

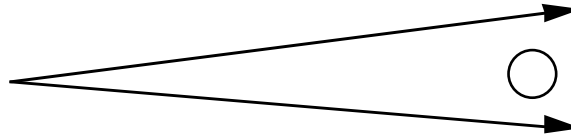
# Obstacles to the Life of Grace

**SIN = Hamartia**



**Missing the Mark**

**1. Archery**



**2. Bushed : Missing the marked track**

- **Active Rebellion**
- **Passive Indifference**

# Capital Sins – Latin caput (‘head’)

7 ‘founts’ from which sin springs

- pride – thinking, judging and acting in a self-reliant, self-focused way, disdainful of others and inattentive to God and to God’s will.
- covetousness – never satisfied with who we are or what we have but grasping for possessions, prestige, reputation, and for whatever gratifies our self-centred desires.

- lust – using our sexual energy either for our own self-gratification or to exercise power over others without regard to their true happiness.
- anger – not the anger which is an appropriate protection of self against unjust aggression, but the anger that resents anyone who crosses our ideas, our preferences, our comfort, even when they are right and we are wrong.

- gluttony – living so superficial a life that bodily gratification is more important to us than the aspirations of our spirit, or the needs of others.
- envy – when we see someone doing well, instead of experiencing joy we feel ourselves devalued and in overt or subtle ways we find ourselves putting others down, feeling miserable that we do not have their beauty or their possessions or their success.
- sloth – unwilling to commit ourselves and our energy to the noble tasks of life, preferring to hang around waiting for life to deal out fortune to us.

‘I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin.

I do not understand my own actions.

For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate ... I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

## Sin : Romans 7:14-25

When I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand.  
For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self,  
but I see in my members another law at war with the  
law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin  
that dwells in my members ...

With my mind I am a slave to the law of God,  
but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.'

‘Venial sin’ (Latin venia – ‘pardon’)

Wounds but does not break communion

- weakens our love-communion with God
- manifests a disordered attachment to creatures
- impedes our progress in the exercise of virtue and living a moral life
- has effects that make our behaviour to some extent dysfunctional.

## ‘Venial sin’ (Latin *venia* – ‘pardon’)

‘While we are in the flesh, we cannot help but have some light sins. But do not think lightly of these sins which we are wont to call ‘light’: if you take them for light when you weigh them, tremble when you count them! A number of light objects makes a great mass; a number of drops fills a river; a number of grains makes a heap. What, then, is our hope? Above all, confession ...’ (Augustine on John’s Letters 1.6).

## 1John 2:15-17

‘Do not love the world or the things in the world.

The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world — the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches — comes not from the Father but from the world.

And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever.’

## Romans 12:1-2

‘I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.’

‘The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord’(Romans 6:23).

### Romans 13:11-14

‘It is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.’

## Galatians 5:16-17

‘Live by the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit to prevent you from doing what you want.’

## Revelation 3:20

‘Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking;  
if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to  
you and eat with you, and you with me.’

## 1Peter 5:7

‘Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.  
Discipline yourselves, keep alert.’

## 2Corinthians 4:6-7

‘It is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.’

## John 8:31-32

‘If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’

# The Eucharist & Forgiveness of sin

‘This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’ (Mat 26:28).

‘The sacrifice of the altar offered with tears and a generous spirit intercedes in a unique way for the forgiveness of our sins.’ (Gregory I Homily 37 In Evangelia)

‘The Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins.’ (Catechism n. 1393)

‘By giving himself to us Christ revives our love and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and put our roots down into Him’ (Catechism 1393).

## The Eucharist & Forgiveness of sin

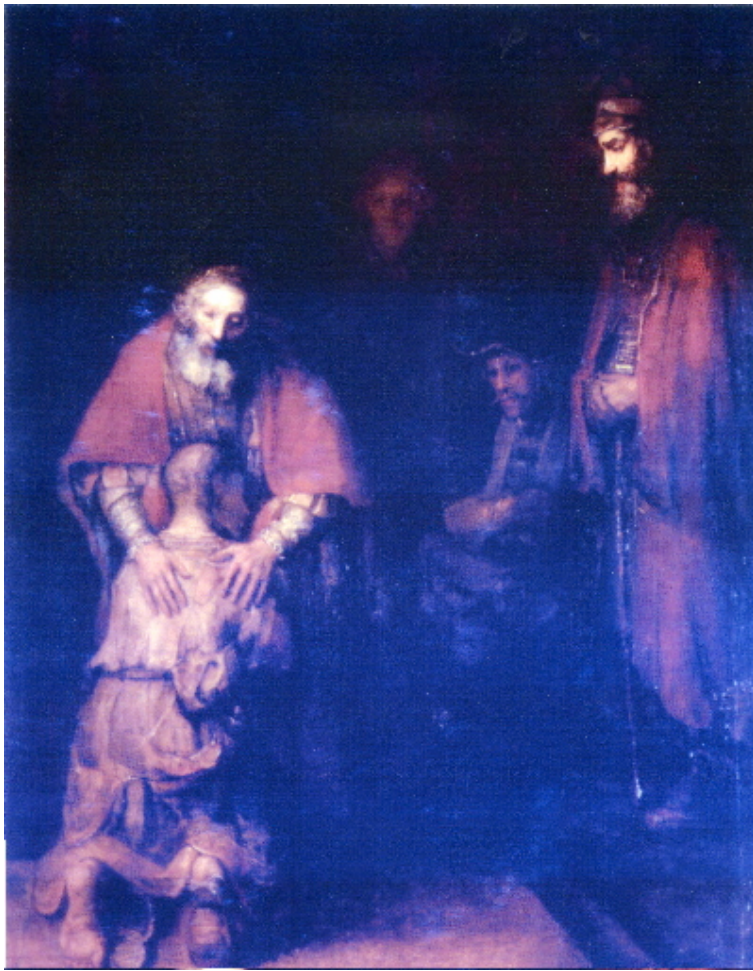
‘We ought all to rejoice on this holy day. No one should separate himself from the general rejoicing because he has sins on his conscience; no one should refuse to take part in the public worship because of the burden of his misdeeds. However great a sinner he may be, on this day he should not despair of pardon, for the privileges granted by this day are great. If a thief was thought worthy of paradise, why should not a Christian be thought worthy of forgiveness?’(St Maximus of Turin Sermon 53.4).

# The Sacrament of Reconciliation & Forgiveness of sin

‘Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God’s mercy for the offence committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labours for their conversion’(Vatican II LG II§2).

We often reflect on God’s merciful forgiveness. Perhaps less often do we reflect either on the ways in which our sin pollutes the environment in which others have to live or on the ways in which we are being helped by those who live holy lives.

The call to turn (return) to God is a constant call to the whole Church who ‘clasping sinners to her bosom, is at once holy and in need of purification, and follows constantly the path of penance and renewal’(Vatican II LG 8). The word ‘conversion’ picks up the idea of turning back. It is the movement of a contrite (‘broken’) heart that is drawn and moved by grace to respond to God’s merciful love.



‘He set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘

Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.’

# Peter

At the Last Supper Peter was so sure of himself that he could say: ‘Though everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you’(Matthew 26:33). However, when Jesus was apprehended, and when Peter was accused of being a follower of Jesus, he persistently (this is the significance of ‘three times’) denied even knowing Jesus.

- Luke recounts the scene in which Jesus turned and looked across the courtyard and caught Peter's eye. Thank God Peter was looking at Jesus. It was then that Peter remembered Jesus' warning and realized what he had done, 'and he went out and wept bitterly' (22:61-63).

We can only imagine what was in that glance. It surely included sadness and hurt, but above all love. Peter's repentance was his response to being loved.

- We are reminded of Paul's amazement: 'God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us'(Romans 5:8).



‘They will look upon the one they have pierced’(John 19:37).

‘Taking a cup and giving thanks, Jesus gave it to his disciples, saying: “Drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, poured out for the many for the forgiveness of sins”(Matthew 26:27-28).

‘I live now in the faith of the Son of God loving me and giving himself for me. I cannot give up God’s gift.’(Gal 2:21)

‘Full lovingly does our Lord hold us when it seems to us we are nearly forsaken and cast away because of our sin – and deservedly so. Our courteous Lord does not want us to despair even when we fall often and grievously into sin. For our falling does not hinder God from loving us ... Some of us believe that God is all powerful and may do everything; and that he is all wise and can do everything; but as for believing that he is all love and will do everything, there we hold back. In my view nothing hinders God’s lovers more than the failure to understand this. As by his courtesy God forgives our sins when we repent, even so he wills that we should forgive our sin, and so give up our senseless worrying and faithless fear.’