
GANZ NOTES – TALK TO SEEL DIRECTORS

Talk given on Monday evening, 5 March 2018; 7 PM to 8:30 PM

Though Janet Buck came some weeks ago to talk to me about this Talk, and in our conversation I suggested that I speak to Discernment, I am concluding that I will make this a Talk on “theological topics” instead. And what I will concentrate on is the section in the Spiritual Exercises [238-260] on THREE METHODS OF PRAYING.

SISTER WENDY BECKETT ON PRAYER

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One year—I forget the details—the Lenten sermons at Saint Patrick’s in New York were given by a famous Jesuit who took prayer for his theme. He was much admired, but the compliment that stuck in his memory was that of an old priest who seemed to regard the very number and length of his sermons as constituting, per se, a sort of brilliant tour de force. **“Because as you know, Father,” he said, dropping his voice conspiratorially, “prayer’s the simplest thing out.”** I hope the famous Jesuit did know, because the simplicity of prayer, its sheer, terrifying uncomplicatedness, seems to be the last thing most of us either know or want to know. (33)

Ask yourself: what do I *really* want when I pray? Do you want to be possessed by God? Or to put the same question more honestly, do you *want* to want it? Then you have it. The one point Jesus stressed and repeated and brought up again is, “Whatever you ask the Father, He will grant it to you.” His insistence on faith and perseverance are surely other ways of saying the same thing: you must really want, it must engross you. Wants that are passing, faint emotional desires that you do not press with burning conviction, these are things you do not ask “in Jesus’ name”; how could you? **But what you *really* want**, “with all your heart and soul and mind and strength,” that Jesus pledges himself to see that you are granted. He is not talking only, probably not even primarily, of prayer of petition, but of prayer. When you set yourself down to pray, what do you want? **If you want God to take possession of you, then you are praying. That is all prayer is.** (34)

***Spiritual Exercises* [234] – First Point**

This is to recall to mind the blessings of creation and redemption, and the special favors I have received.

I will ponder ***with great affection*** how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He possesses, and finally, how much, as far as He can, the same Lord ***desires*** to give Himself to me according to His divine decrees.

Then I will reflect upon myself, and consider, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer the Divine Majesty, that is, all I possess and myself with it. Thus, as one would do who is moved by great feeling, I will make this offering of myself:

Take, Lord, and Receive

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me.

Note: the problem of *possession* language.

THE HEART OF IGNATIUS' WORLDVIEW

John 3: ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave* his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.^k ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn* the world, but that the world might be saved through him.¹ ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.^m ^{19*} And this is the verdict,ⁿ that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil.¹

IGNATIUS ON THE “FIRST METHOD” OF PRAYING EFFECTIVELY [238-248]

TEN COMMANDMENTS [239-243]

“I will beg for a complete understanding of the Commandments, in order to keep them better for greater glory and praise of the Divine Majesty.” (*SpEx* [240])

* *Gave*: as a gift in the incarnation, and also “over to death” in the crucifixion; cf. Rom 8:32.

^k 1 Jn 4:9.

* *Condemn*: the Greek root means both judgment and condemnation. Jesus’ purpose is to save, but his coming provokes judgment; some condemn themselves by turning from the light.

¹ 5:22, 30; 8:15–18; 12:47.

^m 5:24; Mk 16:16.

* Judgment is not only future but is partially realized here and now.

ⁿ 1:5, 9–11; 8:12; 9:5.

¹ [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Jn 3:16–19.

The experiential core in the “Theophany” of Exodus 19:16-25. Only then can the “commands” being expressed in Exodus 20:1-17 be grasped as a way of *extending this Theophany into our way of being friends with each other*. But don’t miss either that there are the Ten Commands and the presence of a human being, *Moses, who is the Mediator* – **the relationship is carried not inside Tablets of Stone but inside a profound friendship one of their own – Moses – has with God.**

The English “moods”:

In grammar, **mood** is used to refer to a verb category or form which indicates whether the verb expresses a fact (the **indicative mood**), a command (the **imperative mood**), a question (the **interrogative mood**), a condition (the **conditional mood**), or a wish or possibility (the **subjunctive mood**).

What does it mean for God to *command* us? God commands according to reality (the Indicative – the way things are).

In other words, God is *not* into power-games: my Will versus your puny will. Rather, God has Himself in relation to reality – the way things are. Reality cannot play power-games with us; Reality just is ... and God commands that we **be** the way reality **is**.

THE CAPITAL VICES AND VIRTUES

The trick about the Capital Vices is that they are mostly completely unable to be noticed as operating and distorting by a person under their Power. In fact, a person under the dominion of a Capital Sin is likely to judge that he or she dwells in the opposite virtue. This very illusiveness of such Vices is what requires divine grace to illuminate.

One does not so much *commit* a Capital Vice; rather because he or she is under the power of such a Vice is able to commit any number of *sins*, mortal or venial.

CAPITAL VICES

Such “source” *vices* in relation to *particular sins* stand, by analogy as a *Heresiarch* (the person whose thought and actions are the source of a Heresy) is to a *Heretic* (one who commits sins because of the Heresy he or she accepts as the truth).

The capital sins are *the source of all sins*. The word “capital” derives from the Latin "*caput*," meaning "head." (Note that they are not called "capital" because they are prevalent around a nation's capital or capitol.) Actually, St. Thomas Aquinas preferred to use the word "vice" instead of "sin" when addressing this issue. **He stated, “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”** (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 153, 4). Here St. Thomas emphasized **the disposition or the habit which inclines a person** to sin. Therefore, the capital sins or vices are indeed “capital” and grave because they are the source of particular actual sins, which may be mortal or venial; in turn, the repetition of actual sins, particularly mortal sins, leads to the spiritual corruption of the person, whose life is permeated by the vice.... The traditional list of capital sins, as specified by Pope St. Gregory the Great, are as follows: **pride, avarice, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth.** Interestingly, St. Thomas listed “vainglory” instead of pride to highlight that pride is the source of all sin without exception.²

“one should consider their contrary virtues” (*SpEx* [245])

THE SEVEN VIRTUES

(Also called the Seven Contrary Virtues or Seven Heavenly Virtues)

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 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 4th century. The poem, *Psychomachia* (meaning Battle of Souls), is an allegory which describes seven virtues defeating seven vices.

Humility – Humility is the virtue that counters **pride**. As pride leads to other sin, true humility clears a path for holiness. Pride is a sin based on undue and inappropriate appreciation of one’s

² Taken from: <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/what-are-capital-sins.html>.

self worth. Conversely, the virtue of humility is about modest behavior, selflessness and the giving of respect.

Liberality – Liberality, or generosity, is the virtue that is counter to **greed** – the sin of immoderate desire for earthly things. The virtue of liberality is focused not merely on the appropriate concern regarding one’s earthly things, but furthermore on generosity and a willingness to give, freely and without request for commendation.

Chastity – 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.

Meekness – 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.

Temperance – The virtue of temperance or abstinence counters the sin of **gluttony**. To be gluttonous is to over-indulge. On the opposite hand, the virtue of temperance is centered on self-control and moderation.

Kindness – Kindness, or brotherly love or love for one’s 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.

Diligence – 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 the spiritual combat laziness and this virtue is manifest in appropriately zealous attitudes toward living and sharing the Faith.

THREE POWERS OF SOUL

Memory/Imagination

Intellect - Experience/Understanding/Judgment

Will – the whole affective domain and its relation to the apprehension of Values

Consider towards what of the Three Powers the “Ten Commandments” are aimed. The assumption that they are about God’s will ... in tensive and obtuse relation to our own wills. But what if the Ten Commandments are really about **God’s imagination** – the right way of seeing the whole Pattern of the created universe?

ON THE FIVE SENSES

Consider this in relation to the “Composition of Place” in relation to the Contemplations of the Second Week.

Also, consider that to every *external* sense there corresponds an *internal* sense.