

Dear people of God,

Peace!

The Directorate of Religious Education of Osogbo Diocese regrets to inform you that due to Covid-19 Pandemic, the printing of our regular booklet publications had been suspended until the last quarter of the year. We encourage you to continue with the online arrangements for the "Deepening the Faith" program and still continue to send your comments, contributions and questions to our email address - info@osogbodiocesandre.org Please visit our website regularly for more information www.osogbodiocesandre.org Thank you for your usual understanding and cooperation. God bless

Sr Dr Omojola Immaculata Olu,SSMA

DRE, Osogbo Diocese

AUGUST 2020

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR DATE: 02/08/2020

THEME FOR THE MONTH: VICES

Opening Prayer: Let the facilitator invite a member for the opening prayer.

INTRODUCTION: Let the facilitator revise the topic of last week with the audience briefly.

Step 1: Facilitator introduces the theme for the week: LUST

Step 2: Specific Biblical Passages are read: 1 Jn 2:16, Matt 5:26-28 and Rm 1:27)

Step 3: Sharing: Members are allowed to share their experiences in relation to the readings heard.

Questions to Ponder:

Discuss some of the requirements of virtuous man and woman (1 Tim 3:1-12; Prov.31:10).

Step 4: Teaching: The facilitator will encourage the audience with these words:

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes ago we dwelt on the topic of virtue, those ordinate passions or desires that dispose us to holy life and righteous living. The virtues are those qualities that lead to our happiness and the happiness of others through our examples. On the other side to these virtues, stand the vices, they are the inordinate passions, those strong desires of the flesh that lead us eventually into sin, thereby offending God and often bring sorrow into our lives; such evil desires are referred to as vices and examples of poor christian life. St. Augustine distinguishes between virtue and vice by saying that virtue is ordinate or appropriate love which is not just loving, but loving in the correct manner and right proportion (loving more the things we ought to love more). This is in furtherance of Aristotle who declares that virtues lie in the middle however, on the other hand, vice is loving more what ought to be loved less which has its end in the acts that are contrary to God's will and precept. Vice is inordinate, that is, it is either a deficiency or an excess. From its Latin root *vitium*, it means fault, blemish, defect or imperfection. Vices represent the acquired habits, having been formed through repeated wrong actions that lead to sin. In order to overcome vices, we need to change to their corresponding virtues. It is important to note that even though the sins committed as a result of vices are forgivable through the acts of contrition, penance and charity or by the Sacrament of Reconciliation, yet, the negative habits remain, unless we make conscious efforts to change and replace the vices with their corresponding virtues. In the weeks ahead, we shall be considering the seven deadly vices which contradict the four cardinal and three theological virtues.

LUST: Lust is an inordinate longing or eagerness to satisfy and enjoy carnal appetites. The scriptures warn us against such longing for it stands at the root of disobedience to God's law, that is, sin. Right from the book of Genesis, the scriptures tell us how the inability to take her eyes off the forbidden fruit became a reason for the fall of Eve (cf. Gen. 3:6). The inability of man to regulate his desire for things of the flesh is what leads him to many actions which are harmful to his happiness and the happiness of others. While desires and longings are natural human emotions, nevertheless, these have to be in the right proportion and towards the right objectives so as not to become lust for us.

To overcome lust, we need to live a life of faith for the righteous lives by faith and not by sight (cf. Hab 2:4). Lust is built on carnal desires based on what our senses perceive, our life of faith will help us to redirect our longing to that which is pleasing to the Lord and not just carnal (cf. 2 Tim. 2:22)

Step 5: Questions and Answers: Allow the audience to ask some questions.

Step 6: TASK: Let the participants agree on a task that is practicable.

SUGGESTED TASK: Practice the act of replacing your vices with the corresponding virtues

Step 7: Evaluation: The facilitator will ask some of the members to summarize the teaching of the day.

Step 8: Ask a member to conclude with a prayer.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR DATE: 09/08/2020

THEME FOR THE MONTH: VICES

Opening Prayer: Let the facilitator invite a member for the opening prayer.

INTRODUCTION: Let the facilitator revise the topic of last week with the audience briefly.

Step 1: Facilitator introduces the theme for the week: ENVY

Step 2: Specific Biblical Passages are read: Act 13:45)

Step 3: Sharing: Members are allowed to share their experiences in relation to the readings heard.

Question to Ponder:

1. Which human situations and circumstances commonly provoke envy and how can they be avoided?

Step 4: Teaching: The facilitator will encourage the audience with these words:

Envy is very much related to jealousy but it differs in the fact that while jealousy harbours the fear that one's possession may be taken away from him or her, envy on the other hand is the emotion of taking what belongs to another person. Galatians 6:4 admonishes us not to compare ourselves with others and this is exactly what brings about both envy and jealousy. The ninth and tenth commandments given to Moses enjoin us not to covet what belongs to our neighbour because coveting is borne out of envy. Scripturally speaking, envy could be termed as one of the foundational misdeeds that led Cain to the sin of murder (cf. Gen. 4:3-7). The sour relationship between Joseph and his brothers was a result of envy of Joseph by his brothers. When not quickly checked, envy can affect one's Christian life, physically, emotionally and spiritually. It could also lead to destruction of one's self and other people, eventually leading to a total departure from God (cf. Prov 27:4, Rm 1:28-32). In order to curb and overcome the vices of envy and

jealousy, we need to practice the virtue of hope which encourages us to wait patiently on the Lord, trusting in God's promises for our life.

Step 5: Questions and Answers: Allow the audience to ask some questions.

Step 6: TASK: Let the participants agree on a task that is practicable.

SUGGESTED TASK: Exercise a strong belief in the Scriptures: Jer. 29:11 and Phil.4:6-7 through ceaseless prayers and waiting on the Lord.

Step 7: Evaluation: The facilitator will ask some of the members to summarize the teaching of the day.

Step 8: Ask a member to conclude with a prayer.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR DATE: 16/08/2020

THEME FOR THE MONTH: VICIES

Opening Prayer: Let the facilitator invite a member for the opening prayer.

INTRODUCTION: Let the facilitator revise the topic of last week with the audience briefly.

Step 1: Facilitator introduces the theme for the week: SLOTH

Step 2: Specific Biblical Passages are read: Prov 26:13-16, Prov 6:6-11 and Matt 25:26-27

Step 3: Sharing: Members are allowed to share their experiences in relation to the readings heard.

Questions to Ponder:

1. What are the various signs and consequences of slothfulness among the youths of today?

2. How can the adults help them to remove the vice?

Step 4: Teaching: The facilitator will encourage the audience with these words:

The vice of sloth is sometimes referred to as laziness. While it contains laziness, it goes by far deeper than laziness as it not only deprives one from acting due to fear, but goes further by killing enthusiasm. St. Thomas Aquinas defines sloth as “sluggishness of the mind which neglects to begin good...is evil in its effect, if it so oppresses man as to draw him away entirely from good deeds”. From this definition of St. Thomas, the poisonous effect of sloth could be deduced, that is, it brings about a feeling of apathy by which one becomes uncaring about what is to be done and when this continues, it can easily make one totally unproductive in good deeds. Unlike other vices, the vice of sloth has to do with omission rather than commission. The vice of sloth could be mental, physical or spiritual and in all circumstances, it is a slow killer of enthusiasm. To overcome the vice of sloth, the Christian is admonished to do works of charity as this helps in being active in doing good.

Step 5: Questions and Answers: Allow the audience to ask some questions.

Step 6: TASK: Let the participants agree on a task that is practicable.

SUGGESTED TASK: Pray for the youths of your parish to be delivered from the vice and consequences of slothfulness.

Step 7: Evaluation: The facilitator will ask some of the members to summarize the teaching of the day.

Step 8: Ask a member to conclude with a prayer.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR DATE: 23/08/2020

THEME FOR THE MONTH: VICES

Opening Prayer: Let the facilitator invite a member for the opening prayer.

INTRODUCTION: Let the facilitator revise the topic of last week with the audience briefly.

Step 1: Facilitator introduces the theme for the week: PRIDE AND AVARICE

Step 2: Specific Biblical Passages are read: Gal 6:4, Jm 4:6-10, Prov 21:4, 1 Cor 5:11, Heb 13:5, 2 Tim 3:2-4)

Step 3: Sharing: Members are allowed to share their experiences in relation to the readings heard.

Questions to Ponder:

1. In our world today, which are the most common characters that expose pride and avarice?
2. As Christians, how can we help those that exhibit the vices?

Step 4: Teaching: The facilitator will encourage the audience with these words:

PRIDE

In his pride the wicked man does not seek God, there is no room for God in his thought (Ps 10:4). This biblical quotation explains the extent to which pride can destroy virtue and lead man into sin. Pride is both an inordinate self-esteem and a contempt for others. In pride, man raises himself to the point of God and as such has no regard for God, and it is for this reason that St. Augustine categorises pride as the “original evil: (in which) man regards himself as his own light”. When pride enters into man, he sees himself as all in all and a self-law giver. Pride is regarded as the root of all sins, the sin of angels and of the first human beings. The presence of pride in a man makes him see himself as being independent of God and an object to be worshipped by other men, C.S Lewis regards it as “the complete anti-God state of the mind”. Many instances in the scriptures convey the vice of pride and how it negates the true worship of God (cf. Gen 11:4, Prov. 30:13, Is 14:13-14). In order to overcome the vice of pride, the Christian needs to build himself in the practice of the virtue of prudence and humility which will help him to be ordinate in his actions.

AVARICE

Avarice can also be referred to as covetousness. It is an inordinate desire to gain and hoard wealth. Traditionally, the ninth and tenth commandment admonishes us against covetousness. It can be regarded as the sin of modernity wherein we crave for material things to the detriment of the good of our souls. In Lk 16; the scriptures admonish us that ...we cannot serve both God and mammon! Unassumingly, many of us fall to the vice of avarice under the guise of wanting to protect and secure our future. When avarice comes into one's life, material goods and possessions are pursued as an end in themselves and this further takes man's glance away from the love of God and the good of fellow man. The vice of avarice can be conquered when man strives to put into practice the cardinal virtue of justice and moderacy by which all are bequeathed what each deserves. Thus, God is given what rightly belongs to Him and man also ordinate seeks what is needed for his own well-being.

Step 5: Questions and Answers: Allow the audience to ask some questions.

Step 6: TASK: Let the participants agree on a task that is practicable.

SUGGESTED TASK: Let's do some self-evaluation and remove any elements of pride and avarice from our daily lives

Step 7: Evaluation: The facilitator will ask some of the members to summarize the teaching of the day.

Step 8: Ask a member to conclude with a prayer.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR DATE: 30/08/2020

THEME FOR THE MONTH: VICES

Opening Prayer: Let the facilitator invite a member for the opening prayer.

INTRODUCTION: Let the facilitator revise the topic of last week with the audience briefly.

Step 1: Facilitator introduces the theme for the week: **GLUTTONY AND ANGER**

Step 2: Specific Biblical Passages are read: Prov 23:20-21, Deut 21:20, 2 Pet 1:5-7, Ps. 37:7-9, Prov 29:22, Eph 4:26-27

Step 3: Sharing: Members are allowed to share their experiences in relation to the readings heard.

Questions to Ponder:

Can you reflect on the common saying "an angry man or woman is never wise"?

Step 4: Teaching: The facilitator will encourage the audience with these words:

GLUTTONY

Food and drink are essential for the well-being of man but greedy consumption which translates to gluttony is a vice and when not checked, can lead to further vices and sins. Gluttony alone can make one blind to compassion, e.g. as in the case of Lazarus and the Rich Man, who feasted sumptuously everyday without responding to the needs of poor Lazarus; even 'dogs' rightly noticed Lazarus! (cf. Lk 16:19-31). St. Thomas Aquinas is of the view that gluttony contradicts the virtue of temperance and in order to overcome

the vice, the virtue would need to be built up. A glutton can be described as a selfish and self-centered person who can become a thief in order to satisfy his or her desires. St. Paul says “their belly is their god” (cf. Phil 3:18-20). The admonition by Jesus that “man shall not live on bread alone” should discourage us from committing the sin of gluttony.

ANGER

Anger is an unpleasant human emotion, capable of creating painful tension in an individual. Anger may easily cause such irrational actions that can lead to self-injury and/or injury to others. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said “...whoever is angry with his brother/sister will be liable to judgement” (cf. Matt 5:21-26). In this passage, Jesus has linked the sixth commandment to the vice of anger. Anger, as a basic human emotion, can be expressed without sinning while “sinful anger”, such that leads to hatred, envy or vengeance is scripturally discouraged (cf. Eph 4:26). These can serve as our guides for determining which anger leads to sin and which does not. This explains the seriousness of anger and shows the need to check it in our lives as Christians.

Step 5: Questions and Answers: Allow the audience to ask some questions.

Step 6: TASK: Let the participants agree on a task that is practicable.

SUGGESTED TASK: Design a personal strategy for restraining yourself from emotional anger

Step 7: Evaluation: The facilitator will ask some of the members to summarize the teaching of the day.

Step 8: Ask a member to conclude with a prayer.

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Sr Dr Immaculata Olu Omojola, SSMA
Director, Religious Education,
Osogbo Diocese