

GLUTTONY

OPENING PRAYER

READING: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's".

"Put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony." – Proverbs 23:2

Putting a knife to one's throat is to kill (to murder)! Isn't it? Look at the way how the Proverbs condemns Gluttony.

Gluttony is to indulge in excessive use for the sake of pleasure. It is about an excess of anything (television, entertainment, sex, or company). We have covered Lust and Greed over the last two months hence this month we will look at Gluttony in relation to food.

We eat to live but if we live only to eat, then it is Gluttony. During the French Revolution many died. Among them, it is said 9/10th of the population died of starvation while 1/10th died of indigestion. That is Gluttony. It is an irresistible lust for food.

Hey, I have a question! Greed is also wanting something in excess, so is it not the same as Gluttony? I don't understand! I am confused!

Don't worry, I think I can explain...Greed is a sin of excess, an excessive desire to possess wealth or goods, and Gluttony is an excess in eating. It is an extravagant indulgence of the appetite for food or habitual eating to excess. St. Thomas Aquinas says '...Gluttony denotes an inordinate desire of eating or drinking leaving the order of reason...' wherein the good of moral virtue consists. Reason and the virtue of moderation are lost in lust for food. It defiles man spiritually. Hence, Gluttony is a sin.

There is a natural appetite for food. It is a biological necessity which asks for food and drink to nurture the human body. This we call hunger and thirst.

There is another type of appetite called the " Sensitive Appetite". It is in the excessive longing for food that the vice of gluttony consists. This may be considered in two ways. First, it is the excessive irresistible attraction towards delicious quality food prepared too nicely and daintily. The Glutton feels, " I just cannot do without it." RESULT ... He eats "too much". The second aspect pertains to the manner in which the food is consumed and the time taken. The glutton, like an animal, chooses the best and consumes it "hastily" and "greedily".

Of course, life cannot be sustained without food. Therefore food too is most desirable.

Yes, very true. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 6:7, "All the labour of man is for his mouth".

As long as food and drink satisfy the basic needs, hunger and thirst, it is fine. It sustains life and nourishes the body. In fact, Gandhiji said "to the hungry man God can come only in the form of food."

Don't we all know, only too well, that we just cannot do anything on an empty stomach??

Absolutely!! While food is required to sustain life, you cannot eat for the next day also. Look at the Infinity of God's wisdom! HE has created the human body in such a way, that food is the only thing to which we can say, No. 'That is enough, I cannot eat anymore.'" It takes 4 to 5 hours to digest. Gradually hunger sets in. Such, is Nature, the best teacher and your body doesn't lie. It knows when you are full. Yet Gluttony seems to be about the pleasure of food rather than about food itself or in other words, food itself is directed to something as its end.

Ah! Now I understand clearly...I wonder about these people who live to eat rather than eat to live! I cannot imagine the consequences of so much eating...Can you?

I can explain the consequences to you...there are so many and I am sure everyone here would also like to know the various consequences of Gluttony..

The first thing that happens is 'dullness of the sense in understanding' on account of fumes of food disturbing the brain. The keenness of reason is dulled by immoderate meat and drink.

Secondly, appetite is disordered and reason seems to be fast asleep at the helm, especially when it is excess drink. This is best explained in the Bible. If you read 3 Esdra 3:20 it says "Wine, gives everyone a confident and joyful mind'. Proverbs 23: 20-21 warns us, "Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags."

Third, it damages speech purity. Gluttons are carried away by inordinate speech. They become too wordy and talkative especially when drinks followed by food go in excess.

Fourth, it damages man's decisions, behaviour and actions. They tend to become vulgar, coarse and foul-mouthed due to lack of reason. It leads dullness

of the sense in thinking followed by consequent indecent and disproportioned actions and behaviour.

Fifth, it damages the body. The desire for eating and drinking in an improper manner, brings disease and afflictions upon the body and soul alike. You all very well know that Gluttony results in obesity, which is increased body weight caused by excessive accumulation of fat. It causes diabetes and numerous other diseases.

Wow! That's a real eye opener! Who is to blame for such consequences if they occur?

None but OURSELVES! There is just no point blaming God or anybody else. It is us who willed and chose to eat and drink. We always thought 'more the merrier' Now why blame somebody else?

Well said! But you see that's the human tendency...When questioned by God, Adam blames Eve and Eve blames the serpent. People always become very defensive over this issue.

Well, does anyone know the difference between a glutton and a hungry person? A glutton eats Long while a hungry person Longs to eat!

All said and done, do you have a remedy that will help all of us improve our eating habits?

Well, although I do not have an answer to that, here are some useful tips to overcome weight problems which usually come about through lack of knowledge or lack of discipline or LUST FOR FOOD:

First, repent for yielding to the temptation of Lust for food. Phil 3:19 says 'Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.'

Then, submit to God and ask Him for the power to overcome gluttony through His Holy Spirit and resist the devil through prayer and obedience to God. James 4:7 – Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you
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Secondly, eat in moderation: Ask the Lord to help you eat the proper amount of food. Eat only until full or even a little less. He will help you. He loves you and cares for you. (Phillipians 4:5 – Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.)

Third, Get Regular Mild exercise. Walking is an excellent form of exercise. Next, ask God for your weight loss plan and allow Him to lead you. Ask God for a

desire for healthy foods and to remove your cravings for unhealthy food. (1 John 14-15 – And this confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, he heareth...we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him'.)

Daily, thank God for setting you free and do not allow the devil to discourage you when at times you fail. Remember, this came 'little by little' and you have to lose it 'little by little'.

I would also like to add that it is good to fast periodically as the Lord leads. Even fasting one meal or one day a week will help to discipline your body to be subject to your spirit. Fasting helps cleanse the body of toxins that can lead to sickness.

A good guideline would be to eat "living foods". These are fresh vegetables, fruits, grains, meats and dairy products. God has blessed us by filling the earth with foods that are delicious, nutritious and pleasurable. We should honour God's creation by enjoying these foods and eating them in appropriate quantities.

God calls us to control our appetites, rather than allowing them to control us.

This is best revealed in the Lord's Prayer where we ask for only three things – For our physical needs we ask for our daily bread, for human needs we ask for the grace to forgive and for our spiritual needs we ask to deliver us from temptation. So let us now all say our Lord's Prayer.