



# Boston Catholic Journal



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[editor@boston-catholic-journal.com](mailto:editor@boston-catholic-journal.com)

SO EASY TO ENTER —  
SO DIFFICULT TO ESCAPE



“SIN CROUCHETH AT THE DOOR; AND ITS DESIRE IS FOR YOU”

GENESIS 4.7

THE DEADLY PREDICAMENT OF SIN

**The image above is perhaps not simply the most graphic, but probably the most apposite depiction of the predicament of sin.**

It is chilling.

Examine it carefully: the smooth involuted teeth, tapered to infinitely fine and absolutely unyielding points. Bending in along polished surfaces, the teeth allow their unwary prey to enter without effort.

But once in, escape — if at all possible — is unimaginably painful: rending flesh, piercing, scoring, tearing, the teeth leave none unscathed who are caught within. They scar, maim, and deform for life. Even if escape is quick it is only at great cost and immense suffering. Yes, that image of a Python's skull is the most appropriate image for **the danger of sin ... that crouches at the door and voraciously awaits us.**

**We cannot toy with this demon,** imagining ourselves more clever and capable of eluding it. It is far stronger than we are.

Like all serpents, its jaws can only be held shut — for clamped down upon, it does not have the strength to open — but once open, it seizes upon us with a ferocity and force that betrays the innocuous flicker of the slender forked tongue that intrigues us as it encroaches upon us. We

cannot allow it to. We **must** not allow it to!

Our greatest safety lies in distance — and vigilance. Not simply the sin itself, but as Holy Mother Church teaches, from “**The near occasion of sin**”.

## THE TRAP

Perhaps that is why Satan is depicted as a Serpent in the Garden of Eden:

Sin is first and foremost a liar. Given that Satan is “**the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning**”<sup>1</sup> it is not surprising that our first parents, Adam and Eve, were first seduced into sin by the **lies** of the serpent, by the alluring deception that they could be like God.

**Sin is always alluring, attractive.** Were it not — and could we clearly see the destructive, fatal, even eternal consequences of sin — we would panic, and instantly flee it!

Time and again we are warned that “**the wages of sin is death**”<sup>2</sup> But let us be candid: the reality is that **we like to toy with sin** — to “sin ... just a little”.

However, since its consequence is death, the obvious question is inescapable: can we be “dead ... just a little”?

Likewise, you are either alive to God (in a state of grace) — or you are not.

There is no middle ground.

Moral of the story? Next time you are mesmerized by something as remotely sinuous and intriguing as a snake — it probably *is* a snake.

***Run!***

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<sup>1</sup> Saint John 8.44

<sup>2</sup> Romans 6.23

Geoffrey K. Mondello  
Editor  
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