

◆ Understanding Anger ◆

Mission Talk #2

1. Anger as a Warning Light

- Anger is like a dashboard warning light:
- something is wrong and needs attention.

It calls us to **stop, evaluate, and take appropriate steps.**

2. St. Thomas Aquinas on Anger

- Anger is a **passion**, morally neutral until governed by reason.
- **Rightly ordered anger** can serve justice.
- **Uncontrolled anger** becomes sinful.
- **Persistent anger = rancor**, which Aquinas calls a **mortal sin** because it opposes charity.
- Forgiveness is an act of charity; anger must yield to it.
- **Key Insight:**
 - **Initial anger can be just.**
 - **Lasting anger is always sinful.**

3. Anger as a God-Given Emotion

- Anger itself is not sinful.
- Jesus experienced anger without sinning.
- What matters is **what we do with it.**
- “Be angry but do not sin.” (Eph 4:26)

4. The Good That Anger Can Reveal

Anger can:

- Reveal true feelings
- Show where boundaries are needed
- Spur positive change
- Expose past wounds
- Encourage honest communication
- Motivate responsible decisions
- Become the foundation for forgiveness
- Reveal our need to turn to the Lord

5. The Misuse of Anger

Anger becomes destructive when:

- Motives are selfish
- It is expressed inappropriately
- It is held onto
- It becomes resentment, bitterness, or hatred

- It gives Satan a foothold (Eph 4:27)

6. The 4 Roots of Anger

- Anger is a **secondary** emotion.

It arises from one or more of these roots:

1. **Hurt** – “I’ve been wounded.”
2. **Fear** – “My hopes or security feel threatened.”
3. **Frustration** – “Expectations weren’t met.”
4. **Injustice** – “My rights or goodness were violated.”

7. Evaluating Anger With Reason

- Emotions move faster than reason.

We must slow down and ask:

- What is causing this anger?
- Which root is involved?
- Is this **present anger** or **past anger** resurfacing?
- Am I remembering that I am held securely by the Father?

8. Present vs. Past Anger

- **Present anger:**

A normal reaction to a wrong happening now.

- **Past anger:** A disordered reaction rooted in old wounds.

Overreactions often reveal:

- Unhealed hurts
- Unforgiveness
- Childhood patterns

Healing the past helps us handle the present.

9. Self-Control & Spiritual Maturity

- Self-control is a **fruit of the Holy Spirit** (Gal 5:23).
- It is not suppression but **joyful mastery**.
- “A fool gives full vent to his anger.” (Prov 29:11)

Questions for reflection:

- What triggers my anger?
- How did anger in my home growing up affect me?
- Do I use anger to control others?
- Do I bury anger instead of processing it?

10. Four Unhealthy Patterns of Anger

1. **Prolonged Anger** – simmering resentment
2. **Pressed-Down Anger** – hidden, denied, repressed
3. **Provoked Anger** – short fuse, irritability
4. **Profuse Anger** – explosive, destructive, abusive

11. Four Types of Misplaced Anger

1. **Bullies** – vent anger on the weak
2. **Abusers** – erupt on those closest
3. **Self-injurious** – turn anger inward
4. **Self-protectors** – misdirect anger onto safe targets

12. “Anger: The Devil’s Cocaine”

Uncontrolled anger:

- Gives a false sense of power
- Blinds us
- Leads to destruction
- Produces shame or denial
- Becomes addictive

Forgiveness is **detox**—a spiritual rehabilitation.

13. Unrealistic Expectations & Pride

Most anger comes from:

- Expectations of others
- Expectations of ourselves
- Expectations of God
- Pride says: **“My will be done.”**
- Humility says: **“Thy will be done.”**

14. Cultivating Peace

- The question is not: **“Am I right?”**
 - But **“Am I Christlike?”**

Peace is not based on circumstances but on relationship with God.

15. The Root of Extended Anger: “My Rights”

We must surrender:

- Entitlement
- Control
- Unrealistic expectations

Ask:

- Is my anger justified?
- Can I change this situation?
- What is the root?
- Am I using anger to meet emotional needs?

16. Prayer as the Answer

Jesus commands:

- Love your enemies
- Bless those who curse you
- Pray for those who abuse you

Prayer transforms anger into charity.

17. Anger Toward God

- Like Job, we may feel anger toward God.

The remedy is to remember:

- God's character
- God's purposes
- God's plan

Nothing is wasted in God's providence.

◆ HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT ◆

Practical Steps to Heal Anger & Grow in Charity

1. Pray the Litany of Humility Daily

- Choose **one stanza** that strikes you and pray it throughout the day.
- Example: **"From the desire of being esteemed, deliver me, Jesus."**

2. Make a "4 Roots Check-In" at Noon or Evening

Ask:

- Which root showed up today?
- **Hurt? Fear? Frustration? Injustice?**
- Pray **3 Hail Marys** for the grace to respond with charity.

3. Keep a Forgiveness List in Your Missal

- Write (in shorthand if needed) the names of those you are working to forgive.

At Mass:

- Pray for them at the Offertory
- Place their souls spiritually in the Chalice at the Elevation