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Class: 8S **Date:** 1.28.11

Saint of the Day: St. Thomas Aquinas

***Worth 20 points**

INSTRUCTIONS: Each month (October – April) you are required to undertake a Christian examination of something from popular culture. You may choose a song, music video, TV show, movie, video game, book, magazine, something from the Internet (Facebook, Youtube, a news article, etc.), advertisements, or anything else you can think of. Your goal is to highlight the deeper messages (good or bad) within the element from pop culture you chose.

***Important Note:** This does **NOT** give you free license to do anything your parents would not normally want you doing (Examples: watching bad TV shows, buying bad magazines/songs/music videos, etc.). For this assignment you should not have to go looking in deep and dark places. Rather, just keep your eyes and ears open as you go about your daily life. If you need help, feel free to ask your parents or an older brother or sister for any examples they can think of.

Type of Example: Trip with soccer team

Description of Media: Las Vegas, Nevada

What are some of the deeper/mixed messages from your example and how does it compare to Christian teaching? Please thoroughly explain.

My soccer team went to Las Vegas for a weekend to play in a tournament. I want to break my trip down into a few different experiences I had on this trip first the airport, then the hotel/ a restaurant we ate at, the people we played, the strip, and an outlet mall we went to.

When we got to the airport the first people we noticed were the women who were most likely already drunk running off to go party. How do I know this? Because they were so loud anyone in the airport could have heard them. Then as we went further into the airport we noticed the advertisements. If you thought advertisements in Minnesota were inappropriate, you should have seen these. There was a giant chip and dales advertisement with half naked men on it on one wall in the airport, all of them had what the culture thinks of as attractive. They all had the big muscles, the perfect hair, the little bit of clothes they were wearing were very tight they might as well have not of been wearing them at all and of course this all left little to the imagination. Then you turned to the other wall and you saw an advertisement for Holly Madison's peepshow. She is an ex playboy bunny and was one of Hugh Heffner's many girlfriends who was of course less than a ¼ of his age. She was wearing this shirt that I think was meant for a 12 year old it was so small and her whole bra was hanging out. Now I watch her show a lot actually and she is a really nice girl. If she didn't do such horrible things with her body she could have gone on to actually help the world but now she is on the peepshow in Vegas and is doing exactly what you would think after hearing the name of the show. Then there were many other advertisements such as the typical perfume advertisement with the naked men and women, one of them being Leonardo DeCaprio and many more.

Then we got to our hotel. We finished unpacking and it was time for dinner. We headed out to a restaurant for dinner. Once we got there we were such a big group that we had to go in a back room. This back room was attached to the bar. Throughout the night we watched this waitress go in and out of the bar all night, she was wearing a hot pink dress, the dress was hardly longer than her butt and was extremely tight, she had also obviously had a boob job done and was wearing extremely tall stiletto heels. Every once in a while she would walk out and this man who was very drunk and possibly had been doing some drugs earlier that evening would follow her out trying to pull her back into the bar. Finally, we left and went back to our hotel it was at least 10 o'clock by then and we had an early game the next day so we went straight to bed. Then at 4 in the morning a drunk man walked through the hallway and woke us up. He was yelling gibberish into the phone and this went on for at least a half hour before he left.

Then over the weekend we played a bunch of teams from Las Vegas. Every team we played was from Las Vegas and in the whole tournament we were the only team from Minnesota and we definitely got made fun of for it. During our games parents would be yelling at us from the sidelines things that would make fun of our state and the weather or racist comments because most of the teams we played consisted of Mexican people. The referees spoke very little English (they were Mexicans) and lets just say did not want us to win. They would not count our goals or they would call yellow cards on our players when they were shoved over by the other teams. A girl on my team sprained her ankle during one of the games and the ref told her to suck it up (one of the few refs who spoke English) and then he later went on to swear at one of our players and that was not a pretty fight between my player and the ref. Back to the parents, one of the parents told us to "get our little white asses back to Minnesota and bring our weather with us," since the weather was not the nicest while we were there.

After all the games were over and my team had won the tournament we went to the strip since our hotel was not on the strip and we wanted to see it. As we drove there it looked beautiful with all the lights and buildings, but once you got there it was a different story. We went to the hard rock café to eat and across the street there was a strippers club that had a giant female devil on top of the building that was wearing lingerie. Then we got out and walked around and we walked passed Holly's peepshow, which you already knows what goes on in there. Then we went to the Bellagio to watch the world famous water show. Once we got there sitting on the ledge of the fountain was a four loco. The four loco has an insane amount of alcohol in it I believe the equivalence as like 6 beers. The Bellagio is one of the only places where people in Vegas bring their families and there was a four loco sitting on a ledge half full where someone (or some kid) could just grab it. Then we walked up to the Bellagio so we could look at the beautiful hotel and as we were walking up these men who were probably in there early 30's starting yelling things at me and my two other friends and at the time we were alone because the other people in our group have walked ahead. We just kept walking the men were obviously necessarily appropriate. Then as we got closer to the Bellagio we started seeing people with giant beer bottle and other alcoholic beverages that were at least two feet tall. They were enormous and we saw many people carrying around these massive bottles and some of them were almost empty. We also saw these girls that come to mind when you think Vegas. They had skimpy dresses on and we ended up getting lectured by the only dad who came on the trip on how we don't want to be those types of girls in Vegas. Although

all this crazy stuff happened the Bellagio was beautiful and it was something I will never forget.

Then we started walking down the strip and we noticed these people who were wearing red t-shirts or sweatshirts. They had these cards in their hands and they kept flicking them to get peoples attention. Every once in a while these people would come up to our group and try to hand us these cards. We soon realized that these men and women were trying to give us prostitutes business cards. These cards were everywhere they were all over the ground and there were people waiting to hand them out at every street corner. The only dad that had come with us on the trip was cornered a few times by these people who tried to force him into calling these women but obviously he wouldn't one woman even approached my friend and I and then realized we were only teenagers. Prostitution is legal in Vegas but that does not mean it is ok. Especially not ok from a Catholic point of view. We also walked by this limo several times that had a man standing Outside of it trying to bribe people to get in. He would say things like come on get in the limo there is all the liquor you could drink in there or to men he would say come on the women are waiting and to women come on the men are waiting. Now I don't know what this mans intentions were but I am assuming they weren't anything good or something that any Catholic would approve of.

Also on the strip we saw three homeless people. One was a man who was sitting all alone on a bridge and the other two were a mother and a daughter. The daughter was probably around the age of ten and her and her mom were sitting down leaning against a light post and the young girl was asleep. This was very saddening because people would turn around and walk the other way when they saw them or go on the other side of the street or bridge. Other people would just stare at them while they looked down at the ground with shame some people would even say things like gross or would plug there noses and would say stay away from them. It was very saddening watching these people get neglected and put down when they were already shameful of themselves. They were aware that they were not clean and that they didn't appear to have anywhere to go and they didn't need people to say things like gross or plug their noses. Also these people are the people who need help. Our society is very unhealthy. Some of these people are our weakest members and we treat them like they aren't anything more than some dirt. People are more concerned with themselves and where they are going to go party all night rather than actually taking just a little time out of their night to help these people. Now with the man he did appear to be either drunk or to be on some kind of drugs and that is also one of the reasons I think he was scaring people off. Now this is somewhat understandable because when you do things like that, that are hurtful to your body you don't always know what you are doing and you can act in violent and hurtful ways but he is still a child of God. He needs our help, he needs it so bad, and he's not getting it. He can't get it because he doesn't have the money. Now the little girl and her mother were wearing a little nicer clothes than the man and they were obviously not doing drugs and were not drinking alcohol but people still ignored them. That was out of pure selfishness. People had nothing to be afraid of it was only a little girl and her mother sitting on a street corner with no where to go but no one cared they just completely ignored them.

One last thing that occurred on the strip was that as a big group my team and the parents were walking on a sidewalk. We realized we had lost a few of the parents so we stopped and stepped to the side. One of the moms stopped on the sidewalk and looked

back to see if she could see the parents we had lost. Just as she was looking a woman came up from behind her and shoved her over. The mom did not fall but she did get pushed into the group of people who were standing next to her. The woman just yelled at her to move and kept on walking. Now this wasn't that bad of thing, and it was a very minor part of the trip but I wanted to bring it up because as a Catholic we have to treat each other all nicely and with respect. We don't know what other people are going through now while this mom didn't really have a problem, I mean yes we had lost some of the parents but it wasn't that big of a deal they just fell behind, that other woman didn't know that she hadn't just lost her two year old son in the crowd of people or maybe even something worse. This is a problem all over the world even right here at OLG. People always have something going on and maybe something very small like a sarcastic comment or joke or gossiping about someone could be taken serious by people and interpreted in a bad way.

The next day we went to an outlet mall. It was the nicest weather we had had all week and for us Minnesotans it was really nice weather. However for the Las Vegas natives the 50-degree weather was freezing. So there were very few people at the outlet mall because it was an out door-shopping center. Then my 3 friends and I walked past this phone case kiosk. There were two men working there most likely in there late 20's for one of them and the other early 30's. The man who was in his 30's stopped us and brought us over to his stand and he started asking us questions. Such as what school do we go to, where we were from, how old we were, and what our names were. He saw that one of my friends on our team was wearing her soccer sweatshirt and started to ask us questions about some of the girls who were on our team. He wouldn't let us leave and with some of the questions we made up answers because we were scared. He then asked us to give him our phones so he could see if there was a phone case that matched when I said I didn't have a phone he saw it and grabbed it out of my sweatshirt I was finally able to get him to give my phone back and then he asked us to follow him because he had a phone case that fit my phone. We were all very creeped out at this point and sprinted away. Now I'm assuming that this guy was only trying to be friendly and make a sale but you never know what people are capable of and my friends and I were very scared and were glad to get away from him.

Las Vegas' Nickname is "Sin City" or "The City of Sin" and this nickname is well deserved. While Not everything in Las Vegas was bad and against the Christian belief a lot of it was. As a Catholic that is not the place you want to be especially if you are easily persuaded you may get sucked into some of the temptations and as a Catholic we want to steer away from temptations and go down the path that leads towards God. Now also as a Catholic these are people who really need our help. While these people may have lots of money and may be very fortunate with what they have they are using their fortune in a wrong way. While they may not want to listen us Catholics need to try to make them listen. Now not all of the people in Vegas are fortunate and they may not have money to support themselves and their family, for example the homeless people, and these people need our help just as much as the wealthy people who are using their money in a wrong way. As Catholics we have to see that all of these people are children of God and even if they don't want it they need our help.

