

### ***Homily for October 6<sup>th</sup> 2017.***

Within the Catholic Tradition we speak of seven deadly sins. The first three are spiritual, that is interior sins. Pride, anger and envy. The last three are corporeal, meaning sins of the flesh, gluttony, avarice (extreme greed for wealth) and lust. The fourth of these sins is what we know as acedia or sloth. It is the hinge sin, that if not checked results in the increase of the interior sins of pride, anger and envy, and the external sins, of gluttony, avarice and lust.

It is because sloth is so rife within our culture that the other sins are also running riot today. People who are learning to come to terms with sloth in their lives will be able to more intentionally deal with the other six.

The medieval theologians had a vivid name for this deadly sin. They called it:

#### ***“The noon day devil”.***

That’s helpful way to think about this especially if you visit a Mediterranean country. Go to a city like Rome or Madrid on a summer afternoon. The stores are closed, life slows right down, and its siesta time. Sloth is that sin that would have us believe when it comes to spiritual matters, just chill, relax take a siesta. “The noon day devil”.

We live in a time historically where this is perhaps the most damaging of all the sins. Thomas Aquinas called sloth “Sorrow for spiritual good”. There is an indifference and carelessness to things of the spirit that leads to a sorrow that people cannot name because they are unaware of sloth’s influence on their lives. There is a sorrow for spiritual good that results in a boredom, torpor and an adolescent: “Whatever” kind of attitude to things of the Spirit.

We live in a time where we have limitless energy for things material and scientific, just think of the purpose constantly given in our age to the discovery of the newest technological, medical and scientific advance.

But when it comes to life in the Spirit we have a “whatever attitude”. Why does sloth set in? Our reading from Baruch would say it results from an indifference to God that in the words of the Gospel Acclamation leads to a hardness of heart.

A hard heart is the consequence of a slothful heart. Such a heart, in the words of Baruch, does not heed the voice of the Lord. This passage is like a teenager saying “whatever.” This is how sloth sets in. When we become careless and don’t attend to the Lord’s voice the “Noon Day Devil” is able to do his work. When this happens, then we humans have a propensity to the other deadly sins, what Baruch describes as ***“following intent of our own wicked hearts by serving other God’s and doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord”.***

Think of how much of modern culture celebrates the corporal sins like gluttony, avarice and lust. We have, for instance, channels devoted to cooking shows, and yet very few families spend time sitting down and eating a meal together. So too, with the consumerist avarice spirit and lust...well they are everywhere.

Then again there is an increasing spirit in the age that is angry, envious and prideful.

Jesus criticism of the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida is his reaction to their sloth: ***“For if the deeds of power done in you would have been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented long ago.***

In other words they had the “whatever attitude” and could care less about what Jesus was doing and what he was saying.

The antidote to sloth is exemplified by the example of our Lady. When she hears of Elizabeth’s pregnancy Luke tells us “she went with haste”. She heeded the word of the Lord and took the appropriate action.

Mary is the one who can pray for and inspire us to guard against the Noon Day Devil. May we be encouraged to by the words of today’s Collect “to strive more eagerly to bring God’s divine work to fruitful completion and so discover more fully the Lord’s healing remedies as he kindly frees us from the sins of pride, anger, envy, gluttony, avarice and lust. By resisting the temptation of sloth we can with today’s psalmist pray:

***Helps us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive us our sins, for your names sake.***