

ENTRUSTED GIFTS

*As each one has received a gift, use it
to serve one another as
good stewards of God's varied grace
1 Peter 4:10*



Red Rose

WEEK NINE ENTRUSTED GIFTS

Opening Prayer

Almighty Father,

You have given us Your strength in many different facets. Help us to see the strengths in ourselves and others as the gifts they are - that we might serve You and others well.

Amen.

*As each one has received a gift, use it to
serve one another as
good stewards of God's varied grace
1 Peter 4:10*



Song for Reflection:
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring - Bach



ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA
DOCTOR OF UNITY



*"Be who God meant you to be, and you
will set the world on fire."*

- St. Catherine of Siena

- ✦ **Early Life and Vocation:**
 - Born in Siena, Italy, in the 14th century (1347), a twin and the youngest of 25 children.
 - Consecrated her virginity to Christ at a young age and experienced early mystical visions.
 - Refused marriage and chose a life of prayer and austerity
 - Joined the Third Order of St. Dominic to live a devout life while remaining a layperson.
- ✦ **Mission and Public Ministry:**
 - Following a mystical experience, felt called to leave seclusion and minister to the poor and sick.
 - Became a vocal public figure, traveling and advocating for reform within the crisis-ridden Church
 - Famously convinced Pope Gregory XI to return the papal residence from Avignon to Rome.
- ✦ **Spiritual Experiences and Legacy:**
 - Experienced mystical espousal to Christ (with an invisible ring) and the stigmata (also invisible by her request).
 - Recognized for her profound theological writings, especially The Dialogue of Divine Providence and her extensive letters.
 - Named a Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI in 1970, one of only a few women to hold this title.
 - Remembered for her courage, strength, unwavering faith

STRENGTHS AS ENTRUSTED GIFTS

The 24 character strengths are organized under six broad virtue categories — universal qualities that have been recognized across cultures, religions, and philosophies throughout human history.

As you read through each one, circle or mark the strengths that appear in your top 10.

Wisdom

The grace to see clearly

Courage

The strength to persevere in goodness, truth and beauty

Humanity

The capacity for deep, personal love

Justice

The call to build up the community around you

Temperance

The interior discipline to steward your gifts well

Transcendence

The strengths that lift your eyes beyond yourself

WISDOM

The grace to see clearly; to seek truth, ask good questions, and learn from the world God made. These are the strengths of a mind turned toward understanding.

Creativity

Seeing new possibilities and expressing ideas in original ways. You approach problems and projects with fresh eyes, finding solutions others might not see.

Curiosity

A genuine fascination with the world around you. You ask questions, explore new ideas, and find delight in discovering what you didn't know before.

Judgement

The ability to think things through carefully and consider all sides. You weigh evidence fairly and are willing to change your mind when truth demands it.

Love of Learning

A deep joy in mastering new skills and knowledge. Whether through a book, a conversation, or experience, the process of learning itself fills you up.

Perspective

The capacity to see the bigger picture and offer wise counsel. Others come to you because you help them make sense of what they're going through.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

— James 1:5

COURAGE

The strength to persevere in what is good, even when it's hard, unpopular, or frightening. These are the strengths of a heart that says "yes" to God despite the cost.

Bravery

Acting on your convictions even when it's difficult or unpopular. You don't shrink from challenges, and you speak up for what's right even when your voice shakes.

Perseverance

Finishing what you start, even when obstacles arise. You find satisfaction in seeing things through and don't give up when the road gets long.

Honesty

Living authentically and taking responsibility for who you are. You speak the truth, present yourself genuinely, and don't hide behind a mask.

Zest

Approaching life with energy and enthusiasm. You feel alive and activated, and you bring that vitality to whatever you do and whoever you're with.

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
— Joshua 1:9*

HUMANITY

The capacity for deep, personal love; for seeing another person and choosing to draw near. These are the strengths that reflect Christ's tenderness toward each individual soul.

Love

Valuing close, genuine relationships with others. You give and receive love deeply, and your closest bonds are marked by mutual care and warmth.

Kindness

A heart inclined toward generous action. You go out of your way to do good for others — friends and strangers alike — and it comes naturally to you.

Social Intelligence

An awareness of what's going on in the hearts of those around you. You sense what people feel and need, and you know how to respond with care.

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God."

— 1 John 4:7

JUSTICE

The call to build up the community around you; to lead, to serve, and to ensure that others are treated with the dignity they deserve as children of God.

Teamwork

A loyalty to the group and a willingness to do your part. You value the common good, show up for others, and thrive when you're working toward something together.

Fairness

Treating every person with equal dignity. You don't play favorites, and you believe that everyone deserves a fair chance, regardless of who they are.

Leadership

The ability to organize and encourage a group toward a shared purpose. You step forward when direction is needed, and you bring others along with you.

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

— Micah 6:8

TEMPERANCE

The interior discipline to steward your gifts well; to forgive, to exercise restraint, and to keep your heart ordered toward what matters most.

Forgiveness

The willingness to release resentment and offer mercy to those who have wronged you. You give others a second chance rather than holding onto hurt.

Humility

A quiet confidence that doesn't need the spotlight. You let your actions speak, you don't seek credit, and you recognize that your gifts come from God.

Prudence

Thinking carefully before you act. You consider consequences, avoid unnecessary risks, and make choices you won't regret later.

Self-Regulation

The discipline to manage your impulses and emotions. You stay steady when things get hard and can redirect yourself toward what's good, even when it's not easy.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

— Galatians 5:22-23

TRANSCENDENCE

The strengths that lift your eyes beyond yourself; that connect you to beauty, to gratitude, to hope, and ultimately to the God who is the source of all of it.

Appreciate of Beauty & Excellence

A heart that notices and is moved by beauty — in nature, in art, in the goodness of others. You see God's fingerprints in the world around you.

Gratitude

An awareness of the good things in your life and a desire to give thanks for them. You don't take blessings for granted, and your thankfulness is contagious.

Hope

A confident expectation that the future can be good and that you can help make it so. You trust that God is at work, even when the path is unclear.

Humor

The gift of laughter and lightness. You bring smiles to others, see the bright side of situations, and know that joy is a form of praise.

Spirituality

A deep sense of purpose and connection to something greater than yourself. Your faith shapes your actions, your perspective, and the way you walk through the world.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."

— James 1:17

MY TOP CHARACTER STRENGTHS

Record your top 10 results from the VIA Character Strengths Survey below. Your top 5-7 are your signature strengths – the ones that feel most essentially you.

| # | Character Strength | Virtue Category |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |
| 7 | | |
| 8 | | |
| 9 | | |
| 10 | | |

OVERUSE/UNDERUSE OF STRENGTHS

| Strength | Overuse | Underuse |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Creativity | Eccentricity; ignoring what works in favor of novelty | Conformity; never offering your own ideas |
| Curiosity | Nosiness; inability to focus | Disinterest; going through the motions |
| Judgment | Cynicism; paralysis by analysis | Gullibility; not thinking things through |
| Love of Learning | Know-it-all; learning as avoidance of doing | Complacency; intellectual stagnation |
| Perspective | Overbearing advice-giving | Shallowness; avoiding deeper thought |
| Bravery | Recklessness; insensitivity to others' fears | Cowardice; silence when God calls you to speak |
| Perseverance | Stubbornness; inability to let go | Giving up too easily; quitting before the harvest |
| Honesty | Bluntness; using truth as a weapon | Inauthenticity; hiding your true self |
| Zest | Hyperactivity; overwhelming others | Passivity; going through life on autopilot |
| Love | Emotional dependence; smothering | Emotional distance; withholding affection |
| Kindness | People-pleasing; inability to set boundaries | Coldness; self-protection at the expense of others |
| Social Intelligence | Over-reading situations; manipulation | Social obliviousness; missing what others need |

| Strength | Overuse | Underuse |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Social Intelligence | Over-reading situations; manipulation | Social obliviousness; missing what others need |
| Teamwork | Losing yourself in the group; inability to stand alone | Isolation; refusal to depend on anyone |
| Fairness | Rigidity; detachment from compassion | Favoritism; inconsistency |
| Leadership | Controlling; domineering | Passivity when God is calling you to step forward |
| Forgiveness | Being a doormat; excusing harmful behavior | Bitterness; holding grudges |
| Humility | Self-deprecation; hiding your gifts | Arrogance; taking credit for God's work |
| Prudence | Excessive caution; missing opportunities | Impulsiveness; reckless decisions |
| Self-Regulation | Rigidity; joylessness | Lack of discipline; being ruled by impulse |
| Appreciation of Beauty | Impractical idealism; overwhelm by the world's pain | Numbness; failing to notice God's gifts around you |
| Gratitude | Toxic positivity; dismissing real pain | Entitlement; taking blessings for granted |
| Hope | Naive optimism; denial of reality | Despair; forgetting that God is at work |
| Humor | Deflecting with jokes; avoiding vulnerability | Taking everything too seriously; forgetting joy |
| Spirituality | Spiritual bypassing; avoiding practical responsibility | Disconnection from God; living as though you're on your own |

GOING DEEPER

YOUR TOP THREE STRENGTHS

Your signature strengths are the ones that feel most essentially you. Using them energizes rather than drains you. They're often so natural you might not even recognize them as strengths — they just feel like breathing.

For each of your top 3 strengths, take time with the reflection questions on the following pages. There's no rush. Let the Holy Spirit guide what comes up.

Also remember, every gift from God can be distorted. A strength overused becomes a burden; a strength underused becomes a buried talent. Christ is our model of perfect balance — He was brave but gentle, honest but kind, a leader who washed feet.

As you reflect on your top 3 strengths, look back at the Overuse/Underuse Table. Where do you see yourself?

SIGNATURE STRENGTH #1

Strength _____

RECOGNITION

*When does this strength show up most naturally in your life?
Describe a specific moment or situation.*

ENERGY

*When you use this strength, does it energize you or drain you?
Does it feel like "breathing fresh air"?*

HOW GOD USES IT

*How might God be using this strength through you — in your
family, friendships, work, or parish?*

HOLY BALANCE

*Looking at the overuse/underuse table, where do you tend to
land with this strength? Do you lean toward too much or too
little? What does that look like in your life?*

A SAINT WHO LIVED IT

*Can you think of a saint who embodied this strength? How
does their example speak to you?*

SIGNATURE STRENGTH #2

Strength _____

RECOGNITION

*When does this strength show up most naturally in your life?
Describe a specific moment or situation.*

ENERGY

*When you use this strength, does it energize you or drain you?
Does it feel like "breathing fresh air"?*

HOW GOD USES IT

*How might God be using this strength through you — in your
family, friendships, work, or parish?*

HOLY BALANCE

*Looking at the overuse/underuse table, where do you tend to
land with this strength? Do you lean toward too much or too
little? What does that look like in your life?*

A SAINT WHO LIVED IT

*Can you think of a saint who embodied this strength? How
does their example speak to you?*

SIGNATURE STRENGTH #3

Strength _____

RECOGNITION

*When does this strength show up most naturally in your life?
Describe a specific moment or situation.*

ENERGY

*When you use this strength, does it energize you or drain you?
Does it feel like "breathing fresh air"?*

HOW GOD USES IT

*How might God be using this strength through you — in your
family, friendships, work, or parish?*

HOLY BALANCE

*Looking at the overuse/underuse table, where do you tend to
land with this strength? Do you lean toward too much or too
little? What does that look like in your life?*

A SAINT WHO LIVED IT

*Can you think of a saint who embodied this strength? How
does their example speak to you?*

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Pick one of your top 3 signature strengths. Use it in a new way every day this week — intentionally, on purpose — and notice what happens.

Closing Prayer

Almighty Father,

Thank You for the unique order of strengths you have given to each of us. Help me to see the calling You have placed on my heart. And grant me the grace to use my talents to bring You glory.

Amen



notes

LIVING IT OUT

Strengths Stewardship Plan

God didn't give you these strengths to admire — He gave them to you to live. The Parable of the Talents reminds us that what is entrusted must be invested. This week, how will you invest what He's given you?

"Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master."

— *Matthew 25:21*

For each of your top 3 signature strengths, identify:

- One new way to use it this week
- One relationship where you can offer it more intentionally
- A prayer offering this strength back to God

Strength #1_____

One new way I'll use it this week:

A relationship where I'll offer it intentionally:

My prayer offering this strength back to God:

LIVING IT OUT (CONTINUED)

Strength #2_____

One new way I'll use it this week:

A relationship where I'll offer it intentionally:

My prayer offering this strength back to God:

Strength #3_____

One new way I'll use it this week:

A relationship where I'll offer it intentionally:

My prayer offering this strength back to God:

A FINAL REFLECTION

Strengths Stewardship Plan

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."

— James 1:17

FROM THE LORD

What has the Lord spoken to your heart today about the gifts He has given you?

ONE THING

What is one thing you are taking away from this session?

