

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C • August 3, 2025



*Almighty God,  
you teach us to number  
our days aright  
according to your wisdom.  
May we put aside  
immorality and greed  
and store up  
lasting treasure  
in the relationship  
we have with you.*

## Sunday Word

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-9

Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

Luke 12:13-21

## Leading Question

A question is posed by the author of Ecclesiastes for all persons of faith to ponder: What does it profit us to toil as we do? We work, and what is it that we build up? In the end, we rely on faith in God. We pray that the Lord will prosper the work of our hands.

## Hidden Promise

The lives we lead by faith are hidden with Christ in God. We must thus stay focused on the things of Heaven and put to death immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the false worship found in greed.

## Rich Pursuit

Our inheritance resides in the rich relationship we have with God, a gift that is given to us by faith. The treasure of this relationship never fades. True wealth belongs to those who discount the value of possessions and pursue what matters to God.

## Church Teaching: Prohibition Against Greed and Avarice (Tenth Commandment)

### Desires and Self-Discipline

Sensory appetites work in such a way that we desire pleasing things we do not currently have. For example, when we are feeling hungry, we desire to eat, and when we are feeling cold, we desire warmth. These desires in themselves are not bad. In fact, as in these examples, our appetites are often closely associated with maintaining our well-being.

These same appetites, however, can lead us to exceed our reasonable limits, such as when we eat ourselves into obesity or lie in the sun to the point of developing skin cancer. If not disciplined and controlled, sensory appetites can also lead us into coveting what is not ours and inappropriately desiring that which belongs to another or is owed to another.

## *Greed, Avarice, Envy*

The Tenth Commandment of the Decalogue forbids greed, which is the excessive desire to acquire wealth, power, and the possessions of others. It also forbids avarice. Avarice is the immoderate desire for wealth—a passion for the accumulation of riches and the unseemly leverage that wealth sometimes gives us in human relationships.

The Tenth Commandment also forbids envy, which is the resentment and discontent aroused within us due to our neighbor's desirable possessions or qualities. We see these possessions or qualities in others, and malevolence wells up within us as we resent the other who has them.

## *An Explosive Effect*

Avarice and envy are considered Capital Sins, deadly in their effects upon us and others, for Capital Sins spawn other sins, vices, and moral failings. Sinning creates a proclivity to sin by the very repetition of action. In other words, sin can become habitual, trapping one into a pattern of behavior. Capital Sins have an invidious and explosive effect in our lives, for from them and their pattern of behavior other sins take hold of us.

We combat greed, avarice, and envy by embracing Jesus' teaching on poverty of heart. Followers of his way strive for a balance between things of this world and the things of Heaven, a holy detachment from material goods that recognizes that true happiness and fulfillment can only be found in God.

## *Distinctiveness of Church Teaching*

Envy often originates in pride. As an antidote to pride, believers cultivate humility in their attitudes and relationships. Moreover, we weave a healthy and holy balance regarding the things of this world by staying focused on the kingdom and by seeking constantly to glorify God. With regard to combating envy, how do we retain this focus and seek God's glory? When a brother or sister makes progress, we praise God. When a neighbor achieves merit, we conquer envy by rejoicing with our neighbor and praising the One who makes all good things possible.

## **Key Terms**

### **CAPITAL SINS**

Those sins that, when we engage in them, lead us into other sins and vices. Traditionally, there are seven Capital Sins: pride, covetousness, envy, anger, gluttony, lust, and sloth (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1866).

### **CALUMNY**

A false statement maliciously made that harms the reputation of another and from which arises a false, improper judgment or appraisal regarding the other (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2477).

### **DECALOGUE**

The Ten Commandments given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-22). Christians interpret the meaning of the Decalogue through the Great Commandment of Christ: to love God and love our neighbor (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2056).

## **Voices of Faith**

There will true glory be, where no one will be praised by mistake or flattery; true honor will not be refused to the worthy, nor granted to the unworthy; likewise, no one unworthy will pretend to be worthy. . . . God himself will be virtue's reward; he gives virtue and has promised to give himself as the best and greatest reward that could exist.

—Saint Augustine

Just as the person fully realizes himself in the free gift of self, so too ownership morally justifies itself in the creation, at the proper time and in the proper way, of opportunities for work and human growth for all.

—Pope Saint John Paul II

## **Further Reading**

***Catechism of the Catholic Church*:** 2534 (Tenth Commandment unfolds and completes the Ninth), 2540 (envy as a refusal of charity), 2541 (economy of law and grace turn us away from avarice and envy)

### ***United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*:**

Chapter 34 (Tenth Commandment: Embrace Poverty of Spirit), especially the section entitled "Where Your Treasure Is, There Also Will Your Heart Be (Mt 6:21)," pages 449–450

### ***Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church*:**

531 (respect for property of others), 532 (poverty of spirit), 533 (greatest human desire is for God)