



The Newsletter of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice Issue 37, January 2021

BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY:

NURTURING VALUES AND VIRTUES IN CHILDREN

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE (Part 2)

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Pope Francis states that people of faith must transmit concrete values to young people... “values and virtues that God has written in the heart of every man and has made evident in the order of creation” (2019).

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Introduction by Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ



It is significant that CCSJ embarked on this series, *Nurturing values and virtues in children: A Parent's perspective*, before Pope Francis proclaimed 2021 as the Year of the Family. As the Vatican states, “on 19 March 2021, the fifth anniversary of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia*, on the joy and beauty of familial love, Pope Francis will inaugurate the Year “*Amoris Laetitia* Family,” which will conclude on 26 June 2022 on the occasion of the X World Meeting of Families in Rome. The Holy Father will be present for the Meeting.”

And by an Apostolic letter entitled, *Patris Corde: With a Father's Heart*, the Holy Father established a Year of St. Joseph so that “every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfilment of God's will.” The year begins Dec. 8, 2020, and concludes on Dec. 8, 2021, according to a [decree](#) authorized by the Pope.

Like all families, The Holy Family faced many trials, but the way in which they dealt with these should inspire all parents to emulate the values and virtues that strengthen them. Mike Sullivan tells us in his article: “*What your family can learn from the Holy Family*”: “On pilgrimage to Nazareth, Pope Paul VI reflected, ‘Nazareth is a kind of school. . . How I would like to return to my childhood and attend the simple yet profound school that is Nazareth!’ He explained that there are three key lessons to learn from Christ's childhood:

- It offered silence. ‘We need this wonderful state of mind,’ the Pope said, to combat the pressures and noise of the world.
- It was ‘a community of love and sharing.’ Nazareth serves as ‘a model of what the family should be . . . beautiful for the problems it poses and the rewards it brings, in sum, the perfect setting for rearing children—and for this there is no substitute.’
- It taught discipline. ‘In Nazareth, the home of a craftsman’s son, we learn about work and the discipline it entails’ (*Office of Readings*, Dec. 26).”

As Christian parents, we are called to model our own family life after the Holy Family in Nazareth. By shaping our homes in the example of silence, community love, and discipline, we ensure that we are doing our part in creating a nurturing environment in which saints are made... We are called to be in the world, not of the world. If we hold up the Holy Family as the example for our families, not only will we learn how to live holy lives, but we will begin to change the culture in which we live. Our little Nazareth can be the refreshing and silent sanctuary we seek to enter each day as we work toward our common goal.” ([What Your Family Can Learn from the Holy Family | Catholic Answers](#)).

Iain T. Benson’s article: *Values and Virtues: A Modern Confusion*, is also worth reading. [Values and Virtues: A Modern Confusion \(catholiceducation.org\)](#). He is right. In today’s world, values language is not a Moral language. In the midst of moral relativism, individualism and selfishness, families must be careful to nurture in their children objective moral norms. He says: “...when a school system, a Catholic school system or a public school system, puts in a so-called “values education” module, they are completely confusing the moral education that they are giving children because that language fails to distinguish between the aesthetic preferences and moral categories...Once we know what the virtues look like...we are in a better position to determine how we are in relation to the standards of virtue we wish to achieve...”

Read about Virtues in our Catechism: 1803-1845: [Catechism of the Catholic Church - The virtues \(vatican.va\)](#). I end with a quotation from Pope Francis when he focused on “virtues” for Christmas 2015:

“I encourage you to take care of your marriage and your children. Look after them, do not neglect them. Marriage is like a plant. It is not like a cupboard that you put in a room and perhaps dust every now and then. A plant is living and must be cared for every day. ... Marriage is a living reality: the life of a couple must never be taken for granted, in any phase during the progress of a family. Let us remember that the most valuable gift for children ... is their parents’ love. And I do not mean only the love of parents for their children, but also the love between parents themselves, that is, the conjugal bond. This is good for you and for your children,”

“Therefore, first and foremost cultivate the plant of marriage, as spouses, and at the same time take care of the relationship with your children; here too, focus on the human relationship rather than material things. Focus on mercy in your daily relations, between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters; and take care of grandparents. The Jubilee must be lived also in the domestic church, not only in major events! The Lord love those who practice mercy in ordinary situations. This is my wish for you: to experience the joy of mercy, starting with your family.”



NOTE OF GRATITUDE TO TONIA GOODING

“Right conduct” must be nurtured. I am thankful to Tonia and Allan Gooding for contributing to the second Newsletter in this series. The virtues on which Tonia focuses are critical and should inform parents as they seek to raise upright, virtuous children.

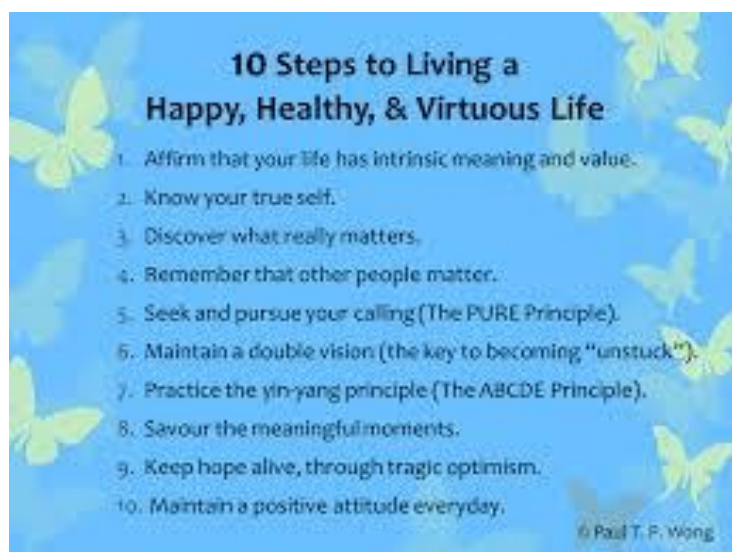
And as you read their contribution, remember the definition of a virtue, as stated in 1803 of our Catechism: “A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.

The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God (Phil 4:8).

St Augustine of Hippo rightly said: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” And we read in Psalm 42:1: “Like a deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you my God.”

Let us nurture in our children a “yearning” to become like God.

Watch this space for the third Newsletter in this series. And if any parents wish to contribute to the series, please contact me on 299 8945.



VIRTUES: A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION:



The origin of the virtues within the Catholic Church became formalised in St. Thomas Aquinas' teachings in Summa Theologica. As Fr John A Hardon S.J. said, he was "the thirteenth century theologian whose principles were the standard of ethical teaching up to the Reformation and since then have become fundamental in Christian moral theology."

This philosophical explanation of the understanding of the virtues in terms of the natural law – being imprinted on our hearts, leads us to appreciate that the Golden Rule – *Do unto others as you would have others do unto you* – permeates every religion and every region in every time in history. The philosophical aspect of using reason to articulate that the desire to choose the good, results in long term happiness, and that appreciating that the integration of the three levels of action - intellectual, psychological, and physical – where one must first

- know and understand what is good,
- accept what is good and then
- freely choose to do the good

is the basis for the practice of the virtues.

This foundation encourages us, as parents to lead by example and to have discussions with our children about our value systems, and the habitual virtues that are needed to be practiced to live them out. The discussions are especially valuable for many reasons:

- Our value systems may be counter cultural.
- We live in a highly technological society, where the earlier our children gain access to the internet, the earlier we have competition in their formation.

- As our children become adolescents they are not only interacting with persons of Catholic upbringing, and although the foundation of what they believe is Catholic, the rhetoric that needs to be used must be based on reason and logic to enable us to speak and defend what we believe.
- The ideologies that are being presented need to be addressed, and many times the people presenting their perspectives do not have a Catholic background, so we need to meet them where they are at.

As a parent of 6 children ranging from 6 years old to 22 years old, married to my husband, Allan, for 23 years, I will highlight 5 virtues which we have tried to nurture in our children during their formative years. I believe these virtues have been the most important to us as a family.

I think most families will agree that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented unique challenges as well as opportunities to practice some of these virtues. This outline will provide some strategies that were put in place before COVID-19, and the change in emphasis that had to be made, due to the many changes (including online schooling) as we struggle to find the balance of the ‘New Normal’.

My contribution hereunder is based on a framework developed by the Institute of Advanced Family Studies, University of Catalunya, Spain, for a Postgraduate Degree in *Marriage and Family education* (online).

The **five virtues** that I would like to write about with regard to my own family.

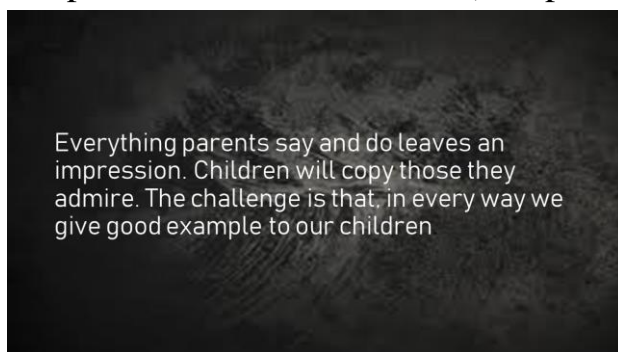
Chapter 1 - Responsibility (Justice)

Chapter 2 - Perseverance/Work ethic in academic studies (Fortitude)

Chapter 3 - Problem solving/Critical thinking (Prudence)

Chapter 4 - Appreciation of Art and Beauty (Prudence)

Chapter 5 - Emotional control (Temperance)



CHAPTER 1: RESPONSIBILITY



The aspects of responsibility that we will address are:

Right attitude towards others; and

The role of responsibilities within the home.

Right attitude towards others

‘The relationship of mutual loving dedication of the spouses themselves will be the foundation of the lessons of loving interaction with others that will be taught to the family. Parents need to be united, otherwise society suffers Frederic Le Play, the French Social scientist, said: “Tell me what kind of family you have, and I will tell you what kind of society you have.”’

- Nurture daily generosity – Self-centred and unrealistic expectations need to be traded for common sense and the ability to deal with others as a “package deal”.
- Try to keep the Love young. *Monthly dates to keep the spark alive*
- Do things together and build up a stock of happy memories – *at-home DIY projects – tiling rooms, putting up shelves and re-organizing rooms as a couple when children are small. As they get older, engage them in larger family projects, e.g., gardening and construction to modify the home. Even family dinners and in-house family cook offs.*
- ‘Parents need to back each other up. Each should sense the tremendous esteem the other feels and communicates to the children. This mutual admiration overcomes all differences.’



The role of responsibilities in the Home

‘Raphael Pich, founder of Family Development, reminds us that the home is the first school of work. She emphasises the importance of a culture of “jobs” and chores in home. Children have a right to be taught how to solve their own problems and to look after themselves in the material as well as the moral sense.’

- Each parent should be striving to become a better parent through, e.g., *Marriage encounter, Spiritual formation, self-help books, Parenting courses and books/audio books by authors such as James Stenson.*
- Try to get sufficient personal time with each child. *One to One special moments, over ice cream or going for a walk*
- All members of the family be present for at least one meal during the day. *During the pandemic, this should be more frequent. This provides an opportunity for checking in, conversation, review of the day, discussions on challenges and issues – good and bad.*
- A family alone is vulnerable. Get to know the parents of your children’s friends, and groups that share similar values. *We belong to ‘Teams of Our Lady’ which provides lots of comradery for both parents and children.*
- Friendship is, above all, service to others. Let your children see how you interact with your friends. *Through having small social gatherings like birthday parties, family sports days.*
- The solution to the negative influences in the wider environment is to build a strong family life and to provide buoyant leadership from both mother and father. You give your children good food to eat for their bodies, what food do you give them to feed their minds and their hearts - internet and social media? *During the pandemic, this is especially challenging with online school. Food for thought, if children are already spending so many hours on computers at home, is there still a great need for young children to have smart phones when they are not going anywhere? Apps for*

communication can be installed on their computers and then monitoring software can be installed, so the parent is still responsible for what is entering the child's mind and heart.

- Children have the right to learn responsibility when they are young, e.g., to clean up after themselves. We must ask a lot from our children but ask with affection... *Demanding with Affection, prepares them for the future, in all aspects of their lives; from chores to responsibility for their books and clothes, homework and projects. We provide the support and environment, but learning is your child's responsibility,*
- With privileges must come the responsibility of using them well. Timetables help to promote good use of time. *Giving chores to your children helps the home to run smoothly. Responsibility for the cooking of meals, washing wares, washing and ironing ones own clothes, cleaning the home, car and the yard should be shared among everyone in Secondary school and older.* Encourage them to:
 - study very hard
 - enjoy entertainment in moderation and not as an end in itself
 - use the car responsibly (for older children)
 - use technology responsibly
 - use the cell phone responsibly.

Moral responsibilities

example:

Lets say you find a 100 dollar bill on the floor and you give it back but you now u didn't need to but you wanted to do it any ways that is moral responsibility



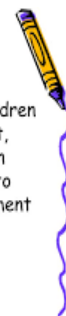
CHORES

By Age: 3-14



Parenthood has joys and rewards ... however ...

The expectations of parenting children must be realistic. If they are not, parents will be disappointed when they realize that raising a child to adulthood is a long term commitment that has many obligations and responsibilities.





CHAPTER 2: Perseverance/Work ethic in academic studies (Fortitude)

Demanding of children in their studies

‘Two and a half thousand years ago, Confucius taught: “*Learn as though you would never be able to master it; hold it as though you would be in fear of losing it.*” He realised that students need determination if they are to achieve their potential.’

‘These are serious issues. For example, a sixteen-year-old student who is not studying a solid two and a half hours each night is not showing responsibility in keeping with the privilege of attending school full-time and thereby being exempted from other full-time work. In many other cultures and in other times, fifteen-year-olds work or worked as adults.’ *Many of our students do not realize there is an obligation to do extra work at this age and stage, so unfortunately many parents fall into the habit of paying for extra lessons, simply for the structure and discipline that our children should develop independently at this age, A costly, unfortunate option.*

‘All of us need to demonstrate a spirit of study that we become so immersed that distractions fail to capture our attention and imaginations. Even if we left school many years ago, our example is important for the children/students in our care and in our homes.’

‘It makes a great difference to the study ethic in each class if there is a quality study atmosphere in the room. And it is also possible to build a positive study atmosphere in each home.’

‘The children of musicians may or may not love music; the children of academics may or may not be studious. What will make the difference is that children grow up in a home where there is a genuine esteem for intellectual craftsmanship. If we are not seen to be *fulfilled* by our work, if our work is not a medium for

idealism, then why should our children copy the way we work? They will find another path to happiness ... one that works better than the one their parent seems to have chosen. This is a sobering thought.’ *We need to strive to be passionate about our chosen career, and desire to continue to keep learning about our particular field.*

‘Parents do well to have high expectations of children in their studies. How counterproductive for a young person to waste time at school. But parents need to be alert to any signs of special needs that their children may have and should seek assistance for them. And one size does not fit all. Remember also that education is more than what goes on in educational institutions. Seek to ensure that you create for your children a healthy balance between school/curricular activities, and extra-curricular activities.’

‘Parents would do well not to make excuses for a child capable of achieving acceptable grades in every subject. They need to communicate urgency, and to help their son or daughter think things through, set realistic goals, and immerse themselves into their studies – or find something else that they want to throw their energies into. The main thing is that a young person should work hard at *whatever* he or she is doing.’



‘**School reports**, if written well by teachers, and handled well by parents, can be a great help in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Small mistakes by your child can be a wake-up call. There is an old English proverb, “*A stumble may prevent a fall.* Once we are alert to the small mistakes we are making, we can avoid bigger failures down the road. Have we not seen this time and again in our own lives?’

‘When reports arrive home, it is a good time for parent and child to sit down on the same side of the table, discuss the positives in the report, and identify areas for improvement. Put this report and the report from the end of last year beside each other on the table. Avoid bribes to induce improvement. Aim for internalized motivation. Avoid parental drama in response to a poor performance, or even a

succession of poor performances. It will be counterproductive. The exercise becomes much more effective if, for example, it is the secondary student himself or herself who formulates his or her *own* resolutions for improvement with some agreed regime to monitor performance throughout the next term.’

‘Certainly, each student has the duty to take responsibility for his or her own performance, but it is essential that parent-child discussions have a positive slant, looking forward not backwards. Let us teach children that generally problems can be solved. If we succeed in building such resilience in young children, they may well negotiate safely some of the more vulnerable moments of life.’

Internalized motivation is paramount as the children realize that learning is their responsibility. One of our family’s Mottos is “Good is not good enough, from whom better is expected’. At the same time a family celebration of ice-cream for ‘Work well Done’ for excellence in academia, sports and the Arts after being recognized by an institution reinforces that Hard Work will bring rewards, and is to be encouraged.

‘All children have the right to be trained in good habits and to develop a sense of responsibility. Teachers and parents must be aware that some children with learning difficulties, including Attention deficit disorder (ADD)-related behaviours, will need attention. “It’s normal for children to occasionally forget their homework, daydream during class, act without thinking, or get fidgety at the dinner table. But inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity are also signs of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD).” (www.helpguide.org).’

‘It helps greatly if there is early diagnosis. Early detection can remove much of the anxiety and help parents understand the difficulties their son or daughter faces, even though it is still crucial that the child develops positive habits. Do not ever be discouraged. They say Einstein suffered from ADD.’



CHAPTER 3: Problem solving/Critical thinking (Prudence)

Prudence has two eyes, one that foresees what one has to do, the other that examines afterward what one has done.
St. Ignatius

PRUDENCE JUSTICE
FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES
TEMPERANCE FORTITUDE

Prudence (sound judgment)

- Prudence - is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it;
- Prudence is exercising practical wisdom & knowledge to accomplish what is good - enables one to reason & to act rightly in any given situation

PROBLEM SOLVING

Situation Options Choice Act Evaluation

You can't solve a problem until you're asking the right question.
www.visionaryreadings.com

‘The Greek poet, Homer (born sometime between the 12th and 8th centuries BC), reserves the highest praise for a person who can think for himself/herself; a quality we all understand intuitively to be at the very core of human maturity. We need to raise children to think for themselves, so they can resist influences that are either external – negative media or peer pressure, or internal - such as bad habits of decision making or poor self-control.’

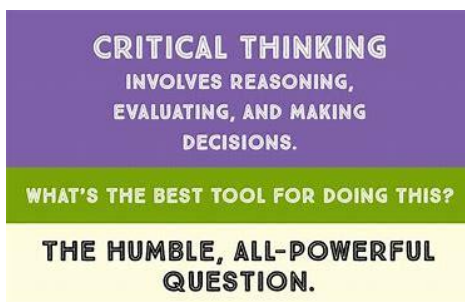
‘There are two aspects to this virtue.

- On the one hand, it is the habit of readily recognising and acknowledging what is right and true (raising children to recognise reality).
- On the more practical side, it is the habit of making sound judgements about what we will do (guiding children to be effective decision-makers who make their decisions based on right principles).’

The teaching of this virtue, like all others, needs firstly, to be practiced by the parents for the children to model their behaviour. Secondly, demonstrations, as well as opportunities for discussions about the rationale for decision-making, also needs to take place during the process.



Critical Thinking and Problem Solving – Practical aspects



‘A person who thinks critically, will judge and act from reasoned principles with depth of conviction. So, one needs to know and understand the principles before a person can believe and be convinced of them. This is a process in itself.’

In the early years of children’s development, parents need to:

- teach children to recognise facts. This helps them to avoid decisions based on incomplete information, emotion, or personal prejudice. *One of the best ways to teach this is through activities. Some suggestions are to:*
 - play observation games - I Spy, Connect 4
 - play concentration games – Bop It, Simon
 - play strategic games – Clue, Chess
 - play memory games – Memory card game
 - art and craft projects – tangram, origami, crochet
- ‘help them to develop skills to be realistic and objective and to avoid decisions based upon incomplete information, emotion, or personal prejudice (use objective criteria)’

- Ask questions such as: “What happened” “What do you know about this” and “How do you know?”

As your children get older:

- ‘one of the most important skill for a teenager to learn, is to think about his/her own decisions and allow consequences to take their course.’ *We, as parents should try not to fight children’s battles for them. When assignments are late or left at home, we should not make excuses for them. These are costly, but valuable lessons. Allow the natural consequences to take place, they will learn the lesson, and plan better the next time.*
- ‘teach them that self-knowledge, reflection, and decision-making precede personal change. Our desires are only as good as our concrete plans and our ability to follow the steps to achieve the goals.’ *Every New Year presents the opportunity for making resolutions and setting new goals. Do this as a family and identify the necessary steps to attain these goals.*
- ‘teach them to separate facts from opinions; objectivity from subjectivity; and the relationship between reasoning and feelings – which describes the different ways that our brains solve problems. Teach them the objective criteria underpinning right and wrong behaviour. Present arguments that show that morality is based on sound reasons. Present sound standards to evaluate right and wrong actions. Show them that true happiness depends on acting on our moral choices and that, in the long run, we are the biggest losers when our choices go against moral principles.’

The above is primarily done through discussions. The pandemic has presented many opportunities for families to watch and critique movies, news features, documentaries, TV programmes, and books. Use the opportunities to highlight ethical principles, for example: The ends do not justify the means; Self-giving is the Key to Happiness. Draw on your own personal experiences to support your moral value systems and listen to their perspectives.

Encourage the practice of analysing our motives – introspection, prayer, honestly, asking for advice, humility to accept feedback. *Ask their opinion on things as they get older. Help them to think broadly on issues. Have family meetings where everyone has a voice and is required to think about others.*




Parenting suggestions

- ‘Have/communicate to your children clear standards for: respect, cooperation, responsibility, work, and personal presentation’.
- ‘Teach the process of establishing standards, then judging according to those standards. Have discussions on the relative merits of toys, cars, ads etc., according to agreed criteria.’
- ‘Watch for signs of ideological influences – change in jargon, aggressiveness, change in friends. Help children to see through the ideological arguments which society bombards us with, for example, materialism, individuality, pleasure, and comfort as the goals of life - power and success at all cost. Show them that these values are only half-truths, based on an impoverished view of humankind. They tell little about lasting true love and happiness.’
- ‘Discourage them from giving opinions lightly. Help them to see the need to recognise their own prejudices, to hear from both sides and to get all the facts before making up their minds.’
- ‘Have discussions but avoid arguments, which usually arise when two parties have not agreed on the facts or on criteria to judge those facts. Emotions cloud rationality and the teenager is likely to become intimidated, resentful, and insincere. When you do have an argument, talk afterwards, clarify your goals and values. Also reconsider sanctions that may have been excessive in the heat of the moment.’



Prudence



Practical judgment.

Prudence asks the question, "What is the right thing to do in this particular situation?" (common sense).

An example of prudence is organizing your study time before an exam.

Staying home before a final instead of going to a football or basketball game is prudent.



IF YOU WANT TO GROW SPIRITUALLY, DO NOT RELY ON YOUR OWN ABILITIES OR UPON HUMAN PRUDENCE AND TACTICS. RATHER, SURRENDER EVERYTHING INTO GOD'S HANDS.

DynamicCatholic.com

QUOTE TAKEN FROM MATTHEW JELLY'S SPORTSBOOKING BOOK THE NARROW PATH.

CHAPTER 4: Appreciation of Beauty in all Art forms



‘Modern Culture is at a crossroads in meshing our human creativity with its purpose:

We need to re-establish the links between

- Beauty and Order
- Beauty and what is fitting for a human being
- Beautiful works of art and a reflection on the reality around us.’

As parents we need to:

- teach a love of nature as a primary source of beauty in all art forms. *For example, taking walks outside; appreciating a sunset; revelling in a visit to the seaside to hear the sound, smells and sight of the ocean; embarking on hikes to waterfalls and other natural landmarks. Introduce your children to Pope Francis’ encyclical: Laudato Si’, on care for our common home, and embark with them on a journey of ecological conversion. Parents should take a lead in transforming the way we relate to our Creator and His Creation.*
- Avoid exposing children to mediocrity. *Let them experience excellence in music and the fine arts through positive examples from all genres.*
- Be confident in creating for your family a sheltered environment. You are buying time to form your children’s impressionable minds and attitudes. *This can be very challenging now with the “New Normal” of on-line schooling, but we, as parents, must continue to try.*
- Develop your own artistic sensibilities. Work at understanding music, art, film, and drama so you can nurture your children’s appreciation of these – by example and by immersing them in exemplars of beauty... fine music and literature of every variety, and visual beauty. It would be even better if you can practice some of these arts. You can teach children the link between craft, skill, and artistic achievement. *Example is the best teacher,*

but it is never too late to learn, why not learn along with your children, experience the immersion in the arts together.

- Shun cultural complacency. Be open to learning new things and share this fascination for learning with your children. *For example, by visiting/attending museums, concerts, exhibitions, and performances.*

Exposing children to music is helpful. Children who grow up in a musical household will often have an ear and love for music. Young children, especially “Trinbago” children, are very capable of picking up music at a very early age. See how quickly they pick up the jingle from advertisements or the choruses of our calypso music. We seem to have a natural sense of rhythm, as we move to all types of music.



All we, as parents need to do is to show lots of encouragement. Our family started having Christmas concerts from the time our children were very small, with just retelling the Christmas story. Eventually, as formal music training took place on the piano and in the choir at school, we realised that music needs to be fun to be really enjoyed. And after all the hours of practice, this should not be only for exams, but for others to enjoy and appreciate. We found that the best audience to begin with is always grandparents. So, our concerts became grander, with the singing of Christmas carols as well as parang. One year our daughter even performed a dance.

‘Artists and musicians need to remember that the art form is a way of serving others. We should aim higher. Through music we pass into a very real world of spirit and beauty, and the talents we possess are gifts that are meant to be shared with others.’

This COVID-19 period provides a golden opportunity for our children to further develop their skills on their particular instruments or begin to play a new musical instrument. Even though music schools may be temporarily closed, YouTube can

be accessed, at least to begin to learn the basics. Having an open mind and being receptive to many genres of music can also enable your children to be willing to listen to your preferences. Music is meant to unite, not divide.

*Our family, after building up the love and confidence of performing for family and friends, was eventually asked to perform for Sr. Jean's Christmas concert, and then for her concert at St. Joseph's Convent, Port of Spain. Seven years later we are a family parang group called: **La Familia de la Paranda**. And during the year we perform as **#Goodvibesing**, bringing lots of joy to audiences on youtube.*

The annual Trinidad and Tobago's Music Festival, provides a great opportunity for schools to showcase the talent of their pupils, thus providing opportunities for young people to practice and develop their self-confidence as they perform. This enables the beauty of the artforms to be presented to audiences so that the public can fully appreciate them. This experience has been beneficial to my children in developing their talents. Also, the opportunities to sing in the Liturgy at Mass, both at Sacred Heart Boys, as well as in their parish, have helped to nurture their musical talents.

Here are some useful quotations about Music:

“Music is the language of the spirit. It opens the secret of life bringing peace, abolishing strife.”– **Kahlil Gibran**

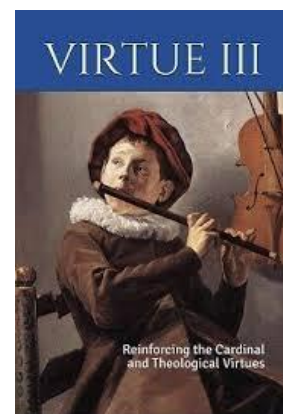
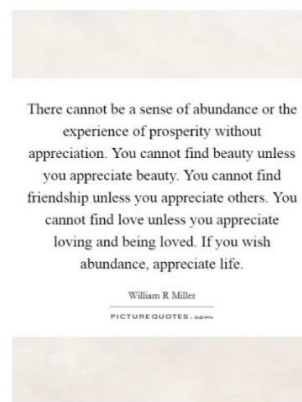
“If Music is a Place — then Jazz is the City, Folk is the Wilderness, Rock is the Road, Classical is a Temple.”– **Vera Nazarin**

“Music is the universal language of mankind.”– **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

“Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without.”– **Confucius**

“Where words fail, music speaks.”– **Hans Christian Anderson**

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.”– **Plato**

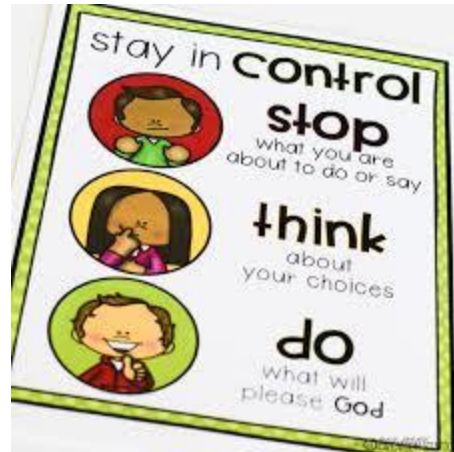


CHAPTER 5: EMOTIONAL CONTROL

TEMPERANCE

Emotional Control (Self Control)

Teaching emotional awareness to children.



‘The goal of emotional education is to teach children to manage their feelings, lest their feelings manage them. Around 350BC, Aristotle described a person whose appetites and emotions were given free reign as a “*disordered soul*”. Yet emotional management requires emotional awareness. One teacher sums up some of the benefits of such awareness:

“For children to recognize butterflies in the stomach, clenching of the gut and tensing of shoulders, even the sense that they are uncomfortable in certain situations, allows them to make better choices. Emotions are also social signals which help us to recognize emotions in others, empathise and act together.” Daniel Goleman’s work on emotional intelligence has highlighted the life skills associated with rich emotional life.’

‘It can help us to have a basic understanding of the science of emotion. Psychologists describe emotion and passions as the interface between our sense experience and our minds. There is consensus that a major neural pathway for emotions lies deep in the geography of the brain through what science has named the *amygdala*. These emotion circuits are already hardwiring at birth, based on the experiences of the infant. These circuits equip us to draw on a reflex response rather than the slower cognitive response when the situation demands. This accounts for the power of emotions and how they can seem to short circuit the cognitive at times. In his most recent work, *Social Intelligence*, Goleman explains the dynamic at work: the immediacy of emotional reaction to experience contrasts with cognitive pathways whereby we can choose how we act.’




SELF-CONTROL

Choosing to do what is right
when I feel like doing wrong

‘Margot Sunderland in *The Science of Parenting* writes of recent discoveries of psychopathology: “Brain scans show that many violent adults are still driven, just like infants, by their ancient rage/fear and defence/attack responses deep in the mammalian and reptilian parts of the brain. The brain scans show all too little activity in the parts of the higher brain that naturally regulate and modify raging feelings.” Aristotle and the psychopathologists would agree on many things.’

‘So, let us teach children some simple physiological processes that are operating... that in carrying out certain actions, chemicals are released at the junctions of nerves causing varying sensations of pleasure or stress. No more or less than that. We must raise children so that their deepest aspirations are higher than to maximize the chemical “hits” they may experience. Of course, we would instill in them the dangers of drug abuse, and that this is contrary to the Church’s teaching that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and we have a duty to promote its well-being.’

‘Let us raise children to have ‘trained’ their *amygdala* not to take certain matters into their own hands in situations that are not real emergencies. A reflex emotional response has great power, but it is undisciplined and dangerous. We need to model reflective behaviours for the young people in our care: ways of getting the pathways of processing right, developing habits of thinking before acting, managing our fears, verifying our data before judging, getting both sides of the situation before deciding. And we need to coach them *patiently* and correct them *calmly* when they fail to act reasonably. In particular, when the emotions of adolescence are in turmoil, the nurturing adults in that teenager’s life have a duty not to reflect the very emotions they are seeking to correct.’

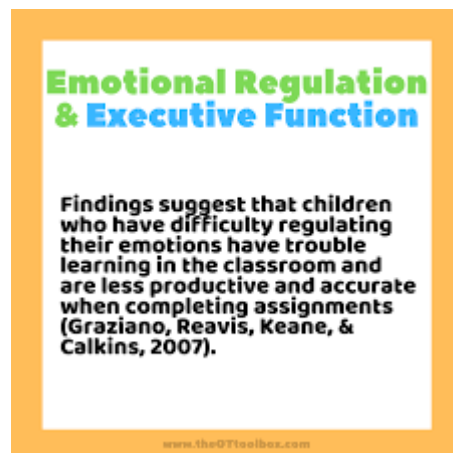


Remember: When you look at your child you are looking in a mirror. By looking at our children we learn about the defects in our own example and we must readjust.

Teaching emotional control: example

Control your emotions, don't let them control you.

alittlemore
by amy



‘We need to be sensitive to a subtle buildup of negative example. Yet, how easy it is to scar children in their development. We must remember that children are not only vulnerable to physical abuse. Because children are impressionable, abuse may be emotional, moral, or intellectual. The care we take now will impact dramatically on that child’s chances of a happy, balanced adult life.’

‘Everything parents say and do leaves an impression. Children will seek to copy those they admire. The challenge for us adults is that, in every way, we strive to give good examples to children.’

‘By looking at children we learn about the defects in our own example and we must readjust. Aristotle’s saying, *“The child is father of the man”*, can have various levels of meaning. Not only do we see a future adult in the child, but also, we adults see in our children our own character strengths and shortcomings. For example, honest parents realise that if their child is short tempered, it may well be because they themselves may have a “short fuse”.’

‘Parents would do well, when they get annoyed with their children, to ask themselves where the child learned this behaviour. Either they learned it at home, ultimately from the parent, or they learned it from their peers or from media influences.’

A little introspection may show us that we are guilty of the same behaviour that offend us, e.g., certain phrases, body language, even “steupsing”. I have lived it! So true.

‘Most importantly of all, we must give the example that our priorities in life bring us deep peace and happiness. Teenagers are sizing up their parents’ values. Adolescence is the time of life when a young person is sorting out the values that he or she wants to adopt for life. Without thinking too much about the theory,

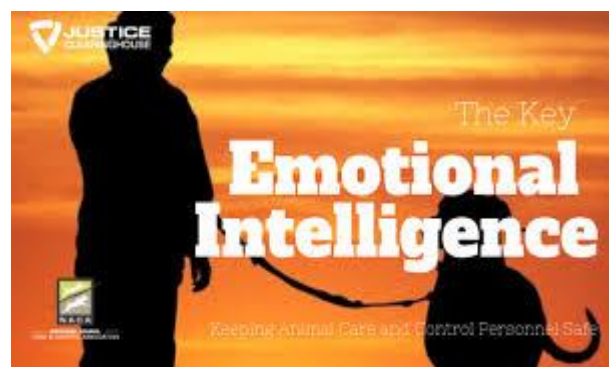
teenagers are deciding what is going to make them happy in life. They are weighing up the values of those adults around them.’

‘Parents want to pass on their values to their children but not all succeed. Why do some seem to fail? Sometimes even examples do not seem to work. We have all met hard working parents who seem to have lazy children. Every church has parents whose children would not think of coming with the family on Sundays. I have met health-conscious parents whose children smoke, drink and even take drugs. How can this be?’

‘Adolescents particularly need to see that the values parents are teaching work for themselves first of all. Otherwise, why should children pay any attention to what they are being told.’

Unfortunately, many times they may compare their parents’ unhappy reality to that of make-believe false reality of social media and television and decide to choose the latter.

Teaching emotional control: family culture



‘Choose our words and our faces carefully. Take great care to manage the tone in the home. It is important for parents to create a positive atmosphere in the home. *The 200 square centimetres* of a parent’s face possibly does more than anything else to set the tone... of loving engagement with others, or preoccupation with one’s own thoughts and difficulties. As Dr Ross Campbell insists, it is the parents’ responsibility to establish the emotional atmosphere in the home, and not a child’s responsibility. Parents must not abdicate this duty.’ *One habit that my husband tries to practice is to listen to soothing or positive podcasts or music on the way home, from work to establish a more relaxed frame of mind before entering the home.*

‘A family where common courtesies are central. Jim Stenson talks of four key words, or expressions, that we must be in the habit of using ourselves and that we must teach to children... *please, thank you, I’m sorry, I give you my word.* When we do not work at it, we end up taking others for granted.’

‘The child who makes little effort to be courteous, could easily become the adult who is quite unpleasant to be around, or is self-absorbed throughout the day. Much of this comes back to the virtues of self-control and respect for others. These four key words are, in the end, only words. But if one puts one’s heart into these words, they will build habits of real respect for others.’

‘When these four key words are not present, be patient. It is said that Abraham Lincoln once was bowled over by an angry young man running through the corridor. Far from responding angrily, he asked, “*Young man, what’s troubling you?*” Let us not overreact to the impoliteness of children, but we should not ignore it either. We must give examples of the value of being patient and help the young person realise that patience is a useful skill that will improve his/her life. When we react angrily, **we confuse the correction with emotion.** If a child listens resentfully it will be much harder to make the lesson stick. This is very important with regard to dealing with teenagers, and quite a valuable technique.’

Create a family where the members listen to each other.



‘Only if I respect others will I listen to them. And if I listen, I will understand why the other person thinks and acts the way he or she does, and I will engage in communication, the starting point of a relationship. It is when people do not listen that they dismiss others, put them down, or make them the target of cheap insults.’

‘By listening, children come to an appreciation of what makes another happy or sad. Only through conversation are we able to understand the complex attitudes of others, or empathise with a loved one’s anxieties. If children have never learned to listen to others, then they may end up being complacent, unable to relate to others, and possibly quite selfish. Conversation is an essential life skill.’

On the family level, the art of conversation can easily be lost in the background noise. Most of us with teenagers with cell phones live through the experience of having them in our cars, but plugged into a different frequency. One strategy that

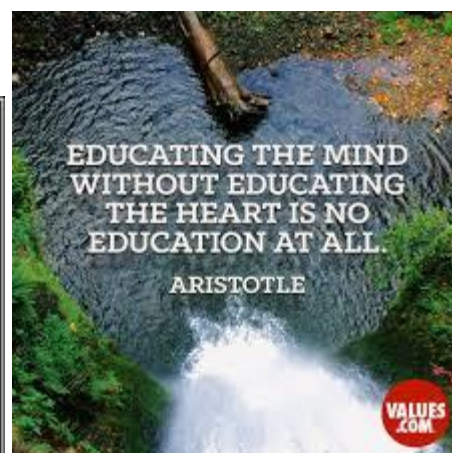
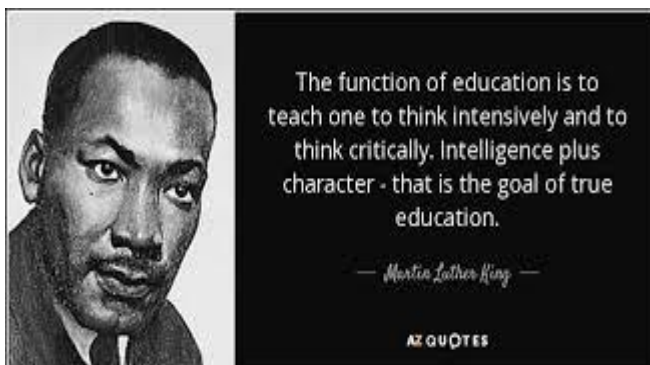
our family tries to employ is that the one who is in the passenger seat, should not have on headphones, so there can be communication with the driver.

‘The art of conversation is not something out of Jane Austen’s novels. Yet it will become a lost art in a family that eats each night in front of the television, or when, as in many families now, members eat at different times, often on their own.’

Teaching emotional control: managing electronic inputs

‘Children are very impressionable. We ignore Plato’s timeless warning at great cost to our children: *“Shall we just carelessly allow children to hear casual tales which may be devised by casual persons? We cannot... Anything received into the mind at that age is likely to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tales which the young hear first should be models of virtuous thought.”* Parents must be awake to pitfalls for a teenager: addictions to TV, gaming and chat rooms, pornography, snacking at will, continued failure to stick to responsible study routines, sloppy habits of getting up, and of going to bed at any hour, etc. Once vices of poor self-control are ingrained, it is harder, although not impossible, to unlearn them. But if those vices continue to flourish in adult life, they may have detrimental consequences.’

‘It was written of Socrates that *“He very easily resisted the temptation to drink more than he needed”*. There is something in all of us that admires that degree of self-possession. We recognise that such self-control is the mark of someone who is exceptional. And deep in our hearts we realise, too, that it probably made him happier than others around him. He had well-developed management of his feelings.’



‘In *Educating for Character*, Dr Thomas Lickona refers to studies showing that the average U.S. child watches 30 hours of TV per week. By 16 that child will have witnessed 200,000 acts of violence on the screen, and by 18 years, 40,000

scenes of sexual immorality. None of us can afford to underestimate the impact on an impressionable child of continual exposure to compromising material. Lickona reminds us to be selective viewers, using the good in television and the internet and resolutely vetting out anything which can damage.'

'Parents must keep a close eye **on the rogue influences of technology** that can easily purvey a stealth culture alien to the family's values. One father said to his son, "*You were born an original. Don't die a copy!*" Yet so often we find groups of teens who dress the same, think the same, and talk the same. Cyber peer groups, chat rooms, soap celebrities, and hip-hop fashions, can be frighteningly powerful. Many years ago, a group of fathers of 13-year-old boys nominated "*managing the technology*" as their biggest parenting challenge.' *This is pervasive now during COVID-19 with online schooling and the amount of time being spent on the internet. Again, internet filters and television rules are only effective to a point. Children can all too easily buy themselves a second phone or flick between screens. Self-management must be a major part of the solution.*



First, be positive. Use television and the internet to enrich family life. *One of our family's regular routines are Friday evenings dinner and a movie. Television brings to children so much potential for learning, for experiencing new things, for developing solidarity with the less fortunate.* A good strategy is to watch television **with** your children, so you can talk about content, and watch their reactions. David Isaacs emphasizes the value of forming children's critical thinking, focusing on what is worth watching. He says, "*Switch off the television, and then choose only the very best programs to watch.*" *Again, agree on a family policy and help your children manage themselves. For a wide range of ages, time could be allocated for the entire family to watch/enjoy a movie, and then when the younger ones go to sleep the parents and older ones can watch more mature, meaningful shows that have been previously been selected. There was a period of DVD selections, now movies are searched up on-line, and there is the option of Netflix, which my family prefers not to have, as it introduces different challenges of control and management.*

'But TV also brings some considerable negatives to family life. In school surveys, arguments about the television have been nominated as the greatest cause of

friction in the home. Isaacs insists: “*Let’s raise children to be producers, not consumers*”. He encourages parents to base family life on the concept of service. Television, rather than improving family life, can do the opposite, creating, besides the arguments, passive consumers who lose the capacity to think critically.’

‘Cut down the sheer hours spent in front of the television and the internet. For example, it is humanly possible to arrange a living room so that television is not the centerpiece. Be prepared to lead by example. It is useless telling a child to go and study when the parents are ensconced in front of their favourite show. Some families find it works to treat television like any other electronic device, only turning it on when it is needed. Channel surfing is out.’

Our family insists that television is not on during weekdays, except for news. It is a big distraction to a student who is looking for any excuse to walk away from their school work. The issue is two-fold: actual content is a problem; but also the very passivity, loss of will-power, and even aimlessness that can develop in children who watch a lot of screens – be it television, I-pads, tablets, cell-phones. The ‘New Normal’ increases this challenge, as not only is school on-line, but so is communication with friends, home-work, research and even reading for pleasure. Of course, gaming, which we do not have in our household (until each child gets their own phone after form 5) introduces a new level of addiction (Please see reference to Loop technology at the end)

‘It is well documented that the Internet has the power to isolate the individual, promote false aspirations, and alienate parents and children, James Stenson writes, “*Television is not life. This is a life lesson that young people must learn.*”



‘The bottom line is that researchers are finding that parents do need to exercise more control over their children’s television viewing. One found that, although 87 % of parents and teachers were concerned with the level of violence in television and video games, parents continued to allow their children to watch such programmes. Could it be that too many parents, rather than engaging in the

battle of wills, simply take the soft option and leave the television on? Haven't we all heard the withdrawal screams of a four-year-old when the television is turned off? Time and again, parents are saying that it is a tremendous battle to change children's viewing habits once they are established. What are needed are positive routines from the start.'

'There is a darker side to all this. Modern criminal history is now glutted with cases of bizarre murders by impressionable and unbalanced young persons with a fascination with violence, even flagging beforehand their intentions by rants on YouTube or Facebook. Children have a right not to be exposed to products that could harm them. We must know what our children are watching and playing.'

The documentary "The Social dilemma" gives a deeper insight into the addictive nature of social media. Parents would do well to watch and learn what is really happening behind the scenes and insist on specific times (if any) that all persons (including parents) should spend, as well as "Loop technology" that is designed into many online and video games. If these tech experts are studying our brains, we need to understand what is happening and conscientiously choose different behaviours. With online schooling during COVID-19, we, as parents need to have our senses heightened, and perhaps select more online security as many times we are not aware if the online activities pertain to schoolwork or not. So, monitoring websites visited and time spent online outside of school hours may be a worthwhile investment, as well as cutting off internet usage after 10 p.m. Developing self-control is key. Pre-COVID-19 the ability to monitor was easier. However, even the ability to have the computer in a public place has changed if you have many children, some assistance with monitoring may be needed.



CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, as I stated earlier, there is no one-size-fits-all handbook that can be recommended when it comes to nurturing values and virtues in our children. Often, we, as parents, will learn by trial and error. However, it is our duty, since we brought our children into this world, to do our best to nurture in them the kind of values and virtues that will help them to chart a course in life. What we instill in them may greatly affect the persons they will become. I pray that the Lord will guide each of us parents to do what is right as we prepare our children for life in a rapidly changing world. God bless us all.

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The Cardinal/Moral Virtues

Gaming and The Social Media

The link to view The Social Dilemma

<https://fbbox.to/movie/the-social-dilemma-k37jw>

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PRAYERS



We are praying together, entrusting ourselves to the intercession of St. Joseph, Guardian of the Holy Family, Guardian of all our families. Even the carpenter of Nazareth knew the precariousness and bitterness. Though he worried about the future, he knew how to walk the darkness of certain moments, always letting himself be guided by God's will without reservation. -Pope Francis, March 18, 2020

Prayer to St Joseph

***Protect**, O Holy Guardian, this our nation.*

***Enlighten** those responsible for the common good, so that they might know — like you do — how to care for those entrusted to their responsibility.*

***Grant** intelligence of knowledge to those seeking adequate means for the health and physical well-being of their brothers and sisters.*

***Sustain** those who are spending themselves for those in need, even at the cost of their own safety: volunteers, nurses, doctors who are on the front lines in curing the sick.*

***Bless**, O St Joseph, the Church: beginning with her ministers, make her the sign and instrument of your light and your goodness.*

***Accompany**, O St Joseph, our families: with your prayerful silence, create harmony between parents and their children, in a special way with the youngest.*

***Preserve** the elderly from loneliness: grant that no one might be left in desperation from abandonment and discouragement.*

***Comfort** those who are the most frail, encourage those who falter, intercede for the poor. With the Virgin Mother, beg the Lord to liberate the world from every form of pandemic. Amen*

Prayer for Responsibility

Father,
Sometimes bad things happen in
my life and it's my own fault.
Please help me take responsibility
for my own actions and not
blame anyone else.
And, Father, tonight would you
give me rest?
In Jesus name,
Amen

prayer.org/facebook

We must never
forget that the
natural environment
is a collective good,
the patrimony of all
humanity and the
responsibility of
everyone.
- Pope Francis

@CatholicBishops



PRAYERS FOR WHEN YOUR KIDS ARE
OUT OF CONTROL

**LORD,
THANK YOU FOR MY CHILDREN.
THANK YOU THAT I GET TO WALK
THROUGH LIFE WITH THEM AND
SHAPE THEIR LIVES
DRAMATICALLY. IT'S AN
UNBELIEVABLE PRIVILEGE AND
RESPONSIBILITY. LORD, ALWAYS
LEAD ME IN THIS VENTURE.
AMEN.**

SPIRITUALLYHUNGRY.COM

A PARENT'S PRAYER

THANK YOU FOR MY CHILDREN LORD;
I KNOW THEY ARE A GIFT FROM YOU.
I NEED YOUR STRENGTH AND WISDOM DAILY
TO TRAIN THEM IN THE WAY THEY SHOULD GO.
GIVE ME PATIENCE AND A JOYFUL HEART;
LET ME BE AN EXAMPLE
OF YOUR LOVE AND FORGIVENESS.
THANK YOU, FATHER,
FOR THE HONOR OF BEING A PARENT.
AMEN.



Prayer for Perseverance/Diligence

Here is my prayer for the day:
May I live this day with
thanksgiving in my soul,
compassion in my heart,
creativity in my mind,
kindness in my words, and
diligence in my work.

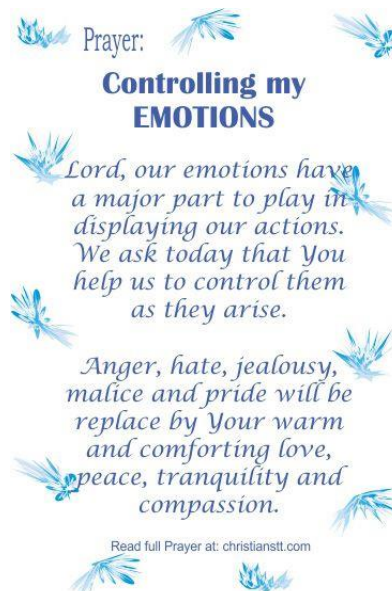
paulpwong.wordpress.com

QuotePixel.com

Pope Francis' prayer for young people, their diligence and courage:

“Lord, Lord God, look upon these young people. You know each one of them. You know what they think. You know that they want to go forward, to make a better world. Lord, make them seekers of goodness and happiness. Make them diligent in their journey and in their encounters with others. Make them bold in serving; make them humble in seeking their roots and nurturing them to bear fruit, to have an identity, to belong. May the Lord, the Lord God, accompany all these young people on their journey and bless each one. Amen.”

Prayer for Wisdom & Controlling Emotions



Prayer adapted from Pope Francis' talk on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

Lord, we know that the Holy Spirit is always with us, always in us, in our hearts. We know that if we listen to him, he teaches us this path of wisdom, he gifts us wisdom which is seeing with God's eyes, listening with God's ears, loving with God's heart, judging things with God's judgment.

Lord help us to cherish this gift of the Holy Spirit and the **gift of wisdom** that teaches us to see with God's eyes, to feel with God's heart to speak with God's words! And with this wisdom help us to move forward, build the family, the Church and we can all be sanctified. We ask for this grace of wisdom today. Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, we ask you for this gift.

Prayer for Appreciation



DEAR GOD,
I WANT TO TAKE A MINUTE.
NOT TO ASK FOR ANYTHING
FROM YOU, BUT TO SIMPLY SAY
THANK YOU, FOR ALL I HAVE.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

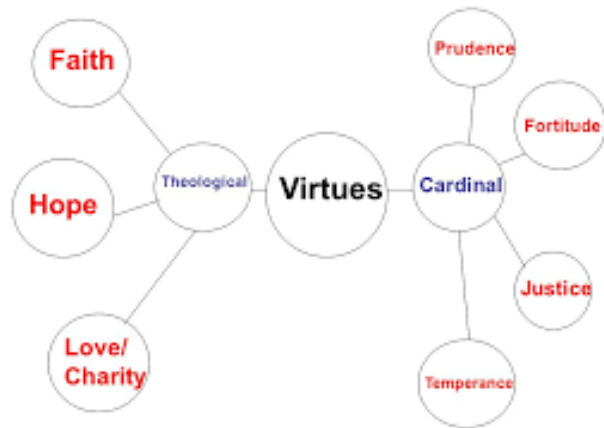


O God open our hearts to the gifts of your Holy Spirit as we seek to promote Your reign here in Trinidad and Tobago. Help us to become a nation where peace is built with justice and justice is guided by love, love of God and love of neighbour. Help us to rediscover and live our faith so that our concern for social justice will be transformed into constructive action as we spread the Good News in this land. We ask you, O God, to guide and bless all our efforts. Inspire us as you did the Prophets of old with courage, imagination, and creativity. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



The Cardinal & Theological Virtues

- **The Virtue** - A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good but to give the best of himself.
- **Human Virtues** are firm attitudes, stable dispositions; habitual perfections of will and interest that governs our actions order our passions and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They make possible ease, self mastery and joy in leading a morally good life.



The Cardinal & Theological Virtues

SUMMARY

- The four cardinal virtues are natural.
- The seven capital virtues are the roots from which all other virtues flow.
- Additional moral virtues are included among the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit.
- There are also five intellectual virtues

5 THINGS THAT WE LEARN FROM OUR FAMILY
BY POPE FRANCIS

- **IT OPENS CHILDREN'S EYES ONTO LIFE**
In their parents they see human relationships built on love.
- **IT TEACHES THE VALUE OF BONDS**
Of fidelity, sincerity, trust, cooperation, respect.
- **IT INVITES PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN RELATIONSHIPS**
It encourages people to believe even in difficult situations.
- **IT TEACHES PEOPLE TO HONOR THEIR WORD**
It shows respect for others and their personal boundaries.
- **TO CARE FOR THE SMALLEST MEMBERS**
To care for the most vulnerable and the wounded.

POPE FRANCIS • GENERAL AUDIENCE OCTOBER 7, 2015 CatholicLink

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