



Practicing Virtues

"I live, now not I; but Christ lives in me." Gal. 2:20

As it says in paragraph 1810 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, virtue is acquired through three human actions: education, deliberate actions/decisions, and perseverance. All of these are governed and supported by the grace which comes from God and is available through the Church in the sacraments. So long as we take time to learn what is good, make the decisions to do what is good and persevere in doing good even in the face of turmoil, then we will grow in virtue. As we grow in virtue, we become more and more like God, which is the ultimate goal of human life. This growth toward perfection makes us realize the truth of our existence and the purpose for which we were created: to serve God and to serve others who are the children of God.

Directions: Each day throughout this assignment look for opportunities to practice virtue. When opportunities arise, make special efforts to choose good over bad; right over wrong. At the end of each day, write a short reflection on how you practiced virtue throughout the day. The reflection should include all of these elements:

1. The situation(s) during which you had to practice one (or more) of the seven virtues (Prudence, Temperance, Justice, Fortitude, Faith, Hope, or Love);
2. The virtue you put (or didn't put) into practice during that situation;
3. The meaning of that virtue (how does that virtue help you in your life?);
4. How the situation ended;
5. How the situation might have been different had you not practiced this virtue;
6. How you felt after the situation;
7. What affect you think this particular action might have on your relationship with God;
8. How you plan to approach similar situations in the future.

Keep in mind that these reflections don't have to be about times when you utilized the virtues. They may also be about times when you recognized that you should use the virtue but weren't able to. Make sure to do one reflection each day for the next 7 days. These situations may be hard to recognize at first because we all have our own way of dealing with things that have become somewhat habitual. However, as you continue to make an effort to find ways to use these virtues, you will start to develop a better sense of what you are expected to do and will quickly realize the importance of these virtues.