

# Lesson 21

## *The Virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*

### **Concepts of Faith**

**What are the three theological virtues?**

Faith, hope, and charity.

**What do faith, hope, and charity make it possible for us to do?**

Faith, hope, and charity make it possible for us to believe in God; to desire to share God's life and to trust in God; and to love God, ourselves, and others.

**What are the four main moral virtues?**

Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

**Why are they called moral virtues?**

They help us lead moral, or good, lives by helping us to treat persons and things in the right way.

### ***Grace***

Adam and Eve sinned when they chose to say "No" to God. They disobeyed God. Their sin was the first sin and is called the original sin. When they sinned, Adam and Eve lost God's life, grace. Since Adam and Eve, all people have been conceived and born with original sin except Jesus and Mary. In us, original sin means that we are conceived and born without grace, God's life.

Jesus was sent by God the Father to teach us who we are and show us how we should act. Jesus was sent also to return God the Father's love and help us to return God's love. In other words, Jesus was sent by God the Father to restore grace through His death and Resurrection. The usual way we receive God's grace for the first time is through Baptism. Baptism takes away original sin and gives us a share of God's life. Through our baptisms, we each became members of the Church and capable of living with God in heaven.

Grace is a supernatural gift from God. In other words, we cannot obtain it through our own power. God gives it to us. Along with grace, God gives us in Baptism the three theological virtues, the moral virtues, and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. When we exercise these theological and moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, God's life is strengthened in us.

## *The Theological Virtues*

The three theological virtues that we are given in Baptism are faith, hope, and charity. These virtues—or powers—make it possible for us to believe in God; to desire to share God’s life and to trust in God; and to love God, ourselves, and others. The three theological virtues all refer to God.

The theological virtue of faith is the supernatural power that makes it possible for us to believe in God and all that He has revealed. Some of the truths that God has revealed are impossible for us to know on our own. But through the virtue of faith, we can believe everything that God has revealed.

For example, we believe that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. When we look at the Eucharist, it appears to be bread and wine. Faith helps us to believe that the Eucharist is the same Christ Who suffered, died, and rose from the dead.

The theological virtue of hope is the supernatural power that makes it possible for us to desire to share God’s life and to trust that, if we follow Jesus, we will share His life here on earth and someday in heaven.

The theological virtue of charity (or love) is the most important of the three theological virtues. “So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor 13:13). Charity is the supernatural power that makes it possible for us to love God above all else and to love ourselves and others as images of God.

For example, we exercise the virtue of charity by taking time to pray. Perhaps we have filled our day with so many activities that we haven’t taken any time to pray. By the time we go to bed we are so tired that we just don’t have the energy or ambition to pray. But, knowing that we haven’t prayed that day, and despite being tired, we kneel to pray, to give praise to God. We are exercising the virtue of charity—showing God love even though we are very tired.

**Read the following story and answer the questions about it.**

### *Elizabeth and Her Grandmother*

Elizabeth and her grandmother loved each other very much. Elizabeth lived near her grandmother, so Elizabeth visited her grandmother almost daily. Often, when they visited, they would talk about some of the things Elizabeth did at school or learned there. One day they talked about heaven and what they believed it was like. Elizabeth’s grandmother said that it was a place of perfect happiness and peace. She also told Elizabeth that she wasn’t afraid of dying, because she trusted God. Elizabeth told her grandmother she wasn’t quite as brave about dying, but she also believed that heaven was a place of perfect happiness and peace.

A few months later, Elizabeth’s grandmother became very ill. As the days went on, her grandmother grew weaker. Elizabeth prayed hard for her grandmother, trusting that

God would keep her in His care. When Elizabeth's grandmother died, Elizabeth was very sad. But she also trusted in God's love and prayed that her grandmother was in heaven, happy and at peace. Though she missed her grandmother very much, Elizabeth believed she would see her grandmother someday in heaven.

1. Hope is the supernatural power that makes it possible for us to desire to share God's life and to trust in God. Give an example of how Elizabeth exercised the virtue of hope.

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2. Faith is the supernatural power that makes it possible for us to believe in God and all He has revealed. Give an example of how Elizabeth exercised the virtue of faith.

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3. Charity is the supernatural power that makes it possible for us to love God above all else and love ourselves and others as images of God. Give an example of how Elizabeth exercised the virtue of charity.

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## *The Four Main Moral Virtues*

In Baptism, God gives us the moral virtues along with grace. The four main moral virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. These are called moral virtues because they help us to lead moral, or good, lives. They help us to treat persons and things in the right way.

The virtue of prudence is the supernatural power that helps us to know the right choices to make in specific situations. The virtue of justice is the supernatural power that helps us to give people what belongs to them. The virtue of fortitude is the supernatural power that helps us to do the right thing even when it is difficult to do. Sometimes fortitude is called courage. The virtue of temperance is the supernatural power that helps us to control our desires and to use correctly the things that please the senses.

*The four main moral virtues help us to act as images of God.*

*The following story is about someone who practiced the moral virtues.*



### *Katie's Dilemma*

Katie's aunt is disabled and lives in a health-care center. Katie's mother visits the aunt every week, but Katie does not always go along with her. Katie feels uncomfortable when she sees so many people who are disabled, elderly, and sick. This week, Katie's mother has asked her to come along to visit her aunt. "She's always so happy to see you", her mother says. Katie doesn't want to go, but

she knows that visiting her aunt is the right thing to do. So she agrees to accompany her mother.

Just before Katie and her mother leave the house, Katie receives a phone call from her friend Angie. Angie is excited and invites Katie to come to her house to go swimming. Katie would love to go swimming with Angie, but Katie explains that she had agreed to go with her mother to visit her aunt that afternoon. Angie is disappointed and tries to talk Katie into changing her mind, to come swimming instead. Katie thinks about telling her mom that she would rather go swimming with Angie than go through the discomfort of a visit to the health-care center. Swimming seems like much more fun! But then Katie decides that visiting her aunt is the better thing to do. She knows that both her mother and her aunt will be disappointed if she doesn't come for the visit. She would rather go swimming, but she decides to stick to her agreement to visit her aunt. She knows it would not be right for her to break her promise to her mother. Katie tells Angie she will call her when she returns from visiting her aunt.