

## Reflection by: Sunday – 5:30PM Mass Group

### The Fourth Cardinal Virtue - **FORTITUDE**

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Fortitude is generally associated with courage and bravery. Specifically fortitude is a virtue of courage and firmness of spirit, steadiness of the will in doing good despite the obstacles in carrying out our daily tasks and duties. It is a virtue that allows the individual to overcome fear and curb recklessness. It is a virtue by which one is able to stand up for the truth or a cause despite the opposition even to the point of facing death.

Fortitude is a gift of the Holy Spirit given to the individual to be used for the greater good of man and the balance of human society.

This virtue brings with it a resolute spirit, firm mind and a victorious will to persevere with a quiet faith in God's providence in the face of obstacles. Fortitude brings with it courage to persist in spite of trials, ill health persecution and even failure.

In the early days of the church the martyrs who went out to proclaim Christ showed great fortitude. Despite the threats to their lives, the physical beatings and the constant uncertainty of the future they lived their lives filled with Hope, knowing that what they were doing was to benefit many in days to come, which in reality it did. Due to the fortitude of these great men and women of God the church was able to flourish.

The story of Job in the Old Testament is a wonderful example of the virtue of fortitude. Job was a good man who pleased God in everything he did and was richly blessed by the Lord. However Satan obtained permission from God to destroy the fruits of the blessing of Job and a point reached where Job lost everything, including all his children. Job, however in the midst of all this; the complaining of his wife and the discouragement of his friends; his own affliction with leprosy, never gave up on God, nor complained nor cursed God whom he had come to recognize as the one who had blessed him and that even if all the fruits of these blessings were taken away, he would receive everything back which he eventually did. The word of God says in Job 42:12 that the Lord blessed the last part of Job's life even more than he had blessed the first.

The story of Job you have just heard shows us that Job was able to withstand all the tricks of Satan and come out victorious. We however belong to the new covenant which Jesus sealed for each of us by his precious blood. After his ascension into heaven he sent the Holy Spirit to dwell permanently in all those who believe in him and thereby gave us the strength and courage of God almighty himself. The day we accepted Jesus as our Lord and savior we are made brand new in our spirit and enjoyed all the benefits that children enjoy as citizens of heaven. We now have the courage to bear witness to Jesus in this world and we have no reason whatsoever to grieve the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. If Job displayed fortitude in the Old Testament how much more should each of us display the virtue of fortitude in our lives.

Today we have several opportunities to express this virtue. How do we witness the Lord when we are in the midst of unbelievers? Do we show courage to stand up for the truth and oppose those who are against it? At our homes are we able to show courage by taking

a stand on real issues confronting us. In our church gatherings are we courageous to stand up and speak against wrong doings, hypocrisy and wrong teachings so that the faithful will not be misguided and confused. Are we courageous to risk our reputation and take a stand on matters that God has entrusted to us and preserve the unity and well being of those under our care?

Fortitude is not an option for believers, but all those who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and savior and have been sealed with the Holy Spirit are called to live this virtue. The word Of God in proverbs 29:25 says that it is dangerous to be concerned what others think of you, but if you trust in the Lord you are safe.

We have several examples of fortitude shown by many bible heroes and heroines.

1. Daniel 3:16-18 Courage of Sadrach, Mesach and Abednego who defied and disobeyed King Nabuchadnessar and did not bow to his statue and worship an idol

2.2 Macabees 7:1-42 courage of a mother and her 7 sons, who refused to eat swine flesh and break the law

3. Acts 7:51-53 courage of Stephen to proclaim Christ to the council and elders despite their opposition to the name of Jesus

4. Acts 21:10-13 Courage of Paul to go to Jerusalem despite the prophesy about him that he would be killed.

In our own times we have seen Fortitude displayed recently by the people of Egypt who were able to over throw a tyrant ruler in the midst of bullets and beatings. Our previous pope John Paul the 2<sup>nd</sup> was another great example who displayed the virtue of fortitude by going around the world despite ill health to witness to Christ, despite great opposition to his stand on various world issues.

Are we too ready to bear witness to Christ today? Are we ready to be courageous for our God who is with us and in us by the Holy Spirit?

Loving father, without showing partiality you have given each of us the gift of the holy spirit .You have made us your children through the sacrificial death of your son Jesus. You have given us in our spirit all things that pertain to life and Godliness You have blessed us all with every spiritual blessing and you desire that we love you praise you and worship you all the days of our life. Loving father may we grow in our love and relationship with you, the very purpose of our existence and may the overflow of this love bring us to serve you through our brothers and sisters. May we always bear witness to you with the truth and never grieve the Holy Spirit within us. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen