

Scrupulous ANONYMOUS

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Scrupulous Anonymous
One Liguori Drive
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WE NEED YOUR HELP

We urgently need your prayers and financial support to maintain our website and to continue offering this newsletter in print for our many members who don't have Internet access. To send a check, please follow the instructions at the bottom of page 4. To donate with a credit card, [click here](#). Thank you for your past and continued support of this important ministry!

Embracing Your True Self

by Fr. Thomas M. Santa

More than a handful of people have told me they rarely feel authentic or genuine. And, except for rare occasions when they really let themselves go, very few other people they encounter seem to celebrate life. This leads them to the logical conclusion that this is how life is, and it won't get better until they get to heaven—if then.

I once felt that way. A few years ago, I was enjoying a normal and very ordinary visit with friends when, for no particular reason, I became very uneasy and somewhat disconnected. On the outside, everything seemed to be going well, but it just wasn't ringing true. I thought, "I don't want to be doing this ten years from now."

Why did I feel that way? Why was I surprised

to discover this feeling? Even more important, why was I resisting the inclination to express thoughts, feelings, or emotions necessary for my happiness?

I realized that a part of myself—call it my inner self, my core self, or my true self—wanted to break out and be accepted for who I am. I had been stifling this feeling, spending a tremendous amount of energy trying to be something I'm not, fearing discovery. The result: "I don't want to be doing this ten years from now"—trying to be what others thought I should be, conforming to their expectations instead of taking care of my true needs.

Once I was aware of this, I took steps to embrace my true self and celebrate God's grace at work in my life.

Start embracing your true self by looking at your environment, dealing with your feelings, identifying your true needs, and seeking support:

Environment Look to your immediate needs and decisions. You can enter a round of depression, of feeling sorry for yourself. You can lash out at others, frantically looking for someone or something to blame it all on. Or you can say, “Why not create a new world safe enough for me to dream, to feel, and to trust?”

Feeling Replace the things you use to dull or ignore your feelings with the actual feelings. If you begin to feel lonely or alone, feel the emptiness instead of trying to fill it with food. If you feel frightened, feel the fear instead of numbing it with alcohol.

Identifying true needs Your true self needs others (see “Seeking support”), but first you need

to know, embrace, and welcome who you truly are. I encourage you to spend today working on yourself, going into the core of who you are and identifying the parts of yourself that feel incomplete, the parts of yourself that feel right crying, shouting, laughing, and doing all those “feeling things” that might even make you look crazy. Give yourself permission to experience the feelings without jumping to the conclusion that feeling is a sin.

Seeking support Find friends who will let you be yourself, who will accept and love you exactly as you are at this moment, this day—not in some distant future. One such friend is Jesus, who wants more than anything else to help you know, love, and accept yourself as the person you are. It’s also helpful to experience Jesus’ love through another person—a friend, family member, or spouse. This relational experience makes all the difference in the world, and it’s a gift of God’s grace and God’s love for you.

Scrupulous Anonymous Retreats
Presented by Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSSR

Friday, Sept. 25 – Sunday, Sept. 27, 2015

Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center
5602 Highway 317
Belton, TX 76513
254-780-2436

www.bit.ly/ScrupAnonRetreat

Friday, Jan. 15 – Sunday, Jan. 17, 2016

Spiritual Life Center (Wichita, KS)
7100 East 45th Street North
Bel Aire, KS 67226
316-744-0167

Reflection

Adapted from *Faithful Meditations for Every Day of Ordinary Time (Weeks 11–22)*
by Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney (Liguori Publications, © 2013).

The path to a good, happy, prosperous, and successful life isn't easy. We're often distracted by personal and worldly matters. We experience a mixed bag of success and failure, happiness and disappointment, order and chaos. We do our best to work through the challenges, remove the stumbling blocks, and overcome the temptations. We're not always successful, but we struggle to move forward.

One of the most difficult challenges is learning the art of self-acceptance. We listen to faulty messages that say we're not good enough. We deny our innate beauty and goodness. We're blind to our unique gifts and talents. We allow fear and self-hatred to be-

come stumbling blocks to our personal growth and development. We're tempted to give up, act irresponsibly, and blame others for our unhappiness. We can't progress until we believe in our own goodness, put fear and self-hatred behind us, and overcome the temptation to make others our scapegoat.

People of faith set our minds and hearts on divine things, not on human things. We believe God has a plan. We're given the grace of discernment and the strength to do God's work on earth. We have confidence as sons and daughters of God that, with the help of the Spirit, we'll remove the stumbling blocks and overcome temptations that prevent us from spreading the Good News.

Ponder What are *my* challenges, stumbling blocks, and temptations?

Prayer Lord, your resurrection conquered sin and death. Give me the strength to overcome pride so I can become a humble servant of your love and peace.

Practice Today I will be faithful by honestly naming and facing my stumbling blocks.



SCRUPULOUS ANONYMOUS

MAILBOX

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Q *Some of my thoughts are so powerful, so disturbing, and so heinous that they have to be sinful. At what exact moment do such thoughts become mortal sin?*

A If I have a very powerful thought that I'm going to win a million dollars, when should I start spending it? The answer is obvious: not until the money is in the bank.

The same dynamic is at work with other thoughts, no matter how powerful. Thoughts become sin *only* when they result in a measurable and observable action, behavior, or result—and not one minute before. You don't have the power to create sin with only your thoughts. The only thing you create with your thoughts is the fear and anxiety of your disorder.

Q *Have you discontinued your radio program?*

A Thank you for asking. I ended the live broadcast at the end of May because of a conflict in my schedule. We may resume the live broadcast later this year or perhaps introduce a different type of program. In the meantime, the podcasts are available at radiomaria.us/scrupulosity/.

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