

con·cu·pis·cence

1263 By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.

1264 Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an inclination to sin that Tradition calls *concupiscence*, or metaphorically, "the tinder for sin" (*fomes peccati*); since concupiscence "is left for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ." Indeed, "an athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

2515 Etymologically, "concupiscence" can refer to any intense form of human desire. Christian theology has given it a particular meaning: the movement of the sensitive appetite contrary to the operation of the human reason. The apostle St. Paul identifies it with the rebellion of the "flesh" against the "spirit." Concupiscence stems from the disobedience of the first sin. It unsettles man's moral faculties and, without being in itself an offense, inclines man to commit sins.

- Catechism of the Catholic Church

From "Resisting Temptation" (by Mike Landry) [<http://www.iamthird.ca/resisting-temptation/>]

"What concupiscence means is that each of us still suffer from the effects of sin in our lives. Simply put, we like sin... or at the very least, we are drawn to sin. We inherit this concupiscence first from Adam and Eve's original sin, believing that God was holding something back from them, and we perpetuate it by continuing to sin – and often believing that God is holding out on us. Even though Jesus has died for our sins, and by the sacraments of Baptism and Confession our sins are forgiven, the effects of sin are still present in our lives. Imagine for a moment that I take a railroad spike and hammer it into one of the pews in our Church- my sin is the railroad spike sticking out of the pew. By confessing this sin and receiving absolution, I am truly forgiven, and the spike is removed and my sin is gone. Now although my sin is gone, there remains a hole in the pew: the effect of the sin remains and needs to be remedied. Our concupiscence is the presence of that 'hole' in each one of us, the draw we feel to lust, to envy, to covetousness, to gluttony, to pride, to laziness, to anger: it's why we commit the same sins over and over again.

There is a difference between being *tempted* to these things and *actually doing them*. There are lots of temptations we face in a day: thoughts and ideas that pass through our heads which we don't embrace. When we entertain these thoughts and act on them, they go from being temptations to being sin. All sin damages us, our relationships with others, and our relationship with God. We distinguish certain sins as being more serious (mortal) sins, as they sever our relationship with God—we close ourselves to the action of Grace in our lives. We will always face temptations. Even Jesus was tempted. The question is: will we sin in face of temptation or resist temptation, flee from the devil, and be holy?"

THREE P's in RESISTING TEMPTATION

by Mike Landry

PLAN TO RESIST

At a certain point, we need to want to be holy more than we want a particular sin. We need to plan to avoid that sin. Whatever sins we struggle with, we need to take an honest look at where and when we are tempted, and PLAN-WANT-CHOOSE to avoid them. It seems like common sense, but it's not so common these days, like young couples who engage in sexual activity before marriage often aren't planning ahead/put themselves in a bad situation. As my pastor, Fr. Paul recently said to me: one will never succeed at dieting if they sleep with a chocolate cake. For my wife and I, we planned to succeed in remaining chaste ahead of our engagement by keeping a curfew while we were engaged. As ridiculous as it might seem to keep a curfew at age 25 while living on our own, it was an honest admission that the later it got, the less willpower we had. So we planned to avoid that temptation.

PRAYER

The original sin was, in many ways, a sin of pride: that we could somehow grasp something on our own and without God's help. Without God, we can do NOTHING. Without God's help, we cannot overcome sin. Twelve step programs start on the right foot with the first three steps:

- 1) recognizing one's powerlessness over an addiction,
- 2) realizing that a "higher power" (AKA GOD!) could restore us to sanity
- 3) They made a decision to turn their will and lives over to God.

As we build a consistent, regular prayer life, and when we pray about a particular area of temptation, we are admitting our powerlessness and recognizing God's ability to help us overcome our sin; and hopefully a place where we turn our will and our lives over to God.

PENANCE

Doing penance helps us recognize whether we obey our will or our 'flesh'. It has taken all sorts of forms in many different holy people's lives: from choosing not to eat meat on Fridays to walking with a pebble in one's shoe, to doing good things for other people, to extreme practices that actually harmed oneself. In a wireless 3G, text-messaging, drive-thru, credit-card society; penance seems out of place. Everything we want and do is about instant gratification: getting what we want when we want it. Penance is about building virtues like patience and self-control. And yet, if we want to learn to resist temptation: we absolutely need to learn to practice regular penance. Why? Because Jesus calls us to conversion.