

GRIST

Diocese of New Ulm Social Concerns Office January, 2008

I. Love God Above All

[Ten upcoming issues of GRIST will feature reflections on each of the Ten Commandments. Ten, hour-long films – The Decalogue, available on DVD/VHS – by the Polish film director, Krzysztof Kieslowski, are intriguing cinematic meditations on the Commandments.]

In God we live and move and have our being.
Acts 17:28

I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, “what can get through such snares?” Then I heard a voice saying to me, “humility.” *St. Anthony the Great (Desert Father)*

Three things are necessary for our salvation:
to know what we ought to believe; {faith
to know what we ought to desire; {hope
and to know what we ought to do. {charity
St. Thomas Aquinas

We would rather be ruined than changed
We would rather die in our dread
Than climb the cross of the moment
And let our illusions die *W. H. Auden*

Sin is energy in the wrong channel... There is more than one way of sacrificing to the fallen angels... We are ensnared by the wisdom of the serpent; we are set free by the foolishness of God.
St. Augustine

There are four classes of idols which beset our minds. To these for distinction's sake I have assigned names – calling the first *Idols of the Tribe*; the second, *Idols of the Cave*; the third, *Idols of the Marketplace*; the fourth, *Idols of the Theater*.
Francis Bacon

In order to be prepared to hope in what does not deceive, we must first lose hope in everything that deceives.
Georges Bernanos

Discernment unmask the lie of temptation, whose object appears to be good, a “delight to the eyes” and desirable, when in reality its fruit is death.
Catechism of the Catholic Church #2847

The smallest piece of scientific foolery enchants... Money and footlights are all a man understands... One drugs oneself with whatever's at hand... The rich can be easily amused – mirrors, for instance, will do... It isn't fun growing old in a country where there are no distractions. *Louis-Ferdinand Celine*

The honest man disabused of his illusions is man at his best. *Sebastien Roch Nicolas Chamfort*

We always keep God waiting while we admit more importunate suitors. *Malcom de Chazal*

The man who cannot believe his senses, and the man who cannot believe anything else, are both insane. *G. K. Chesterton*

To have grazed every form of failure, including success... Of all that makes us suffer, nothing – so much as disappointment – gives us the sensation of at last touching Truth. *E. M. Cioran*

There is nothing in all creation so like God as stillness. *Meister Eckhart*

If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore!
Ralph Waldo Emerson

We dance around in a ring and suppose, but the Secret sits in the middle and knows.
Robert Frost

The devil divides the world between atheism and superstition. *George Herbert*

After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.
Aldous Huxley

The people long eagerly for two things – bread and circuses. *Juvenal*

In German the word *sein* signifies both things: to be and to belong to Him. *Franz Kafka*

If we really knew what was important, if we truly understood what happiness is, we would, no matter

what our place or station, slowly learn to embrace what matters in this life so that when we die our arms would be open to all the truth there is to know and all the good there is to love. Aside from considerations of unmerited grace, which might rescue us from our direst acts, our choices are the prime indicators of our destiny. Behavior matters – not because we are punished by a God eager for retribution, but because we actually become, eternally, what we have given ourselves to.
John F. Kavanaugh, S.J.

If your heart is straight with God, then every creature serves as a mirror of life and a book of holy doctrine, for there is no creature so little or vile, that does not show and represent the goodness of God.
Thomas ‘a Kempis

I do not understand the mystery of grace – only that it meets us where we are, but does not leave us where it found us.
Annie LaMott

You can change your faith without changing gods, and vice versa.
Stanislaus Lec

This is one of the miracles of love; it gives a power of seeing through its own enchantments and yet not being disenchanted.
C. S. Lewis

Superstition, idolatry and hypocrisy have ample wages, but truth goes a-begging.
Martin Luther

Whatever else I may have written, I think all can be reduced in the end to this one root truth: that God calls human persons to union with Himself and with one another in Christ.
Thomas Merton

God, have mercy on me.
From the earth’s greedy mouth deliver me,
cleansing me of her untrue songs. *Czeslaw Milosz*

He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian.
John Milton

I measure God by everything that I am not.
Flannery O’Connor

Tell me to what you pay attention
and I will tell you who you are.
Jose Ortega y Gasset

A mere trifle consoles us,
for a mere trifle distresses us. *Blaise Pascal*

Practice humility without annoying anyone.
Peter of Dios (Desert Father)

Do not give your heart
to that which does not satisfy your heart.
Poemen the Shepherd (Desert Father)

If they fail to recognize truth as it appears now, needy, naked, and weak, they may not know it until it comes with great power and glory, terrible and indicting, and they may then redden and in vain answer in trembling voices: *When did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to thee?* The Lord shall be known when he judges, if he is not known when he seeks mercy.
J. F. Powers

I know that it is the marred and scarred and faulty that are subject to grace.
Richard Selzer

Forgive me, but I am lost.
Sisoies (Desert Father)

Only if I exist in a world in which history, or the demands of nature, or the needs of my fellow human beings, or the duties of citizenship, or the call of God, or something else of this order *matters* crucially, can I define an identity for myself that is not trivial.
Charles Taylor

The Devil is God’s ape...God is invisible, although seen; incomprehensible, although revealed by grace; unfathomable, although fathomed by the human senses.
Tertullian

Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly lights.
Henry David Thoreau

One should attack not other people, but their gods. But the first step is to discover them; for people take care to hide the gods they *really* worship.
Paul Valery

We do not have to acquire humility.
There is humility in us – only we humiliate ourselves before false gods. *Simone Weil*

If God lived on earth,
people would break his windows.
Yiddish Proverb