

Temperance – *Enjoying life’s pleasures in keeping with the Gospel*

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 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.

Temperance is about freedom – freedom to be all we were meant to be as God’s children. This freedom comes tied to responsibilities – to ourselves, to friends and family and to our communities. We depend on one another as members of Christ’s body, and as citizens of our world. And so, we need to make choices that help us to be there for one another as God calls us – parents, educators, priests, religious and friends.

Practicing temperance is about living well. This means nourishing ourselves with proper food and sleep, and staying away from any kind of excess that takes away our energy and determination to live and work as God calls us – as students, parents, pastors and educators. A temperate person will limit their intake of food and alcohol, and time with the television, internet or video games when others need their help.

Temperance is also about striving to treat one another respectfully within our state in life – as young people, single, married or celibate persons. We all need one another’s friendship, kindness and good example. Practicing temperance helps us seek what is best for one another in unselfish ways.

Temperance is really about being our true selves. We are God’s beloved children. Male and female, we are the masterpieces of God’s creation. But we are not perfect. We sin and make mistakes and need the help of our Creator to live a good and happy life. Practicing temperance means staying away from exaggerated positive and negative ideas about who we are. None of us is a hopeless case, and even the greatest saint still very much needs God’s help. To be our true selves, we need to seek God’s help in prayer and the sacraments, and neighbour’s friendship with good judgement and kindness. When we practice honesty about who we are, there is room for God and others to reach out to us in our need.

We were made to live in the freedom of God’s children. When we practice temperance, we say “no” to some things so that we can say a much bigger “yes” to God’s wonderful plan for our lives. Practice temperance to be free to be all you can be, and let your light shine!