



Young Adult

"I live, now not I; but Christ lives in me." Gal. 2:20

Introduction:

We live in an increasingly secular culture, where to get ahead, or even just succeed in business, we are trained to be cut-throat and to push the other down. To say that this approach to business is against the Catholic Christian message is an understatement! However, many young adults struggle with how to incorporate their Christian Virtue into their career path, as they seem to be at odds. Yet, by modeling a life of virtue out amongst the world, today's young adult can evangelize his or her co-workers in an effective and transparent way. This sheet lists some suggestions on how to live out your faith in the midst of a busy and secular world.

Formation:

In order to live a life of virtue, one must first know the virtues:

The four moral virtues:

- *Prudence:* As defined by St. Thomas Aquinas, prudence is the 'right method of conduct.' It is the struggle to act in a manner consistent with our Christian beliefs. It is the ability to make the correct decision when facing a matter of choice. Prudence has as its goal the acting out of the other virtues, hence it is seen not only as moral but also intellectual. The opposite of prudence is viciousness.
- *Justice:* As we are essentially persons in community with one another, justice orders our dealings with our brothers and sisters. This virtue forms in the Disciple an inherent respect for the rights of others. It is here that we live out Jesus' command that 'no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for a friend.' As a response to justice, we recognize that we have been given many good gifts by God and our proper response is one of gratitude for the gifts received. The opposite of justice is narcissism.
- *Temperance:* The life of moderation is guided by the virtue of temperance in which reason trumps the voracious appetite of pleasure. Temperance enables the Christian to avoid the excesses and traps of modern materialism while also finding joy in the hidden pleasures of life. It is in this virtue that the Beatitudes, as articulated in the Sermon on the Mount, are lived out in daily life. The opposite of temperance is concupiscence, the blind giving into the appetite of the flesh.
- *Fortitude:* Going against one's own inclination of self preservation, fortitude is the virtue of bravery and having the strength of courage to live up to the difficult demands of discipleship, especially when it is uncomfortable or dangerous. This virtue encourages the disciple: to reach out for greatness; to live out the faith in bold and dynamic ways; to desire first and foremost the Kingdom of God and its righteousness; and to see the endeavors begun through to their final completion.

The three theological virtues:

- *Faith:* A free gift from God, the virtue of faith helps the mind see into the supernatural, into the very nature of our Triune God. With faith, we are able to read Divine Revelation and be moved in spirit to accept the mission God has set forth for each of us in our own unique way.
- *Hope:* Directed towards the future fulfillment of the faith we profess, hope orients the believer toward union with God in heaven. The virtue of hope directs the will to long for



the Beatific Vision, as outlined by St. Thomas Aquinas, as the goal of the Christian's life, to build a home not just here on earth, but an everlasting dwelling in heaven.

- **Charity:** In charity, the ultimate end of every Christian's life is achieved: union with God. According to St. Paul, this is the greatest of all gifts, for it is the one gift that finds its perfection and fulfillment in heaven. As Pope Benedict XVI described in his encyclical, *God is Love (Deus Caritas Est)*, this is the ultimate gift of love because in charity does the person sacrifice of themselves for the other, living out Jesus' great command: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for a friend." It is in the perfection of charity that we seek God in and of Himself, for He is the perfection of goodness.

For a further discussion on Virtue, see: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15472a.htm>

Application:

The most effective evangelization is one of personal witness and testimony. It is not enough to just say the words; we must also live out our commitment completely and consistently. We must desire to be saints alive in the world of today! What follows are suggestions of ways that each of the above listed virtues may come into play in the life of today's young adults.

Prudence: Making the right decision even when difficult.

- We are faced with difficult decisions throughout our lives. While usually it is a choice between two equal goods that causes difficulty, pressure from co-workers to participate in a morally objectionable action can be even more severe than doing the right thing. When faced with such decisions, draw on the virtue of prudence in making the correct decision regarding future steps.

Justice: Treating our brothers and sisters in fairness.

- The Golden Rule moderates the virtue of justice, where we treat others not only as we ourselves would want to be treated, but as if the other person were Christ in our midst. Justice demands that we respect the dignity and worth of each person, whether they be the corporate CEO or a homeless person on the street. No matter, we should treat all equally.

Temperance: Finding peace in the middle way.

- As careers begin to take shape, even the most committed of Catholic Christians can be caught up in the corporate rat race to get ahead and make as much money as possible. With the virtue of temperance, there is a balance in our lives between work and spirituality; between the commitments to the office and our family and friends; the obligations for Sunday Mass and daily prayer are fulfilled.

Fortitude: Strength to live up the Christian Ideals.

- Those who refuse to be shackled by the Golden Handcuffs, where the pursuit of material possession drives an ever increasing need for financial wealth, often experience a white or green martyrdom. The committed Catholic Christian could be passed over because he or she refuses to work 80+ hours a week because it detracts from the balance of family life. Is this a sacrifice you are willing to make for the sake of the Faith?

Faith: Trusting in things unseen.

- A quiet, yet determined show of faith is an effective means of evangelization. Wearing a crucifix and carrying a rosary are ways that the believer can show witness to the



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importance of Christ in his or her life. Also, displaying a picture of your favorite saint in your office or on your desk serves as a great conversation starter.

Hope: Longing for a future fulfillment.

- The life of the Christian is designed to build a place in heaven, therefore we willingly sacrifice the comforts of this world to build a dwelling in the Father's Eternal Mansion. True Christian hope is spontaneous and infectious, it spreads to those whom the believer interacts with.

Love: Sacrifice for the other.

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- 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for a friend.' With these words, Jesus gives a command to all His disciples down through time to be willing to put the other in front of one's self.



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