

Evagrius on Gluttony

- Gluttony=picturing and immoderate (excessive) desire for foods which are wanted for their pleasure alone
- Gluttony together with closely related sins of avarice and vainglory are the most basic temptations to be overcome at the beginning of the Christian life (*Th.* App. 1; compare *Refl.* 42) or one will not be able to rise above the passions and pray without hindrance and distraction (*Pr.* 50).
 - In one sense, then, gluttony can be called the first of the passions (*8Th.* 1.3).

Effects of Gluttony

- Gluttony→lust/licentiousness/fornication (*Eul.* 13.12; *8Th.* 1.11; 2,1; *Th.* 1), both representing a form of laziness that allows the demons to gain control of the mind and use the promise of increased, easily available pleasures to lead one into various sins (see *Refl.* 42).
 - As a particular habit of seeking pleasure develops, desire is increased (cf. *8Th.* 1.2; 1.10) and gives force to temptation.
 - The irascible part, stimulate when one is contending or fighting for food, can lead from gluttony to irritability and anger.
- The mind is blunted by an excess of food and loose clarity, focus and vigilance (*8Th.* 1.17), so contemplation of God in prayer is not possible (*8Th.* 1.19) and one is never able to become free of passions that disturb the mind and distract from God (*8Th.* 1.25)
 - One seeks food and the pleasures of food more than God or wisdom.
- The Devil offers Jesus first the promise of bread, then offers him power, then offers him public honor and the avoidance of harm (*Th.* 1).
 - Evagrius: Here it all starts with bread! And the failure or victory that follows also depends on how one first deals with bread.
- One fears the harm that will come from leaving the comforts of food, (see esp. *Pr.* 7); for people who took on too much self-denial (often out of vainglory), there is later a consuming fear that harms will follow that one cannot bear and so they give up quickly (*Th.* 35)

Cure for Gluttony

- Abstinence=Eating in moderation, fasting (*Vic.* 1.2; *Th.* 30) together with prayer (*Exh.* 1.1)→
 - learning to become grateful for small things (what one does have at present) (*Th.* 16)
 - restores hope in God (confidence that God will supply what is truly needed for the body) (*Exh.* 1.2).