



Roots & Wings

A publication of the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Life Committee

Fortitude

"I assert that an imperfect human being needs more fortitude to pursue the way of perfection than suddenly to become a martyr."
—Teresa of Avila

Today, there is rarely discussion of the virtue of fortitude or courage in the context of faith. Christian theologians usually discussed it in regard to the martyrs who reached the pinnacle of fortitude by dying for their faith. Although we live in a social and political environment that does not force us to be ready to die for our faith, this does not mean that we should not strive for fortitude in our daily lives. The virtue of fortitude presupposes our vulnerability. In practicing

fortitude, we accept our insecurities, abandon our anxieties, and surrender confidently to God. With God's help in overcoming our fears, we gain confidence that God will deliver us from all danger and lead us to eternal life.

Fortitude is not a virtue that stands alone. In order to be brave in our faith, we must be prudent as well as just.

Without prudence, the knowledge of God and what is good, fortitude seems foolish. Within our own lives, it takes courage and endurance to live according to God's will for us, to love Him, and to love others. At many times, living our faith is counter to what our society tells us is good or right. We may find that we may have to make sacrifices to be faithful to God and to love others.

By: Laurie Liesen

Service at IJP

In March, the IJP community collected over 500 children's books for distribution.

This Lent, the IJP community "adopted" 25 home-bound senior citizens and prepared overflowing Easter baskets delivered by Midwest Palliative Care.

Way to go IJP!

"That Takes 'Guts' "

Have you ever seen somebody do something and you said, or thought to yourself "That took a lot of guts". We often say that in sports when someone is hurt and keeps playing or they are small and maybe not as strong as others but they keep going. "I remember watching the Olympics one year when a gymnast who had badly sprained her ankle didn't quit, but had it taped up and ended up winning a medal - "that took a lot of guts".

That is like the Virtue of Fortitude. When we are in difficult situations, when we are consistent in living a good a life, when we firmly resist temptations and when we overcome our fears in the face of trials or rejections--- that is Fortitude---that takes guts.

Sometimes just on the playground it is "easy to join the crowd" and pick on someone or join in ignoring someone--- that doesn't take courage. But when the crowd does things we know are wrong and we still do the right thing---that takes guts.

It is **not** easy to be a Christian. It is **not** easy to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Very simply, it is **not** easy to always be good or do the right thing. We need to practice the Virtue of Fortitude in "small things", always having the courage to do the right thing.

And we have to pray. We pray that when those tough decisions come, when it comes times to make hard choices, we pray that we are prepared. We pray "Lord, give me guts."

By Deacon George W. Brooks

Fortitude Prayer

Lord, Give Me Strength

Give us your strength, Lord, because sometimes things get tough, and we are ready to quit.

Give us your love, Lord, because sometimes people reject us, and we are tempted to hate.

Give us your eyes, Lord, because sometimes life gets dark, and we lose our way.

Give us your courage, Lord, because often we are put under pressure, and it's hard to do what is right.

Give us yourself, Lord, because our hearts were made for you, and we will not rest until we rest in you.

Mark Link, S.J.

Courage in Film and Books

On Video:

“Ruby Bridges”, “The Diary of Ann Frank”, “Call It Courage”, “The Sound of Music”, “There’s a Nightmare in My Closet”, “There’s An Alligator Under My Bed”, “There’s Something in My Attic”, “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington”.

In Literature:

Primary:

The Bear Who Didn't Like Honey, Maitland, Barbara

There's a Nightmare in My Attic, Mayer, Mercer
Courage, Moncure, Jane Belk

Seeing in the Dark, Montgomery, Elizabeth Rider
Courage, Raatma, Lucia

Intermediate:

Annie and the Skateboard Gang, Carlson, Nancy
The Power of Courage, Colonna, Phyllis
Mayday!Mayday!, Milton, Hillary H.

Junior High:

Profiles in Courage, Kennedy, John F.
Words By Heart, Sebestyen, Ouida
Learning About Courage from the Life of Christopher Reeve, Kosek, Jane Kelly

Easter Cookies

from Catholicmom.com

To be made the evening before Easter

You need:

1c. whole pecans
1 tsp. vinegar
3 egg whites
pinch salt
1c. sugar

zipper baggie
wooden spoon
tape
Bible
Preheat oven to 300.

Place pecans in zipper baggie and let children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested He was beaten by the Roman soldiers. **Read John 19:1-3**

Let each child smell the vinegar. Put 1 tsp. vinegar into mixing bowl. Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross he was given vinegar to drink. **Read John 19:28-30**

Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave His life to give us life. **Read John 10:10-11**

Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sin. **Read Luke 23:27**

So far the ingredients are not very appetizing. Add 1c. sugar. Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know and belong to Him. **Read Ps. 34:8 and John 3:16**

Beat with a mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed. Explain that the color white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus. **Read Isa. 1:18 and John 3:1-3.**

Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoons onto wax paper covered cookie sheet. Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid. **Read Matt. 27:57-60.**

Put the cookie sheet in the oven, close the door and turn the oven OFF. Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. Explain that Jesus' tomb was sealed. **Read Matt. 27:65-66. GO TO BED!**

Explain that they may feel sad to leave the cookies in the oven overnight. Jesus' followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed. **Read John 16:20 and 22.**

On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow! On the first Easter Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty. **Read Matt. 28:1-9**

(Special note) Cookies can be left on a very, very low temp...like 250 degrees. and be ready in a couple of hours...when surface of cookie looks dry and cracked....they are ready to eat!