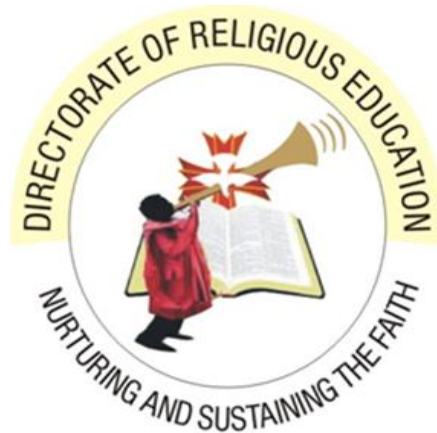




CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OSOGBO



DEEPENING THE FAITH

A CATECHETICAL

MANUAL

SEPTEMBER 2020

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

Edited by:

Sr Dr Omojola Immaculata Olu, SSMA

Imprimatur: Most Rev. Dr. John Akinkunmi Oyejola
Catholic Bishop of Osogbo Diocese

Nihil Obstat: Rev. Fr. Dr. Peter Oluseyi Adeyemi
Catholic Diocese of Osogbo

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SEPTEMBER 2020

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

DATE: 06/09/2020

THEME FOR THE MONTH: CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

THEME FOR THE WEEK: CARDINAL VIRTUES

Biblical References: Wisdom 4:1, Wisdom 8:7, Wisdom 15:3, Psalm 25:21, Daniel 6:4 and 1 Mac 7:18

“Virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good and allows the person not only to perform good acts but to give the best of himself” (CCC no 1893). It means moral excellence, uprightness, honesty, righteousness, self-discipline, self-control, goodness, courage and the like. It is a habitual willingness, readiness and self-imposed compulsion to do good at all times, everywhere and in all situations. Virtue is a self-mandatory possession that gives man the pleasure of "doing-things-right" all the time. However, 3 things are important when talking about virtues, namely:

1. It must be a human action.
2. The action must be good.
3. The action must be habitual.

CARDINAL VIRTUES

“Cardinal Virtues are those fundamental virtues upon which all the other moral virtues in some way hinge and to which they may be reduced” (Pastoral Guide 483). It is the mother of moral virtues and it gives meaning to moral virtues; etymologically, they are from the Latin word “Cardo” meaning “hinge” because moral virtues do hinge on them. Cardinal virtues include: prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice. They are so-called because they are regarded as the basic virtues required for a true virtuous life.

The cardinal virtues assist us to be able to love God rightly and love our neighbours. The virtue of Prudence for example provides the best means of loving God while the virtue of justice enables us to love God alone and keep the right order in our relationship with others. The virtue of fortitude assists us to endure hardships for the love of God and neighbours. Virtue of Temperance helps us to love God purely. Thus, Prudence is concerned with the means of loving God while Justice avails the right order of loving God and relating to others. Fortitude is concerned with enduring difficulties or some time suffering in loving God while Temperance talks about total and pure love of God.

Moreover, cardinal virtues may be considered requisites and conditions for practicing all other virtues. Therefore, whoever performs an act of virtue must judge rightly (prudence), must have regard for the laws, rendering what is due to everyone (Justice), enduring difficulties or suffering (Fortitude) as well as observing moderation and self-control (Temperance) – (Pastoral Guide 483).

Questions to Ponder:

1. How important are the Christian virtues?
2. Do we really need these virtues as Christians?

TASK: Ask God for any of the virtues you lack.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR DATE: 13/09/2020

THEME FOR THE MONTH: CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

THEME FOR THE WEEK: PRUDENCE AND WISDOM

Biblical References: Deut 4:6, Prov. 3:21, Col 3:16, 2 Tim 3:16, 1 Cor1:20, Luke 21:15 and Daniel 1:20.

Prudence is the Cardinal Virtue that enables one to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason. Proverb 14:15 makes it clear that ‘a prudent man considers his step’. St. Thomas Aquinas defined it as the ‘right reason in action’. Prudence is the mother of other cardinal virtues, which are Justice, Temperance and Fortitude because it guides them by setting rules and measures. All other cardinal virtues cannot be properly exhibited without prudence. It guides the judgment of one's conscience and does direct man's conduct in accordance with this judgement. It concerns with "goodness" and the right means of achieving it. Both the means and achievement must go together and must necessarily be good. The one who knows what is to be done or what is to be avoided according to the right reason in a concrete case is said to be prudent.

Prudence and wisdom are interwoven, because wisdom is included in applying prudence. In action, Prudence implies wise consultation, the right judgment and command. Wisdom is part of prudence and prudence utilises wisdom. That is why prudence is also called

practical wisdom. It is basically an example of practical common sense. It demonstrates the character of saying and doing things right and properly, every time and everywhere. For example, it is good to be charitable to the needy, but prudence tells us what or how much, where, when and in what manner of doing it, so that reasoning can tally and match with the act of charity. Therefore, a prudent man must necessarily be a wise man.

There are two major sins against Prudence.

1. Sin by defect (many short comings)
2. Sin by excess (flesh gratification)

Questions to ponder:

Do we need prudence and wisdom to become good Christians?

Can someone be prudent without being wise?

TASK: Act wisely; be prudent in all your dealings.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

DATE: 20/09/2020

THEME FOR THE MONTH: CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

THEME FOR THE WEEK: JUSTICE AND TEMPERANCE

Biblical References: Proverbs 14: 29, Lev 19:15, Deut 1:16 and 1Kg 3:28.

Justice is a cardinal virtue which motivates us to give what is due to others. It is the moral virtue that stimulates the constant and firm determination to give what is due to God and neighbours. (CCC 1807). For example: “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Matt. 12:17). Justice is a virtue that inclines one to respect other persons' personality and to grant what is due to them (Pastoral Guide 512). Justice seeks to promote fair play and unbiased attitude. It is a desire and resolve to give each person his due and it demands that you reward goodness and punish evil. However, the virtue of Justice is the fundamental principle of the existence and the coexistence of man as exemplified by human communities. (Rom 13:7, Deut. 1:16, Deut. 25:13-15). It is note-worthy to affirm that justice can be legal, distributive and commutative.

Temperance is a cardinal virtue that moderates the attraction and attachment to pleasure and provides a balance in the use of worldly things. It keeps the worldly desires within the limits of what is honorable (CCC 1809). The virtue of temperance regulates the desire and the use material things of the world such as food, drink, venereal pleasure, etc. within the reasonable limits (Pastoral Guide 497). It is a virtue of moderation that forbids

excesses and inadequacies. It downplays inordinate attention to insufficiency in order to prevent the urge for excessiveness. It is called the virtue of balance, because, in exhibiting temperance as a virtue, a person exploits the power of moderation and balance in him. It is a character or a habit that allows a person to relax and be free without crossing the line of holiness by committing sin. For example: one should not eat or drink more than necessary for good health of mind and body. If it is less than necessary, then the body suffers and if more than necessary, then one becomes a glutton which is a sin. Gluttony is one of the seven capital sins.

Justice and Temperance may appear the same but are clearly different. Justice is concerned with judgment while Temperance is about moderation and self-control. If a glass of water is needed for a man to survive and there are two men for only one glass of water; Justice demands that the cup of water be divided into two, thereby each of them takes half-cup of water; no cheating and justice has reigned.

From the above scenario, Justice and Temperance, though differ in meaning, they share the same operational identity. As two of the cardinal virtues for a virtuous life, the outcome of each of them describes uprightness.

Questions to ponder:

Can someone be just without being temperate?

Do Christians need these two virtues? Why?

TASK: Be just and moderate in all your dealings.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

DATE: 27/09/2020

THEME FOR THE MONTH: CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

THEME FOR THE WEEK: FORTITUDE AND COURAGE

Biblical References: 1 Thess 2:2, 1Sam 30:6, Baruch 4; 30, Matt 9:22, Acts 23:11 and Wisdom 8:7.

Fortitude is a virtue that strengthens the spirit in the pursuit of arduous good, without being deterred by obvious inevitable difficulties or dangers, even that of death (Pastoral Guide 492). It is the virtue that helps us to stand for good no matter the difficulties

encountered. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that it is a moral virtue that ensures constant firmness and determination in the pursuit of good. It enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, but rather to face trials and persecutions (CCC 1808). Doing good in spite of its challenges and dangers is a mandatory duty of every Christian and the ability to persist in doing the good is the virtue of Fortitude. For example, all the martyrs who died in defense of their faith have demonstrated the virtue of Fortitude, having been confronted with death for being firm in doing good. Also Jesus in Gethsemane (Mt. 26:41, Mk.14:38). Therefore, fortitude is the ability to persevere in times of trial and tribulation, the ability to move-on when the going gets tough.

Courage is the ability to do something that frightens one, bravery. It is the strength in the face of pain or grief. When one is fearless, bold, intrepid, pluck, brave etc. in taking painful decision and/or in grief is said to have courage. However, both Fortitude and Courage are the same. Although Fortitude is on the supernatural level while Courage is on natural or physical level. Anyone who has the virtue of Fortitude has necessarily possessed Courage. It is a movement from natural (courage) to supernatural (fortitude). On the other hand, not everyone with Courage that possesses Fortitude. Someone with Courage may use it to do bad whereas the one with Fortitude has made use of Courage for doing good to attain the virtue of Fortitude.

Questions to ponder:

1. Can someone have virtue of fortitude without courage?
2. Are these virtues relevant in christian life? How?

TASK: Be courageous in performing good deeds.

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The New Community Bible

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**Sr Dr Immaculata Olu Omojola, SSMA
Director, Religious Education,
Osogbo Diocese**