

FALL FORTITUDE

THE MEMO: A GUIDE FOR DUKE CATHOLICS // FAMILY WEEKEND 2022



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HOW TO GROW IN YOUR FAITH

FROM CATHOLICISMSCOFFEE BY DOMINIC TANZILLO



I was reading lists of Italian expressions. I stopped on a simple and short interjection: Peccato. Used in quick response to learning disappointing news as a means to say “a pity” (or as Che Peccato to mean “Such a shame”) this word literally translates to sin. For the American Christian, the association between sin and pity may seem odd. In an effort to separate ourselves from sin, we may attempt to cast sinners as wholly other than ourselves. We may sooner feel disgust or anger rather than pity for the person who we have labeled a sinner. This word, peccato, opened up a new world as I began to investigate the manifold meaning of sin.

A Comprehensive View of Sin

Read paragraph 1849, of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. You can find it anywhere online, and it is there where we find our definition of sin. The first sentence of the paragraph lays out the goods we should hope to work for in this life: reason, truth, and right conscience. As God is identified as pure reason, truth, and righteousness, it may be more digestible to rethink this sentence as, “sin is an offense against God.” Hopefully, it should be obvious that the enumerated goods are goals for which we should strive. In moments of doubt and fear, these nobler goods may be obscured by more immediate pressures. It may be even worse where, after committing sin repeatedly, we may be unable to cooperate with grace. It is in this last category that the word Peccato becomes so necessary — such a shame that someone is so distant from God as to not feel His constant calls for redemption. The next statement from the Catechism ensures that we consider our neighbor with God. This consideration parallels when Jesus answered the question of the most important Law: **Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the first and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, “Love others as much as you love yourself.”** All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments. — (Matthew 22:37–40). Of note, when asked the question of the single most important commandment, Jesus immediately includes the second. This is not a misunderstanding of the question on His part, but instead knowing that proper love for neighbor is embedded in love for God — that is, **if we love God we will love our neighbor, and conversely love for neighbor does not compete with love of God.** Further, the Catechism explains why we are first tempted to work against God and neighbor. Rarely, is the sinner first motivated to cause genuine harm. Neither friendship nor genuine desires of freedom can be considered evil. However, it is a “perverse attachment” to these goods that we see their distortions into sin. Too much emphasis on being liked by others is necessarily vanity, and wanting to assert one’s will that leads to violations of the law is pride. Thus his falling away from God comes from failing to understand that all smaller goods are embedded within and tempered by The Transcendent Good. And here again we find a path to compassion.

Humans long for social connections, friendship, love, and happiness. Therefore, it’s not hard to appreciate that, especially when we lack these goods, we may mistake them for some ultimate good and become overly attached. The next statement, “It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity,” makes the necessity of our shame apparent. Our human and fallen nature is the echoing of Original Sin in our own life. This is the wound that gravely afflicts all of us and further causes discordance between brothers. From Cain and Abel to the aforementioned contempt we experience when we judge someone as a sinner, **human solidarity and love is always threatened by sin. It is the ever-present temptation to turn our gaze away from the good and become enamored with the agents of our own destruction that is truly pathetic.**

“We need not wallow permanently in shame.”

Compassion Rather Than Contempt

We need not wallow permanently in shame. Feeling sorry for ourselves and helpless to combat sin is a recipe for never changing. Rather we have the tools for repenting of our sins and moving closer to Christ. Sin may be a purely human endeavor but we are constantly invited to escape it through infinite grace. Confession is a necessary first step and weekly visits ensure that we are consistently contemplating our own mistakes. We should always work to need to bring less sins to our next Confession with the knowledge that we will always fall short. To live a life free of sin, there is also a call to ascetically disengage with the world. We may recognize that temptations of the world lead us to sin, but the explanation that the problem lies outside of ourselves is incomplete. **The universality of our condition is why contempt or isolation can never be the correct response to sin. In short, all of us are in the same boat and no matter where we go we will make mistakes. The Confession is not the last step because it instills within us sympathy towards the human condition.** Catholic Guilt™ is insufficient if it does not extend from the individual to become Catholic Compassion. Once freed from sin ourselves, we have an obligation to help rescue others. Armed with a more comprehensive view of sin, feelings of contempt become impossible because we all share the same stains of sin. And Jesus going out saw a great multitude: and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. — (Mark 6:34). He who was without sin did not sit on the sidelines. Instead, He entered into our brokenness to guide us towards compassion and mutual respect. Sin lurks in the corner of our own hearts and it is through action that we may redeem ourselves. Next time we encounter sin in the world, let’s not spread it by attacking the human being in front of us. Here, we find that it is our duty to engage with the world as much as we can leading with compassion. †

HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE DCC

4 WAYS TO MAKE FRIENDS IN FAITH AND HAVE FUN

1 JOIN A SMALL GROUP

It's a great small community where you can meet up each week, pray with the Gospels, make friends, and grow in your faith. We also have many affinity groups for you to explore the Catholic faith through a lens unique to your experience. As one of our sophomores said about the Hispanic Small Group he joined, "Being able to speak in Spanish and express some of the shared aspects of our heritage created an ideal environment for me to grow. My small group enriched my person, my soul, and my faith." Check out catholic.duke.edu/smallgroups for a list of available groups, times, and the sign up link.

2 MUSIC MINISTRY

If you play an instrument or sing, or have previously, or even if you just want to learn, then join the Music Ministry! We have so much fun rehearsing, eating dinner every Tuesday at the FAH, praising God with music at adoration and mass, and growing in faith all at the same time! Contact Andrew to get involved at ajw47@duke.edu.

3 SERVICE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Our service and social justice ministry is super active. We offer opportunities almost every week to serve the needy in our Durham area. Please visit our calendar (catholic.duke.edu/calendar) to stay up to date, and/or email MyLan to sign up at mlm140@duke.edu.

4 MOSTLY, GET RECONCILED

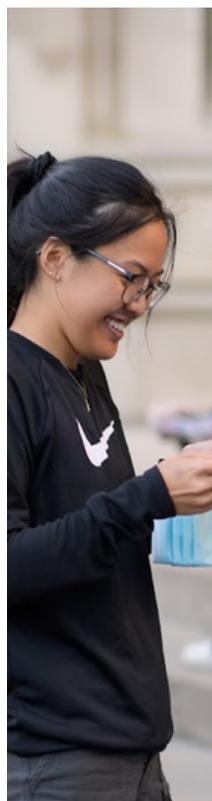
We've got FOUR times throughout the week for you to return to the Lord, and just straight up get His healing and see yourself how He sees YOU - created in His image!

Sundays @ 10 am @ Goodson Chapel
Sundays @ 7 pm @ Duke Chapel
Wednesdays @ 8 pm @ Goodson Chapel
Thursdays @ 4 pm, Quad between Kilgo & Craven



"We become beautiful people when we give whatever we can give."

-Henri Nouwen



HOW TO GROW IN YOUR PRAYER AT ADORATION

Every Wednesday, we have Eucharistic Adoration at 8 pm in Goodson Chapel (Reconciliation is also available at the same time). Especially if it's your first time, Eucharistic Adoration can seem daunting, long, and nerve-wracking. You might not know what songs are being sung, what prayers are being said, or even what it is going on! That's okay!

To that end, this is your guide to make the most of your Eucharistic Adoration hour - so that you can grow closer to God and so that you can really understand and pray with what is going on.

1 DON'T OVER-COMPLICATE IT

No one—especially Jesus—is expecting you to kneel down and go on for an hour. Be yourself. You're the person God created. You're the person Jesus wants visiting Him. Decide why you feel called to adoration and follow up that call with action that makes sense for who you are.

2 JUST BE THERE WITH HIM

As Pope Francis says, "Let Christ gaze on you." He continues by asking, "Adoring Christ truly present in the Eucharist: Do I let myself be transformed by Him? Do I let the Lord who gives Himself to me, guide me to come out more and more from my little fence, to get out and be not afraid to give, to share, to love Him and others?" When Christ gazes on us, we are seen as we really are and become more self-giving.

3 ADORE HIM BY LEARNING ABOUT HIM

Spend some time in adoration reading the Gospels. Remind yourself just Who it is that allowed Himself to take on the appearance of bread inside that monstrance. Stop every once in a while and ask Jesus to help you better understand something you've read. Or simply stop to stare at Him in wonder of everything He came to earth to do for us.

4 PRAY SOMETHING YOU ALREADY KNOW

The rosary is an excellent way to pray anytime and anywhere. Together with Mary, we meditate deeply on Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, putting Jesus at the center of our thoughts. We can also read any part of the Bible. Jesus truly is the word of God, and by opening up the written word, we become closer to Him. It also can be helpful to read the Scripture of the day or of the upcoming Sunday Mass.



Excerpts from AquinasandMore and CatholicLife

