

---

## Presentation Four

Estimated Reading Time: approx. 45-90 minutes

---

### *Covenantal Communication and the Moral Virtues*

#### PRESENTATION GOALS

- ☞ To discuss various stages and patterns of healthy and unhealthy communication skills.
- ☞ To address other verbal skills, such as rules for argument and who deals with the in-laws.
- ☞ To teach couples that good communication means practicing the virtues in daily life as a couple, such as patience, generosity, perseverance, fortitude, charity, and forgiveness.
- ☞ Consequently, striving to grow in virtue, with the help of God's grace, will strengthen a couple's communication and "Love Language" in marriage so that, as a couple they will increase in holiness and be one step closer to Heaven!

“Volumes have been written in recent years about the importance and the techniques of communication. There is no question: *how* you communicate with your spouse and *what* you communicate to your spouse will have a great influence on your marital happiness.”<sup>97</sup>

#### SETTLING DOWN<sup>98</sup>

“The experts tell us that a partnership normally passes through three stages: (1) romance, (2) disillusionment, and (3) either a breakthrough to true love (which comes with patience and perseverance) or loneliness, distance, and pain. It is the third phase that is critical; but because its outcome depends on how the other two are understood, a look at disillusionment is in order.”

Some kind of letdown following the honeymoon is almost certain to occur. Most husbands and wives find themselves hard pressed merely to cope with the strain of daily living. There may also

be a gap between what is expected of marriage and what marriage as an institution is capable of delivering. Although people faced with a deteriorating relationship often believe that the fault lies with their spouse, the fact is that no human being, however angelic, is equipped to guarantee the happiness of another. This is something only God Himself can do, and even He does not promise instant results. There will be periods of estrangement in even the happiest home when one or the other party is likely to feel misunderstood and dejected. There will also be intervals when a perfectly good husband or wife will drive everyone up the wall. Be patient. Wait for the sun to come out from behind those clouds. It will.

Still another reason for disillusionment is that the bride and groom may discover that they have little in common. Assume, for the sake of argument, that boy meets girl on a ski trip, and they decide to get married on the basis of some fun they had on the slopes. Once they are married, there may not be any more ski trips, at least not for a while. So they settle down and find conversation awkward, decisions difficult. Suppose, in another instance, that a disproportionate amount of the couple's attention before marriage centered on ways and means of obtaining parental approval or, alternately, on the number of wedding guests to be invited and canapés to be served. After all is in place, these same people who occupied themselves with romantic plans and strategies may find themselves with few, if any, shared interests, much less common goals on which to build.

A fourth factor which helps to explain post-honeymoon blues is the effect that relaxation tends to have on human behavior. Where once we tried to look our best, we now feel free to "let our hair down." As dates, we may have been sensitive, courteous, and attentive. Now, all of a sudden, we feel we can take each other for granted. Faults, once hidden, begin to surface under the strain of budgeting. There is a need to adjust sexually, to adapt to in-laws, and to hold down a job that overnight becomes vital to the security of two people, instead of just one. Similarly, a couple will often find that, hard as they may try, they have less uninterrupted time together once they are married and their income may not allow for the kind of diversion or the type of wardrobe to which they were accustomed. Suddenly, they have to make decisions that are potentially divisive, and if they are not careful, they begin to lose touch. Fears, hopes, and desires go unexpressed, frustration mounts, and communication breaks down.

If you should find yourself in this situation, just remember that marriage was designed by Almighty God to last forever, and it will if you take your vows in good faith and with determination to go the distance. One of the answers to marital letdown in the early stages is to recognize it for what it is and to know that family harmony takes time, as well as effort. Are there cases of chronically troubled marriages that will resist even the most heroic efforts as healing? Yes. There may be times when marriage becomes a cross that one must carry all the way to the grave. You can be certain, however, that if this is so, it will be your ticket to Heaven. I like to think that Jesus is going to say to worn-out spouses who have persevered to the end what He said to the good thief on Calvary: "today you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk 23: 43). In any event, the answer is not to shop around for a new partner. Far better an imperfect union, even a separation, than the most perfect divorce. And this goes for the children, as well as the parents — especially the children. Studies show that the younger victims of divorce and remarriage suffer the most.

But let us not dwell on the negative. Doubtless, your match will be all you ever hoped for and more. You will seek out solutions to problems as they arise; joy will outweigh sadness; faith will overcome all obstacles. This is the ideal, and there is no reason to believe that it is not a realizable

ideal for those who are willing to work at it. Let me explain what I mean by “willing to work at it.

Who is not familiar with the soap opera stereotype of an unhappy marriage? John hides behind his newspaper when he is not glued to the tube or out drinking with the boys, while his wife Joan runs a chaotic household and spends her time on the phone with girlfriends or relatives. At the dinner table, neither party has much to say, John takes little interest in Joan’s problems. She could care less about the things that occupy him at work. When they do converse over a family meal, it is more by way of criticism than positive reinforcement. So the conversation sputters along in dribs and drabs, directed mainly at the children.

According to marriage counselors, communication breakdowns such as this are not only ominous; they are very common, affecting a broad cross-section of society. And while they may reflect a variety of marital problems, they are often the cause of such problems. At the same time — and here is the rub — they are eminently avoidable. Communication is an art and, as such, it can be cultivated. The husband and wife who communicate with ease have an automatic handle on almost any problem that may arise. So the very least, they are able to grapple with ongoing challenges as a couple. There is, moreover, no reason why one can’t learn the skill of communication just as one would learn any other skill.

## WHY GOOD COMMUNICATION IS NECESSARY

Communication, from the Latin *communicare*.

☞ To share; to make common.

☞ To make union with.

☞ Remember, that at Mass, we enter into communion with Christ!

As we presented before, your Marriage here on earth is a Sacrament, meaning a sign and participation in the Marriage of Christ and his Church in Heaven. Just as entering into communion with Christ at Mass strengthens our relationship with him, so too does your communication with each other.

### Basics of Communication

Communication is more than just words. If receiving Christ in the Eucharist is a form of communication, then communication is more than just words. It involves the body, i.e., body language, gestures, actions. If communication is to “make union with,” then body language (or better yet: “the language of the body”) as well as words, gestures and actions are part of it. Good communication is a union of all forms to share the same message. Words and actions should all harmoniously “speak” the same thing.

## TEN COMMANDMENTS OF COMMUNICATION<sup>99</sup>

### 10. *Keep confidences confidential*

The best way to shut down the all-important communication process is to reveal family secrets. Some of us may feel that we are only confiding in ‘best friends.’ But once you are married, you have only one ‘best friend,’ your spouse. Do not complain, especially to relatives. Bear in mind, too, that the right kind of friend will strengthen your marriage by causing you to feel satisfied rather than dissatisfied.

9. *Use sex for the purpose intended by God*

At its best, marital intercourse can be an extremely beautiful way of saying, 'I love you.' At its worst, it is likely to convey just the opposite meaning. One hears much these days about 'having sex.' What a contradiction in terms! If the procreative act is anything, it is the supreme act of giving; and, because it transmits the tenderest of messages in the tenderest of ways, it can be one of the most effective forms of communication. The message will be distorted, however, if not altogether lost, if it involves manipulation or if too much emphasis is placed on the physical. (More on this topic in Presentations Six through Ten.)

8. *Learn the ground rules for fighting*

(This will be discussed later in the presentation.)

7. *Express gratitude*

(This will be discussed in the next section: "*The 5 Love Languages.*")

6. *Avoid nagging*

Instead of asking directly for certain favors when your wife or husband is distracted, you might consider writing a little 'love note' that can be left in plain view for action when convenient. If you need something badly enough and one or two gentle reminders do not suffice, it may be time to sit down and calmly explain the urgency of the problem from your point of view. Occasionally, though, even this will not work, and you may simply have to accept what you cannot change, offering it up as a share in the Lord's suffering.

5. *Accept criticism gratefully and learn to apologize*

Learning to take criticism is good, but better still is asking for it on occasion and being quick to apologize. The phrase 'I'm sorry' is a wonderful all-purpose solvent capable of cutting through the gummiest mounds of double-talk and misunderstanding.

4. *Be patient and discreet in drawing the other person out*

Some spouses may want to be left alone for a spell before they open up, especially after a long days work. There may be times, too, when your partner will be talked out. At moments like this, you might decide to take a quiet walk together simply to show that you care. Whatever you do, never 'dump' on your spouse the moment he/she arrives home from work. Allow time for the new arrival to wash up, have a snack, and look over the mail. Later on there will be enough time to catch up on the latest in your respective spheres.

3. *Learn to listen*

(This will be covered in the next section: "*The 5 Love Languages.*")

2. *Take nothing for granted*

Marital relations rarely stand still. If they don't thrive, they languish. It is important, therefore, to ask questions while keeping a hot line open to your spouse at all times. In business, the boss is always checking to make sure the secretary understands what needs to be done; the attitude is one of 'give me a buzz if there's a problem.' So too, lifelong collaborators should be saying that same thing at every juncture, anxious to know how they are doing. There may be virtue in the 'strong, silent type,' but such virtue lies more in the strength than in the silence. If one party is reticent by nature, the other should not give up. The ideal couple will converse about all aspects

of life, including matters of delicacy, for unless both parties can deal verbally with issues across the board, it will be hard for either of them to meet the full range of the other's needs and expectations. One might add that children, too, should have their forum. Often, parental willingness to hold a family conference for the airing of proper concerns will do wonders to restore peace and harmony.

#### 1. *Make time for each other*

In order for couples to maintain a love relationship, they need to spend quality time with each other. Communication is very important. Lack of communication can signal to your spouse that you have lost interest in him or her. Couples should make an effort to spend some time talking every day. When our lives are so busy, couples need to make time for each other if the relationship is going to prosper. Working time into a busy schedule can be done. Multitasking while communicating is not quality time. Forget all the little things still to do and just concentrate on each other.

Laugh and enjoy the time together. Forget about expectations and demands. Just relax and relish in the moments together. Make an effort to keep romance alive. If possible, schedule a vacation in a romantic setting. If this is not possible, then plan a day together. There are lots of things a couple can do without spending a lot of time or money. Go on a walk in the park. See a movie. Read the Bible together. Ask each other questions about your favorite things, and schedule outings based on the results.

## *The 5 Love Languages*

Gary Chapman<sup>100</sup>

While all forms of communication are important . . . each person has a primary love language.

This form of communication satisfies a person's emotional need for love. It is the way the person hears that his spouse loves him/her. There are five basic forms of communication, or love languages.

To nourish your married love, you need to speak love to your spouse in your spouse's primary love language.

A husband and wife may each have a different primary love language than the other.

### *The 5 Love Languages*

#### 1. **Words of Affirmation**

- ☞ A verbal affirmation of your spouse
- ☞ Compliments and thanks

The first love language is entitled "words of affirmation." The language is spoken when you verbally affirm your spouse. It is usually done out loud, but can also be done through letters. It involves both complimenting your spouse (for example: on how she or he looks, on the quality

of her cooking, or on how warm and caring he/she is) and thanking your spouse for what he or she does for you (e.g., bathing the kids, fixing the car, etc).

## 2. Quality Time

- ☞ Giving your spouse your undivided attention
- ☞ Listening to your spouse
- ☞ Doing an activity together

The second love language is “quality time.” You speak this language when you either give your spouse your undivided attention, do an activity together, or both. Sitting in front of the TV together doesn’t count. It is a way of telling your spouse that he or she is so important because you are stopping everything else to focus your attention on him or her. If you are giving your spouse your attention, it is best to begin by simply listening. It not only indicates that you care what your spouse is thinking, but also that you are his/her companion in all the areas of his/her life. Listen to one another and problem solve together. Similarly, by doing an activity together, it is a way of sharing in your spouse’s life. Examples include: going for a walk together, playing tennis, cooking dinner together, dancing together, exercising together, and praying together.

## 3. Receiving Gifts

- ☞ Giving your spouse a gift as a sign that you were thinking of him/her.
- ☞ Doesn’t need to cost money and don’t forget that your marriage is more important than money.

The third love language is “receiving gifts.” Some people feel loved when their spouse gives them gifts. It is a sign that their spouse was thinking of him/her. If you give your spouse a gift, it also represents that you are giving him/her your life. For this kind of love language, it is helpful to recall the adage: “it is the thought that counts.” The gifts don’t need to cost money. The gift can be a handmade card, a flower picked from the field, or some other items that you made or went out of your way to find. At the same time, once in a while it would be helpful to purchase a gift, especially if it is something you know your spouse would really appreciate, like chocolate. While a couple *must be* fiscally responsible, the marriage is more important than the money. (There will be more on “Money and Marriage” in the next presentation.)

## 4. Acts of Service

- ☞ Doing things (cooking a meal, painting the bedroom, washing the car, doing the laundry, cleaning the house, doing the grocery shopping, changing the oil in the car) for your spouse that you know *your spouse will like*.

The fourth love language is “acts of service.” As the name describes, it entails doing things for your spouse that you know your spouse will like. You may want to consider doing things you think should be done and your spouse may just find it *so* loving such as doing things that your spouse normally does. When you do some act of service for your spouse, it indicates you love him/her in that you put his/her needs first. It also brings joy in that it completes a task or project that your spouse wanted done. If you are uncertain what type of service your spouse would like, it may be best to simply ask.

## 5. Physical Touch

- ☞ Communicating your love by holding hands, a hug, the one flesh union, etc.

The fifth and final love language is “physical touch.” This is more than simply the one flesh union, and is usually a separate category. It is true that spouses communicate love by means of the language of the body in sexual intercourse. However, for some spouses the emotional need for love needs to be communicated in terms of holding hands, a hug, a caress, or a massage. Physical touch indicates not only your affection, but also your contact with and consideration of your spouse.

### OTHER VERBAL SKILLS

In addition to the Ten Commandments of Communication and learning and speaking your spouse’s primary “Love Language,” there are two other verbal skills that you should keep in mind to ensure that you have good communication and a happy, healthy, holy, and lasting marriage.

#### Rules for Your Arguments

Every couple has arguments. It has undoubtedly already happened in your courtship, and will happen at different times in your marriage. The important thing is that you argue charitably, meaning “lovingly.” Just because you are arguing doesn’t mean that you do not love one another. However, you should make certain that there are careful boundaries to your arguments so that your relationship is not wounded as a result.

Therefore, both of you should know the rules for marital arguments.

- ☞ There can be no name calling (no matter how angry you are).
- ☞ Absolutely no pushing, shoving, or other physical contact; even if you don’t think it is a big deal, your spouse might.
- ☞ Do not bring up all the things your spouse “has done wrong” from the past. Stay focused on the issue at hand.
- ☞ Avoid raising your voice and yelling.
- ☞ No “transferred aggression” to objects in the house.

### *Rules of Fair Fighting*

Bruce and Yvonne Brizzolara

The following guidelines are intended to assist you to have constructive arguments. Implementing them takes practice and a sincere effort on the part of both partners.



- ☞ Be clear about what you (and your partner) want the outcome of the argument to be. Make sure that you are not misdirecting anger or frustration intended for someone else at your partner.
- ☞ Limit the scope of the argument to the issue at hand. Stick to one issue at a time. Do not throw in the kitchen sink or garbage bag (bring up other issues from the past or that you have been harboring in addition to the issue at hand).
- ☞ Seek a resolution that you can both live with. Remember it is not important to win, but to compromise.
- ☞ Do not use words such as “always” and “never.” Remember the positive aspects of your marriage when you are arguing.
- ☞ See the glass as half full, not as half empty. Focus on what you have and not on what is missing.
- ☞ Remember to be kind. Even when you are in the middle of an argument include a kind word, a compliment, or a hug to show that you care.
- ☞ Hold hands — physical contact reminds you of your love for the other person and keeps you from feeling alone or isolated.
- ☞ Try to not cross your arms — this indicates a defensive position and that you are really not listening to the other person.
- ☞ Apologize when you need!!! Say I AM SORRY and how you intend to ensure that it does not happen again.

### **Avoiding the Don'ts of Fair Fighting**

- ☞ Don't look for total victory or unconditional surrender.
- ☞ Don't intentionally prolong the argument.
- ☞ Don't nag or withdraw.
- ☞ Don't bring out the heavy artillery. (Don't go for your spouse's vulnerabilities or sore spots. Also, don't bring up past sins or old fights.)
- ☞ Don't use threats of divorce. This can be very harmful to the marriage.

Remember your marriage vows — “for better, for worse.”

The point is to keep focused on the specific disagreement and to remember that you are trying to work it out with the person you love so much that you married him/her. While you may need some time to cool-off and think about the matter, *always* talk out your differences before you go to bed.

“If you are angry, let it be without sin. The sun must not go down on your wrath; do not give the devil a chance to work on you.”<sup>101</sup>

Being united as one flesh does not mean the selfish pursuit of pleasure, such as putting one's own interests before the other. But rather it demands patience, kindness, and selfless desire to serve the other: not to dominate or subjugate the other for personal gain or satisfaction. Only self-sacrificial, forgiving, and patient love can lead to a healthy and holy marriage.

Make no doubt about it there will be difficulties in your marriage. With the passing of time physical and/or emotional health may fail; financial difficulties may arise or the stress of daily life may become a



burden; common interests and tastes may change over the years; disagreements or arguments may arise; idiosyncrasies may get the best of you, but “we would have a poor idea of marriage and of human affection if we were to think that love and joy come to an end when faced with such difficulties. It is precisely in these moments that our true sentiments come to the surface, in order to show a true and profound affection that is stronger than human weakness.”<sup>102</sup>

God knows it is hard sometimes, but if you keep Christ at the heart of your marriage, pray constantly together and for one another, share your faith together in the sacramental life of the Church — especially the Eucharist — you will always be strengthened, consoled, and healed in difficult times and given fresh opportunities for proving and strengthening your love for one another.

## **How to Deal with the In-laws**

“However much two families may have in common, they will not react to all situations in exactly the same way any more than they will share the same expectations. On a purely practical level, they are likely to have different ways of celebrating religious feasts and holidays. Feelings can run deep as to how many presents should be exchanged at Christmas and when they should be opened. Familiarity breeds contempt, and parents of the bride and groom, while not intending it, can easily come between husband and wife.”<sup>103</sup>

When it comes to maintaining peace and joy in marriage, good strategies for dealing with the in-laws help. Generally, you are responsible for communicating with your side of the family. It is especially important when you communicate vacation plans or other key decisions. For example, do not make your spouse tell your parents that the two of you are going elsewhere for Christmas this year. You are the one who has the most good will with your family; do not put your spouse in an awkward position. Likewise, communicate all decisions as a joint decision. Do not tell your parents that you are not coming for Christmas because your spouse is the one who wants to go to the Bahamas. From the day of your marriage on, you both are one. You must communicate your decisions as such.

“Many couples, when they marry, develop a wonderful relationship with their new families. Grandparents are a godsend. They can be extremely generous. And who can forget the story of Ruth, an Old Testament widow, who assured her mother-in-law, “Where you go I will go and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16). In-laws deserve the greatest respect and consideration. At the very least, we should avoid criticizing them, especially in the presence of our spouse, when in doing so we may be treading on a loyalty that is deeply rooted as it is natural. Even if the criticism strikes a sympathetic cord, it will put one’s partner in an awkward spot.”

“At the same time, it has been well said that in-laws are outlaws. Like all adages, this one may not ring entirely true in every instance, but it contains a wealth of wisdom. Scripture has it, “A man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gn 2: 24). Therefore, in any dispute pitting spouse against in-law (or blood relative, for that matter), the spouse’s mate should remain neutral or, preferably, come down on the side of his/ her spouse. Likewise, if a parent requires correction, the person to do it is the blood relative. We are enjoined by the Fourth Commandment to honor father and mother, but our primary allegiance is to the person we marry, and couples who experience friction with their relatives are advised to limit the contact. If and when in-laws offer advice, the prudent response is, “Thank you for your thoughtfulness; I’ll talk it over with my better half.” Never complain, and never tolerate remarks or behavior from family members that denigrate your spouse, even indirectly. As

mentioned earlier, smooth communication between husband and wife is essential to the health of the marriage, and this calls for one hundred percent loyalty.”<sup>104</sup>

*Take a five minute break and make note of two things you learned so far.*

---

---

---

---

---

---

## COMMUNICATION AND THE VIRTUOUS LIFE

“Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”<sup>105</sup>

“. . . [I]t is the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day and those other things about which you hear me conversing and testing myself and others, for the unexamined life is not worth living . . .”<sup>106</sup>  
“As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, ‘Do you also want to leave?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of everlasting life.’”<sup>107</sup>

If you are not in the state of sanctifying grace, that is, in a right relationship with God, your actions will show it, especially in the way you communicate with your spouse. Most Christian couples who truly know what it means to love and are living lives of holiness rooted in Christ, are genuinely charitable, kind, generous, patient, etc. These virtues are all expressions of the state of the soul.

Holiness is contagious only if a person recognizes his or her sinfulness and strives to continually root out the vice with the help of God’s grace so as to grow in virtue. Virtue is a firm disposition of the soul to choose the good. The virtuous life is the means by which we become saints.

“Through love of God we conceive virtues, and through love of our neighbor, they are brought to birth.”<sup>108</sup> “Now is the time to prepare yourself for [marriage] and family life. You cannot follow this path if you do not know how to love. To love means to want to perfect yourself and your beloved; to overcome your selfishness and give yourself completely.”<sup>109</sup>

Striving to grow in virtue, with the help of God’s grace, will strengthen your communication and “love language” in marriage so that, as a couple, you will increase in holiness and be one step closer to Heaven.

## KNOW THE SIN AND THE CORRESPONDING HEAVENLY VIRTUE<sup>110</sup>

The Catholic Encyclopedia states that “*Sin is nothing else than a morally bad act* (St. Thomas, *De malo*, 7: 3), *an act not in accord with reason informed by the Divine law.*” God has given us free will, reason and a sense of responsibility. We are to use these gifts to live by his law. Sinning is what we do when we use our gifts of reason and free will in deviation from God’s law.

### What are the Seven Capital Sins and Their Corresponding Heavenly Virtues?

In the early centuries of the Church, the formal list of the capital sins took a few different forms. The earliest predecessor to the list that has been accepted for the past millennium was penned in the fourth century by a monk named Evagrius Ponticus, who listed eight “evil thoughts.” Seven of these evil thoughts were first listed formally by Pope St. Gregory the Great and later were enumerated by St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica*: vainglory (pride), avarice (greed), gluttony, lust, sloth, envy, anger (*STh*, I-II: 84: 4).

In defining capital sin, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* references St. Thomas Aquinas: “According to St. Thomas (*STh*, II-II: 153: 4) ‘a capital vice is that which has an exceedingly desirable end so that in his desire for it a man goes on to the commission of many sins all of which are said to originate in that vice as their chief source.’ It is not then the gravity of the vice in itself that makes it capital but rather the fact that it gives rise to many other sins.”

The concept of the seven capital virtues has been an aspect of Catholic Faith for several centuries, having gained recognition and popularity in the Middle Ages. This list of seven virtues is a set of virtues which are to counter the temptation to succumb to the seven capital sins. For this reason, they are sometimes also called the seven contrary virtues; they represent the opposite of the seven capital sins.

The list of seven capital virtues stems from the subject matter of an epic poem written by an early Christian poet, Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, at the end of the fourth century. The poem, *Psychomachia* (meaning Battle of Souls), is an allegory that describes seven virtues defeating seven vices.

### The Seven Capital Sins and Their Corresponding “Heavenly” Virtues

**Exercise:** Each couple or group is given one vice and / or virtue: Write down two practical examples that explain:

- How the vice can break down and weaken marriage.
- How the virtue can build up and strengthen marriage.

☞ PRIDE is an unrestrained and improper appreciation of our own worth. This is listed first because it is widely considered the most serious of the seven sins; pride often leads to the committing of other capital sins. Pride is manifest in vanity and narcissism about appearance, intelligence, status, etc. Dante described pride as “love of self perverted to hatred and contempt for one’s neighbor.”

HUMILITY is the virtue that counters pride. As pride leads to other sins, true humility clears a path for holiness. Pride is a sin based on undue and inappropriate appreciation of self-worth. Conversely, the virtue of humility is about modest behavior, selflessness, and the giving of respect.

☞ GREED, which is also known as avarice or covetousness, is the immoderate desire for earthly goods, as well as situations such as power. It is a sin of excess. The object of greed need not be evil, but the issue lies in the way one regards the object, placing inappropriate value on it. Greed can further inspire such sinful actions as hoarding of materials or objects, theft, robbery, trickery, and manipulation.

GENEROSITY is the virtue that counters greed. The virtue of generosity is focused not merely on the appropriate concern regarding earthly things, but also on generosity and a willingness to give freely and without request for commendation.

- ☞ GLUTTONY, which comes from the Latin *gluttire*, meaning to gulp down or swallow, refers to the sin of overindulgence and overconsumption of food and drink. The manners in which gluttony can be committed are eating too soon, eating too expensively, eating too much, eating too eagerly, eating too daintily, and eating wildly.

St. Alphonsus Liguori explained that “it is not a fault to feel pleasure in eating: for it is, generally speaking, impossible to eat without experiencing the delight which food naturally produces. But it is a defect to eat, like beasts, through the sole motive of sensual gratification, and without any reasonable object.”<sup>111</sup>

TEMPERANCE or abstinence counters the sin of gluttony. To be gluttonous is to overindulge. Conversely, the virtue of temperance is centered on self-control and moderation.

- ☞ LUST refers to impure desire of a sexual nature. Sexuality is a gift from God, and not inherently impure in itself. However, lust refers to the impure thoughts and actions that misuse that gift, deviating from God’s law and intentions for us. Indulging in the sin of lust can include (but is not limited to) fornication, pornography, masturbation, adultery, bestiality, rape, and incest and can lead to such things as sexual addiction. (More on this vice in presentations six and seven.)

CHASTITY is the counter-virtue to the sin of lust. Chastity embraces moral wholesomeness and purity, and in both thought and action treats God’s gift of sexuality with due reverence and respect. (More on this virtue in presentations six and seven.)

- ☞ SLOTH is often described simply as the sin of laziness. However, while this is part of the manifestation of sloth, the central problem with sloth as a capital sin is spiritual laziness. The sin of sloth means being lazy and lax about living the Faith and practicing virtue.

The Catholic Encyclopedia explains: “In general [sloth] means disinclination to labor or exertion. As a capital or deadly vice St. Thomas calls it sadness in the face of some spiritual good which one has to achieve. . . . St. Thomas completes his definition of sloth by saying that it is torpor in the presence of spiritual good which is Divine good. In other words, a man is formally distressed at the prospect of what he must do for God to bring about or keep intact his friendship with God. In this sense sloth is directly opposed to charity.”

DILIGENCE or persistence is the virtue which acts as a counter to the sin of sloth. Sloth, as a capital sin, refers to laziness in matters of Faith. Diligence in matters of Faith combats laziness. This virtue manifests itself in appropriately zealous attitudes toward living and sharing the Faith.

- ☞ ANGER OR WRATH: The Catholic Encyclopedia explains: “[Anger is] the desire of vengeance. Its ethical rating depends upon the quality of the vengeance and the quantity of the passion. When these are in conformity with the prescriptions of balanced reason, anger is not a sin. It is rather a praiseworthy thing and justifiable with a proper zeal. It becomes sinful when it is sought to wreak vengeance upon one who has not deserved it, or to a greater extent than it has been deserved, or in conflict with the dispositions of law, or from an improper motive. The sin is then in a general sense mortal as being opposed to justice and charity.”

Anger can be just. But due to the common usage of the word “anger,” this capital vice is often referred to as “wrath” or “rage,” emphasizing the unbalanced and improper motives which result in anger being a mortal sin.

MEEKNESS or patience is the virtue that counters the sin of unjust anger, also called “wrath” or “rage.” Where the sin of wrath is about quick temper and unnecessary vengeance, the virtue of meekness focuses on patiently seeking appropriate resolution to conflicts, and on the ability to forgive and show mercy.

- ☞ ENVY or jealousy is more than merely one person wanting what someone else has; the sin of envy means one feels unjustified sorrow and distress about the good fortune of someone else. The law of love leads us to rejoice in the good fortune of our neighbor; jealousy is a contradiction to this. Envy is named among the capital sins because of the other sins to which it leads.

KINDNESS or brotherly love or love for neighbor, is the virtue which counters the sin of envy. Envy, in contradiction to God’s law of love, is manifest in a person’s sorrow and distress over the good fortune of another person. Conversely, kindness and brotherly love is manifest in the unprejudiced, compassionate, and charitable concern for others.

“The heart itself is but a small vessel, yet dragons are there, and there are also lions; there are poisonous beasts and all the treasures of evil. But there too is God, the angels, the life and the kingdom, the light and the apostles, the heavenly cities and the treasures of grace — all things are there.”<sup>112</sup>

#### **Recommended Book:**

Donald DeMarco, *The Many Faces of Virtue* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2000).

#### **THE VIRTUES OF A CATHOLIC MAN<sup>113</sup>**

- ☞ A Catholic man has some sense of what or whom he would die for if necessary.
- ☞ A Catholic man passes his faith to his children and sees to their religious education.
- ☞ A Catholic man informs himself about his faith, reads Scripture, selects Catholic literature, and studies the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
- ☞ A Catholic man insures that there are sacred symbols in his household, such as, a crucifix(es), Bible, use of sacramentals such as Advent wreath, Christmas crèche, holy water, etc.
- ☞ A Catholic man leads prayer in his household at significant domestic events, such as, birth, graduation, marriage, illness, death, and other special meals and events with use of a passage from scripture or other Catholic sources.
- ☞ A Catholic man invests himself in some project or apostolate at parish or diocesan level.
- ☞ A Catholic man is faithful to his wife, his children, his Church and his friends, indeed in all his commitments.

## THE VIRTUES OF A CATHOLIC WOMAN<sup>114</sup>

- ☞ A Catholic woman is an instrument of God's love, allowing his love to flow through her as she gives life to others. She is especially self-disciplined when her feelings might oppose love.
- ☞ A Catholic woman is grateful for the talents and gifts of Catholic men, always seeking to appreciate and complement, not criticize the opposite sex.
- ☞ A Catholic woman exemplifies truth and beauty through the way that she acts, dresses, and keeps her home orderly.
- ☞ A Catholic woman is prudent and discreet in her speech, avoiding any unkind words that might reveal the faults of others, or hurt others.
- ☞ A Catholic woman is patient and gentle while teaching and encouraging others to grow in character.
- ☞ A Catholic woman is generous with her time; always faithful, humble, and sincere in her duties toward God, family, and society. She is diligent, reliable, and thoroughly practical in her work. Chances are that if you give yourself unreservedly with one eye trained on the hereafter, your marriage will not only survive but prosper. Storms there will be, along with periods of aridity. You may be faced with a rash of catastrophes when God seems to be looking the other way. But there is no reason to panic. If you can't resolve an issue, see a mutual friend or counselor (or your parish priest), who is sound in the faith. Above all, remember that love is not a feeling that comes and goes depending upon one's mood. It is a lifelong commitment which, like fine wine, improves with age. Someone once remarked that "love is what you've been through together," and how true. Perseverance is nine-tenths of the battle and, given such an attitude, communication crises, if and when they occur, will only bring you closer together. In the end, you will be more secure as a couple, and better off as a team, for having braved the winds of adversity.<sup>115</sup>

"Marriage is like a fine wine; it improves with age and appreciates in value. Torrents of worries and difficulties are incapable of drowning true love because people who sacrifice themselves generously are brought closer together in the long run."<sup>116</sup>

[Right Click Here to open in a new tab to answer Presentation 4 questions](#)



---

Note: This takes you to an outside Microsoft Form; answer these individually (not as a couple)

---

**You're doing great! After answering the questions, Module ONE is complete...**

Please move on to **Module TWO** by reading the next PDF **Presentation 3**