

# St. John's Newsletter



## Virtues—leading the faithful to eternal life

"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, Think about these things." Phil 4:8



In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul encourages the faithful to practice a virtuous life. A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. Human virtues are firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. (CCC1803) The moral virtues are acquired by human effort. They are the fruit and seed of morally good acts; they provide the human being the opportunity for communion with divine love. Human virtues are acquired by education, by deliberate acts and by a perseverance ever-renewed in repeated efforts are purified and elevated by divine grace. With God's help they forge character and help us in the practice of Good. (CCC 1810)

### Cardinal Virtues

Four virtues play a pivotal role and so are called cardinal because all others are grouped around them. They are *prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance*. (CCC 1804) **Prudence** is the virtue that gives practical reason to decide our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it. According to St Thomas Aquinas, prudence is the "right reason in action." It guides other virtues by establishing rules. With the help of this virtue we apply moral principles to particular cases without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid. (CCC 1806)

**Justice** is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor. Justice toward God is called the "virtue of religion." Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relations the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good. (CCC 1807)

**Fortitude** is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of good. Also called courage, it strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear and face trials and persecutions. (CCC 1808)

**Temperance** is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. The temperate person directs the appetites toward what is good and maintains a healthy moderation in human pleasures. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable. (CCC 1809)

### Theological Virtues

The human virtues are rooted in the theological virtues that are the foundation of Christian moral life. They are infused by good into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as His children and deserving eternal life. (CCC 1812)

**Faith** is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that has been revealed to us. The disciple of Christ must not only keep faith and live on it but also profess it, confidently witness to it and spread it. (CCC 1815)

**Hope** is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and not relying on our own strength but on the help and grace of the holy spirit. (CCC 1817)

**Charity (Love)** is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. (CCC 1822) By loving one another the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. (CCC1823) And as St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "So faith, hope, charity abide, these three. But the greatest of these is charity (love)." 1 Cor 13:13

Sources: Catechism of the Catholic Church 1803-1832

<https://www.churchpop.com/the-3-theological-virtues-in-one-infographic/amp/>

Volume 15 - March 2024- St. John's Newsletter is a once-a-month publication aimed at providing you with items of interest about our Catholic faith. If there is a topic you are interested in, please contact the parish office and we will try to address it in future issues. – Submitted by Mary Jo Peters