

The Virtue of Religion

The virtue of religion is that moral virtue which leads us to give God the worship due to him as the first principle of all things. It is the most important of all the moral virtues because it affects our relationship to God. It is closely associated with faith, hope and charity. All that we are and have comes from God. It is only fitting that we give him thanks and praise, honor and glory. We do that both with our internal and external acts.

2. We can and should worship God in many ways:

- by thinking often of how good God is in himself and how good he has been to us.
- by thanking him often, for showering his fatherly love and care upon us.
- by attending the Mass often since that is the most perfect act of worship (Cf. 3 below)
- by praying daily our set vocal prayers and by carrying on a trusting dialogue with God whom we know loves us so much.
- by treating with respect God's holy name and his Word, the Church, the Sacraments, etc.
- by treating with respect all persons, places and things for they have all come from God.
- by speaking, and acting always in a Christ-like way so that others might come to realize that we do all for God's glory.

3. The Mass is the greatest act of worship. It is the re-presentation of Christ's unique sacrifice on Calvary. In the Mass:

- the Holy Spirit inspires us to unite ourselves to Christ as he offers himself to the Father on our behalf.
- we should try to make Christ's sentiments our own: adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition.
- we bring the whole universe and place it in Christ's hands so that he offer it to the Father.
- we share in the most perfect sacrifice ever offered to God.
- the Father is pleased to accept Christ's sacrifice and ours.
- we are able to show God how much we love him and how eager we are to serve him.

4. We live the virtue of religion in a very practical way when we pray for in prayer we direct our thoughts and our words to God, we think about him and we talk to him.

God is the one who inspires us to pray. He calls us to prayer. He urges us not to neglect prayer. In the depths of our soul he himself teaches us to pray.

But even so, we need to "work at prayer," gathering our thoughts, making use of the words from a book, reciting prayers we know by heart, etc.

Prayer leads us to realize that God is close to us, God lives in us, God knows us and loves each one of us.

By praying to God we become better because we grow into what we are meant to be: good sons and daughters of God.

5. The virtue of religion leads us to have respect for everything related to the worship of God in the Liturgy. Consequently we will:

- put our mind and heart into paying attention at Mass, to every word and gesture of the priest.
- listen attentively to the reading of Sacred Scripture at Mass.
- respond and sing clearly and reverently at Mass.
- handle with care everything that is used at Mass and in the other Liturgical rites: the bread and the wine used for the Eucharist, the altar furnishings, the vestments and vessels, etc.

6. Because I love God and want to worship him I will try:

- to be aware that I am in his holy presence always and everywhere.
- to realize that he created all the beautiful things in the world and that nothing would exist without him.
- to talk to him often. This is prayer. (Cf. 4 above)
- to put great care into paying attention when I am at Mass
- to do my daily work/study with care and make it into an offering to my God.
- to treat every human being as a brother or sister, a soul loved by God.
- to respect and use each and every thing as it was intended to be used by God.