

Theological Virtues

These notes are derived from Catholic Morality by Fr. John Laux.

Section II, Chapter I:A Theological Virtues, pp 53-65.

The chapter 'Theological Virtues' from the Baltimore Catechism covers similar material and is included below.

The three **Theological Virtues** are **Faith, Hope**, and **Charity**. These virtues are infused by grace and dispose one to act in a morally right manner according to God's will.

Faith

- Faith rests on authority of God, not knowledge of God
- Faith must be living--Faith without works is Dead
- Firm and unwavering faith embraces all revelation
- Faith is conquering and unconquerable. Lives of Martyrs testify to this.
- Faith is Man's most valuable possession--a 'pearl of great price'.

We are duty bound to:

- Live by our Faith, keep faith active
- Profess our faith openly without fear
- Shun things likely to endanger faith
- Broaden our knowledge of faith
- Make frequent acts of faith

Sins Against Faith:

- **Infidelity** — Disbelief in Christian doctrines. Infidelity is not a sin in case of ignorance of Church doctrines.
- **Heresy** — Christian who accepts some truths of the Faith, but denies others
- **Apostasy** — Apostasy is rejection of Christian faith by baptized person.
- **Schism** — Revolt against the authority of the Church without necessarily disagreeing on most points of dogma.
- **Denial of Faith** — Denial of Christian faith by one who holds the faith to be true in his heart.
- **Skepticism** — Doubts regarding specific doctrines of the Faith. Willful doubting of tenets of faith is heresy.
- **Indifferentism (theoretical)** — Belief that it is of no consequence what religion a man follows. Form of apostasy in baptized Christians.
- **Indifferentism (practical)** — Neglect of duties and disinterest in the faith.

Dangers to the Faith:

- Participation in religious services of non-Catholic sects.
- Participation in secret societies, especial anti-Catholic such as Freemasonry.
- Reading books or viewing movies hostile to the Catholic faith
- Reading books or viewing movies with immoral plots or purposes.

Hope

- Hope consists of a desire for a valuable good and confidence that good can be obtained.
- Hope is the supernatural gift by which we trust God will give us eternal life through the helps of Jesus Christ and his church.
- Hope in God should be living, firm, and unwavering, and accompanied by a Holy fear for our souls.

Sins Against Hope:

- **Despair** — Giving up hope of eternal life by regarding our sins as too great for pardon, or our temptations too strong to be overcome.
- **Presumption** — Continuing in sin with the intention of repenting before death.

Despair deadens our soul, causes us to abandon prayer, and leaves us exposed to every vice. Prayer is best remedy for Despair and presumption.

Charity

- **Charity** is a supernatural virtue by which we love God above all things.
- The 'Object' of Charity is God and all his creation. We serve our neighbors and do good for the sake of God.
- **Perfect Charity** is selfless love of God.
- **Imperfect Charity** proceeds from gratitude and love of what God has done for us.
- Charity is the **Queen of Virtues**

Charity is increased in us by:

- Meditating on Divine perfection and the passion of Christ
- Making frequent acts of Charity and perfect contrition
- Fidelity to all duties of one's station
- Referring all thoughts and actions to God.

Charity is destroyed by Mortal sin. Sins against Charity are:

- **Hatred of God** — Rejection of God's goodness, refusal to accept God's laws, or blaming of God for allowing evil and suffering.
- **Hatred of one's neighbor** — Unforgiveness, anger or lack of charity in relation to the failings of other people.
- **Envy** — resentment or unhappiness at the success or prosperity of another
- **Sloth** — Spiritual, mental, or physical laziness that causes neglect of one's duties.
- **Scandal** — setting a bad example to others or leading others into sin

Theological (Divine) Virtues

Q. 462. What do you call those graces or gifts of God by which we believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him?

A. Those graces or gifts of God by which we believe in Him, and hope in Him, and love Him, are called the Divine (or Theological) virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Q. 465. What is Faith?

A. Faith is a Divine virtue by which we firmly believe the truths which God has revealed.

Q. 466. What is Hope?

A. Hope is a Divine virtue by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and the means to obtain it.

Q. 467. What is Charity?

A. Charity is a Divine virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Q. 473. Who is our neighbor?

A. Every human being capable of salvation of every age, country, race or condition, especially if he needs our help, is our neighbor in the sense of the Catechism.

Q. 474. Why should we love our neighbor?

A. We should love our neighbor because he is a child of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and because he is our brother created to dwell in heaven with us.

Q. 468. Why are Faith, Hope and Charity called virtues?

A. Faith, Hope and Charity are called virtues because they are not mere acts, but habits by which we always and in all things believe God, hope in Him, and love Him.

Q. 469. What kind of virtues are Faith, Hope and Charity?

A. Faith, Hope and Charity are called infused theological virtues to distinguish them from the four moral virtues—Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.

Q. 470. Why do we say the three theological virtues are infused and the four moral virtues acquired?

A. We say the three theological virtues are infused; that is, poured into our souls, because they are strictly gifts of God and do not depend upon our efforts to obtain them, while the four moral virtues—Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance—though also gifts of God, may, as natural virtues, be acquired by our own efforts.

Q. 472. What mortal sins are opposed to Faith?

A. Atheism, which is a denial of all revealed truths, and heresy, which is a denial of some revealed truths, and superstition, which is a misuse of religion, are opposed to Faith.