

COURAGE

THE STRENGTH TO LIVE OUR VOCATION

THE VIRTUES

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“Fortitude ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1837

“DO NOT BE AFRAID!” (MT 28:10)

By John Bosio

Once upon a time in an old barn there was a cat and lots of mice.

One day all the mice got together to talk about their problem: the cat. The old gray mouse, the one that was thought to be wise, came forward to speak.

He said: “Listen to me. Let’s hang a bell on the cat’s neck. Then we will know when the cat is coming, and we can hide.”

“Excellent suggestion,” said all the mice. One of them ran to get a bell and brought it to the gray mouse. Holding the bell the gray mouse asked the group:

“Now, which of you will hang this bell to the cat’s neck?”

All together the mice said: “Not I! Not I!” And they ran away to their holes.



This story, which is attributed to Aesop, reminds us that fear can keep us from doing what we should. Courage helps us overcome fear.

WHAT IS COURAGE?

According to the Catechism Fortitude, also known as courage, is the virtue that gives us the strength to conquer our fears and to persevere in the pursuit of the good. (CCC1808)

In the Gospels we hear Jesus say repeatedly to his disciples “Do not be afraid!”

Fortitude is the virtue that gives us the strength to become what God created us to be – to live our vocation, even when it is difficult.

We all have fears. As you go about your daily life, what concerns do you have?

What keeps you awake some nights?

IT TAKES COURAGE TO MARRY AND TO STAY MARRIED

St. Paul wrote to the couples in Ephesus: “Husbands: love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church.” (Eph. 5:25)

Pope Francis tells couples today: “It takes courage to love one another as Christ loves the Church.” (5-6-15)

What have been the moments in your marriage when you have needed courage the most?

In marriage we need courage daily:

- to *speak up* and tell each other how we feel, in a respectful manner.
- to *bite our tongue* when we want to say an unkind word.
- to *truly listen*, even when we feel like screaming.
- to *change* a behavior that causes discomfort to our spouse.
- to *seek help* when we are stuck in our negative habits and addictions.
- to *admit our mistakes* and ask forgiveness and to forgive.

And the list goes on.

Through each of these actions we perfect each other. A husband helps a wife to grow as a woman. A wife helps a husband to grow as a man, and as a couple, husband and wife become a vivid image of God’s love. (Pope Francis - September 14, 2014)

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THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

“Moderation and prudence, justice and fortitude... nothing in life is more useful than these.” Wisdom 8:7

Prudence – Justice – Courage – Temperance

CONVERSATION STARTERS

For Couples

Directions

For a Fun Conversation

1. Read the article on this flyer.
2. Review the questions below and together choose three to talk about.
3. As you talk, be respectful of each other's thoughts and feelings.
4. Agree on a word or phrase that you will say when one of you is uncomfortable and wants to stop the conversation.
5. If later you want to review some skills for resolving conflicts, read the short article at:
<http://www.happy-together.net/the-virtues-a-program-for-couples/skills/>

1. When you think of courage, can you identify a person who has shown courage? What did he/she do?
2. Do you remember a time when you witnessed one of your parents or both show courage?
3. Do you recall a time or times in your childhood or teen years when you had to have courage?
4. What are some of the moments or events in any marriage that require spouses to have courage?
5. Fortitude is the virtue that gives us the strength to conquer our fears. What keep you awake some nights?
6. Can you remember a time when you were afraid for one of your children or grandchildren? What gave you the courage to overcome those fears?
7. How does your faith help you find the courage you need?
8. What prayers or scripture passages help you choose what is right, and give you the courage to do it?
9. When reading the article on this flyer, does anything stand out to you that you want to remember?



IT TAKES COURAGE TO BE A PARENT

As parents we need courage each day to be a good example to our children, to make time for them, to patiently correct them when they make mistakes, and to love them, even when they disappoint us.

Parents show great courage when:

- They make clear rules for their children and enforce them consistently.
- They spend time playing or visiting with their children.
- They make the raising of their children a priority.
- They welcome and love every child, including children with special needs or disabilities.

“The path of Christian courage is a grace given by the Holy Spirit.” *Pope Francis 4-13-15*

COURAGE COMES FROM GOD

Pope Francis reminds us that spousal love is rooted in God's love. He told young people that God's grace embraces a couple's love and gives the spouses the strength they need – the courage to face anything together. (October, 2013)

Let us not forget Jesus' words: *“Do not be afraid!”*

Always choose what is right! The Holy Spirit will give you the strength to act.

“Jesus does not stand by and leave you alone to face the challenge. He is always with you to transform your weakness into strength.”

St. John Paul II

Teach your children to trust God, and be steadfast in your vocation. You are their model.

Jesus is always with us, and when we open the door of our heart to welcome him, he transforms our family into a domestic church, a small patch in God's Kingdom, the place where God's love is felt, it is learned, and is shared with others.



See directions for your conversation on the top left of this page.

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