



Capital Sins

Pride – distorted self importance (one places himself before God and neighbor)

Avarice – also called covetousness, avarice is wanting things to which we do not have a right

Lust – more than just sexual passion, lust is an inordinate desire for something (e.g., food, wealth, sex)

Anger – harboring dislike and aversion toward someone; anger does not allow a healthy perspective

Gluttony – having too much of something; e.g., food, drink, shopping

Envy – serious jealousy; it means that if we cannot have what another has, then we do not want him to have it either

Sloth – spiritual laziness

Opposing Virtues

Humility – seeing ourselves as we truly are

Liberality – generosity with our goods and talents

Chastity – generosity with ourselves and temperance with our desires

Patience – also called meekness, patience is the virtue of putting God and others before ourselves and acting with gentleness

Sobriety/Temperance – using created goods well, with proper limits

Brotherliness – wanting the best for others and being happy for their goods and successes

Diligence in the service of God – to persevere in our spiritual life

Prudence: Natural prudence indicates the best way to earn money; whereas supernatural prudence indicates the best way to get to heaven and to help others get there.

Justice: Natural justice includes the work of the civil court; whereas supernatural justice includes teaching the Faith to children.

Temperance: Natural temperance includes dieting to lose weight; supernatural temperance includes offering up food for penance.

Fortitude: Natural fortitude includes athletic training; supernatural fortitude includes suffering martyrdom.

Saint Thomas More: An Example of Prudence and Justice

After studying for many years at Oxford, building a reputation as a respected attorney, and authoring widely popular works of political literature, such as his classic, *Utopia*, Saint Thomas More was appointed Lord Chancellor of England by King Henry VIII. When the Protestant Reformation hit England, Saint Thomas More was faced with a choice that forced him to use the virtues of prudence and justice. King Henry VIII wanted to divorce his lawful wife Catherine of Aragon. The Pope refused to give the Church's blessing so, in 1531, King Henry VIII separated the Church in England from that of Rome. He then called himself "Protector and Supreme Head of the Church of England." In doing so, King Henry broke with the Holy Father and the true Church and demanded that Saint Thomas More do the same. For several years, Saint Thomas More openly opposed the King's move and finally Henry had him imprisoned in the Tower of London where he stayed for fifteen months. On July 6, 1535, Saint Thomas More was condemned to death for refusing to recognize the King as head of the Church of England. Before losing his head, Saint Thomas declared: "I die the king's good servant, but God's first." In justice Saint Thomas gave God his due over that of the king, and in prudence he did the right thing in the best way possible, even though it led to his death.

Saint Maria Goretti: An Example of Temperance and Fortitude

Saint Maria Goretti died when she was twelve years old. Shortly before she died, a young man who worked with her family tried to make her commit an act of impurity. When she refused, he stabbed her several times. She died from these wounds shortly after, but before she died, she forgave the man who had killed her. Although she was only twelve, she showed remarkable temperance and incredible fortitude in refusing to be unchaste and carrying that refusal even to death. After her death, the young man was imprisoned and remained unrepentant until, one night, Saint Maria Goretti appeared to him in a dream and gave him some flowers, showing that she had forgiven him. Upon his release nearly thirty years later, he went directly to Saint Maria's mother and asked her to forgive him. Her mother replied that if her daughter could forgive him then she could do the same. In 1950 this man was in Saint Peter's Square watching as Pope Pius XII canonized Saint Maria Goretti.