



**Pope at Audience: God's power is made perfect in weakness**

During his weekly General Audience, Pope Francis continues his catechesis series on virtues and vices, this week focusing on the sins of envy and vainglory, suggesting there are remedies to each, both of which involve making ourselves less at the center, embracing weakness, and letting God operate in our lives.

**By Deborah Castellano Lubov**

Envy and vainglory are dangerous vices, but there are remedies to combat each.

Pope Francis suggested this during his weekly General Audience on Wednesday morning in the Vatican's Paul VI Hall, as he continued his catechesis series on virtues and vices, this week examining envy and vainglory.

Given the Pope's recent flu-like symptoms, the Holy Father opted for an official of the Vatican Secretariat of State, Msgr. Filippo Ciampanelli, to read his remarks on his behalf, as he has done for the Holy Father on other occasions.

Speaking first about envy, the Pope recalled the sin, even as early as in the story of Cain and Abel, proved to be a destructive force fuelled by resentment towards others, that often leads to deadly hatred.

"Envy," he observed, "is an evil that has not only been investigated in the Christian sphere: it has attracted the attention of philosophers and wise men of every culture."

God's 'math' is different

At envy's basis, the Holy Father suggested, is a relationship of hate and love. "One desires the evil for the other, but secretly desires to be like him.

"His good fortune," he continued, "seems to us an injustice: surely, we think to ourselves,  we would deserve his successes or good fortune much more!

At the root of this vice, he noted, is "a false idea of God," where "we do not accept that God has His own 'math,' different from ours."

Remedies to envy and vainglory

The remedy to envy, the Pope suggested, lies in Saint Paul’s exhortation: “Love one another with brotherly affection, compete in esteeming one another.”

Meanwhile, vainglory, which is excessive or ostentatious pride especially in one's achievements, he said, is marked by an inflated self-esteem and "a craving for constant praise," "frequently prone to using other people for one’s own ends."

This sin, the Holy Father pointed out, goes hand in hand with "the demon" of envy, saying both vices are characteristic of a person "who aspires to be the centre of the world."

God's power made perfect in weakness

The vainglorious person, the Pope indicated, is completely self-absorbed.

To combat this vice, the Pope suggested following Saint Paul’s example of boasting of his weakness rather than achievements, which "offers an effective way for overcoming vainglory."

Pope Francis urged the faithful to imitate Saint Paul in knowing that God’s grace is sufficient, since His power is made perfect in weakness.

As we accept and even embrace our weaknesses, the Holy Father suggested, the power of Christ will set us free for a more generous love of others.

