

Virtues

Virtues are gifts from God that lead us to live in a close relationship with him. Virtues are like good habits. They need to be used; they can be lost if they are neglected. The three most important virtues are called the Theological Virtues because they come from God and lead to God. The Cardinal Virtues are human virtues, acquired by education and good actions. They are named for the Latin word for "hinge" (*cardo*), meaning "that on which other things depend."

Theological Virtues

faith charity hope

Cardinal Virtues

prudence justice
fortitude temperance

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to do what God the Father asks of us by giving us many gifts. They include the following:

wisdom counsel
knowledge understanding
fortitude fear of the Lord
piety

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are examples of the way we find ourselves acting because God is alive in us. They include the following:

love joy peace
kindness generosity goodness
gentleness self-control modesty
faithfulness chastity patience



Left to right: the Theological Virtues of charity, faith, and hope, Heinrich Maria von Hess, 1819.

Making Good Choices

Our conscience is the inner voice that helps us know the law God has placed in our hearts. Our conscience helps us judge the moral qualities of our own actions. It guides us to do good and avoid evil.

The Holy Spirit can help us form a good conscience. We form our conscience by studying the teachings of the Church and following the guidance of our parents and pastoral leaders.

God has given every human being freedom of choice. This does not mean that we have the right to do whatever we please. We can live in true freedom if we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, who gives us the virtue of prudence. This virtue helps us recognize what is good in every situation and make correct choices. The Holy Spirit gives us the gifts of wisdom and understanding to help us make the right choices in life, in relationship to God and others. The gift of counsel helps us reflect on making the correct choices in life.