

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

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From the Compendium to the Catechism paragraphs: 391 – 400

What does the acceptance of God's mercy require from us?

It requires that we admit our faults and repent of our sins. God Himself by His Word and His Spirit lays bare our sins and gives us the truth of conscience and the hope of forgiveness.



What is sin?

It is an offence against God in disobedience to His love. It wounds human nature and injures human solidarity. Christ in His passion fully revealed the seriousness of sin and overcame it with His Mercy.

Is there a variety of sins?

There are a great many kinds of sins. They can be distinguished according to their object or according to the virtues or commandments which they violate. They can directly concern God, neighbour, or ourselves. They can also be divided into sins of thought, of word, of deed or of omission (not doing something you should do).

How are sins distinguished according to their gravity?

A distinction is made between mortal (sins that lead to everlasting death) and venial sin.

When does one commit a mortal sin?

One commits a mortal sin when there are present at the same time: grave matter, full knowledge and deliberate consent. This sin destroys charity in us, deprives us of sanctifying grace, and, if unrepented, leads us to the eternal death of hell. It can be forgiven in the ordinary way by means of the sacraments of Baptism and of Penance or Reconciliation.

When does one commit a venial sin?

One commits a venial sin, which is essentially different from a mortal sin, when the matter involved is less serious or, even if it is grave, when full knowledge or complete consent are absent. Venial sin does not break the covenant with God but it weakens charity and manifests a disordered affection for created goods. It impedes the progress of a soul in the exercise of the virtues and in the practice of moral good. It merits temporal punishment which purifies.



St Augustine of Hippo

Sin is “a word, an act, or
a desire contrary to the
eternal Law”

How does sin proliferate?

The action of sinning causes a proclivity to sin as well as engendering vice by repetition of the same acts. One sin can lead to another – for instance lying to cover up the previous sin.

What are vices?

Vices are the opposite of virtues. They are perverse habits which darken the conscience and incline one to evil. The vices can be linked to the seven, so-called, capital sins which are: pride, avarice, envy, anger, lust, gluttony and sloth or acedia.

Do we have any responsibility for sins committed by others?

We do have such a responsibility when we culpably cooperate with them.

What are the structures of sin?

Structures of sin are social situations or institutions that are contrary to the divine law. They are the expression and effect of personal sins.

It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk