

Making Virtues Visible in our Catholic Schools

Taken from Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Cooperative's

Curriculum Support for Catholic Schools www.ourlanguageourstory.org

Virtues & Themes Page: http://www.ourlanguageourstory.org/virtues_themes.html

Theological Virtue: Faith

A new way of seeing, a shared way of believing.

The language of our story speaks of **faith**. The theological virtue of faith is God's gift to us at Baptism. Christian faith transforms our minds with God's self-understanding. Faith gives us a new way...

- of seeing: seeing God, ourselves and everything around us,
- of believing: what Christ has taught us in the Gospels and handed on to us through His Church.

The faith we share through Baptism into Christ's body (the Church), leads us to believe, pray and to worship. It is witnessed in love of God and in love of neighbour, made in God's image.

Faith is visible in our Catholic schools whenever there is trust in God, belief, prayer, worship and the witness of love.

Theological Virtue: Hope

Trusting God's promises in prayer and work for justice.

The language of our story speaks of hope. The theological virtue of Christian hope is God's gift to us at Baptism, which unites us with the risen Christ. By hope, we desire the happiness of the Kingdom and eternal life. Hope makes us able to trust in God's promises, no matter what the obstacles. It keeps us from despair and presumption, and is expressed principally in prayer. Hopeful people live the Gospel with joy; they work for peace and justice on earth despite facing many obstacles. They trust that God's plan will be fulfilled, even if not in their lifetime.

Hope is visible in our Catholic schools whenever we find prayer, trust in God's faithfulness, and work for peace and justice.

Theological Virtue: Love

Loving God above all things and others as God loves them.

The language of our story speaks of **love**. The theological virtue of love is God's gift to us at Baptism. The gift of Christian love enables us to love God above all things and to love others as God loves them. This was the great insight of St. Thérèse, who said, *we have been made by love for love*. God's gift of love directs and gives strength to our life of virtue. Our model of love is Jesus, who laid down His life so that we might have life to the full (Jn. 10: 10). Our encounters with Jesus in His Gospel and the sacraments nurture us so that we can love as He has loved us.

Love is visible in our Catholic schools wherever the kindness, service and self-giving of Jesus are found.

Cardinal Virtue: Prudence

Seeking, judging, acting – with confidence and love

The language of our story speaks of **prudence** or good sense. The cardinal virtue of *Prudence (good sense)* has been called “the watchful eye of love.” Prudence has three steps: seeking the proper, most loving thing to do; judging what is the best choice; and confidently acting. A prudent person asks, “What is the right, most loving thing to do?” She considers others’ advice, and looks to the Gospel and Church teaching to guide her conscience. She prays and thinks things through, then confidently acts in truth and love. In this way, practicing prudence unites us more closely both with God and neighbour.

Prudence is visible in our Catholic schools when we reflect as Jesus’ disciples and act in His love.

Cardinal Virtue: Justice

Seeking the good, meeting obligations to God and neighbour

The language of our story speaks of **justice**. The cardinal virtue of *Justice* is found in the character of persons who practice...

- seeking what is good in every situation, and
- living in right relationship with God and neighbour.

A just person fulfills their obligations to God in prayer and worship, and to neighbour in mercy and fairness.

Justice is visible in our Catholic schools whenever we see people striving to meet their obligations to God and neighbour.

Cardinal Virtue: Temperance

Enjoying life’s pleasures in keeping with the Gospel

The language of our story speaks about **temperance**. The cardinal virtue of *temperance* (moderation) is the practice of enjoying life’s pleasures in keeping with the call of the Gospel. A temperate person practices staying away from excesses. She or he strives...

- to exercise moderation in eating and drinking,
- to exercise self-control in emotional expression,
- to practice balance in living responsibly,
- to form chaste, healthy friendships,
- to be honest about who they are (humility).

Practicing temperance frees us from slavery to unhealthy habits so that we can live a fully human life as God intended for us in Christ.

The virtue of temperance is visible in our Catholic schools whenever moderation, chastity and humble attitudes are practiced.

Cardinal Virtue: Fortitude

Practicing the good and just in challenging situations, patience with obstacles.

The language of our story speaks about **fortitude**. The cardinal virtue of *Fortitude* (courage) involves practicing what is good and just when it is difficult or even dangerous. A person of fortitude practices patience when meeting obstacles while working to do what is right, even when others criticize them or remain silent.

Fortitude is visible in our Catholic schools whenever we see persons defending truth and kindness in challenging situations.