Good. The reward which God promises us is not merely the beauty, the harmony, and the other joys of this blessed city; the chief reward is God himself,—that is, to see and love God face to face. *I am thy reward exceeding great.* (Gen. 15:1)...

"During the present life, we cannot comprehend the delight of seeing and loving God face to face; but we may form some notion of it by considering that divine love

is so delightful that, even in this life, it has sometimes raised up from the earth not only the souls but even the bodies of the saints. A saint was once lifted up into the air along with a bench which he had grasped. Another saint was also elevated from the earth, and a tree which he held was torn up from the roots...

“Yet in this life we do not see God as he is; we see him only in the dark. *We now see through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face.* (1 Cor 13:12) At present there is a veil before our eyes, and God is seen only with the eyes of faith; but what will be our joy when the veil is removed and we see God face to face? We shall then see the infinite beauty of God, his infinite greatness, his justice, his perfection, his amiableness, and his infinite love for us.”

The Life Everlasting

by St. Augustine

As the hart panteth after the fountain of waters, so my soul panteth after thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God? O thou Fountain of life, thou spring of living waters, when shall I pass from this desert, from this pathless, barren land to the waters of thy sweetness, to see thy beauty and thy glory, and to slake my soul's thirst at the gushing streams of thy love? I thirst, O Lord: Thou art the Fountain of life; give thou me to drink. I thirst, O my Lord; I thirst for thee, the living God. Oh, when shall I come and appear before thy face! Shall I in very deed see that day, that day of joy and gladness, that day which the Lord hath made that we may rejoice and be glad in it?

O bright and glorious day which knoweth no evening, whose sun shall no more go down; in which I shall hear the voice of praise, the voice of joy and thanksgiving, thy voice saying unto me: Enter into the joy of thy Lord; enter into joy everlasting, into the house of the Lord thy God, where are things great and unsearchable, and wonderful things without number; enter into joy wherein is no sorrow but untroubled gladness; wherein is all manner of good, and no manner of thing that is evil; where all thine heart's desire shall be satisfied, and all that thou fearest and hatest shall be far from thee; where life shall be calm and glad; wherein the hateful enemy shall not enter, nor any breath of temptation shall come near thee; where is supreme and settled security, and tranquil joy, and joyful happiness, and a happy eternity, an eternal blessedness, the Blessed Trinity, and the unity of the Trinity, the Godhead in unity, the blissful vision of the Godhead: the joy of thy Lord!

O joy upon joy, joy transcending all joys! When shall I enter into thee and behold my Lord, whose dwelling is in thee! I shall go thither and see this great sight. And now what keepeth me back? Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged! How long, O Lord, shall it be said to me: Wait, wait, yet awhile? Come, O Lord, delay no longer! Come, Lord Jesus Christ, and visit us in peace; come and bring forth thy captives from their dungeon, that they may praise thee with a perfect heart! Come, thou desire of all nations, show thy face and we shall be saved! Come, my light, my Redeemer, bring my soul out of prison that it may give thanks to thy Name.

Blessed are they who have passed over the great and wide sea to the eternal shore and are now blessed in their desired rest. Blessed are they who have escaped from all evils and are secure of their unfading glory in thee, thou kingdom of blessedness! How long shall I be tossed about on the waves of this my mortal life, crying unto thee, O Lord God, while thou hearest me not? Hear me, O Lord, from this great and wide ocean, and bring me to the everlasting haven.

O everlasting kingdom, kingdom of endless ages, wherein rests the untroubled light and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, where the souls of the saints are at rest, and everlasting joy is upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing have fled

away! Oh, how glorious is the kingdom in which all thy saints reign with thee, O Lord, clothed with light as with a garment, and having on their heads a crown of precious stones! For there is infinite unfading joy, gladness without sorrow, health without a pang, life without toil, light without darkness, life without death; there the vigor of age knows no decay, and beauty withers not, nor doth love grow cold, nor joy wane away, for there we look evermore upon the face of the Lord God of hosts.

O Christ, our refuge and strength, thou hope of mankind, whose light shineth from afar upon the dark clouds which hang around us; behold, thy redeemed ones cry unto thee, thy banished ones whom thou hast redeemed with thine own most precious Blood. Hear us, O God our Savior, thou who art the hope of all the ends of the earth and of those that are afar off on the wide sea. We are tossed about on the wild and raging waves in the dark night; and thou, standing on the everlasting shore, dost behold our sore peril: Save us for thy Name's sake. Guide us amidst the shoals and quicksands which beset all our course, and so bring us in safety to the haven where we desire to be. Amen.

Hence, if you are on the verge of committing mortal sin, think first of the eternal pains in hell that await you and then of the eternal joys of heaven that you will forfeit. These things being truly considered will strongly deter you from committing mortal sin. If your mortal sins are habitual, you might continue to commit them for a short time even with these things considered; but with each sin you commit, the fear of the pains of hell and loss of the joys of heaven increases so that you will beg God more and more with fear and trembling, with tears, and with great sorrow to please help you. If you do this, within a short period of time, you will no longer commit the sin, assuming, of course, that you are of good will and thus do everything else necessary as stated in this book.

Imprimatured Book: "Judgment and the Punishment of Sin: In all things, consider the end: how you shall stand before the strict Judge from whom nothing is hidden and who will pronounce judgment in all justice, accepting neither bribes nor excuses. And you, miserable and wretched sinner, who fear even the countenance of an angry man, what answer will you make to the God Who knows all your sins? Why do you not provide for yourself against the day of judgment, when no man can be excused or defended by another because each will have enough to do to answer for himself? In this life your work is profitable, your tears acceptable, your sighs audible, your sorrow satisfying and purifying...

"In truth, we deceive ourselves by our ill-advised love of the flesh. What will that fire feed upon but our sins? The more we spare ourselves now and the more we satisfy the flesh with sinful desires, the harder will the reckoning be and the more we keep for the burning.

"For a man will be more grievously punished in the things in which he has sinned. There the lazy will be driven with burning prongs, and gluttons tormented with unspeakable hunger and thirst; the wanton and lust-loving will be bathed in burning pitch and foul brimstone; the envious will howl in their grief like mad dogs.

"Every vice will have its own proper punishment. The proud will be faced with every confusion, and the avaricious pinched with the most abject want. One hour of suffering there will be more bitter than a hundred years of the most severe penance here. In this life men sometimes rest from work and enjoy the comfort of friends, but the damned have no rest or consolation.

"You must, therefore, take care and repent of your sins now so that on the day of judgment you may rest secure with the blessed. For on that day the just will stand firm against those who tortured and oppressed them, and he who now submits humbly to the judgment of men will arise to pass judgment upon them. The faithful

who are poor and humble will have great confidence, while the proud will be struck with fear. He who appeared to be as a fool in this world and to be scorned for Christ will then appear to have been wise. (1 Cor. 4:10)

“In that day every trial borne in patience will be pleasing and the voice of iniquity will be stilled; the devout will be glad; the irreligious will mourn; and the mortified body will rejoice far more than if it had been pampered with every pleasure. Then the cheap garment will shine with splendor, and the rich one become faded and worn; the poor cottage will be more praised than the gilded palace. In that day persevering patience will count more than all the power in this world; simple obedience will be exalted above all worldly cleverness; a good and clean conscience will gladden the heart of man far more than the philosophy of the learned; and contempt for riches will be of more weight than every treasure on earth.

“Then you will find more consolation in having prayed devoutly than in having fared daintily; you will be happy that you preferred to remain silent rather than gossip. Then holy works will be of greater value than many fair words; holy penance better than a life without penance.

“Learn, then, to suffer little things now that you may not have to suffer greater ones in eternity. Prove here what you can bear hereafter. If you can suffer only a little now, how will you be able to endure eternal torment? If a little suffering makes you impatient now, what will hell fire do? In truth, you cannot have two joys: you cannot taste the sinful so-called pleasures of this world and afterward reign with Christ.

“If your life to this moment has been full of honors and pleasures, what good would it do if at this instant you should die? All is vanity, therefore, except to love God and to serve Him above all else. ...

“It is no wonder that he who still delights in sin fears death and judgment. It is good, however, that even if love does not as yet restrain you from evil, at least the fear of hell does. The man who casts aside the fear of God cannot continue long in goodness but will quickly fall into the snares of the devil.”

Sin no more by avoiding the near occasions of sin

“Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent;
for if thou comest near them, they will take hold of thee.
The teeth thereof are the teeth of a lion, killing the souls of men.”
(Ecclesiasticus 21:2-3)

By voluntarily placing yourself in the near occasions of sin, you tempt God and will not be able to be free from sin. One must avoid the near occasions of sin in order to conquer sin:

Imprimatured Book: “The greatest of all counsels, and the one which is, as it were, the foundation of religion, is to fly from sinful occasions. Being compelled by exorcisms, the devil once confessed that of all sermons, that which displeased him most was the sermon on avoiding the occasions of sin: and justly; for the devil laughs at all the resolutions and promises of penitent sinners who remain in the occasion of sin. The occasion of sins of the flesh, in particular, is like a veil placed before the eyes, which prevents the soul from seeing either its resolutions, or the lights received from God, or the truths of eternity: in a word, it makes it forget everything and almost blinds it. The neglect of avoiding the occasions of sin was the cause of the fall of our first parents. God had forbidden them even to touch the forbidden fruit. God commanded us, said Eve, that we should not eat, and that we should not

touch it. But through want of caution she saw, took, and ate it. She first began to look at the apple, she afterward took it in her hand, and then ate it. He who voluntarily exposes himself to danger, will perish in it. 'He that loveth danger shall perish in it.' (Eccus. 3:27) St. Peter tells us that the devil 'goes about seeking whom he may devour.' (1 Pt. 5:8) And what, says St. Cyprian, does he do in order to enter again into the soul from which he has been expelled? He seeks an occasion of sin. If the soul permits him to bring it again into the occasion of sin, he will enter again and shall devour it.

"He, then, who wishes to be saved must forsake not only all sin, but the occasions of sin—that is, the companions, the house, the connections which lead to sin. But you will say: I have changed my life, and now I have no bad motive, nor even a temptation, in the society of such a person. I answer: it is related that in Mauritania there are bears that go in search of the apes. As soon as they see a bear, the apes save themselves by climbing up the trees: but what does the bear do? He stretches himself, as if dead, under the tree; and when the apes descend, he springs up, seizes, and devours them. It is thus how the devil acts: he makes the temptations appear dead; and when the soul exposes itself to the occasions of sin, he excites the temptation, which devours it. Oh! how many miserable souls that practised mental prayer, frequented Communion, and might be called saints, have, by putting themselves into dangerous occasions, become the prey of hell?...

"Is it possible, says St. John Chrysostom, for hay not to burn when it is thrown into the fire? And St. Cyprian says that it is impossible to stand in the midst of flames and not be burned. According to the prophet Isaias, our strength is like that of tow cast into the fire. 'And your strength shall be as the ashes of tow.' (Isa. 1:31) And Solomon says that it would be folly to expect to walk on red-hot coals without being burned. 'Can a man walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?' (Prv. 6:27) Thus it is likewise folly to expose ourselves to the occasion of sin and to expect not to fall. It is necessary then to fly from sin as from the face of a serpent. 'Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent.' (Eccus. 21:2) We ought not only to avoid the bite or contact of a serpent, but should also abstain from approaching it. But you will say: My interest requires that I should frequent such a house, or that I should keep up a certain friendship. But if you see that such a house is for you a way to hell, there is no remedy; you must forsake it if you wish to save your soul. 'Her house is the way to hell.' (Prv. 7:27)

"And for those who have contracted a habit of committing sins against purity, it will not be enough to avoid proximate occasions; unless they fly even from remote occasions, they will relapse... It is impossible for anyone who does not endeavor to flee from the occasions of sin, especially in the matter of sensual pleasures, to avoid falling into sin. In the war of the senses, the conquerors are those who bravely flee from the occasion of sin... It is morally impossible for anyone to put himself voluntarily into the occasion of sin and not to fall, although he may have made a thousand resolutions and a thousand promises to God. This is clearly shown every day by the misery of so many poor souls who are plunged into vice for not avoiding the occasions of sin...

"We must flee from evil companions; the devil is continually tempting us, and the senses are drawing us to evil; the slightest suggestion of a bad companion is only wanting to make us fall. Therefore the first thing that we have to do to save ourselves is to avoid evil occasions and bad companions. And we must in this matter do violence to ourselves, resolutely overcoming all human respect. 'By respect of persons, he will destroy himself.' (Eccus. 20:24)"

For instance, to be free from physical lust, you must avoid the near occasions of sin that tempt and excite lust. You must guard all your senses, the avenues that lust enters through: the eyes by immodest sights, the ears by immodest sounds, the touch by

immodest touches and embraces, the mouth by immodest words, the nose by sensual perfumes and colognes meant to seduce, and the body by dressing immodestly.

You must turn immediately away from all immodest sights, for to gaze upon them willingly, even for a second, is a sin. You sin by not fleeing from or by speaking immodest words, by not fleeing from or by giving immodest touches and embraces, by not fleeing from or by wearing seductive perfumes and colognes, and by not fleeing from or by wearing immodest clothes. These sins can be venial or mortal. If you continue to commit venial sins by placing yourself in any one of these near occasions of mortal sin, you will eventually commit mortal sin. Some of these near occasions may only be faults, but habitual faults lead to venial sins, and habitual venial sins lead to mortal sins.

There are times when you are forced to bear these temptations; in these cases, you do not sin and are not even at fault, provided you pray to God to protect you from being infected by them. With God's help, the temptations will not take root, and you will even gain merit.

Anyone who continually places himself in the near occasions of sin will eventually fall into mortal sin. If you do not do all the other necessary things to be a good Catholic, as stated in this book, you will eventually place yourself in the near occasions of sin and then fall into mortal sin.

Sin no more by possessing the Catholic faith

To eventually be free from mortal sin, the first and most necessary thing is to honestly and humbly seek the truth, the Catholic faith. In order for me to stop committing my habitual mortal sins, I knew, by God's grace and aid, that the first thing I needed to do was to make a sincere effort in finding, learning, and embracing the Catholic faith. That was my primary problem that led me into committing mortal sins of immorality, the lack of the Catholic faith and no desire to find and know it. I grew up as a so-called Catholic but was not actually Catholic because I knew not and cared not about the full deposit of the faith. I knew that a lack of proper faith in God, in one way or another, leads to mortal sins of immorality. Mortal sins against the faith lead to mortal sins of immorality. God showed me this when I read Osee Chapter 4, Romans Chapter 1, and contemplated the fall of Adam and Eve:

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel, for the Lord shall enter into judgment with the inhabitants of the land: for there is no truth, and there is no mercy, and there is no knowledge of God in the land. Cursing, and lying, and killing, and theft, and adultery have overflowed, and blood hath touched blood. ...My people have been silent because they had no knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee that thou shalt not do the office of priesthood to me; and thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children. According to the multitude of them, so have they sinned against me; I will change their glory into shame. They shall eat the sins of my people and shall lift up their souls to their iniquity. And there shall be like people like priest; and I will visit their ways upon them, and I will repay them their devices. And they shall eat and shall not be filled; they have committed fornication and have not ceased because they have forsaken the Lord in not observing his law... For the spirit of fornication hath deceived them, and they have committed fornication against their God. ...I will not visit upon your daughters when they shall commit fornication, and upon your spouses when they shall commit adultery, because themselves conversed with

harlots and offered sacrifice with the effeminate, and the people that doth not understand shall be beaten. (Osee, Chapter 4)

“Because that when they knew God, they have not glorified him as God or given thanks but became vain in their thoughts. And their foolish heart was darkened. For, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools... Wherefore, God gave them up to the desires of their heart unto uncleanness, to dishonour their own bodies among themselves. Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause, God delivered them up to shameful affections. For their women have changed the natural use into that use which is against nature. And, in like manner, the men also, leaving the natural use of the women, have burned in their lusts, one towards another: men with men, working that which is filthy and receiving in themselves the recompense which was due to their error. And as they liked not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense to do those things which are not convenient. Being filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, avarice, wickedness; full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity, whisperers, detractors, hateful to God, contumelious, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, foolish, dissolute; without affection, without fidelity, without mercy. Who, having known the justice of God, did not understand that they who do such things are worthy of death; and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them.” (Rom. 1:21-32)

Adam and Eve knew no sin until they committed their first sin, which was a sin against the faith by putting their faith in Satan instead of God. Only after this sin against the faith did sins of immorality follow.

My first prayer request to God, then, was that I find and learn the truth that would set me free (Jn. 8:32). The word of God taught me that “*God is compassionate and merciful...and he is a protector to all that seek him in truth.*” (Eccus. 2:13) Therefore, I prayed to God that He would motivate me with a sincere desire to seek the truth and eventually embrace the Catholic faith, which implies the full deposit of the faith. If my effort was sincere, I knew that God would eventually free me from committing mortal sins of immorality—the forgiveness and remission of them would come later when I found and embraced that Catholic faith by abjuring my heresies and errors and entering the Catholic Church. God goes before men in many ways if they have good will, and this is the only way they can even come into His Church and have their sins forgiven and remitted. If a man sincerely seeks the truth, God rewards him every time he makes progress; and this brings him closer to God until he eventually enters the Catholic Church.

A man, such as a Greek Schismatic, can profess belief in Christ and the Most Holy Trinity, pray, and mortify himself, and give to the poor, but if he does not have the Catholic faith he cannot be saved:

Catholic Catechism: “The most Holy Roman Catholic Church firmly believes, professes, and preaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews, heretics, and schismatics, can have a share in life eternal but that they will go into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels unless before death they are joined with Her; and that so important is the unity of this ecclesiastical body that only those remaining within this unity can receive an eternal recompense for their fasts, their almsgivings, their other works of Christian piety and the duties of a Christian soldier. No one, let his almsgiving be as great as it may, no one, even if he pour out his blood for the name of Christ, can be saved unless he remain within the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church.”

These non-Catholics would also not be able to be totally free from mortal sins of immorality until they first reject their false religion and make an effort to find the true one, the Catholic religion, and then embrace the Catholic faith and enter the Catholic Church. As the Prophet Osee and St. Paul teach, all heretics and schismatics—no matter how much they profess belief in Christ, pray, mortify themselves, or give to the poor, etc.—are guilty of some type of mortal sin of immorality because of their faithlessness: be it fornication, intellectual lust, condescension, not loving neighbors and enemies, racism, reading or watching bad books and movies, feminism, effeminate men, immodesty, sins of omission, homosexuality, gluttony, sloth, laziness, pedophilia, contraception, abortion, listening to bad music, lying, stealing, calumny, detraction, covetousness, vanity, greed, negligence of the corporal or spiritual acts of mercy, etc. For instance, the Greek Schismatics allow divorce and “re-marriage,” which is adultery; Protestants allow the same and contraception, and some support abortion and some are racists; and Old Catholics are infected with homosexuality. The same applies to fallen-away Catholics who think they are Catholic, such as all the members of the Renaissance Church, the Vatican II Church, and all the Traditionalists.

Dear so-called Catholic, honestly and humbly examine your conscience in the light of the full deposit of the Catholic faith to learn if you are truly Catholic or not. If you are not, then you are on the road to hell for that alone; and you are also guilty of some type of mortal sin of immorality whether you acknowledge it or not. To eventually be free of your mortal sins, you must make a sincere and humble effort to find the truth (the true Catholic faith), embrace it, and enter the true Catholic Church. Only then will you have a hope to be saved. Part of your conversion requires that you profess the Catholic faith when obliged, avoid religious communion with nominal Catholics and all other non-Catholics, and enter the Catholic Church by abjuring from your heresies or idolatries and from the non-Catholic sects and priests you were once united to.

Prayer for Enlightenment

By Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

Almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, thy Son our Lord, and the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I beg of thee to show me the way and the truth that leads to everlasting life. If I am not now on that path, please, O please, show me what I must do to enter that path and be saved.

Lord, your servants teach that *“There is a way that seemeth to a man right, and the ends thereof lead to death...”*¹² and *“I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet I am not hereby justified.”*¹³ Please, Lord, help me to truly examine my conscience; expose any sins I may be hiding from myself. Do not let me make excuses for my sins. *“Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord. ...Incline not my heart to evil words, to make excuses in sins.”*¹⁴ Reveal my sins to me in spite of my stubbornness. I know that none of my sins can be forgiven unless I am inside the Catholic Church

¹² Prv. 16:25.

¹³ 1 Cor. 4:4.

¹⁴ Ps. 18:13; 140:4.

because “Outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation or remission of sins.” If I am outside the Catholic Church for mortal sins of apostasy, heresy, or schism, show me these sins. Do not let me make excuses for them. Tell me what I must do to enter the Catholic Church in order that my sins can be forgiven so that I may have a hope to be saved. If I am guilty of mortal sins against the moral commandments, show them to me so I can confess them with perfect contrition and sin no more.

Lord, thou hast promised that all who wholeheartedly seek thee shall find thee. “*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.*”¹⁵ Behold, I ask, I seek, and I knock.

I know that only those who obey all of thy words are blessed. “*Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.*”¹⁶ And I know that I cannot think or do anything good without thy grace. “*For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will.*”¹⁷ Please, O please, I beg of thee, Lord God, have mercy on me and show me the way to eternal life and give me whatever I need to follow that way by obedience to all of thy words and commandments.

Lord, I have confidence that thou wilt answer my prayer provided I offer it with my whole heart, for thou never refuseth any good thing to those who truly desire it and are willing to love and obey thee. May it not be said of me, “*You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss.*”¹⁸ If I have offered this prayer with a double heart or some other impure motive so as not to be heard by thee, then please reveal this also to me so that I may pray it again with a pure heart and deserve to be heard by thee. O God, this we ask of thee through the same our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son, the author and finisher of faith,¹⁹ who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Pray the Penitential Psalms: 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142.

¹⁵ Mt. 7:7.

¹⁶ Lk. 11:28.

¹⁷ Phil. 2:13.

¹⁸ Ja. 4:3.

¹⁹ Heb. 12:2.



“Make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again;
he was lost, and is found.”
(St. Luke 15:32)

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