



## Managing Scrupulosity

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

This monthly newsletter—created in 1964 by Fr. Thomas Tobin, CSSR, to address a critical need—has always used the most up-to-date communications resources available. Fr. Tobin took on the tasks of creating a newsletter, scheduling its publishing dates, and deciding to deliver it at no charge to anyone who asked for it. He organized and led the essential support team within Liguori Publications, secured the necessary permissions to spend the required resources, and succeeded in establishing *Scrupulous Anonymus* as a worthy service that has been provided free for the asking ever since. The edition you are reading stands as a sample testament to his work.

Over the years, Liguori Publications has made the necessary adjustments that technology enabled. The newsletter is mailed upon request, is available in an electronic format, is occasionally printed in color, and it is archived so it can be accessed easily by anyone with a computer and who visits the website [scrupulousanonymus.org](http://scrupulousanonymus.org). *Scrupulous Anonymus* has become an essential pastoral resource for people who suffer with the disorder and those who minister to them.

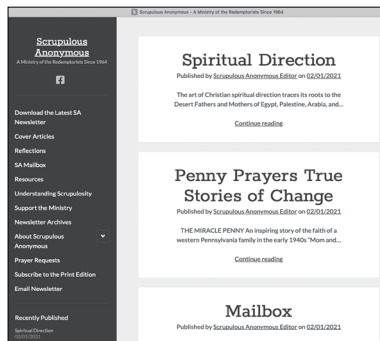
Of course, there are limits to what a newsletter can accomplish. For example, it is impossible to

answer the volume of mail we receive. Reader questions provide the topics for columns like this one and our “Mailbox” content. While I strive to be thorough, it is almost impossible to answer all the questions readers mail and email.

One glaring unmet need I am asked about often is a request for a list of priests in a reader’s community who know about the disorder and can help. There has been no database or other resource that could provide that much-needed information. Mostly I have referred questioners to their local Catholic Charities, a retreat center, or another pastoral entity that might have useful resources.

This often helped people in large communities, but it was woefully inadequate for those in rural areas or whose local diocese was small.

In the spirit of Fr. Tobin’s vision and the efforts of people who have served in this ministry, the Redemptorists have launched a new pastoral tool. While it will not provide all the answers or pastoral direction that is needed, it is a good step. As a result of the generosity of donors, the new pastoral response and aid for the scrupulous is available in the form of a website. It is intended to complement the efforts of the *Scrupulous Anonymus* newsletter. The new site will enable Redemptorists and people



A SAMPLE HOME PAGE FROM SCRUPULOUSANONYMOUS.ORG



# Managing Scrupulosity

You too can experience relief with the help we provide.

Get Started Below

The home page of the Redemptorists' new pastoral support website, [ManagingScrupulosity.com](http://ManagingScrupulosity.com)

affiliated with us to provide pastoral responses that are more helpful than ever.

I encourage you to visit this new pastoral effort at [ManagingScrupulosity.com](http://ManagingScrupulosity.com).

The new site has been in development for the last year. I envision it as a gathering place for the community of people who suffer with scrupulosity. In addition to resources that are familiar to this community, the site provides more resources, primarily the opportunity for interaction with the extended community. This interaction is intended to remove the experience of isolation that is so often part of the experience of the disorder.

People with scrupulosity often speak of the burden of the disorder and the pain of suffering alone. They feel isolated, that no one understands what is going on. They are frustrated with trying to connect with someone who can help and support their effort to heal. A disconnected voice in the confessional's darkness often worsens their feelings of isolation, anxiety, and hopelessness.

[ManagingScrupulosity.com](http://ManagingScrupulosity.com) provides regular opportunities for the discussion of the details, questions, and feelings associated with the disorder. A moderated "chat room" is one part of the pastoral effort. Sessions for group spiritual direction and individual spiritual direction may be

scheduled. So far, five experienced people have committed to being spiritual directors. More will join. Opportunities for peer groupings, mentor experiences, specific training, and resources for the clergy and other tools are being developed. The new site is separate from Liguori Publications, which will continue to produce this newsletter monthly.

We held successful trials of numerous group spiritual-direction gatherings and individual spiritual-direction meetings. The participation was encouraging and the feedback overwhelmingly positive. I anticipate the new site will widen the pastoral reach of the Redemptorists to those with scrupulosity and offer services to people in need.

This month, Christians will celebrate the great feast of Easter. It is the day when Jesus conquered the darkness of death and restored light and life to the people of God. With the new hope that the Easter feast generates, it is appropriate that this new pastoral tool is now online. I pray the site will help those with scrupulosity claim the Easter joy and hope that God wants for all humanity. I pray that those with the disorder can roll back the stone of isolation and enter into the light of a community of men and women who understand, are connected, and are committed to new life in the Spirit of God. ✨

# Contemplation to Attain Love

Consider that we were created by love to love, that our fundamental purpose or aim in life is to move from the selfish love with which we are all born to a totally unselfish love that is our only way of sharing in the existence of God, who is love.

Consider the contemplation proposed by St. Ignatius known as the Contemplation to Attain Love. The grace we ask for is a double one: to realize how gifted we are, surrounded on all sides by love and, in the gratitude this arouses, to respond by loving and serving God in all things. In the words of St. Ignatius: “to ask for interior knowledge of all the good I have received, so that acknowledging this with gratitude, I may be able to love and serve his Divine Majesty in everything.”

The contemplation is developed in four points. Each covers an area of human reality and illustrates a mode of God’s loving presence and action. We encounter God through God’s gifts: *bestowing* them, *present* in them, *working* in them, and *source* of them:

**1. Bestowing them.** Consider all the benefits or gifts God has given you: your creation, your redemption, and all the other gifts you have. Then reflect within yourself what you ought to offer back to God. It is here that St. Ignatius introduces his famous prayer of offering:

*Take Lord and receive all my liberty,  
my memory, my understanding and my  
entire will, all that I have and possess.  
You gave it all to me; to you I return it.*

*All is yours, dispose of it entirely according  
to your will. Give me only the love of you,  
together with your grace, for that is enough  
for me.*

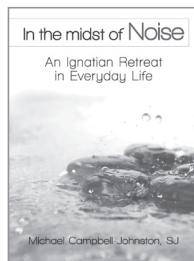


**2. Present in them.** See how God dwells in all creatures: in the elements, plants, animals, and humankind, and therefore in you, giving you being, life, and sensation, and causing you to understand. Again, consider what return you should make.

**3. Working in them.** God is not only present in his gifts but is actually working and laboring on your behalf in all the created things on the face of the earth. Then reflect within yourself.

**4. Source of them.** To see how all that is good in this world descends from on high. This takes you beyond your own personal life to consider the source of all the good things you can imagine. Then finish by reflecting within yourself.

Your final prayer should take up the offering suggested by St. Ignatius, requesting the help of Mary, Jesus, and the Father to make it honest and effective. It is an offering of yourself, made in love, to God who, because of love for you, has given you so much. ✧



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# Mailbox

ONE LIGUORI DRIVE, LIGUORI, MO 63057 • NEWSLETTER@LIGUORI.ORG

**Q.** *What are the sacraments of reconciliation? During a recent homily, the priest spoke about the sacraments. This is the first time I recall hearing this kind of reference. Have I been missing something?*

**A.** The sacraments of reconciliation are baptism (which forgives all sin, including original sin), Eucharist, the anointing of the sick, and the sacrament of reconciliation (which forgives all sin except for original sin, which only can be forgiven in baptism). You might enjoy a further explanation about the sacraments by reading *The Essential Catholic Handbook of the Sacraments* (copyright 2001 Liguori Publications). This book is comprehensive and easy to understand.

**Q.** *I have been invited to visit my children this summer at their cabin. Because it is in a remote location, I am concerned about missing Sunday Mass. Will I commit a sin if I am unable to attend Mass? Should I just tell my children that I will not visit them?*

**A.** Your children have invited you to be with them for a special family time. They have not invited you to an isolated cabin to make it difficult, if not impossible, to attend Sunday Mass. There is a difference. Go to the cabin, be with your family, give thanks for them, and if Sunday Mass is reasonably impossible for you to attend, which it sounds like it might be, then so be it. This special occasion is reflective of a temporary reality, not a change in lifestyle or orientation.



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