An excerpt from

“Some Cognitive Strategies Behind

‘Making Excuses with Excuses in Sin’”

by Fr. Alexis Trader from the blog Ancient Christian Wisdom, September 23, 2012

***Reading the list might help us see if we excuse any of our sins in such ways, so that we can instead of an excuse, offer repentance and receive the sweet balm of forgiveness.***

So here’s one version of the excuse list. Many others are possible:

1) It’s not sinful, if most Christian denominations encourage it.

2) It’s not sinful, if I can’t find it in the Church Canons or local bylaws.

3) It’s not really sinful, if it’s not illegal.

4) It’s not all that sinful, if I can name other people who do the same thing.

5) It’s not sinful as long as I didn’t mean to hurt anyone.

6) It’s not sinful even if my acts have caused harm as long as the person I harmed had it coming, provoked me, deserved it, was really asking for it, or practically forced me to do it—or, failing that, has not behaved perfectly, is in some way unlikable, or is acting unreasonably.

7) It’s not all that sinful if I could not (or did not) anticipate the unintended consequences of our acts.

8) It’s not sinful if it was simply an error in judgment, completely inconsistent with the virtue manifest in every other part of my life and insignificant in the context of the unbelievable good that I do.

9) It’s not sinful if I can say any of the following about it:

“What else could I do?”

“Anyone else would’ve done the same thing.”

“It came from the heart.”

“I listened to my soul.”

“I went with my gut.”

“It was the smart thing to do.”

“It was just common sense.”

“Look, I was just stuck between a rock and a hard place.”

“I’d do the same thing again if I had it to do over.”

“I’m only human, you know!”  “What’s the big deal?

10) It’s not that sinful as long as I was under a lot of stress. No fair-minded person would hold me accountable when it is clear that it was the stress I was under—along with all sorts of other powerful factors—that must be held responsible.

11) It’s not sinful as long as no one ever complained about it.

12) It’s not sinful as long as I know that people higher up in the hierarchy are dishonest, stupid, and destructive (This excuse is ironically also a sin).

13) It’s not sinful as long as it was for a worthy cause.

14) It’s not sinful, since I’m the real victim in the situation.

15) It’s not sinful as long as it would be almost impossible to do things another way.

16) It’s not sinful as long as there are books, articles, or blog posts claiming that such behavior is the right thing to do.

17) It’s not sinful as long as I can find some other member of the congregation, or better yet member of the clergy, who says its OK.