

Diocese of Covington
High School Safe Environment Resources

CARDINAL VIRTUES

PRUDENCE is a virtue associated with wisdom or more simply, **common sense**. Prudence is the virtue that guides a good conscience. A person who carefully cultivates the habit of being prudent is more likely to make good and wise choices when confronted with difficult dilemmas or circumstances. A prudent person is a good listener who is open to the idea of others. Prudence is also closely associated with love. A prudent person tries to make decisions based on love. In doing so, he or she is more closely united with God.

JUSTICE was defined by St. Thomas Aquinas as the habit of giving to every person his or her due. This presupposes that everyone has basic rights, the most basic being the right to life. The virtue of justice consists in a person's constant will to treat one's neighbor fairly; the golden rule of loving neighbor as you love yourself. To do so promotes equal rights and the common good among all people.

FORTITUDE is a moral virtue associated with courage to handle the difficulties that arise when trying to do good. Fortitude helps you to resist temptations, conquer fears and face persecutions. These difficulties can be of the ordinary variety; for example, peer pressure. Fortitude gives you unwavering courage to stand up to difficult challenges as you try to do what is good and right.

TEMPERANCE is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures like food, drink, and sex. Each of these desires is regulated by instinct, including the human need for survival. Temperance helps you to master these instincts, and keep them within the limits of what is good and right. For, example, the virtue of temperance helps you to regulate your eating habits and eat only what your body needs to sustain itself. For teens, temperance in the area of alcohol and drugs helps you to respect yourself and others and avoid a wrong action based solely on a controllable human instinct.