

The 42 Virtues

A Treasury of Christian Character



From *The Paradise of the Soul* by St. Albert the Great (Albertus Magnus), the great 13th-century Doctor of the Church and teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas. These 42 virtues reveal the landscape of a soul flourishing in grace.

†■ Theological Virtues

Faith

The theological virtue by which we believe in God and all He has revealed, trusting completely in His word.

Hope

The theological virtue by which we desire and confidently expect eternal life and the grace needed to attain it.

Love of God & Neighbour

The foundation of all Christian life, whereby we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves, seeking the eternal good of souls.

■■ Cardinal Virtues

Prudence

The mother of virtues that guides right judgment, enabling us to choose fitting means to achieve good ends and avoid evil.

Justice

The virtue that renders to God and neighbor what is due, maintaining right order in all relationships and obligations.

Fortitude

Spiritual strength that enables the soul to undertake and endure difficult tasks for God without yielding to fear or adversity.

Temperance

The guardian of all virtues that moderates our inclinations and pleasures, keeping us from excess in temporal goods.

■ Virtues of Humility & Self-Mastery

Humility

True humility fears receiving glory and contemns it when given, always preferring to be unknown rather than celebrated.

Obedience

The virtue by which we submit our will to God and His representatives, dying to self-will and embracing divine providence.

Poverty

Voluntary poverty of spirit that liberates the soul from attachment to created things, making room for God alone.

Chastity

The angelic virtue that keeps the soul pure and undivided, directing all love toward God and spiritual goods.

Abstinence

Temperance in food and drink that keeps the body subject to the spirit and maintains clarity of mind for divine contemplation.

Mortification

The practice of dying to self through voluntary self-denial, subduing the flesh to liberate the spirit.

■ Virtues of Repentance

Sadness for Sin

Holy sorrow for sin that arises from love of God, grieving that we have offended infinite goodness and wounded others.

Contrition

Perfect sorrow for sin arising from love of God, grieving that one has offended the Supreme Good.

Confession

The virtue of openly acknowledging one's sins and faults before God, leading to healing and restoration.

Penance

The virtue of making satisfaction for sins through prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and willingly accepted suffering.

■ Virtues of Charity & Relationship

Compassion

The virtue of suffering with others, moved by their misery to alleviate their distress through works of mercy.

Mercy

The virtue by which we are moved with pity for another's distress and seek to relieve it, imitating God's infinite mercy.

Peace

The tranquility of order that arises from union with God, bringing serenity to the soul and harmony to relationships.

Concord

Unity of hearts and minds that binds people together in mutual goodwill, reflecting the unity of the Blessed Trinity.

Meekness

Gentleness of spirit that moderates anger and maintains tranquility in the face of injury, following Christ's example.

Liberality

Proper use of material goods, giving freely without attachment while avoiding both miserliness and prodigality.

Gratitude

The virtue of recognizing benefits received and making due acknowledgment and return for them.

Congratulation

The virtue of rejoicing with those who rejoice, sharing in the happiness of others without envy or resentment.

Zeal of Souls

Ardent desire for the salvation of souls, moved by charity to seek the eternal good of all people.

■■ Contemplative Virtues

Religion

The virtue that disposes us to give God the worship and honor proper to Him, expressed through prayer, sacrifice, and sacred observance.

Fear of the Lord

Filial fear that reverences God's greatness and dreads offending Him, the beginning of wisdom and foundation of devotion.

Silence

The virtue that guards the tongue and creates space for contemplation, speaking only what is necessary and good.

Solitude

The grace of withdrawing from external distractions to commune with God in the hidden sanctuary of the heart.

Contemplation

The loving gaze upon divine truth, resting in God's presence and perceiving spiritual realities with the eyes of the soul.

■ Virtues of Character

Patience

The strength to bear adversity, tribulation, and injury with tranquility of spirit, knowing that all comes from God's hand.

Constancy

Firmness of spirit that maintains virtue in the face of changing circumstances and ongoing challenges.

Perseverance

Steadfast continuance in good, remaining constant in virtue despite trials, temptations, and the passage of time.

Truth

The virtue of conforming one's words and deeds to reality, manifesting oneself truthfully to others.

Simplicity

The virtue of being single in intention and transparent in action, without guile or divided heart.

Discretion

The virtue of right judgment that enables one to distinguish between good and evil, appropriate and inappropriate.

Maturity

Spiritual adulthood that transcends beginners' ways, marked by wisdom, stability, and depth in the spiritual life.

■ Virtues of Spiritual Freedom

Joy

The spiritual gladness that arises from union with God and the contemplation of divine goodness, even amid trials.

Liberty

Spiritual freedom that comes from detachment, liberating the soul from bondage to sin and created things.

Confidence

Filial trust in God's goodness and providence, approaching Him with the confidence of beloved children.

Contempt of the World

Holy indifference to worldly honors and goods, valuing eternal treasures above temporal vanities.



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