CHAPTER 2 OF 11 · PREACHED SEPTEMBER 13, 2026 · 24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Anger

Sirach 27:30 to 28:7 · Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12 (R. "The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger.") · Romans 14:7-9 · Matthew 18:21-35 (the Unforgiving Servant)

I The Teaching

In the Readings: Peter's Question

- Peter asks how often he must forgive, as many as seven times?, thinking he's already being generous
- Jesus answers seventy-seven times: no ceiling at all

> "*Seizing him, the man choked him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.'*" (*Matthew* 18:28)

Nature

> "*Anger is the desire for revenge*" (*Aquinas, Summa II–II, Q. 158; revenge "may be desired both well and ill."*)

- Tanquerey distinguishes lawful anger ("the ardent, but rational desire to visit upon the guilty a just retribution"; Christ cleansing the Temple) from anger as capital vice: "a violent and inordinate desire of punishing others."
- Tanquerey names degrees: a mere impulse of impatience, then agitation, then violence, then fury ("temporary insanity"), and finally implacable hatred that wishes the offender ill
- Aquinas, quoting Gregory: "zealous anger troubles the eye of reason, whereas sinful anger blinds it"; the difference is proportion, not the feeling itself

Daughter Vices

Aquinas (Summa II-II, Q. 158, a. 7) sorts anger's six daughters by where anger lives: first in the heart, then in the mouth, then in deeds.

- **Indignation:** In the heart, directed at the other person: judging the one who wronged us as unworthy, someone who had no right to treat us that way and now deserves no decent treatment in return.
- **Swelling of the mind:** In the heart, within ourselves: the mind filling up with schemes and fantasies of revenge, rehearsing what we'll say, how we'll get even. Aquinas cites Job 15:2, the man who fills 'his stomach with burning heat.'
- **Clamor:** In words, in their manner: disordered, confused, raised-voice speech, anger audible in how we talk before it shows in what we say. Aquinas ties it to calling one's brother 'Raca' (Mt 5:22).
- **Contumely:** In words, in their content, against our neighbor: insulting, injurious speech that dishonors the other person, usually to their face.

- **Blasphemy:** In words, against God: anger breaking out in injurious speech aimed at God himself, blaming or cursing Him for what we suffer.
- **Quarreling:** In deeds: anger passing from words into action that injures, the shove, the slammed door, the fight (Latin rixa).

In the Readings

- Swelling of the mind is exactly what the servant does, with no gap at all between being forgiven and going to collect.
- Indignation is what lets him treat an equal as beneath him; quarreling is his hand on the other man's throat.
- Ever caught yourself rehearsing an argument in the shower? That is swelling of the mind in miniature.

Effects

> *Tanquerey, citing Seneca: unrestrained anger's fruits include "treasons, murders, poisonings, divisions in families, dissensions and civil wars."St. Gregory: unchecked anger costs us "good judgment," "gentleness," "the sense of justice," and "the spirit of recollection" needed for union with God.*

- Sirach names the specific incoherence: nursing wrath while expecting mercy for ourselves is nonsensical, almost the Lord's Prayer stated as a diagnosis before it's stated as a petition

Remedies

- Tanquerey, practically: reflect before acting; when anger takes you by surprise, "drive it away speedily" rather than entering into a parley with it; divert the mind from the injury; call on God "as the Apostles when tossed by the wind and storm"
- For anger that has hardened into rancor: root it out through charity grounded in our common sonship, recall the Our Father's own terms, Christ still calling Judas "friend" at the moment of betrayal, praying for his executioners from the cross
- The contrary virtue, meekness, is a golden mean: not the absence of anger, but anger ordered by reason toward what's actually just

Living It Out in Ordinary Life

- Charity is the root remedy: knowing how to forgive, never holding a grudge or being resentful (The Way 452, 686, 689; Forge 802, 954).
- Exercising dominion over bad moods (The Way 10, 20); anger's first degree, impatience, is fought in small daily moments, not only in big confrontations.
- "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2); being understanding and patient with others (Friends of God 233; The Way 174, 446, 463).

Taking It Home

- Return to the king's question: "should you not have had pity, as I had pity on you?"
- The debt we've been forgiven dwarfs anything anyone owes us

II Examination of Conscience

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit, help me to see my sins clearly, to be truly sorry for them, and to trust in your mercy. Amen.

How to read the ◆ GRAVE MATTER tag

A question with this tag concerns a serious matter. A sin is mortal only when grave matter is chosen with full knowledge and deliberate consent (Catechism 1857), and fear, habit or other factors can lessen responsibility. If you are unsure about anything, bring it to Confession and ask the priest.

Anger itself

- ☐ Have I wanted someone to be punished or "paid back" more than to be healed or corrected?
- ☐ Has my anger been out of proportion to what actually happened?
- ☐ Have I aimed my anger at the wrong person, taking out on my family what really came from work, traffic or my own frustration?
- ☐ Have I kept anger burning for days, months or years instead of letting it go?
- ☐ ◆ GRAVE MATTER Have I deliberately wished serious harm on someone, or wanted to see them badly hurt? (CCC 2302)
- ☐ Have I refused to forgive someone, even in my heart, while still asking God to forgive me?
- ☐ On the other side: have I stayed silent and unmoved when someone was truly being wronged and I could have spoken?

Indignation: deciding they deserve nothing

- ☐ Have I decided that someone who hurt me no longer deserves basic kindness or respect?
- ☐ Have I treated a person as beneath me because of how they treated me?

Swelling of the mind: rehearsing revenge

- ☐ Do I replay old hurts, rehearse arguments, or imagine ways of getting even?
- ☐ Have I let resentment crowd out my prayer, even during Mass?
- ☐ Have I plotted, even in small ways, to make someone look bad or feel bad?

Clamor: the raised voice

- ☐ Have I yelled, slammed doors, or spoken in a harsh, cutting tone?
- ☐ Have I used the silent treatment or a cold shoulder to punish someone?

Contumely: the insult

- ☐ Have I insulted, mocked, belittled or called someone names, in person, by text or online?
- ☐ Have I said things I knew would wound, especially in an argument with someone close to me?

Blasphemy: anger aimed at God

- [ ] ◆ GRAVE MATTER Have I spoken against God, cursed Him, or used His name in anger? (CCC 2148)
- [ ] Have I blamed God for what I suffer and refused to speak to Him?

Quarreling: when words become deeds

- [ ] ◆ GRAVE MATTER Have I seriously hurt someone physically in anger?
- [ ] Have I hit, shoved or grabbed someone in anger?
- [ ] Have I broken or thrown things, or frightened others with my temper?
- [ ] Have I driven aggressively, tailgated or tried to "teach someone a lesson" on the road?

What my anger has done

- [ ] Has my anger caused division in my marriage, family, friendships or parish?
- [ ] Has it robbed me of peace, or made it hard to pray?
- [ ] Have I asked God for mercy while refusing mercy to others? ("Could anyone nourish anger against another and expect healing from the Lord?" Sirach 28:3)

The remedies: have I tried?

- [ ] When anger rises, do I pause before I speak or act?
- [ ] Do I bring my anger to God in prayer instead of arguing with it in my head?
- [ ] Do I pray, by name, for the people who have hurt me (Matthew 5:44)?
- [ ] Where it is possible and safe, have I made the first move toward reconciliation?
- [ ] When I pray the Our Father, do I mean "as we forgive those who trespass against us"?
- [ ] Do I fight the small daily battles against impatience and bad moods?

For particular states of life

Married

- [ ] Do I bring up old offenses in new arguments?
- [ ] Have I refused to be reconciled before going to sleep (Ephesians 4:26)?

Parents

- [ ] Do I discipline in anger rather than with calm firmness?
- [ ] Have I apologized to my children when I lost my temper with them?

Single adults

- [ ] Have I let loneliness or disappointment turn into bitterness toward others or toward God?

Young people

- [ ] Do I lash out at my parents, brothers or sisters?
- [ ] Have I posted or sent something cruel when I was angry?

At work

- [ ] Have I humiliated a coworker or employee, or spoken harshly to someone serving me?
- [ ] Do I carry workplace resentments home?

Beneath the surface

These are not accusations but invitations to let Christ heal what lies underneath.

- [ ] Is there a hurt underneath my anger that I have never brought to God?
- [ ] Have I made a quiet vow, like “No one will ever do that to me again,” that now keeps me on guard with everyone?
- [ ] Have I confused forgiveness with saying “it didn’t matter,” or with having to trust again? (Forgiveness releases the debt to God; trust can be rebuilt slowly.)
- [ ] Am I angry at myself, unable to accept that God has forgiven me?

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

III Meditation: The Debt You Carry

With the Gospel of the day, Matthew 18:21-35

Find a quiet place. Maybe it's your car in the driveway after work, engine off, before you go inside. Take a slow breath and let the day settle.

God is already here with you. He is not waiting for you to get everything right first; He is simply glad you have come.

When you are ready, hear Peter's question as if it were your own: "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive?" Who comes to mind when you hear that? Don't push the face away. Let it come.

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Now imagine the servant standing before the king. He owes ten thousand talents, more than he could pay in a hundred lifetimes. He falls to his knees and asks for time. And the king doesn't give him time. He gives him everything. The debt is gone.

That servant is you. Think of your own sins over the years, the ones you've confessed and the ones you'd rather not remember. Each one forgiven. Stand there for a moment and let the king look at you with mercy.

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Now follow the servant out the door. Notice how quickly it happens. He walks out forgiven and grabs the first person who owes him a little. Ask yourself honestly: where have I walked out of Confession, or out of Mass, and gone straight back to keeping score? At the kitchen table. In the carpool line. Stuck in traffic on Vietnam Veterans Boulevard, rehearsing what I should have said.

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Bring the person you named earlier before the Lord. You don't have to feel warm toward them. You don't have to pretend it didn't hurt. Just say, as honestly as you can: "Lord, I hand this debt to You. You judge justly. I won't carry it anymore." If you can't say it yet, say: "Lord, make me willing."

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Hear the king's question, spoken now to you, gently: "Should you not have had pity, as I had pity on you?" Let it be an invitation, not an accusation.

Close by praying the Our Father slowly. When you reach "as we forgive those who trespass against us," stop, and say the name.

How to Use This Guide

The Teaching

Each chapter begins with the outline of that Sunday's homily: the readings, what the sin is, the sins it gives rise to (its "daughters"), what it does to us, and its remedies. Read it slowly. Look up the references that catch your attention.

Examination of Conscience

Use it before Confession, or as a nightly examen. You don't have to answer every question at once; let the Holy Spirit show you what matters. Each examination ends with questions for particular states of life and a few questions about the wounds beneath our sins.

Meditation

A guided prayer with that Sunday's Gospel. Find a quiet place and read it slowly. Where you see a pause, stop and stay with the Lord for a while.

Questions tagged ◆ GRAVE MATTER concern serious matters. For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must all be present together: grave matter, full knowledge, and deliberate consent (Catechism 1857). Fear, habit, ignorance, immaturity and other factors can lessen responsibility (Catechism 1735, 2352). The tag does not mean you have committed a mortal sin. It means the question deserves special care.

Mortal sins should be confessed, in kind and number as best you can recall, before receiving Holy Communion (Catechism 1385, 1456-1457). If you are unsure about anything, bring it to Confession and ask the priest. That is why he is there.

Come to Confession

Saturday	7:30 AM and 3:30 PM
Sunday	7:30 AM, 10:00 AM, 1:00 PM (Spanish) and 5:00 PM
Monday–Friday	5:30 AM and 8:15 AM
Wednesday	also 5:00 PM

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