

## Chapter 3

# Answer Key for Double-Check Questions

1. *Briefly describe two key understandings of sin found in the Old Testament.*

- One idea of sin found in the Old Testament is that sin is rebellion against God. We may rebel against God because we want life to be different. We may even want God to be different because we want to be the ones in control.
- Another Old Testament view of sin is the idea of missing the mark—that is, missing the goal of living in harmony with God's Eternal Law. In this idea, we may desire to do what is right and to live according to God's will, yet we still fail in some of our attempts to do so.

2. *What are some of the misunderstandings of sin reflected in the Old Testament?*

The following misunderstandings about the consequences of sin are sometimes reflected in Old Testament passages. One misunderstanding is that if you were prosperous and well off you must be free from sin, and if you were poor or suffering God must be punishing you for sin. A second misunderstanding is that God sometimes punishes children for the sins of their parents. A third misunderstanding is that the negative consequences of our sins is God taking vengeance on us, even forsaking us because of our sin.

3. *Why does Jesus say that sin is about lies and darkness?*

First, Jesus explains that every sin is a lie against the truth of what really will bring God's saving love and joy into the world. People lie to themselves that a sinful action will make them happy or fulfilled, when in fact it cannot lead them to beatitude, or true and lasting happiness found in union with God. Second, Jesus explains that sinful acts are done in the darkness. This is a metaphorical darkness—he means that people tend to keep their sinful acts secret out of shame and in the deep knowledge that these actions are lies against God's truth.

4. *Name three things that Jesus teaches about forgiveness.*

(The students may name any three of the following teachings from article 11, pp. 65–70.) Jesus teaches that we need to practice generous forgiveness. He teaches the importance of forgiveness through the Parables of the Lost Sheep, the Unforgiving Servant, and the Prodigal Son. In the Sermon on the Mount, he teaches that we must also practice loving forgiveness, explaining that we will be judged in the same way we judge others. Jesus tells Peter that we must forgive seventy-seven times—by which he means an unlimited number of times. Above all, Christ wants us to understand that God is primarily waiting to forgive us, not to condemn us.

5. *Define sin.*

(The students may give or summarize the definition of sin from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “[Sin is] an offense against God as well as a fault against reason, truth, and right conscience. Sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the Eternal Law of God. In judging the gravity of sin, it is customary to distinguish between mortal and venial sins” [p. 899].)



6. *What three things determine whether a human act is a sin?*

Three elements determine whether an act is morally good or sinful: the object (the specific action), the intention of the person acting, and the circumstances of the action. All three elements must be determined together.

7. *What is the difference between a mortal sin and a venial sin?*

A mortal sin is a serious offense against God that results in a complete separation from him and his grace and condemns the sinner to eternal death. It destroys the virtue of charity, which helps us to love God and our neighbor. Venial sin is a less serious offense against God's will. Unlike mortal sin, venial sin does not destroy our relationship with God, but it diminishes our personal character, damages our relationship with God, and hurts our ability to love.

8. *What is the relationship between personal sin and social sin?*

Social sin is the collective effect of the personal sin of many people. The personal sins of many can create a social condition in which injustice is accepted and tolerated, and individual sinful attitudes or actions become so commonly accepted that they go unchallenged by society.

9. *Give three examples of social sin.*

(The students may give a broad range of personal examples, historical or contemporary, so long as they are appropriate examples of social sin as described in article 14.)

(The quotation in question 5 is from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for use in the United States of America, second edition [CCC], p. 899. Copyright © 1994 by the United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana [LEV]. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* copyright © 1997 by the United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—LEV.)

