

TOWARDS A LENTEN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE
“SEVEN DEADLY SINS---SEVEN LIVELY VIRTUES”
FROM BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

PRIDE: The deadliest of all the deadly sins. To put yourself in the place of God. A turning in on oneself, egoism (“It’s all about me.”). Refusal to surrender to God’s will for my life. I do not see the great beauty of God’s world around me, because I am preoccupied with myself, how I come across, what others think of me, my reputation, etc.

Antidote Virtue: **Humility**.....to be in touch with the real world, and my place in it.....

Suggestion: Deliberately draw attention away from yourself, to others. Learn to notice and value the simple things. Surrender to them (like a little child does), and find joy in them.

ENVY: “When a friend of mine succeeds, something in me dies.” (Gore Vidal) Envy is the daughter of pride, because I am so jealously guarding my “place”. We waste much time on whether “I am getting what I deserve in life.”

Antidote Virtue: **Admiration**.....recognition that everything is a gift, whether it comes to me or to someone else.

Suggestion: Praise another person, especially someone of whom you are envious. And let go of the insidious practice of comparing self with others.

ANGER: So very common.....it grips so many of us. It is a passion for revenge, which goes beyond the control of reason. Anger clouds our vision, and prevents us from communicating with one another....it separates us from one another.

Antidote Virtue: **Forgiveness**.....bearing another’s burden, as Jesus bore ours. Going the extra mile, taking it beyond mere justice. So central to our faith..... “Father, forgive them.....”

Suggestion: Take a concrete step, however small, toward healing a broken relationship, with someone against whom you hold a grudge. Forgive quickly. Do not let resentments fester. Refrain from gossip. Criticize someone else only in the measure to which you are willing to help that person to address the problem.

SLOTH: A kind of “boredom of the soul”, a torpor or indifference relative to spiritual things. Relativism (just shrugging, tolerating everyone and everything else, without bothering to search for a higher god). Like a river flowing without any banks to direct its course.....just floating. No energy, no life, no purpose.....ho hum.....whatever.....

Antidote Virtue: **Zeal** for the Mission.....recognition that we have been sent. “You don’t really know who you are until you have found your mission.” (Hans Urs von Balthasar) The Church is a community of missionary disciples.

Suggestion: Work on discerning how you have been sent by God, refining your sense of mission. You have an “acorn” planted within you, meant to grow to a mighty oak. At different points in your life, you get a sense of what this is all about, stirring within you.....”Yes, this is what you are supposed to be and do.” Live, every day, the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

<https://fwdioc.org/works-of-mercy.pdf>

AVARICE: Greed. The immoderate desire for riches; the greedy attachment to material things.....or to honour, pleasure, power. We are unhappy, we think there is something “missing”. So we fill up the empty cage of the ego with material things. But the truth is that we are not filled unless we give ourselves away.

Antidote Virtue: **Generosity**.....because God is “the One Who gives”.

Suggestion: Give something away every day during Lent. Do something each day to remind yourself of the poor.....have a little poor box in your home. Distinguish better between what you need and what you want.

GLUTTONY: Taking an unreasonable, immoderate pleasure in food and drink. A type of avarice, where we are still trying to fill up that empty cage of the ego. We must discipline the sensual desires, such that they do not run the house. “Man does not live by bread alone.” (Matthew 4:4)

Antidote Virtue: **Asceticism**.....to deny, to bring limits, to the satisfaction of sensual pleasure, in order to focus better on awakening spiritual desire, the spiritual goals of our lives.

Suggestion: Fasting.....skip an entire meal, and spend the time in prayer; deliberately go away from meals still feeling hungry, at least sometimes.

LUST: A distortion of the sexual desire, where we use another human being as a means to our own sexual gratification. Today, a huge plague is pornography, “institutionalized lust”.....and youngsters are now exposed to it when they are very young, risking almost immediate addiction.

Antidote Virtue: **Chastity**.....a morally upright expression of one’s sexuality, which always profoundly respects the personhood of the other.

Suggestion: Rid your life of pornography entirely, do not co-operate with this industry. Cut out all activity, in sexual expression, which is manipulative of another person.

Watch the entire video! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wG4VF0jU568&app=desktop>