

## Virtues and the Road to Holiness



In one of his homilies, Father Mitch Pacwa of the EWTN television network mentioned that a preacher addressed his congregation with the following question: "How many of you want to go to heaven?" The whole community raised its hand. Then he asked, "How many of you want to be holy?" A few raised their hands. The preacher then said to them "Well, we have a great problem, because only saints go to heaven."

The verb "to go" represents a path and a journey, just as life is a journey in continuous movement in the direction that one chooses. For Christians, the journey is towards God. Along this path are influences that can denigrate and mock the human being, as well as projects that seek to defend the dignity of the person, such as the protection of life from conception to natural death. We live in a world of opposing ideas: the strong and the weak, success and failure, happiness and sadness, good and evil. In our human condition each person adapts or justifies each concept according to their own interpretation. As Christians we must ask ourselves: how do we know what is right?

Let us remember the great statement set out in Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), numeral 1951 which reads: *"Alone among all animated beings, man can boast of having been counted worthy to receive a law from God: as an animal endowed with reason, capable of understanding and discernment, he is to govern his conduct by using his freedom and reason, in obedience to the One who has entrusted everything to him."*

We have within all of us the potential to be holy or sinful. God does not force this upon us; he leaves it to our choice. Even angels have freedom and choose, and as we know, many decided not to follow Him.

It is indispensable to properly form our conscience to know what the right thing to do is. We must be open to the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives. There is no discernment without prayer and meditating on the Word of God, which helps us to recognize the voice of Jesus among so many other voices. If we want to live virtuously, we need more than good sporadic works. *"Virtue is a common and firm willingness to do good" CCC, 1833.*

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q: What are virtues?**

**A:** "CCC 1803: "A Virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.

**Q: What is Holiness?**

**A:** Holiness is attaining the character of God, that is, the fruits of the Spirit.

*"You shall be holy, for I am holy"*

**1Peter 1:16.**

*God chose us ALL to be holy out of love. Love as God loves us.*

*The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are:*

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-control

*Against such there is no law.*

*Galatians 5:22-23*

**Note:** Send us your questions

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### Reflection

Blessed be the Lord of mercies, before me the human limitation is diluted to nothing.

With Him, my desire to compete in society takes on another meaning, no longer out of selfish satisfaction but for having the opportunity to share the source of my joy.



A Message from the Secular Catholic Society of Missionaries of God's Love

**Cardinal virtues**, also called moral virtues, are named after the Latin word "thistle", which means main or fundamental. Thus, it is understood that cardinal virtues are those principal and fundamental values that lead us to practice good freely. These virtues are also associated with the theological virtues.

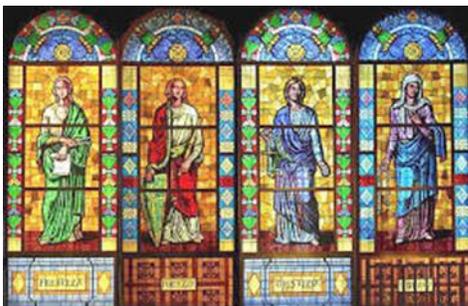
The cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. They are complemented by the theological virtues, which are faith, hope and charity.

- **Prudence** *"is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our own good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving"*. Prudence is *"right reason in action"* writes St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle CCC1806. This virtue allows us to be alert to and measure the consequences of our actions so we may make clear judgments before acting.
- **Justice** is a virtue that opposes malice. Thus, justice is understood as a person's manifest will that everyone receives what they deserve, that is, everyone receives his or her due.
- **Fortitude** *"Ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good"* CCC 1837. This virtue contrasts with weakness, allowing us to overcome great obstacles, fears, trials and temptations.
- **Temperance** is a response to the disorder of concupiscence. It is the virtue of moderating disorderly appetites, as well as the temptations of the senses. To do this, a person must first apply reason. The means of achieving temperance are abstinence, sobriety, chastity, and continence. Other virtues that often accompany temperance are humility and meekness.

A repetitive action becomes a habit. Good habits create good character, and good character allows us to open ourselves to receive the Grace of God. By being in the Grace of God we are on our way to holiness.

Let us remember that we are all called to holiness, in all situations of life we are living, whether single, married, widowed, or religious. The best way to reach holiness is through solid faith nourished with prayer and good works, where through the Grace of God our virtues may be perfected.

"Everyone must have some Saint whom he or she is on familiar terms, to feel close to with prayer and intercession but also to emulate." (Benedict XVI, 25 August 2010).



- Lord, give me the strength to follow you, even if it is against my own interests.
- Lord Jesus, help me stand firm in times of temptation.
- Lord, may I say with infinite confidence "Thy will be done".
- Lord, may my way to holiness begin by cultivating the virtue of humility, for humble is the man who lets God act in his life.