CHAPTER 4 OF 11 · PREACHED SEPTEMBER 27, 2026 · 26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Pride

Ezekiel 18:25-28 · Psalm 25 · Philippians 2:1-11 · Matthew 21:28-32 (the Two Sons)



I The Teaching

In the Readings: Two Sons

> *"He said in reply, 'I will not,' but afterwards changed his mind and went." (Matthew 21:29"Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you."; Matthew 21:31)*

- The tax collectors and prostitutes knew they were sinners; the priests and elders didn't think they needed to change anything

Nature

> *"Pride is the appetite for excellence in excess of right reason." (Aquinas, Summa II-II, Q. 162)*

- Tanquerey: pride is "an inordinate love of self, which causes us to consider ourselves, explicitly or implicitly, as our first beginning and last end. It is a species of idolatry."
- Both point to the same structure: a good God gave (a gift) quietly reclassified as something we generated ourselves (an achievement)

Daughter Vices

Aquinas places pride above the seven as the "queen and mother of all vices," and counts vainglory as the capital sin in its place. The seven daughters below belong to vainglory (Summa II-II, Q. 132, a. 5). Aquinas sorts them by how we try to show off our excellence: directly, indirectly, or by refusing to yield it to anyone.

- **Boasting:** Displaying our excellence directly in words: talking ourselves up, steering conversation toward our accomplishments.
- **Love of novelties (presumption of novelties):** Displaying our excellence directly in deeds: doing new, unusual, or showy things precisely because they draw admiration.
- **Hypocrisy:** Displaying excellence indirectly: feigning a goodness we don't actually have so as to be esteemed for it.
- **Obstinacy:** Refusing to yield in the intellect: clinging to our opinion because it is ours, unwilling to grant that anyone else sees more clearly.
- **Discord:** Refusing to yield in the will: unwilling to give up our own preference for the sake of agreement and peace with others.
- **Contention:** Refusing to yield in speech: arguing noisily, needing to win the exchange.
- **Disobedience:** Refusing to yield in action: unwilling to carry out a legitimate superior's command, because submitting feels like a loss of standing.

In the Readings

- The second son's "Yes, sir" with no intention of going is hypocrisy in its purest form: the appearance of obedience without the substance.
- The priests and elders show obstinacy: even after seeing tax collectors repent, "you did not later change your minds."
- Tanquerey adds his own treatment of pride's offspring: presumption (attempting what's beyond our strength), ambition (inordinate love of honors and authority), and vanity (inordinate love of others' esteem), which in turn breeds boasting, ostentation, and hypocrisy.

Effects

> *"God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." (James 4:6, cited by Tanquerey)*

- Tanquerey: pride deprives us of grace (God withholds it from the proud) and of merit (purity of intention is corrupted when we act to be seen, cf. Matthew 6:1-2); it produces both personal faults (presumption leading to falls, discouragement) and faults against others (harshness, refusal to yield, discord); and finally it is "a source of unhappiness to those habitually given to it"; since we can never fully vanquish every rival, we "know no rest"

Remedies

- Philippians 2's kenosis: "he emptied himself… becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross"; not thinking less of yourself, thinking of yourself less
- Tanquerey's classical remedy is a meditation in three steps: acknowledging that whatever we have is gift ("what hast thou that thou hast not received?", 1 Corinthians 4:7), that we can do nothing of ourselves without grace, and that as sinners we are due humility rather than acclaim, strong medicine, meant to free us, not to make us despise ourselves
- The Litany of Humility (Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val): asks deliverance from the desire to be esteemed, praised, preferred, then asks the grace to want others preferred instead

Living It Out in Ordinary Life

- Humility is the truth: all that we have comes from God (The Way 599-600; Forge 588); Aquinas's definition of pride, turned inside out.
- Pride makes us complicated and inhibits cheerfulness and active charity (Christ is Passing By 18, 77). Simplicity is humility's positive face, Nathanael, "in whom there is no guile" (Jn 1:47).
- Beware false humility (The Way 603; Furrow 262); running ourselves down is often pride in disguise.
- Practical means: ask insistently for self-knowledge; take every occasion to admit we have feet of clay (Friends of God 95); rectify promptly when we react with pride; serve others and forget ourselves; don't be the center of attention in conversation. Christ washing the disciples' feet (Jn 13:4-5) is the icon.

Taking It Home

- The son who said "no" and went isn't a hero for being naturally humble: he's a hero because he stopped protecting his pride long enough to change his mind
- Series callback: anger, envy, pride, one wound underneath all three: a self too anxious about its own standing to let God's mercy be generous with someone else

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.

Pride itself

- [ ] Have I taken credit for gifts that God gave me?
- [ ] Have I lived as though I do not need God, praying little or not at all?
- [ ] ◆ GRAVE MATTER Have I knowingly rejected a truth of the faith that I know the Church teaches? (CCC 2089)
- [ ] Have I looked down on others as less intelligent, less holy or less worthy than I am?
- [ ] Have I refused to admit I was wrong?
- [ ] Have I been unable to accept correction, advice or help?

Pride's companions: presumption, ambition, vanity

- [ ] Have I attempted things beyond my strength, relying on myself instead of God?
- [ ] ◆ GRAVE MATTER Have I presumed on God's mercy, sinning gravely while planning to confess later? (CCC 2092)
- [ ] Have I chased honors, titles or control for their own sake?
- [ ] Do I live for the esteem of others, worrying constantly about what people think of me?

Boasting and love of novelties

- [ ] Do I talk myself up or steer conversations toward my accomplishments?
- [ ] Have I done unusual or showy things mainly to be noticed?

Hypocrisy: seeming without being

- [ ] Have I pretended to be more devout, generous or virtuous than I really am?
- [ ] Have I said "yes" to God or others with no intention of following through, like the second son?

Obstinacy, discord and contention: refusing to yield

- [ ] Have I clung to my opinion simply because it is mine?
- [ ] Have I refused to give up my preference for the sake of peace?
- [ ] Do I need to win every argument and have the last word?

Disobedience

- [ ] ◆ GRAVE MATTER Have I refused to obey legitimate authority (parents, Church, lawful superiors) in serious matters?
- [ ] Have I resisted direction mainly because submitting felt like losing face?

False humility: pride turned inward

- [ ] Do I run myself down so that others will reassure me?
- [ ] Have I refused to use my gifts out of fear of failing or looking foolish?

What pride has done

- [ ] Has pride made me harsh, impatient or unforgiving with others?
- [ ] Has it led me into presumption, then falls, then discouragement?
- [ ] Has pride kept me from Confession, from asking forgiveness, or from asking for help?

The remedies: have I tried?

- [ ] Do I regularly thank God, remembering that all I have is gift ("What do you have that you did not receive?" 1 Corinthians 4:7)?
- [ ] Have I said "I was wrong" this week, without excuses?
- [ ] Do I let others have the credit, the last word or the better seat?
- [ ] Do I ask God insistently for self-knowledge?
- [ ] Do I pray the Litany of Humility, or another prayer for humility?
- [ ] Do I look for small ways to serve, especially when no one will notice?

For particular states of life

Married

- [ ] Do I insist on my way in our marriage?
- [ ] Do I find it hard to apologize to my spouse?

Parents

- [ ] Do I refuse to admit mistakes to my children?
- [ ] Do I treat my children's achievements as trophies for myself?

Single adults

- [ ] Have I made independence into a wall, refusing to let anyone close?

Young people

- [ ] Do I act like I know better than my parents and teachers about everything?
- [ ] Do I care more about my image than about being honest?

At work

- [ ] Do I take credit for team work, or hide my mistakes?
- [ ] Do I treat people below me with less respect?

Beneath the surface

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

- [ ] Is my pride armor over an old shame or rejection?
- [ ] Do I believe I have to earn my worth, or that I can never look weak?
- [ ] Have I vowed never to need anyone?
- [ ] Can I receive that the Father said “You are my beloved Son” (Mark 1:11) before Jesus had done anything, and that my worth, too, is given before it is earned?

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 Son Who Changed His Mind

With the Gospel of the day, Matthew 21:28-32

Take a quiet moment. Maybe it's early, before the house wakes up, or late at night after the last practice and the last load of laundry. Take a slow breath.

God is here with you. He has looked forward to this time with you even more than you have.

When you are ready, listen to the father's request: "Son, go out and work in the vineyard today." Hear the first son answer, "I will not." Hear the second say, "Yes, sir," and then never go.

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Which son are you more often? The one whose words are good but whose feet never move? The one who looks right on Sunday and lets the week slide? Or the one who says no, and then, slowly, changes his mind?

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Think of a time recently when you were wrong and didn't want to admit it. An argument at home. A decision at work. A moment when you dug in because backing down felt like losing. Let the memory come without defending yourself.

Now picture the first son turning around in the road and walking back toward the vineyard. No speech, no excuse. He just goes. That is what conversion looks like: letting yourself be wrong.

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Ask the Lord gently: "What am I protecting?" Often pride is armor over something tender: a fear of not measuring up, an old shame, the belief that you have to earn your worth. Let Him show you.

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Now hear what the Father said over Jesus at His baptism, before He had preached a sermon or worked a miracle: "You are my beloved Son." Hear it said to you. Your worth was given before you did anything. You don't have to win every argument to be loved.

Pray these lines from the Litany of Humility slowly, one at a time: "From the desire of being esteemed, deliver me, Jesus. From the fear of being humiliated, deliver me, Jesus. That others may be preferred to me in everything, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it."

Before you get up, decide on one person you will say "I was wrong" to this week. Then let it go into His hands.

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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