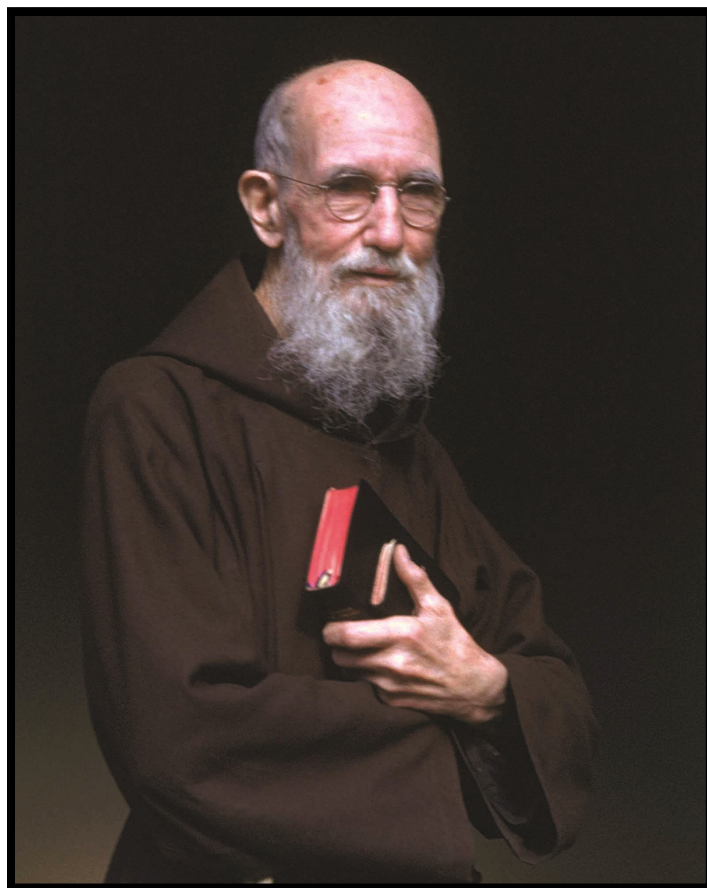


*Virtues  
in Practice*



*Charity*

GRADES 3—5



*Virtues*  
*in Practice*

---

*Charity*

GRADES 3—5

DOMINICAN SISTERS OF ST. CECILIA CONGREGATION  
Nashville, Tennessee

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## What is Virtue?

A virtue is a good habit.

If we practice thinking about what is right and opening our hearts to grace, we make good choices and develop virtues. If we often do things that are wrong we develop bad habits, or vices. Vices can trap us. Virtues free us to be our best selves, which makes us happy and holy.

There are three virtues that are called *theological virtues*. These virtues are given to us by God, lead us toward God, and open our hearts for God to live within us. We receive these virtues in baptism and develop them as we grow in holiness. They give life to all the other virtues. The theological virtues are *faith, hope, and charity*.

There are four virtues that are called *cardinal virtues*. "Cardinal" is from a Latin word that means "hinge", like the hinge on a door. All the other virtues rely on these. The cardinal virtues are *prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance*.

## Who are the Saints?

A saint is a person who is in heaven.

The Catholic Church *canonizes* some saints. "Canon" means list; canonized means someone is added to the list of saints. One of the first steps in the process for canonization is an investigation to see if the person lived a life of "heroic virtue". In the last step of the process, the Church prays for a miracle through the intercession of the person. *Blessed* and *Venerable* are titles for people who are almost canonized. The Church gives us canonized saints as role-models and intercessors, but every single one of us is called by God to be a saint.

YR./MO.	VIRTUE	DEFINITION	GR. PK-2 SAINT	GR. 3-5 SAINT	GR. 6-8 SAINT
<b>FAITH</b>	(Theme: Service)				
SEP.	<b>FAITH</b>	Believing in God and all He has revealed	St. Martha	St. Jerome	St. Augustine
OCT.	<b>REVERENCE</b>	Showing your deepest respect for things of God	St. Hyacinth	St. Tarcisius	St. Margaret Clitherow
NOV.	<b>STEWARDSHIP</b>	Returning to God the first fruits of your time, talent, and treasure	St. Elizabeth of Hungary	Bl. Fra Angelico	St. Joseph Moscati
DEC.	<b>GENEROSITY</b>	Giving without counting the cost	St. Nicholas	St. Mary Magdalene	St. Maximilian Kolbe
JAN.	<b>GRATITUDE</b>	Seeing everything as a gift and being thankful	St. Francis of Assisi	St. Julie Billiart	St. Josemaria Escriva
FEB.	<b>HONESTY</b>	Being trustworthy and true	Sts. Jacinta & Francesco Marto	St. Kateri Tekakwitha	St. Athanasius
MAR.	<b>MERCY</b>	Caring for those who suffer	St. John Vianney	St. Faustina	St. Teresa of Calcutta
APRIL	<b>JUSTICE</b>	Being fair and giving each his due	St. Anthony of Padua	St. Katharine Drexel	St. Thomas More
MAY	<b>ZEAL</b>	Being driven by an intense love for God	St. Paul	St. Dominic	St. Francis Xavier
<b>HOPE</b>	(Theme: Study)				
SEP.	<b>HOPE</b>	Trusting in God's loving plan	St. Joseph	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Sts. Louis & Zelle Martin
OCT.	<b>STUDIOUSNESS</b>	Seeking knowledge to grow closer to Truth	St. Albert the Great	St. Thomas Aquinas	St. Edith Stein
NOV.	<b>HUMILITY</b>	Accepting your limitations and God-given talents	St. John the Baptist	St. Pio of Pietrelcina	St. Therese of Lisieux
DEC.	<b>PATIENCE</b>	Waiting or enduring without complaint	St. Monica	St. Isaac Jogues	St. Rita of Cascia
JAN.	<b>FIDELITY</b>	Being faithful to promises and commitments	St. Cecilia	Bls. Luigi & Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi	St. Gianna Molla
FEB.	<b>CHEERFULNESS</b>	Looking on the bright side	St. John Bosco	St. Philip Neri	Bl. Miguel Pro
MAR.	<b>TEMPERANCE</b>	Enjoying things in a proper, balanced way	St. Teresa of Avila	St. Camillus de Lellis	Ven. Matt Talbot
APRIL	<b>OBEDIENCE</b>	Saying "yes" to the loving will of God and those He has set over us	Our Lady	St. Juan Diego	St. Frances Xavier Cabrini
MAY	<b>DILIGENCE</b>	Doing your best and working hard until you're finished	St. Andre Bessette	St. Francis de Sales	St. Catherine of Siena
<b>CHARITY</b>	(Theme: Community)				
SEP.	<b>CHARITY</b>	Loving God with all your heart, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself	St. Gertrude	St. Vincent de Paul	Ven. Laura Vicuna
OCT.	<b>FRIENDSHIP</b>	Sharing a mutual love that seeks the good of the other	Sts. Benedict & Scholastica	Sts. Basil & Gregory	Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati
NOV.	<b>COURTESY</b>	Being thoughtful of others	St. Martin de Porres	Bl. Solanus Casey	Ven. Pierre Toussaint
DEC.	<b>PURITY</b>	Keeping your soul free of sin	St. Dominic Savio	St. Agnes	St. Maria Goretti
JAN.	<b>FORTITUDE</b>	Being brave and strong in the face of trials	St. Bernadette	St. Joan of Arc	Sts. Paul Miki & Comp.
FEB.	<b>PRUDENCE</b>	Making good decisions in specific circumstances	St. Junipero Serra	St. John Neumann	St. John XXIII
MAR.	<b>RESPECT</b>	Recognizing the dignity of all people	St. Jeanne Jugan	St. Damien of Molokai	St. John Paul II
APRIL	<b>FORGIVENESS</b>	Pardoning those who offend you	St. Patrick	St. Margaret of Castello	St. Josephine Bakhita
MAY	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Being reliable in your duties and accountable for your actions	St. Peter	St. Henry II	Bl. Bartolo Longo

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# September

## PRAYER:

*Act of Charity*

## VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

*Charity*: loving God with all your heart, mind, and strength and your neighbor as yourself

Charity is one of the theological virtues that God gives us in baptism. It comes from Him, allows Him to dwell within us, and leads us to Him in heaven. Charity is another word for love; Saint John tells us that God IS love. The best way to know how much we love God is to look at how we treat our neighbor. If our hearts are truly open to God, they will be open to *everyone*.

## SAINT OF THE MONTH:

*Saint Vincent de Paul*

(1580-1660, France)

Feast: September 27

As a boy, Saint Vincent was a simple shepherd in a poor family. His father sent him to school to study for the priesthood, and about five years after he became a priest, he was kidnapped by pirates and sold as a slave in North Africa!



*Saint Vincent de Paul*

Years later he escaped to Rome, where he became a tutor to rich noble families. After some time, he realized that he had become proud and superficial. He gave up his position, and began to serve the poor, giving special attention to the poor rowers in the galleys of wealthy ships. With the help of Saint Louise de Marillac, he founded the Ladies of Charity, groups of women who took care of the sick and poor in parishes. Later the Ladies of Charity developed into a religious order named the Daughters of Charity.

**CHARITY**: loving God with all your heart, mind, and strength and your neighbor as yourself



**DISCUSSION:**

What are some of the experiences of Saint Vincent de Paul's early life that might have contributed to his love and care for the poor and suffering?

**HOME PROJECT:** Due September \_\_\_\_\_

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**PRAYER:**

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to God's living Word!  
(Read and discuss Matthew 25:31-46 and 1 John 4:16b, 20-21.)

**VIRTUE ACTIVITY:**

Practice charity. Role-play the following situations:

1. It's time for morning prayers and one of your classmates keeps talking to you.
2. Your friend invites you to spend the night on Saturday, but he or she isn't Catholic and doesn't go to Mass on Sundays.
3. Your little sister is really excited about what she did in school today and wants to tell you all about it, but it's not very interesting to you.
4. You're in the middle of a great basketball game, and you've made three baskets! One of your teammates isn't as happy as you, because he or she has barely touched the ball.
5. In the cafeteria, all your friends start racing to their table so that they get a seat. They know one of your classmates wants to start sitting with your group, and there isn't enough room for everyone.
6. You're playing four square with your friends at recess when you notice a classmate standing alone and not joining in with any of the games. Your friends tell you that the person never wants to play.
7. Your teacher lets you choose partners for an activity. You think that you should go to someone who is getting left out, but your friends make fun of the person.

**When you see this symbol,**  
**remember to invoke your guardian angel!**



**CHARITY:** loving God with all your heart, mind, and strength and your neighbor as yourself

**PRAYER:**

Saint Vincent de Paul, you gave up a life of comfort to serve the sick and the poor. Help us to love God above all things and to love each person with whom we come in contact. Amen. Saint Vincent de Paul, pray for us.

**SAINT ACTIVITY:**

Research the Saint Vincent de Paul Society or the Ladies of Charity. You may want to ask a member of one of these groups to be a guest speaker. Join your class in collecting goods to support their ministry.

Things I learned about the Saint Vincent de Paul Society or about the Ladies of Charity:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Saint Vincent de Paul was kidnapped by pirates. Do you think he showed them charity at the time? Should he have shown them charity? Do you think he spoke of them with charity when he was older?

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**CHARITY:** loving God with all your heart, mind, and strength and your neighbor as yourself

**PRAYER:**

Pray the Fifth Luminous Mystery of the Rosary, the Institution of the Eucharist. Ask Our Lady to increase your devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist and to unite all Christians in charity.

**REVIEW:**

What is charity?

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Who is Saint Vincent de Paul?

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**GROWTH IN CHARITY:**

Describe what you did to grow in charity this month and whether it helped you.

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What do you need to work on most to grow in charity this year?

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**CHARITY:** loving God with all your heart, mind, and strength and your neighbor as yourself

# October

## PRAYER:

*Act of Charity*

## VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

*Friendship*: sharing a mutual love that seeks the good of the other

There is a difference between an acquaintance (someone you know by name) and a friend. True friendship is more than eating lunch at the same table or visiting each other's homes. True friendship is a virtue, a good habit of helping each other do what is right, even when it's hard, because you love each other so much that you want to help each other become saints.

## SAINTS OF THE MONTH:

*Saints Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen*  
(330-379/389, Turkey)

Feast: January 2

Saints Basil and Gregory became friends at school in Athens. They were both really smart, but instead of competing for who got the highest grade, they competed over who could give up the highest honors to the *other*. They wanted to be true Christians and decided to help each other grow in virtue. Both of them became bishops. Together they helped defend the Catholic faith and joined other bishops to write the *Nicene Creed*.



*Saints Basil & Gregory, icon written by Rev. Christopher Klitou*

## DISCUSSION:

What was good about the "competition" between Saints Basil and Gregory? Could you have a similar competition with your friends?

**FRIENDSHIP**: sharing a mutual love that seeks the good of the other

**HOME PROJECT:** Due October \_\_\_\_\_

**PRAYER:**

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to God's living Word!  
(Read and discuss Sirach 6:14-17.)

**VIRTUE ACTIVITY:**

Think-pair-share: Discuss these questions with a partner and then share your answers with the class.

1. What does it mean to "seek the good of the other"?



2. List behaviors that make and break friendships:

Make

Break

3. What is the difference between fun teasing and mean teasing?

4. Do true friends *share* their friends?

Role-play helping your friend to do what is right in the following situations:

- he/she asks to copy your homework
- he/she makes fun of someone
- he/she is mad at the teacher for punishing him/her
- he/she asks if you mind if he/she sits with someone else today
- he/she asks if you want to watch an inappropriate movie
- he/she asks your help to study a subject you don't like

**FRIENDSHIP:** sharing a mutual love that seeks the good of the other

**SAINT ACTIVITY:**

With a partner, compare the *Nicene Creed* to the *Apostles' Creed*. Use a highlighter to mark the differences.

The *Apostles' Creed* came first. Years later, there was some confusion about part of what we believe, so bishops like Saints Basil and Gregory met at Nicaea to add details to some of the phrases of the creed. From looking at the parts that are longer in the *Nicene Creed*, can you tell what areas of confusion needed more careful wording?

Choose one of the phrases that was added. On a blank paper, write it in large letters and illustrate it. Finish by praying one of the creeds.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
 Creator of heaven and earth,  
 and in Jesus Christ, his only Son,  
 our Lord,  
 who was conceived  
 by the Holy Spirit,  
 born of the Virgin Mary,  
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
 was crucified, died and was buried;  
 he descended into hell;  
 on the third day he rose again  
 from the dead;  
 he ascended into heaven,  
 and is seated at the right hand  
 of God the Father almighty;  
 from there he will come to judge  
 the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
 the holy catholic Church,  
 the communion of saints,  
 the forgiveness of sins,  
 the resurrection of the body,  
 and life everlasting. Amen.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,  
 the Father almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
 the Only Begotten Son of God,  
 born of the Father before all ages.  
 God from God, Light from Light,  
 true God from true God,  
 begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
 through him all things were made.  
 For us men and for our salvation  
 he came down from heaven,  
 and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
 and became man.  
 For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
 he suffered death and was buried,  
 and rose again on the third day  
 in accordance with the Scriptures.  
 He ascended into heaven  
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
 He will come again in glory  
 to judge the living and the dead  
 and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
 who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
 who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
 I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
 and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
 and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**FRIENDSHIP:** sharing a mutual love that seeks the good of the other

**PRAYER:**

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning, and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,

R. *That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

**REVIEW:**

What is friendship?

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Who are Saints Basil and Gregory?

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**GROWTH IN FRIENDSHIP:**

Describe what you did to grow in friendship this month and whether it helped you.

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What should you do to grow further in friendship this year?

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**FRIENDSHIP:** sharing a mutual love that seeks the good of the other

# November

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## PRAYER:

*Act of Charity*

## VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

*Courtesy*: being thoughtful of others

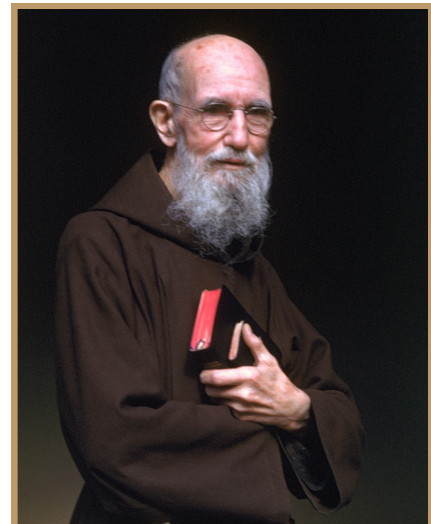
The name of the virtue *courtesy* comes from the royal court of kings and queens where people showed great honor and thoughtfulness in word and deed. Back then, the words "ladies" or "gentlemen" meant men or women with land. Today we use the same words to describe someone who has the good manners they exhibited.

Sometimes we don't pay attention to the people around us because we are tired, busy, or in a hurry. Sometimes we leave messes instead of leaving things in order for the next person. Yet as Christians, we know we should be courteous to everyone, because whatever we do to them, we do to Christ, our King.

## SAINT OF THE MONTH:

*Blessed Solanus Casey,*  
(1870-1957, United States)

Born in Wisconsin, Blessed Solanus Casey began to study for the priesthood when he was 21 years old. He became a Capuchin friar, and was known as "The Doorkeeper" because of the 20 years he served as porter at Saint Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit, Michigan. He was always ready to meet people and listen to their needs at any hour of the day or night. He treated each visitor, whether rich or poor, as he would have treated Christ.



*Bl. Solanus Casey* © Fr. Solanus Guild

COURTESY: being thoughtful of others



**DISCUSSION:**

How do you know when someone is really listening to you? How does the virtue of charity help us to practice courtesy?

**HOME PROJECT:** Due November \_\_\_\_\_

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**PRAYER:**

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to God's living Word!  
(Read and discuss Romans 12:9-10.)

**VIRTUE ACTIVITY:**

Make a "good manners" video to teach meal-time courtesies.



Materials needed: video camera, plates, bowls, cups, forks, knives, and spoons, napkins, food (real or imaginary)

In your classroom, discuss etiquette for meals. Then go to the cafeteria and record while you practice good manners in groups. Later, watch the most courteous clips as a class, and use the recordings to teach good manners to younger children.

- Wait for everyone to be ready before you begin eating.
- Place your napkin on your lap.
- Keep your hands on your lap when not taking a bite or getting a drink (rather than resting them on the table).
- Hold your knife and fork properly for cutting.
- Take small bites and sips.
- Chew with your mouth closed.
- Practice polite conversation:
  - Ask questions about other people. Only talk about yourself if someone asks a question for you to answer.
  - Speak at an appropriate volume.
  - Only speak when your mouth is empty!
- Go to get a drink; before you go, ask if you can get anything for others.
- Offer to take trash for others at your table at the end of the meal.

**COURTESY:** being thoughtful of others

**PRAYER:**

Blessed Solanus Casey, you treated each visitor at your monastery as you would have treated Jesus. Help us to be thoughtful of others, to be gracious, gentle, and kind. Help us to honor Christ in each person, as you did. Amen. Blessed Solanus Casey, pray for us.

**SAINT ACTIVITY:**

Blessed Solanus Casey was a doorkeeper who served others by greeting and serving them as Christ. Sometimes, he was busy when they came, but he always listened and helped them. How do you respond if someone interrupts you when you are busy?

In each situation, practice stopping, standing, and giving the person your full attention. When you respond, repeat part of what they said, to show that you were listening.

1. You are playing a video game and your dad comes to ask how your basketball game went.
2. You are eating a snack, and your mom comes to ask if you can help get dinner ready.
3. You are playing a board game with your friends for indoor recess, and your teacher comes to ask if you can help hand out papers.
4. You are talking on the phone and your big brother comes to tell you that he needs to make a call to a friend since he has a question about his homework.
5. You are leaving Church after Mass, and Father comes over to ask you a question.
6. You are practicing warm-up stretches. The coach comes to give you pointers for the game.



**COURTESY:** being thoughtful of others

**PRAYER:**

Pray the Second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Visitation. Reflect upon Our Lady's thoughtfulness in rushing to serve the needs of her cousin, Elizabeth. Ask her help in being thoughtful of others.

**REVIEW:**

What is courtesy?

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Who is Blessed Solanus Casey?

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**GROWTH IN COURTESY:**

Describe what you did to grow in courtesy this month and whether it helped you.

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What should you do to grow further in courtesy this year?

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**COURTESY:** being thoughtful of others

# December

## PRAYER:

*Act of Charity*

## VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

*Purity*: keeping your soul free of sin

If we truly love God, we will not let anything get in the way of our relationship with Him. This might mean avoiding music with bad lyrics, videogames that reward vices, sinful scenes in movies, or even friendships that lead us away from God. We are called to keep our minds, bodies, and hearts pure, so that nothing separates us from God's love and truth.

## SAINT OF THE MONTH:

*Saint Agnes*

(3rd century, Rome)

Feast: January 21

Saint Agnes lived at a time when it was illegal to be a Christian. When she was about 12 years old, a wealthy young man fell in love with her and asked her to marry him. She told him that she had already given her heart to Jesus as His bride. The young man was upset and reported her to the government for being a Christian. Agnes was arrested, and everyone begged her to deny her faith and worship the Roman gods. She refused, and was sentenced to death. Saint Agnes went joyfully to martyrdom. *Agnus* means "lamb", and a spotless lamb is the symbol of her pure love for Christ.



*Saint Agnes, statue, photograph by Russ Martin*

## DISCUSSION:

Saint Agnes loved Jesus, and refused to deny Him. How does the virtue of charity help us to practice purity?

*PURITY*: keeping your soul free of sin

**HOME PROJECT:** Due December \_\_\_\_\_

**PRAYER:**

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to God's living Word!  
(Read and discuss Psalm 51:9-12.)

**VIRTUE ACTIVITY:**

If I lose my temper and say mean things every time I talk about politics, I should avoid talking about politics. If every time I play a certain videogame I disobey my parents about doing chores, I should avoid playing that particular videogame. A sin is any willed thought, word, or action that turns us away from God. An occasion of sin is a situation that tempts someone to turn away from God. These situations can be different for different people. Some people don't like videogames and can be perfectly calm when they talk about politics!

Often we confess the same sins over and over in the sacrament of Reconciliation. We should ask ourselves whether there are situations we should avoid since these are tempting us to turn away from God and are harming our relationship with Him.

Play "Avoiding the Occasion of Sin":



1. Make three signs that say "Temptation!".
2. Choose an obstacle course like your classroom or a field with trees, where a contestant cannot go from start to finish in a straight line.
3. Label the start "earth" and the finish "heaven".
4. Let three people hold the temptation signs, and walk around the course holding the signs down. Whenever they hold a sign up, the contestant has to run away from them. (For example, if the contestant is running around a tree, a temptation might pop up right in his path, and he must turn and run the opposite way, a little like human pinball.)
5. Let each person in the class have a turn trying to get from "earth" to "heaven", avoiding "temptation" along the way!

**PURITY:** keeping your soul free of sin

**PRAYER:**

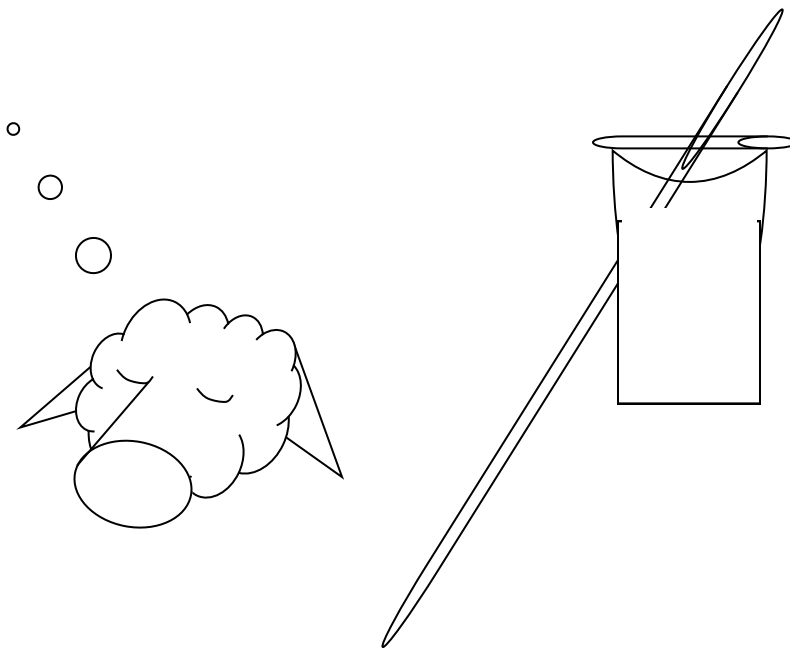
Saint Agnes, you gave your whole heart to God. You were willing to die rather than to sin by denying Christ. Keep my heart pure, that I may glorify God and seek to please Him. Amen. Saint Agnes, pray for us.

**SAINT ACTIVITY:**

The name Agnes derives from *agnus*, the Latin word for lamb. Each Mass we pray "*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. . . Dona nobis pacem*" which means "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. . . Grant us peace."

We call Jesus the Lamb of God because, like the Passover lamb offered by the Jewish people, Jesus was totally pure and was offered as a sacrifice for our salvation. In sacred art, Christ is often pictured as a lamb, holding a banner of victory with a cross on it, to represent His triumph over death in the Resurrection.

Draw a poster with a lamb holding a victory banner with a cross on it. Include the words: "Agnus Dei, Dona Nobis Pacem." Below are some elements to help you.



**PURITY:** keeping your soul free of sin

**PRAYER:**

Pray the First Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Annunciation. Mary never sinned, but always did the will of God joyfully. Ask her to help you to be pure, and to seek only what is pleasing to God.

**REVIEW:**

What is purity?



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Who is Saint Agnes?

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**GROWTH IN PURITY:**

Describe what you did to grow in purity this month and how it helped you.

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What should you do to grow further in purity this year?

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# January

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## PRAYER:

*Act of Charity*

## VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

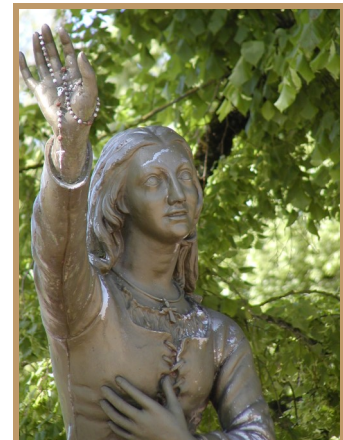
*Fortitude*: being brave and strong in the face of trials

Fortitude is being strong enough to stand up for what is right, even when it is difficult. Many people today talk about *passive, assertive, and aggressive* behavior. *Assertive* behavior is a type of fortitude. If we see someone doing something dangerous, deceiving others, or hurting someone, the virtue of fortitude helps us to get involved to solve the problem. *Aggressive* behavior tries to overpower another person and is not virtuous, because it fails to respect their dignity. *Passive* is the opposite of active. In tense situations, fear often tempts us to be passive and not to act, and we should pray for the grace we need to be brave and act when needed.

## SAINT OF THE MONTH:

*Saint Joan of Arc*  
(1412-1431, France)  
Feast: May 30

Born a simple peasant, Joan of Arc began hearing the voices of Saint Margaret, Saint Catherine of Alexandria, and Saint Michael the Archangel speak to her as a young girl. The voices began telling her to go the man born to be King of France and lead the army to re-conquer his kingdom. Many people thought she was crazy, and that it was inappropriate for a young girl to dress in armor like a man. But her faith soon changed their hearts. She demanded that everyone in the army lead lives of purity so that God could work through them, and though she was very afraid she led them into battle with a flag that said "Jesus, Maria." After many battles Joan



*Jeanne d'Arc*, photo by  
Alexander Wallnoefer

**FORTITUDE**: being brave and strong in face of trials



was wounded, but victorious. France was re-united and Charles VII was crowned king. Unfortunately, Joan was captured and accused of heresy, but the king did not defend her. She was put on trial for heresy (telling lies about the faith) because she would not deny that the voices that spoke to her were sent by God. It was an unfair trial with many trick questions, but she answered them all with simplicity and truth. Still, she was condemned and was burned at the stake. Later, her trial was re-investigated and she was declared innocent. In 1920 she was canonized a saint.

**DISCUSSION:**

How is the virtue of fortitude related to charity? What was the source of Saint Joan's strength?

**HOME PROJECT:** Due January \_\_\_\_\_

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**PRAYER:**

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to God's living Word! (Read and discuss Psalm 27:1-3 & Psalm 18:2-3, 32-35.)

**SAINT ACTIVITY:**

Choose one of the activities below:

1. It would be impossible for a teenage girl to take command of an army today, and it was even more impossible in 15th century Europe. Play "Impossible Obstacle" course. Create an obstacle course. Label the start as "country" and finish as "crown". Create five stages of obstacles, and name them for the battles won by Saint Joan of Arc: the Battles of Orleans, Jargeau, Meung-sur-Loire, Beaugency, and Patay.
2. Saint Joan was strong "in face of trials"—literally! Hold a mock trial or a skit about the trial of Joan of Arc.
3. Exercise your military strategy by learning or teaching someone to play chess.
4. Write a prayer for those in military service.
5. Design a battle cry and/or banner like Saint Joan's "Jesus, Maria".

**FORTITUDE:** being brave and strong in face of trials

**PRAYER:**

Saint Joan of Arc, help us to be as pure and brave as you were. You experienced fear, danger, betrayal, and injustice. You know how difficult it is to stay strong. Please pray for us, especially when we need courage to do what is right. Help us to know that all people are weak, and only God makes us strong. Help us to defend what is true and good. Amen. Saint Joan of Arc, pray for us.

**VIRTUE ACTIVITY:**

Label a beach ball or popsicle sticks with the words of the FORTITUDE acronym on the right.

Role-play these situations, and take turns catching the ball or drawing a stick to choose one of the ways in the acronym to practice appropriate assertiveness.

1. Everybody laughs at one of your classmates and tells him he can't join their recess game.
2. Someone is spreading a ridiculous rumor.
3. One of your friends is making fun of another student's drawing.

**FORTITUDE:**

*ideas for standing up for someone else*

**Fine/Penalty**

"Yikes! Give him a compliment to make up for that."  
"Foul! We get five yards!"

**Opposite**

"Well, I think it's a *cool* haircut."  
"I think it's a *great* idea."

**Report it**

Hand a note to the teacher.  
Talk to the teacher after school.

**Take over**

"Hey, everybody—let's have a race to decide."  
"Let's vote on a movie to watch."

**Investigate**

"Why did you say that?"  
"What made this such a big issue?"

**Talk about it later**

"I think we really hurt her feelings yesterday."  
"That was pretty mean, what we did this morning."

**Understanding**

"That wasn't fair. I'm on your side."  
"Want to hang out with me at recess today?"

**Distract**

"Look, who is that?"  
"Hey, have you heard my favorite joke?"  
"Wait—do we have any tests this week?"

**Exclaim**

"That's mean!"  
"Don't say that!"

FORTITUDE: being brave and strong in face of trials

**PRAYER:**

Pray the Fourth Sorrowful Mystery of the Rosary, the Carrying of the Cross. Reflect upon how Our Lady followed Christ in spite of the danger of the soldiers and crowds. Ask her help to always be brave enough to do what is right.

**REVIEW:**

What is fortitude?

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Who is Saint Joan of Arc?

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**GROWTH IN FORTITUDE:**

Describe what you did to grow in fortitude this month and how it helped you.

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What should you do to grow further in fortitude this year?

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**FORTITUDE:** being brave and strong in face of trials

# February

## PRAYER:

*Act of Charity*

## VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

*Prudence*: making good decisions in specific circumstances

Prudence helps us to decide what is best to do in a certain situation. It is one of the four cardinal virtues because other virtues depend on prudence: if you do something that is good, but you do it in the wrong way, or at the wrong time or place, it is not an act of virtue.

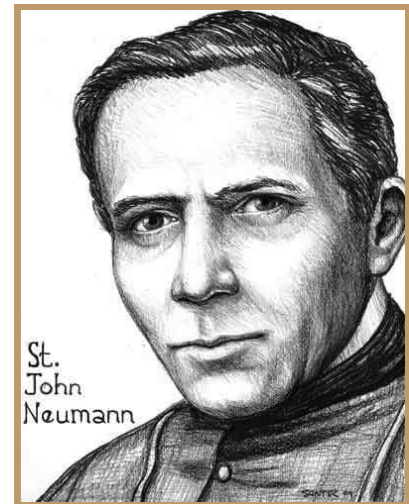
## SAINT OF THE MONTH:

*Saint John Neumann*

(1811-1860, Bohemia, United States)

Feast: January 5

John felt called to be a priest, but there were *too many* priests in his native Bohemia. He decided to go to America, where the people had a great need for more priests. He was ordained shortly after he arrived and began serving the people in rural areas of New York and New Jersey. He joined the Redemptorist Order in 1840 and was ordained bishop of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1852. In those days, bishops and families were very concerned that children would lose their Catholic faith in public schools. Saint John Neumann solved this problem by establishing in his diocese the Catholic school system now used throughout the United States. While he was a bishop, the number of Catholic school students in Philadelphia rose from 500 to 9,000!



*Saint John Neumann*  
by Christopher Santer

## DISCUSSION:

How did Saint John Neumann demonstrate prudence?

**PRUDENCE**: making good decisions in specific circumstances

**HOME PROJECT:** Due February \_\_\_\_\_

**PRAYER:** Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to God's living Word! (Read and discuss 1 Kings 3:5-14.)

**SAINT ACTIVITY:**

Saint John Neumann began the Catholic school system in the United States. *Parochial schools* are associated with a particular parish and *diocesan schools* are under the direction of the local diocese and its bishop. *Independent schools* are usually run by a particular Religious Order. As a class or in a group explore the website for your school and for your diocese. Try to find the answers to the following questions:

1. Is your school parochial, diocesan, or independent?
2. What is the name of your diocese?
3. What geographical area is included in your diocese?
4. Who is the bishop?
5. How many Catholic schools are there in your diocese?
6. Are all the Catholic schools in your diocese part of a parish?
7. What are the advantages of attending a Catholic school?

**PRAYER:**

Saint John Neumann, you saw the difficulties in supporting the faith of the young and you were prudent enough to create a new system for Catholic education. When I am faced with difficulties, help me to see the best solution. Amen. Saint John Neumann, pray for us.

**PRUDENCE:** making good decisions in specific circumstances

**VIRTUE ACTIVITIES:**

A. In making decisions, we should look at our options and ask ourselves about the possible effects of that decision.

- *Long-term effect*: "If I do this, how will that impact my life tomorrow, next week, next year, when I'm an adult, or in eternity?"
- *Ripple effect*: Just as dropping a stone in a pond creates ripples that multiply and spread out, my decisions impact other people and their actions, which impact other people and their actions...

As a class, think of a decision you might have to make today. Name your choices. List the possible long-term and ripple effects of each choice. Which choice is the most prudent?

B. The virtue of prudence also helps us to decide the best time and way to talk to someone about a *problem*. Role-play the situations below and use an "I-MESSAGE" or the "PRUDENT Process" to talk about the problem.

1. At lunch, another student says, "You can't sit at our table."
2. Your best friend accidentally breaks your prized possession and hides it.
3. Someone in your science project group doesn't do any work.
4. In gym class, someone deliberately hits you hard with the ball twice.

**I-MESSAGE**

"I felt \_\_ when you \_\_; please \_\_."  
(Maintain eye contact.)

*Sample:*

"I felt angry when you took my pen; please don't touch my things."

**PRUDENT PROCESS: speaking privately to solve a problem**

Plan ahead what to say.

Request a private moment.

Utter a prayer.

Describe the deed.

(Maintain eye contact.)

Effect on me

Nothing. Wait for a response.

Terms

*Sample:*

P: Mentally go through all the steps

R: You see the person alone in the hall; ask to talk.

U: As you lead them aside, pray, "Help me, Jesus!"

D: "When you poured out my beaker in lab today..."

E: "...it really embarrassed me."

N: (Pause until the other person says something.)

T: "Please don't touch my things again or I'll have to report it to the teacher."

**PRUDENCE:** making good decisions in specific circumstances

**PRAYER:**

Pray the Second Luminous Mystery, the Wedding Feast at Cana. Reflect upon how Our Lady saw a problem and knew the best solution. Ask her to remind you to always turn in trust to Jesus and to rely on His help.

**REVIEW:**

What is prudence?

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Who is Saint John Neumann?

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**GROWTH IN PRUDENCE:**

Describe what you did to grow in prudence this month and whether it helped you.

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What should you do to grow further in prudence this year?

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**PRUDENCE:** making good decisions in specific circumstances

# March

## PRAYER:

*Act of Charity*

## VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

*Respect*: recognizing the dignity of all people

All people are created in the image and likeness of God, with a soul that is able to love and to live forever in heaven. Every single human person has great dignity and deserves our respect. To “re-spect” means to “look again”, since many times we only see what people are like on the outside. This virtue reminds us to look deeper and recognize that all of us are children of God and are loved by Him.

## SAINT OF THE MONTH:

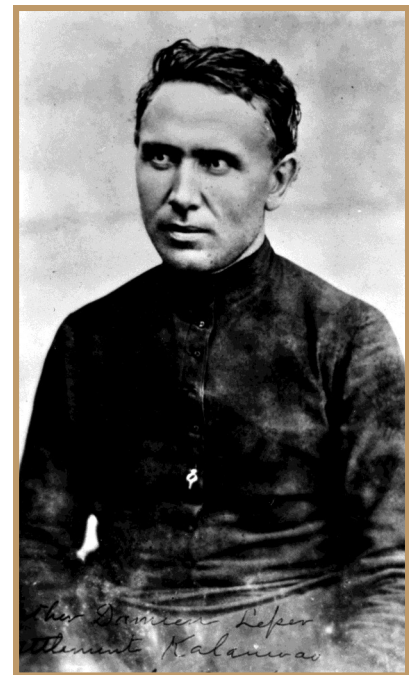
*Saint Damien of Molokai*

(1840-1889, Belgium & Hawaii)

Feast: May 10

Jozef de Veuster entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and took the religious name Damien. He was sent as a missionary to Hawaii, where he spent 10 years befriending the people, enjoying their food, learning their language, travelling and building churches.

At that time, the Hawaiian government exiled anyone with leprosy to an isolated peninsula on the island Molokai. The bishop did not want to command any priest to go to this leper colony, so Saint Damien volunteered to go there and serve the people. When he arrived, he found the people living in terrible conditions and committing many sins. Saint Damien built houses, an orphanage, and a church, giving dignity and respect to the people that



*Saint Damien as a young priest*

RESPECT: recognizing the dignity of all people



everyone else had left for dead. He visited all the people in their homes every week. He started a choir and band for the children, and established perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Hundreds of the people were converted and baptized. After 16 years he himself contracted the disease and died at the age of 49.

**DISCUSSION:**

Why do you think the lepers had lost self-respect? Why did they deserve respect?

**HOME PROJECT:** Due March \_\_\_\_\_

**PRAYER:**

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to God's living Word!  
(Read and discuss Genesis 1:26, 31.)

**VIRTUE ACTIVITY:**

Every human being has great dignity because God has created us in His image, with understanding and free will. One way that we show respect for others is by being careful never to take away their freedom. This means respecting boundaries such as privacy, personal space, and the ability to say "no" to things that are not a duty.

Discuss what you could do to show respect in the following situations. Role-play your answers.

1. You are at a friend's house. She leaves the room for a minute, and you notice her diary is open on her desk.
2. Everyone in the class is shoving to get front seats at an assembly, and you see that one of the boys is getting squashed.
3. You really, really want your friend to go to the movies with you on a Saturday, but he/she wants to get homework done first.
4. You really want to go to a sleepover party, but your parents say no because they don't know the family.
5. You ask your friends if they like anyone in your class. Everyone tells who, except one friend who doesn't want to tell.

**RESPECT:** recognizing the dignity of all people

**PRAYER:**

Saint Damien, be with us and remind us to respect every person, especially those who are sick. Help us to be brave like you and reach out to them to show them God's love. Amen. Saint Damien of Molokai, pray for us.

**SAINT ACTIVITY:**

Celebrate Hawaiian culture, just like Saint Damien!

Make a birthday card or welcome sign using the Hawaiian words below.

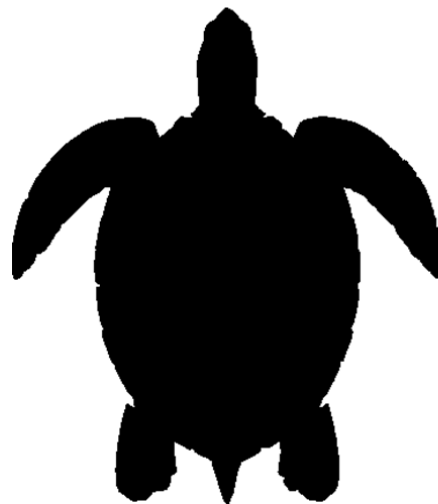
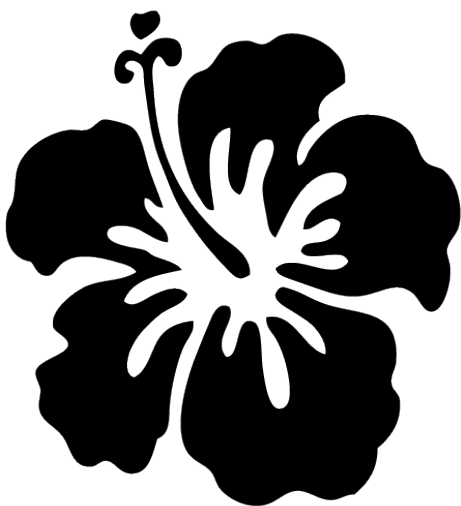
Create a Hawaiian print background by tracing the hibiscus flower and/or sea turtle in a repeating pattern. Choose two bright colors; one for the traced shapes and one for the background. (You could use another color for the words, or make the letters white.)

**E komo mai**

Welcome, come in (pronounced Ay koh-moh ma-ee)

**Hau`oli la Hanau**

Happy Birthday (pronounced how-oh-lay la ha-now)



**RESPECT:** recognizing the dignity of all people

**PRAYER:**

Pray the Third Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Nativity. Reflect upon how Our Lady welcomed the shepherds who came to see Jesus just as she welcomed the kings, and how she respected the kings even though they were foreigners. Ask her to help you to respect all people, especially those who are different.

**REVIEW:**

What is respect?

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Who is Saint Damien of Molokai?

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**GROWTH IN RESPECT:**

Describe what you did to grow in respect this month and whether it helped you.

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What should you do to grow further in respect this year?

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**RESPECT:** recognizing the dignity of all people

# April

**PRAYER:**

*Act of Charity*

**VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:**

*Forgiveness: pardoning those who offend you*

Think of a time when someone really hurt your feelings. Did you forgive the person? Did it take a while? Imagine if you never forgave them, how would it affect them—and how would it affect you?

Forgiving others can be difficult, but a lack of forgiveness only hurts us more, binding us like a chain, hanging over us like a dark cloud, preoccupying our thoughts and making us misunderstand situations. Forgiveness frees us. Forgiveness means that, even if the person is not sorry for what he or she did, I refuse to let the hurt control my life. It doesn't mean that what they did was okay, but it means that I'm not going to let the memory of it keep hurting me and making me angry and hateful. I can say "that was wrong" and then choose to move on with my life. In His parables, Jesus reminds us that since God has forgiven each one of us, we should forgive others.

**SAINT OF THE MONTH:**

*Saint Margaret of Castello*

(1287-1320, Italy)

Feast: April 13

Saint Margaret of Castello was born into a family of Italian nobility. However she was also born blind, lame, and with a hunchback. Margaret's parents did not want others to find out about her because they were ashamed of her and thought that she was unfit to be their daughter. When Margaret was seven, they locked her away in a cell next to the church

**FORGIVENESS:** pardoning those who offend you



*Saint Margaret of Castello*  
by Sister Mary Grace Thul, O.P.

so that she could hear Mass, but no one would be able to see her. It was here that a priest found her and discovered Margaret's intelligence. He taught her more about God and the Catholic faith.

When Margaret was about 16 years old, her parents took her to a distant shrine where people were sometimes miraculously cured. They left her in the church and told her to pray for a miracle. When they returned at the end of the day and saw she had not been healed, they abandoned her there and returned home. The church beggars found her, and realizing what had happened, began to condemn her parents. When Margaret recovered from her shock of being left behind and realized what they were saying, she told them to stop. She would not allow anyone to speak poorly of her parents and said it was time she took care of herself.

The beggars soon recognized that Margaret was very holy, and they told her she should be a religious. Margaret became a Dominican sister. Rather than being bitter about her difficulties, she forgave those who had hurt her, lived joyfully with the sisters, cared for the sick, and visited those in prison. By God's grace, she even worked miracles. After she died, a crippled child was cured at the place of her burial. She was declared blessed in 1609 and canonized by Pope Francis in 2016.

**DISCUSSION:**

Does it surprise you that Saint Margaret forgave her parents? Why do you think she was able to forgive them?

**HOME PROJECT:** Due April \_\_\_\_\_

**PRAYER:**

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to God's living Word!  
(Read and discuss Luke 18:21-33.)



**FORGIVENESS:** pardoning those who offend you

**VIRTUE ACTIVITY:**

Can you be assertive *and* forgiving?

Discuss and role-play this situation: You are a new student. At recess, you are not picked for the soccer game.

1. Were the actions of your classmates right or wrong?
2. How would it make you feel?
3. What are some different ways you could respond?
4. What would happen if you did *not* forgive them?
5. What would happen if you did forgive them?
6. Does forgiving them mean saying their actions were okay?

Role-play the situation, using both assertiveness and forgiveness.

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**PRAYER:**

Saint Margaret, even though your own parents abandoned you, you forgave them and would not allow others to speak evil of them. Help us not to hold grudges and build resentments. Help us to be like you and to forgive those who offend us, even if they are not sorry. Amen. Saint Margaret of Castello, pray for us.

**SAINT ACTIVITY:**

Saint Margaret's parents only saw her deformities. They saw her as blind, lame, and hunchbacked, but failed to see her inner beauty — her kind heart, faith, courage, and intelligence, and her dignity as a child of God. Margaret forgave her parents for their spiritual blindness. She had the true vision to see as God sees, and to recognize her own dignity and worth in His eyes.

Make a poster about you. Use pictures to show your unique qualities. Emphasize your best qualities, instead of focusing on the qualities you do not have. Be thankful for who you are.

After you make your poster, think of times others have made fun of you or did not accept you because they were focusing on your weaknesses. At the bottom of your poster, write a prayer thanking God for creating you and loving you. Ask Him to help you to forgive those who do not see as He sees.

**FORGIVENESS:** pardoning those who offend you

**PRAYER:**

Pray the Fifth Sorrowful Mystery of the Rosary, the Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord. Reflect upon Jesus' prayer for those who crucified and mocked Him, "Father, forgive them..." (Luke 23:34). Ask Our Lady to pray for you, that you might have her Son's Heart of love and forgiveness.

**REVIEW:**

What is forgiveness?

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Who is Saint Margaret of Castello?

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**GROWTH IN FORGIVENESS:**

Describe what you did to grow in forgiveness this month and how it helped you.

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What should you do to grow further in forgiveness?

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**FORGIVENESS:** pardoning those who offend you

# May

**PRAYER:**

*Act of Charity*

**VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:**

*Responsibility*: being reliable in your duties and accountable for your actions

Have you ever felt like people don't want to ask your help, because they don't trust you to do your work? Have you ever made a mistake, been totally ashamed, and not wanted to admit it? Have you ever hurt a friend (on accident or on purpose), felt too awkward to apologize, and seen it create a distance between you?

Taking responsibility for our work and our actions makes us dependable, someone others can count on. Everyone makes mistakes and bad choices. It is important to acknowledge our failings so that we can fix things and move forward. It doesn't help anyone when we pretend there is nothing wrong or just make excuses about why it wasn't our fault. Frequent Confession helps us to practice responsibility and gives us the grace to make amends and do better in the future. Asking others' forgiveness shows them we want to do better.

**SAINT OF THE MONTH:**

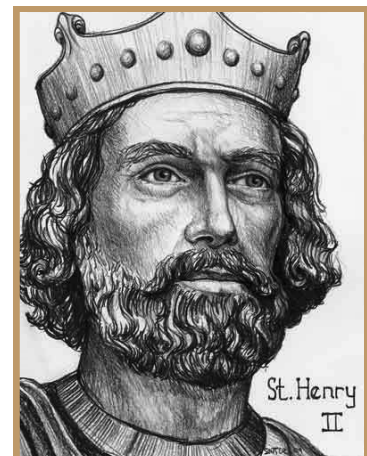
*Saint Henry*

(972 - 1024, Germany)

Feast: July 13

Saint Henry was born of a royal family. He was crowned King of Germany and King of Italy, and then became the fifth Holy Roman Emperor.

Although he was an emperor, Saint Henry did not seek power, but knew it was his role to serve others. He always fought for the good of his



*Saint Henry* by Christopher Santer

**RESPONSIBILITY**: being reliable in your duties and accountable for your actions



people and the good of the Catholic Church. He defended the rights of the Church and supported the bishops. He affirmed Rome's sovereignty, or power to rule, and insisted on priests living holy lives. He built Bamberg Cathedral, a magnificent church which still stands today.

Saint Henry had a lot of common sense and energy as king. He was always victorious in battle and was well-loved by his people for his justice and kindness. Saint Henry was also humble and able to admit his mistakes. Once he fell on his knees before the Bishop of Cologne to beg his pardon after a misunderstanding. He desired holiness so much that he wanted to abdicate, or retire as king, so that he could become a Benedictine monk. The abbot of Verdun counseled him to remember the responsibility God had given him to care for the empire. So Saint Henry remained emperor, and became an oblate, or lay member of the Order.

Saint Henry's wife was also a saint, Saint Cunegunde. They are buried together in Bamberg Cathedral.

**DISCUSSION:**

When we make mistakes, why are we tempted to make excuses? How did Saint Henry show that he took his responsibilities seriously?

**HOME PROJECT:** Due May \_\_\_\_\_

**PRAYER:**

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to God's living Word!  
(Read and discuss Matthew 25:19-21.)

**SAINT ACTIVITY:**

In small groups, look for photos of the outside and inside of the following famous cathedrals: Bamberg, Notre Dame, Chartres, and Santiago de Compostela. Share your photos with the class. What similarities do you see? Why do you think the churches were designed that way? Which is your favorite?

**RESPONSIBILITY:** being reliable in your duties and accountable for your actions

**PRAYER:**

Saint Henry, you fulfilled the duties God entrusted to you and faithfully served the people of your kingdom. Above all, you tried always to be faithful to Jesus, the true King of the world. Help me to be responsible for all my duties, and to grow in holiness by serving God and others. Amen. Saint Henry, pray for us.

**VIRTUE ACTIVITY:**

OWN UP: When we've hurt a relationship, we usually need to talk it out, and that can be pretty intimidating. Having a method for admitting our mistakes will make it easier to face when the time comes.

**OWN UP:**

*admitting you were wrong and asking forgiveness*

OPINION: Ask God His opinion: "Am I in the wrong?" Listen humbly.  
WHO: Who did I hurt?  
NEXT TIME: What made me do it? What will I do next time?  
UNBURDEN: Go to the person. Name the deed you regret. Explain why you did it and what you will do next time. ASK FORGIVENESS.  
PAY EXTRA ATTENTION: Watch closely for small ways to show you like that person over the next few days, to mend the relationship.

Role-play these situations, naming the steps as you go.

1. Your little sister wanted to play with you, but you told her to go away so that you could play with your friends.
2. Your parents seemed overwhelmed by all of the yard work, but you decided to go watch TV.
3. You were sitting with your friends when a classmate came up. You told the person, "You can't sit with us."
4. In gym class you pegged someone hard with the ball, and then got everyone to laugh at him.
5. A friend told you something personal and you talked about it with several other students, which really hurt your friend's feelings.

**RESPONSIBILITY**: being reliable in your duties and accountable for your actions

**PRAYER:**

Pray the *Memorare* for an increase in the virtue of responsibility, and for opportunities to grow closer to Jesus over the summer.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

**REVIEW:**

What is responsibility?

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Who is Saint Henry?

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**GROWTH IN RESPONSIBILITY:**

Describe what you did to grow in responsibility this month and how it helped you.

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What should you do to grow further in responsibility during the summer months?

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** being reliable in your duties and accountable for your actions

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# Acknowledgements

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The *Virtues in Practice* program was originally written by a team of parents and faculty members at St. Gertrude School in Cincinnati, Ohio in 2005, and implemented beginning with the 2006 academic year. The program began as a nine-year cycle with students in kindergarten through eighth grade learning about a different virtue, and a saint who exemplified that virtue, each month. It was intended only for the use of St. Gertrude School, but within a short time it became clear that many schools desired the use of such a program.

To make the program accessible to a wider audience, Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia from St. Gertrude School, St. Mary's School in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in Newport News, Virginia, and St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School in Woodbridge, Virginia worked together with faculty and staff volunteers in those schools to create the current program which follows a spiraling curriculum that repeats the same virtues over a three-year cycle while introducing new saints each year. To all who have contributed time and talent to the creation of this program, we are deeply grateful.

This program is the fruit of grace and collaboration, and is offered free of charge to those who wish to use it in their home or school. It is our prayer that all who read it will be inspired to pattern their lives more faithfully on that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May our lives radiate His virtues, so that others may come to know and believe in the life and love He offers freely! To that end, we offer this work to His glory through the patronage of Mary, our Mother, and Star of the New Evangelization.

*~ The Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation*  
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For questions related to the *Virtues in Practice* program,  
please contact the Virtues in Practice coordinator at [virtuesprogram@op-tn.org](mailto:virtuesprogram@op-tn.org).



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*Eight centuries ago St. Dominic de Guzman, inspired by the Holy Spirit in response to the needs of his time, founded an Order with the mission of preaching for the salvation of souls. Dominic's love for God and neighbor continues to inspire the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation today, as they joyfully embrace the Church's call to the New Evangelization. Through their teaching apostolate, the Sisters serve over 16,000 students in 41 schools in the United States, Canada, Australia, Italy, and Scotland.*

## *Act of Charity*

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O my God, I love You above all things,  
with my whole heart and soul,  
because You are all good  
and worthy of all love.

I love my neighbor as myself  
for the love of You.

I forgive all who have injured me,  
and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

Amen.