

HELPFUL HINTS FOR ATTACKING ANGER

It can be a tremendous help to train ourselves to be aware of the signs that anger is rising within us. We need to be on guard against anger especially in the places and during the times when we have been tempted and have fallen into anger in the past. Being aware of situations and persons that usually stir up anger within us can help us to repress that first temptation and movement towards anger. We can move forward in a proactive mode, calling and relying upon the virtues to help us and strengthen us during those times of temptation.

Usually we are not aware of the strength of our will. St. Paul tells us, "You must put that aside now: all the anger and quick temper, the malice, the insults, the foul language" (Col 3:8). As Christians, we are bound to restrain our anger and do our part to foster and maintain the spirit of unity within our families and communities.

To help me resist anger, I can. . .

-Embrace meekness by:

- *choosing to love all in our Lord, even those who are not friendly. Where there is no love, I can beg God to fill me with love;
- *being gentle, though firm and strong, in my speech, thoughts, and conduct. Meekness is not to be confused with weakness;
- *choosing to patiently bear with life's small problems and injustices, and with my sins and those of others, not expecting perfection in myself or others;
- *keeping my anger in check which helps keep my own self-love from getting too powerful;
- *choosing to be reasonable and restraining any feelings of revenge or retaliation;
- *frequenting the Sacrament of Reconciliation and confessing all feelings of anger or desires for revenge or retaliation;
- *being submissive to God, not the world;
- *practicing selflessness and avoiding harming others through my action or inaction; and
- *praying for the virtue of meekness which will help moderate anger in my soul.

-Practice gentleness by:

- *slowing down in all my thoughts, words, and actions; thinking before I speak or act;
- *keeping quiet when annoyed;
- *keeping my eyes on the Father's honor and glory;
- *seriously and consistently choosing to be even-tempered, pleasant, patient, mild and agreeable;
- *retaining my peace of heart and trust in God even when worried.

-Embrace charity by:

- *keeping my emotions under control and my criticisms in check;
- *acting towards others as I would like them to treat me;
- *choosing to see and appreciate the good in others, choosing not to dwell on their faults;
- *examining myself and the way I might annoy others, especially when I am bothered by others;
- *looking for the Lord's presence in others, especially those I have difficulty liking;
- *consciously striving to overcome all dislikes;
- *choosing to do little acts of charity for those who annoy me;
- *loving God above all things and my neighbors as myself;
- *imitating Jesus and His selfless love in all my relationships;

- *in difficult situations asking God, “Where is my love too small?” and then begging Him to increase my love;
- *deciding to forgive myself and others;
- *choosing to accept the humanity, faults, and weaknesses of myself and others; and
- *choosing to not contradict others unless it is absolutely necessary. St. Francis de Sales teaches us, “We must avoid contradicting the opinions of anyone, unless there is an evident necessity for it. In that case, it should be done with all possible mildness, and with great tact, without in the least outraging the feeling of the other party.”

-Practice patience by:

- *choosing to live constantly in God’s presence;
- *habitually keeping Christ Crucified in mind;
- *frequenting Mass and spending time before the Blessed Sacrament;
- *bringing all my feelings and emotions to the Lord and journaling my feelings, especially the ones that seem very strong. I can allow God to touch these feelings and heal them; and
- *patiently waiting on God and His grace, believing that He will purify and heal me if I cooperate.

-Embrace the virtue of prudence by:

- *strengthening and developing my use of reason to help me discern what is good in every situation and then choosing the means to achieve it;
- *listening to and obeying my conscience;
- *contemplating, “What is my anger preventing me from doing?”;
- *journaling with the Lord about how my anger is preventing me from bringing Jesus’ presence into a situation and blocking my drawing into deeper transforming union; and
- *praying for the virtue of prudence which combats anger’s impediment of reason to discern what is good in every situation. Prudence guides my conscience and the other virtues by setting rules and measures.

-Embrace the virtue of justice by:

- *choosing to respect the rights of all parties involved in a situation through my words, thoughts, and actions;
- *seeking harmony, unity, and the common good in all situations;
- *choosing to constantly and firmly give what is due to God and neighbor;
- *looking for whatever unfair treatment I am receiving in my life in the life of Jesus, realizing that when I am being treated unjustly, it is really the Jesus in me who is being treated unjustly; and
- *praying for the virtue of justice which respects the rights of all involved, seeking harmony and unity.

Should I happen to fall into the sin of anger, I should not despair, but rise quickly, and choose to continue to fight these tendencies. I beg God for the grace to have my will triumph over my emotions, realizing my true poverty. I am totally dependent upon the Father for all things. I am thankful for each of these situations where I can choose to deny my self-love and allow Jesus to live more fully in me, as I pray for all those who are struggling in the same way.