

Encouragement Encouragement

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'Virtue'

THE HOST APOSTOLATE
WWW.THEHOSTAPOSTOLATE.ORG

14, GOATBECK TERRACE,
LANGLEY MOOR,
COUNTY DURHAM DH7 8JJ
thehostapostolate@gmail.com

'Patience is a virtue and virtue is a grace and grace is a little girl that never washed her face.' I was taught the little rhyme as a little girl. We were being taught about the virtues of life but to help us remember, the little bit about the girl was added. Amusing yes..? Remembered most certainly! But behind the verse is a profound truth. What are virtues and why are they important and secondly do we wash are ourselves clean of those things that prevent us learning to be virtuous? I cannot recall the last time that somebody referred to someone being 'virtuous' although this was a name often given to good people who died. Sometimes, instead of the word 'good' this was used as an accolade for someone's life in general. Indeed, it crops up in the Bible a good many times, not least in the oft used readings for funerals. Wisdom (3:1-9). 'The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God',.. The Catechism reminds us that there are four main virtues to practice in purity of lives if we are to follow The Gospel. They are Prudence... Justice... Fortitude and Temperance ... or Moderation: Each one of these has many implications and many aspects. Each requires Grace to be perfected within us and growth that leads us to holiness. The wounds left by original sin and our very human nature make it difficult to practice any virtue (Catechism, 1811). To live out and practice any virtue we have to depend on God's grace, which is always available which is so healing. If we live in the Wounds of Jesus our wounds are transformed and healed.

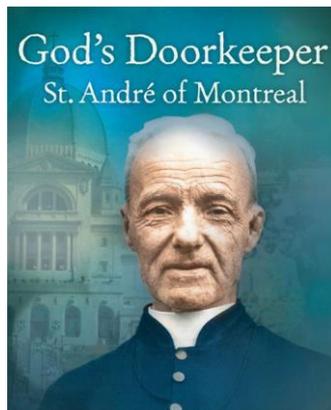
It is no surprise therefore that Fortitude or Endurance is also one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And do we not all need this at this time, in the history of the world, where there is so much at stake for our futures. Justice too is vital for us in these times but how often this is interpreted as 'my right' irrespective of anyone else's without recourse to charity or truth. Temperance too, has an association

with alcohol whereas it calls us to be moderate with all that we have and own, always remembering who is the Giver and being prepared to share with others rather than justifying pleasure in excess. Prudence, gets even less airing, but it leads us to think carefully before any action or words and make decisions which are for the good of the whole not just ourselves. It enables us to stand back awhile in uncertainty and move forward with prayer and discernment. Some virtues are gifts and we may possess them as *natural gifts*... for example kindness, patience, modesty, generosity, honesty etc.... but even these have to be practised.

Because they are so called 'natural' they come more easily to us in normal circumstances. However it is when we are tested or life becomes difficult that we start to acquire the Cardinal Virtues and these too become transformed by grace and we start to grow... there is nothing wrong with using our natural attributes, indeed we must, as they are a blessing but we too must endeavour to overcome that

which does not come so easily to us. 'If we are aiming to live virtuously in our marriages, families, and friendships, we need much more than sporadic good deeds or occasional acts of kindness when we happen to be in a good mood' (Edward Sri).

Some time back I received some 'insight' from the Lord on Virtues and there were indeed some surprises. I was given sixteen of these which presented many challenges. (Called: Rosebuds, 'Flowers of Surrender of the Crucified Jesus'.. see Web site). I realised how totally inept I was at living a virtuous life in the deepest sense and how much I had to learn and discipline myself to practice. In writing this I realised that I could not do justice to all sixteen Rosebuds and prayed that I would choose the one that The Lord wanted this time. The two that came to me were Hope and Patience (Hope of course is also a Theological Virtue, a supernatural virtue).



Tolerance is an important part of Charity. Without it is difficult for two people to get along together with a bond of friendship,

unity with Our Lord that they are at peace.' St. Vincent de Paul

Hope – “Holy Hope is the summit of Grace. It enables the spirit to endure when all seems lost and no glimmer of light shines on the soul. Yet it remains steadfast in both love and prayer. It acts under this inspiration of the Holy Spirit without any tangible certainty yet with an abiding faith and a transparent awareness that all will be well. Holy Hope is not the mere expectation that things will be ‘ok’ and that things and patterns will turn about bringing good things in the wake of bad. It is the complete and utter knowledge that in all things God is in full control, so that whether in life and/or death He knows all things. It is the certainty, even in grave doubt that nothing can come between Creator and the created, for in Love He holds the soul in the palm of His Holy Hands, the everyday events are not crucial to this Hope – disaster or bliss, solitude or company, pain or pleasure. Nothing alters the degree of Hope. Yet this is pure gift. Anyone who has felt the icy fingers of despair, or known real travail and has prayed, knows the joy of Hope. This Hope fills the spirit with the Trinity, the abiding presence of an indestructible and faithful God, so that the spirit responds by knowing that it has been touched by the Infinite so it cannot surrender to ‘nothing’ but to something greater than itself, more powerful, more awesome, more lovely, more gracious, kind, faithful, and so the soul sighs with relief and goes on in spite of trepidation and anxiety. The transformation of hope to Holy Hope is by grace.”

Patience... So often a stumbling block for so many of us in different circumstances can also be graced.... “One second can seem like hours and hours one second. This timelessness should point you to be patient, to always be in the present tense... I am always present to you. remember that the word patience leads to being a ‘patient’; The same word as for on who is ‘suffering’ or ‘ill,’ awaiting a cure... enduring. Quite so, a patient, a good patient endures so that he can be healed. In your native Polish ‘Cierpliwość’, patience, literally means waiting in pain – enduring, one full of suffering. Remember how patiently I hung on the Cross. I suffered timelessly and continued ‘My Suffering’ for all of humanity and through My chosen vessels. Please consider the grace and virtue of Patience. It is not only essential to those who carry my word but to all who wish to teach. It is not only a matter of sighing deeply and putting up with inconvenience of waiting,

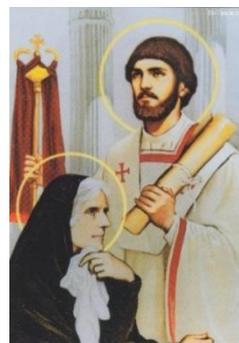
though that can be start to Holy Patience- but think of patience in terms of not owning time – not of waiting but of being ‘in time’ and with time, all being Mine” (extract from the Rosebuds).

There are many ways of improving our lives and practicing being virtuous, is most certainly a path well trodden by countless holy people. It brings great rewards as it makes us fully aware how dependent we are on grace and how much we need to look at ourselves carefully and pray, using the sacrament of Confession too, to help us. Are we brave enough to try?

Halina Holman

Pope Francis

‘The suggestion is to bring life into this rhythm of patience. But ‘patience, it is not resignation, it is something quite different. Patience means bearing the things of life that are not good, the bad things, the things that we do not want. This patience will cause our lives to mature. Those who have no patience are whimsical people, who end up behaving ‘like naughty children’ who say ‘I want this or I want that, I do not like this’ and are never satisfied with anything. The Christian life has to be carried out with this music of patience, because it was the music of our fathers: the people of God. The music of those who believed in the Word of God, who followed the commandments which the Lord had given to our father Abraham: Walk before me and be blameless.’
Rome 2014



Saints filled with...

Patience & Hope

- St. Monica. Mother
- St.Br.André Bassette. Porter D.’37
- St. Jean Vianney. Parish Priest
- St.Gemma Galgani.Single Woman

Feasts Days in August

- 1st St. Alphonsus Liguori
- 2nd **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 4th St. Jean Vianney, Parish Priest
- 6th **Transfiguration of the Lord**
- 8th St. Mary MacKillop, Patroness of Australia
- 9th **Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 10th St. Lawrence of Brindisi 11th St. Clare of Assisi
- 16th **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Sunday)**
- 17th **Our Lady of Knock**
- 20th St. Bernard of Clairvaux 21st St. Pius X
- 22nd **The Queenship of Mary**
- 23rd **Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 24th St. Bartholomew, Apostle
- 26th Blessed Dominic Barberi, Apostle to England
- 27th St. Monica, Mother 28th St. Augustine of Hippo
- 29th **The Beheading of John the Baptist**
- 30th **Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 31st St. Aidan and the Saints of Lindisfarne