

## *from Vatican Sayings*

Epicurus

IV. Every pain is easily disregarded; for that which is intense is of brief duration, and the suffering brought by a physical pain that lasts long is slight.

VII. For a wrongdoer to be undetected is difficult; and for him to have confidence that his concealment will continue is impossible.

IX. Necessity is an evil; but there is no necessity for continuing to live subject to necessity.

XI. Most men are in a coma when they are at rest and mad when they act.

XIV. We have been born once and there can be no second birth. For all eternity we shall no longer be. But you, although you are not master of tomorrow, are postponing your happiness. We waste away our lives in delaying, and each of us dies without having enjoyed leisure.

XV. As if they were our own handiwork, we place a high value on our characters whether or not we are virtuous and praised by other men. So, too, we should regard the characters of those about us if they are our friends.

XVI. No one chooses a thing realizing that it is evil; but when it appears as good in contrast to a greater evil, he takes the bait and is caught.

XVII. We should not regard the young man as happy, but rather the old man whose life has been fortunate. The young man at the height of his power is often baffled by fortune and driven from his course; but the old man has come to anchor in age as in a harbor, and holds in sure and happy memory blessings for which once he could scarcely hope.

XVIII. If sight, association, and intercourse are removed, the passion of love is ended.

XIX. He has become an old man on the day on which he forgot his past blessings.

XXI. We must not resist Nature but obey her. We shall obey her if we satisfy the necessary desires and also those bodily desires that do not harm us while sternly rejecting those that are harmful.

XXIII. Every friendship in itself is to be desired; but the first cause of friendship was a man's needs.

XXIV. Dreams have neither divine nature nor prophetic power, but they are the result of idols that impinge upon us.

XXV. Poverty, if in proper proportion to the natural purposes of life, is great wealth; but the wealth that is unlimited is great poverty

XXVI. One must assume that the long argument and the short tend to the same end.

XXVII. The benefits of other pursuits come to those who have reached the end of a difficult course, but in the study of philosophy pleasure keeps pace with growing knowledge; for pleasure does not follow learning; rather, learning and pleasure advance side by side.

XXVIII. Those who are hasty in making friends are not to be approved; nor yet should you commend those who avoid friendship, for risks must be run for its sake.

XXIX. To speak frankly, I would prefer as I study nature to speak in oracles that which is of advantage to all men even though it be understood by none, rather than to conform to popular opinion and thus gain the praise that is scattered broadcast by the many.

XXXI. It is possible to provide security against other ills, but as far as death is concerned, we men all live in a city without walls.

XXXII. The honor paid to a wise man is a great good for those who honor him.

XXXIII. The voice of the flesh bids us escape from hunger, thirst, and cold; for he who is free of these and expects to remain so might vie in happiness even with Zeus.

XXXIV. We do not so much need the help of our friends as the confidence of their help in need.

XXXV. Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; but remember that what you now have was once among the things only hoped for.

XXXVII. When confronted by evil the soul is weak, but not when faced with good; for pleasures make the soul secure but pains ruin it.

XXXVIII. He is of very small account who sees many good reasons for ending his life.

XXXIX. Neither he who is always seeking material aid from his friends nor he who never thinks of such aid as possible is a true friend; for the one engages in petty trade, taking a favor instead of gratitude, and the other deprives himself of hope for the future.

XL. He who says that all things happen by necessity can hardly find fault with the one who denies that all happens by necessity; for on his own theory this very argument is voiced by necessity.

XLI. At one and the same time we must laugh, philosophize, manage our business, and carry out our other duties, while never ceasing to shout out the words of the true philosophy.

XLII. The time of the beginning of the greatest good and the time of its enjoyment are one.

XLIII. To love money unjustly gained is evil, and to love money justly gained is shameful; for sordid niggardliness is unseemly even when accompanied by justice [or even in the case of a just man].

XLIV. The wise man who has become accustomed to limited means knows better how to share with others than how to take from them, so great a treasure of self-sufficiency has he found.

XLV. The study of nature does not produce men who are fond of boasting and shouting or who make a show of that culture that is highly prized by the many, but rather men who are haughty and self-sufficient, and who take pride in the high qualities that depend upon themselves and not in those that depend on their possessions.

XLVI. Let us completely banish our evil habits as if they were evil men who have done us long and grievous harm.

XLVIII. While we are on the journey of life, we must try to make what is before us better than what is past; but when we come to the journey's end, we must be content and calm.

LI. I understand from you that your natural disposition is too much inclined toward sexual passion. Follow your inclination as you will provided only that you neither violate the laws, disturb well-established customs, harm any one of your neighbors, injure your own body, nor waste your possessions. That you be not checked by some one of these provisos is impossible; for a man never gets any good from sexual passion, and he is fortunate if he does not receive harm.

LII. Friendship dances through the world bidding us all to awaken to the recognition of happiness [or to awaken and give thanks].

LIII. Envy no man. The good do not merit envy. As for the evil, the greater their good fortune, the greater the pains that they inflict upon themselves.

LIV. It is not the pretended but the real pursuit of philosophy that is needed; for we do not need to seem to enjoy good health but to enjoy it in truth.

LV. We should find solace for misfortune in the happy memory of the things that are gone and in the knowledge that what has come to be cannot be undone.

LVIII. We must free ourselves from the prison of private and public business.

LIX. What cannot be satisfied is not a man's belly, as men think, but rather his false idea about the unending filling of his belly.

LX. Every man passes out of life as if he had just been born.

LXII. If the anger of parents against their children is justified, it is quite foolish for the children to resist it and to fail to seek forgiveness. If the anger is not justified but is unreasonable, it is folly for a child to increase the unreasoning wrath by his own anger and not to try to turn it aside in other directions by a display of good feeling.

LXIII. There is also a limit in simple living. He who fails to heed this limit falls into an error as great as that of the man who gives way to extravagance.

LXIV. We should welcome praise from others if it comes unsought, but we should be concerned with correcting ourselves.

LXV. It is folly for a man to pray to the gods for that which he has the power to obtain by himself.

LXVI. We show our feeling for friends, not by wailing, but by meditating.

LXVII. Since the attainment of riches can scarcely be accomplished without servitude to crowds or kings, a free life cannot obtain much wealth, but such a life has all possessions in unfailing supply. Should such a life happen to fall upon great wealth, this too it can so distribute as to gain the good will of those about.

LXVIII. Nothing satisfies him to whom what is enough is little.

LXIX. The thankless nature of the soul makes the creature endlessly greedy of changes in its way of life.

LXX. Do nothing while you live that will cause you to fear if it becomes known to your neighbor.

LXXI. Test each of your desires by this question: "What will happen to me if that which this desire seeks is brought to fulfillment, and what if it is not?"

LXXIII. That we have suffered certain bodily pains aids us in guarding against their like.

LXXIV. In a philosophical dispute, he gains most who is defeated, since he learns most.

LXXV. The saying, "Observe the end of a long life," shows small thanks for past good fortune.

LXXVI. As you grow old you are such as I urge you to be, and you have recognized the difference between studying philosophy for yourself and for Greece. I rejoice with you.

LXXVII. Freedom is the greatest fruit of self-sufficiency.

LXXVIII. The noble man is chiefly concerned with wisdom and friendship; of these, the former is a mortal good, the latter an immortal one.

LXXIX. He who is calm disturbs neither himself nor another.

LXXX. The first step toward salvation is to watch over one's youth and to guard against that which stains everything by maddening desires.

LXXXI. The soul neither rids itself of confusion nor gains a joy worthy of the name through the possession of greatest wealth and of the honor and admiration bestowed by the common crowd, or through any of the other things sought by unlimited desire.