

## THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

### THE VIRTUES

#### Biblical Reflection: 1 Cor 13:1-7

A virtue is an 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. (CCC 1803)



Four virtues play a pivotal role and accordingly are called “cardinal”; all the others are grouped around them. They are” prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance... These virtues are praised under other names in many passages of Scripture. (CCC 1805)

The theological virtues are the foundations of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. They inform and give life to all the moral virtues. They are infused by God into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life. They are the pledge of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the faculties of the human being. There are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity (Cf. 1 Cor 13:13). (CCC 1813)

The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit. (CCC 1830)

The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: “charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity.” (CCC 1832)

*“The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God”* St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De beatitudinibus*, 1. (CCC 1803)

#### Questions for discussion:

- What could you say about your experience of faith, hope, and charity?
- Could you give examples of situations in which moral virtues would be of help?
- Think about one particular moral and one theological virtue, how do you recall them acting in your life in the present or in the past?
- Paragraph number 1831 of the Catechism lists the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Select the one you will desire most to sustain you and grow in your heart? Please explain why.

**Further reading:** Catechism of the Catholic Church, numbers 1803-1845