

March virtue of the month: Temperance

“Conquer yourself and the world lies at your feet.” St. Augustine

Temperance brings order to our emotions and our appetites. **Temperance** is the first virtue that perfects man’s ability to act well with one’s self from within one’s self.

Examples:

What happens when the teacher leaves the room and tells you to continue reading, or complete an assignment, but you want to talk to a classmate?

Or your mom says she’ll be home in an hour and asks that you do not eat anything... but you’re hungry?

Or you are at an all-you can eat sundae buffet! Temperance is the virtue that says “stop! That is enough toppings!”

Temperance turns off the computer or ipad or tv because its time for bed, or to do homework, or to go outside.

Temperance is a virtue of *moderation* and *balance*. The CCC (1809) says that temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the wills’ mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable.

Temperance does mean avoiding all pleasure, but having and using pleasant things in a way that is healthy, balanced, and consistent with what is good. Temperance guides to have neither too much, nor too little of what we need and desire. The temperate person will be strong and flexible, like a perfectly tempered two-edged sword.

Temperance is very closely related to **self-control**: joyful mastery of one’s passions and desires.

- “A man without **self-control** is like a city broken into and left without walls.” Proverbs 25:28
- “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**; against such there is no law.” Gal 5:22
- “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and **self-control.**” 2 Tim 1:6-7

Self-control:

Looks like

- Raising your hand before talking in class
- Walking in a straight line
- Keeping your hands to yourself
- Not taking an extra cookie
- Listening to others while they speak; not interrupting them

Sounds like

- I will raise my hand before I speak
- Silence
- I will keep my hands to myself
- I will only take one cookies even if I want more than one
- I will listen while you are speaking

Temperance is a cardinal virtue, meaning that there are many virtues related to it, including:

Meekness: Serenity of spirit while focusing on the needs of others; remaining calm when someone upsets us.

Moderation: Attention to balance in one's life: time to read, play, work, pray, eat, sleep...

Orderliness: Keeping oneself physically clean and neat and one's belongings in good order

Honesty: Sincerity, openness and truthfulness in one's speech and actions.

Modesty: Purity of heart in action, especially in regards to dress and speech

“Holy Spirit, please help us to practice the virtue of temperance. Help us not to follow our own desires and inclinations, but walk according to Your will, so that we may live upright and Godly lives that give You glory and lead us to heaven.” Amen. St. Joseph, pray for us!

Saint of the Month: St. Augustine of Hippo

St. Augustine was born in 354 in Africa. He was raised Christian, but was not Baptized. As a school aged boy he was very smart and full of passions. Soon enough his passions overcame him and he lost sight of morality and faith of any kind. He persisted in this lifestyle until the age of thirty-two when he was in Milan and he intellectually returned to the truths of the faith of his childhood. Even though he knew the Catholic Church was the Truth, it took him time to unleash himself from the sinful pleasures that had a grip on him. Eventually, he was overcome (probably due to the prayers of his mother, St. Monica), was Baptized into the Catholic Faith and went on to become one of the most influential Church Fathers. He is the perfect saint for Temperance because that was the virtue lacking in him that held him back from doing the work God created him to do, yet he overcame his passions and the rest is history!