

February 28th, 2013

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

This week I continue my series, during the Season of Lent, with Sin #3 of the Seven Deadly Sins... COVETOUSNESS. Ironically, as I write this Bishop's Note I am sitting in the airport in Las Vegas after having visited **Jesus the Good Shepherd** (www.vegasanglican.org) in Henderson, NV. As I sat here thinking about which of the deadly sins I should write upon I note that I can see evidence of all of them right in front of me... or out the window as I can easily see the Las Vegas Strip. However, I didn't have to ponder long which sin I should write on as my eyes fall upon the people playing the slot machines and hearing an incessant call out from one of the machines... Wheel Of Fortune followed by a chiming of bells... hoping and dreaming that with the next quarter, or dollar, or pull of the handle all their troubles will vanish when the three stars line up in a row.

COVETOUSNESS, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia is, "*Generally, an unreasonable desire for what we do not possess.*" (www.newadvent.org) I don't know about you but I don't think that this definition is strong enough, "Generally an unreasonable desire?" The Lord wrote it down much more forcefully when he gave Moses the 10th of the Ten Commandments: "***You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.***" (Exodus 20:17 ESV)

Clearly the first aspect of sin here is the inordinate desire for material possessions - but more than that it is the desire for other people's possessions. But this is more than a material sin - it is a spiritual sin because more than the material possessions it is the perceived status or power or comfort that those possessions might bring that draws us.

This idea is so prevalent in our culture that the entire advertising industry is built upon tempting us to have things not simply because of the need... food, shelter, protection etc. but because of who those possessions will make us. Buy our bra and you will attract more men...drink this beer and you will be a wealthy athlete... if you love your child you will make sure to drive junior to soccer practice in a Mercedes Benz... my gosh it is to the place where millions of people watched the recent Super Bowl for the commercials instead of the game... and what was the commercial that got the most buzz? A super model and a super geek in a dispassionate and sloppy kiss. What was



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the message? Use our website tools and the geek will attract the beauty. You can bet that every geek watching that commercial wondered about the potential and every beauty thought..."NO WAY."

A covetous spirit is an anxious spirit believing that they never have enough and even worse...others have more. The sin of covetousness attacks our relationship with God because it turns our eyes and heart away from a spirit of gratitude to God for all His provision. Like all sin, the sin of covetousness turns our eyes inward instead of outward and calls us to compare ourselves to others instead of comparing ourselves to the standard that God has set for us... namely that we be content with what God has given us and strive to give to others by loving and caring for them.

This does not mean that we're not called as Christians to work hard and provide for our families... but it does mean that we work hard to provide the things that are necessary for our families: shelter, protection and sustenance. Imagine what our families would be like if instead wasting inordinate amounts of time pursuing that which provides status or power and instead spent that time praying and playing and serving together as a family.

My prayer for you this Lent is that you will examine any areas of covetousness in your life, admit to them, turn them over to God and then use the time and energy that you would have spent on that sin by serving others, preferably by serving with your family!

I pray you all a blessed and Holy Lent!

Bishop Menees

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[February 2013 Edition of The San Joaquin Anglican](#)

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for current news of the Diocese!

Diocesan Calendar

Check the Diocesan Calendar for information on upcoming events!

April 29th - May 1st - Clergy Retreat
August 2-4th - Anglican Church Women's Annual Retreat
at Camp San Joaquin

Diocese of San Joaquin www.dioceseofsanjoaquin.net 559-244-4828