

# Cultivating Virtue

*Daily Lenten Reflections  
with G.K. Chesterton*



# Cultivating Virtue

## with G.K. Chesterton

### Overview of our Iconography

G.K. Chesterton was a man who upheld virtue in his life, in both thought and deed. He was a constant defender of the faith wedded to reason, particularly after he converted to Catholicism.

This Lenten season, we focus on Chesterton's insights into the Cardinal virtues of Temperance, Justice, Fortitude, and Prudence, as well as the three great Theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love. Each week, we will be focusing on one of these virtues as well as a specific symbol chosen to signify each.

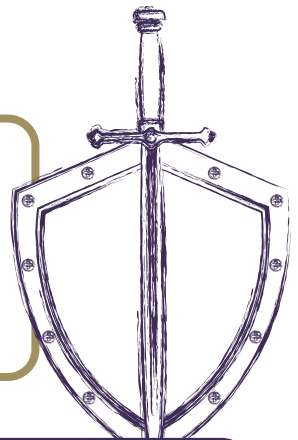


First, the symbol of the torch represents all the virtues combined. This idea springs from the great call from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.*

When we try to live a life of virtue and seek out others who inspire us by their virtuous actions, we become filled with the light of Christ and become glowing manifestations of the glory of God.

During the first week of Lent, we focus on the virtue of **Fortitude**, or courage. Here, we find the sword and shield an obvious and fitting choice. Chesterton would most likely agree! We are in a constant battle, says St. Paul in Ephesians, against the forces of darkness. What better symbol for courage and fortitude than the spiritual Armor of God?



Next, in week two, we reflect on **Prudence**, that virtue of reason and well-formed conscience that aids us in making the right decision for the greater good. We are inspired by the parable of the ten virgins (Matt 25:1-13), and take the burning oil lamp as a symbol to remind us to be wise. To know best how and when to act, we must first be properly prepared.





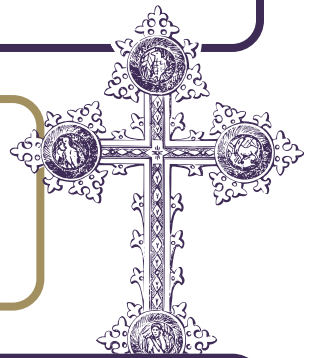
During the third week of Lent, we meditate on **Justice**, the virtue that helps us to give what is due to God and to our neighbor. A widely known symbol of justice is a blindfolded woman holding balanced scales. We chose to simply use scales, because a Chestertonian approach to the virtues is never blind.



Beginning on *Laetare* Sunday, we turn to Chesterton's thoughts on **Temperance**. In Chesterton's writings, we find him battling contemporaries who use "temperance" as a buzz-word—but he doesn't think it means what they think it means. Chesterton balks at the idea that "temperance" focuses only on total abstinence from alcohol. We sympathize with his annoyance. Being temperate means to avoid extremes in all things, and the key to it is moderation.



The fifth week of Lent begins our focus on the Cross—the most recognized symbol of the virtue of **Faith**. Simply to look at a cross and ponder Christ is to act upon the virtue of Faith: believing in God and all that He has revealed to us. We are drawing closer to the Cross during this last week before the Triduum.



We will call upon the virtue of **Hope** during Holy Week. As members of the Church Militant, the resurrection IS our hope. The resurrection of Christ firmly anchors our hope for Heaven, and the symbolism is clear. When we are at our darkest moments, hiding in the upper room, terrified of what happens next, we can remain secure in the hope that Christ will make all things new and we will one day join Him in glory.



During the Easter Octave we will reflect on **Charity**. The greatest example of God's love for us is Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, but we'll reflect more on how we can share the gift of Christ's love with others. We chose the image of the Sacred Heart because Christ's Heart burns for us. It burns for us out of Love so that we may love. Our hearts are not satisfied with counterfeit love, either. Only the love of God, the Heart of Christ, can truly satisfy us.



Far too often, the life of virtue can seem like a dreary affair, the mere avoidance of vice. But for Chesterton, as for the great Saints throughout history, virtuous living was a blazing adventure. Chesterton wrote, "Men should always love virtue before they love duty; the reverse method produces dried souls, incapable of joy." In his life and writing, Gilbert not only exemplified the virtues, but challenged others to grow in them. Light the torch, take up the armor, trim the lamp, balance the scales, open the lock, and remain steadfast in Faith, Hope, and Love.

# Ash Wednesday

*Virtue*

## Today's Quotation

"Men should always love virtue before they love duty; the reverse method produces dried souls, incapable of joy."

-G.K. Chesterton

("The School Magazines," *To Res Paulinae*)

## Scripture Selection

If one loves righteousness, whose works are virtues, she teaches temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude, and nothing in life is more useful than these.

-Wisdom 8:7

## Reflection

So here we are at the beginning of another Lent. It's a somber, sorrowful, dry time that we spend in the desert with Jesus. Right away, the Prince of Paradox challenges us. Just because we're in the desert doesn't mean our lives should be void of joy. Just because we might suffer doesn't mean we should despair. He calls us to embrace this time of dryness, and see it as an opportunity instead of obligation. When we begin to recognize the graces that we receive during this time of prayer and fasting, it becomes an opportunity to grow in virtue instead of just an obligation to fulfill. During the next 40 days, we'll reflect each week on one of the Cardinal or Theological virtues. Which virtue is your favorite, one that's perhaps easy to demonstrate in your own life? Which do you struggle with the most? Which one challenges you to grow the most? What virtues do you need in your life right now? Chesterton is going to lead us through the desert to Jesus so we can emerge, joyfully victorious, on the other side. Are you ready?

Men should always  
love virtue before  
they love duty;  
the reverse  
method produces  
dried souls,  
incapable of joy.

G.K. Chesterton  
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# First Thursday in Lent

*Virtue*

## Today's Quotation

"I daresay that when I get out of this bed I shall do some deed of an almost terrible virtue."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Tremendous Trifles*)

## Scripture Selection

Immortal is the memory of virtue, acknowledged both by God and human beings. When it is present people imitate it, and they long for it when it is gone; Forever it marches crowned in triumph, victorious in unsullied deeds of valor.

-Wisdom 4:1-2

## Reflection

This particular quotation made me guffaw the first (and following times) I read it. It's such a wholesome threat, isn't it? Chesterton's chapter in *Tremendous Trifles*, "On Lying in Bed," is quite hilarious. Read it if you have the chance. Anyways. I love this threat. Imagine that, threatening the forces of evil with "some deed of almost terrible virtue." I really wonder what was going on in GKC's head at that moment. But how beautiful is his example- to wake up and greet the day (or at least the prospect of getting out of bed) *unafraid* and confident in the victory of our battle. It reminds me of the "heroic moment" that St. Josemaría Escrivá writes about. Who wouldn't want to jump out of bed in a swashbuckling manner after reading those lines?! Chesterton's words connect beautifully to the verses from the Book of Wisdom today- when people display virtue, it's captivating. It catches our attention and inspires us to do the same. How will you inspire others today by your virtue?

I daresay that  
when I get out of  
this bed I shall do  
some deed of an  
almost terrible  
virtue.

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# First Friday in Lent

## Virtue

### Today's Quotation

"True virtue is of the will."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*St. Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox*)

### Scripture Selection

Complacent, I once said, "I shall never be shaken." LORD, you showed me favor, established for me mountains of virtue. But when you hid your face I was struck with terror.

-Psalm 30:7-8

### Reflection

Sts. Perpetua and Felicity are two shining examples of heroic martyrdom. Have you ever read the account of their martyrdom and the visions of St. Perpetua? It's pretty amazing. Part of that account always stands out to me. Right before her martyrdom, it is said that St. Perpetua "bound up her hair, for it was not becoming for a martyr to suffer with disheveled hair, lest she should appear to be mourning in her glory." It sends shivers down my spine. Imagine facing your impending, horrific death, and taking just a minute to look your best for the King of Kings. It makes me wonder if I would ever have that kind of heroic willpower, bravery, boldness, and modesty if I were ever to be martyred.

While physical martyrdom isn't likely for most of us, spiritual martyrdom definitely is. That's what Lent is all about- dying to ourselves in some way so that we become more united with the sufferings of Our Lord. The martyrdoms of Sts. Perpetua and Felicity were full of virtue because these holy women willingly accepted their deaths for the Glory of God. What is Christ calling you to die to this Lent? How is Christ calling you to be a spiritual martyr? It's going to take a lot of willpower and virtue.

*God, come to my assistance! Lord, make haste to help me!*





# First Saturday in Lent

Virtue

## Today's Quotation

"The holy man always conceals his holiness; that is the one invariable rule. And the hagiographer sometimes seems like a persecutor trying to frustrate the holy man."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*St. Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox*)

## Scripture Selection

Human goodness is like a signet ring with God, and virtue he keeps like the apple of his eye. Later he will rise up and repay them, requiting each one as they deserve.

-Sirach 17:22-23

## Reflection

As I was recently re-reading Chesterton's *Dumb Ox*, this line made me chuckle. We all know that those recognized by the Church as Saints would never have considered themselves worthy of such a claim. They clearly understood their own sinfulness and pride, but they *kept trying*. The saints quietly overcame their struggles and vices through the help of the Holy Trinity. That's the paradox of sainthood. The humility of a saint is what makes him great. Her littleness is what moves stony hearts. But I laugh at the imagery here. I can just imagine someone following around one of the great introverted saints (like Aquinas) with pen and paper, taking notes on his every move to check-off the "boxes of sanctity." But for the saints, there were no boxes to check off, nor some to-do list that guaranteed sanctity. There was only Christ, and the courage to follow Him at all costs. The saints illuminate the way to Christ by inspiring us with their virtues. Who is your favorite saint? How do they lead you to Christ? Which of their virtues inspires you the most?

The holy man always  
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is the one invariable rule.  
And the hagiographer  
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frustrate the holy man.

G.K. Chesterton  
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# First Sunday in Lent

## Fortitude

### Today's Quotation

"It might well be maintained that, in the ultimate sense, there is no courage when there is no fear."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, February 9, 1929)

### Scripture Selection

I command you: be strong and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD, your God, is with you wherever you go.

-Joshua 1:9

### Reflection

Today, on this first Sunday of Lent, we begin to focus on the virtue of **fortitude**. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us: "Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. It disposes one even to renounce and sacrifice his life in defense of a just cause." Simply put, fortitude is the virtue by which we continue to move forward in the face of difficulty. Fortitude and courage often go hand-in-hand, because difficulties, challenges, and changes can often be frightening things. Chesterton nails it here. When we have nothing to be afraid of, we don't need courage. Back in Advent, we learned that Chesterton said something very similar about the virtue of hope. Courage tends to lie dormant until we call it into action. Take some time today to reflect on the thing that might be causing fear or anxiety in your life. How will you be courageous and steadfast in the face of these challenges?

*Come, Holy Spirit! Pour out upon us a spirit of courage and fortitude this Lent!*

It might well be  
maintained that,  
in the ultimate sense,  
there is no courage  
when there is no fear.

G.K. Chesterton  
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# First Monday in Lent

## Fortitude

### Today's Quotation

"But in these times it needs almost superhuman fortitude to be human."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*G.K.'s Weekly*, July 29, 1930)

### Scripture Selection

During the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. At once [Jesus] spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus.

-Matthew 14:25-29

### Reflection

Take a look at the date of this quotation. It was written **ninety five** years ago! While Chesterton was certainly speaking to his contemporaries, his words (as they often do) can absolutely apply to us today. There are so. many. things. that we are up against these days. Aren't you exhausted? I'm exhausted. Do you feel like you're just overwhelmed and drowning sometimes? This quotation doesn't make me dwell on the world as it stands today. It makes me think of that time, 2,000 years ago, when a sinful and angry man stepped out of a boat and walked on the water toward Christ.

Oh, St. Peter. I relate to him so much. Dense as a rock. Stubborn as a rock. (Eventually sinks like a rock.) St. Peter definitely displayed superhuman courage when he walked out onto the waves, and he had the fortitude to keep going as long as his eyes were locked on the Lord. But as soon as he started looking around, what happened? Of course we need fortitude to keep moving forward, but we need to keep our eyes focused on Christ and not on the tumultuous waves of our times. What is taking your eyes off of Jesus right now? Beg Our Lord for the courage to be not afraid: "*Lord, save me!*"





# First Tuesday in Lent

Fortitude

## Today's Quotation

"The only complete bravery [is] the bravery of the beaten."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Time's Abstract and Brief Chronicle*, 1904)

## Scripture Selection

Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong.

-1 Corinthians 16:13

## Reflection

It's difficult to explain to a four-year-old the beauty of mercy and forgiveness that one finds in the sacrament of Confession.

It's not easy to explain *in Persona Christi Capitis*, absolution, contrition, etc., to someone who has yet to reach the age of reason. They just wouldn't understand. But do you know what 4-year-olds *do* understand? Bad guys. They understand the concept of bad guys and what it means to "say sorry." So when my son asked me one day if Jesus loved bad guys, of course I told him "yes." The inquisitive mite pressed further, "even if they're bad!?" and I told him "yes. Jesus wants everyone in Heaven with him. And all they have to do is say sorry to Him, mean it, and try not to do bad things anymore. Like how Scrooge wakes up Christmas morning and turns his life around. Or how in your Star Wars book, Darth Vader saves his son's life by sacrificing his own and making amends before he dies. Or how Saul gets knocked off his horse and stops hurting the Christians." So after a litany of similar "redeemed" bad guys, I decided to blow his little mind. All dualistic heresy aside, the conversation went thus:

"Bubba, did you know that mama used to be a bad guy?"

I received an audible gasp of shock and look of absolute horror.

"WHAT, Mama?! Why? How were you bad? Did you steal!?"

"No," I said, chuckling. "There are two types of bad guys: those who hurt others, and those who hurt themselves. Mama hurt herself a lot until I met the Truth. And Who is the Truth?"

"Jesus, Mama."

"That's right. And Jesus told me the truth, and I knew He'd take all that bad stuff away if I just let Him have it, say sorry, and never do it again."

"And did you, mama? Did you become a good guy?"

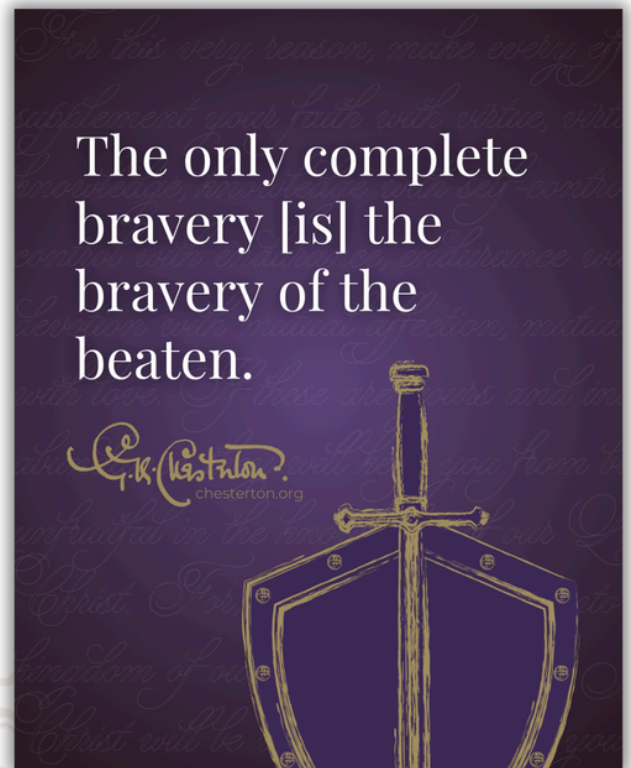
"Yes. I said sorry to Jesus in Confession and promised to never do it again."

"So now you're a good guy!" he exclaimed with glee.

"I'm certainly trying, son. I don't want to be just a good guy anymore, though. Jesus is calling all of us to be saints, and I want to be a saint in Heaven someday. So I don't do a lot of the big bad things that I used to do. But sometimes it's hard for me to not do the little bad things that I used to do. But I can always hope in the mercy of Jesus to make me good again."

Do you "have a past"? Do you know someone who "has a past"? Or maybe you are the mayor of Struggle-town right now and you want to resign. As someone who has a pretty colorful pre-conversion history, this line of Chesterton really struck me to the core. It is difficult to be brave, especially when you've been in some pretty dark places. There's always that fear lurking that you'll go back. It's only when we've lost *everything* that we can realize that Christ is the *only* thing. If you've ever struggled after overcoming a major battle in your life, be confident of Christ's mercy in the confessional. If it's been 2 weeks, 2 months, or 20 years, just go. sdsafasd

Christ is waiting to make you a good guy again. Be brave.





# Second Wednesday in Lent

*Fortitude*

## Today's Quotation

"Fight the thing that you fear."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The Man Who Was Thursday*)

## Scripture Selection

Battle against Evil: Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens. Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all [the] flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones and also for me, that speech may be given me to open my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains, so that I may have the courage to speak as I must.

-Ephesians 6:10-20

## Reflection

Just *what* are you afraid of? This scripture was one of the first to really grab my attention after my conversion. I mean, it's basically the most fierce battle-cry I'd ever heard (with the exception of St. Michael's "*Quis ut Deus?*"), and it absolutely shocked me out of my stupidity and complacency. St. Paul calls us to fight evil in no uncertain terms. In order to do that we need fortitude, truth, righteousness, anticipation, peace, faith, salvation, scripture, prayer, vigilance, and perseverance. St. Paul gives us all the battle weapons we need in this short passage. So often today, we find that there isn't a healthy or holy fear of Hell. But there are so many forces at work in the world vying for our souls. We need to be able to recognize evil and call it out for what it is. Chesterton, along with St. Paul, challenges us to bravely confront those things we fear, especially if they're detrimental to our souls.



# Second Thursday in Lent

*Fortitude*

## Today's Quotation

"Man relies in every hour of his life upon courage and the simple virtues."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The Daily News*, August 24, 1901)

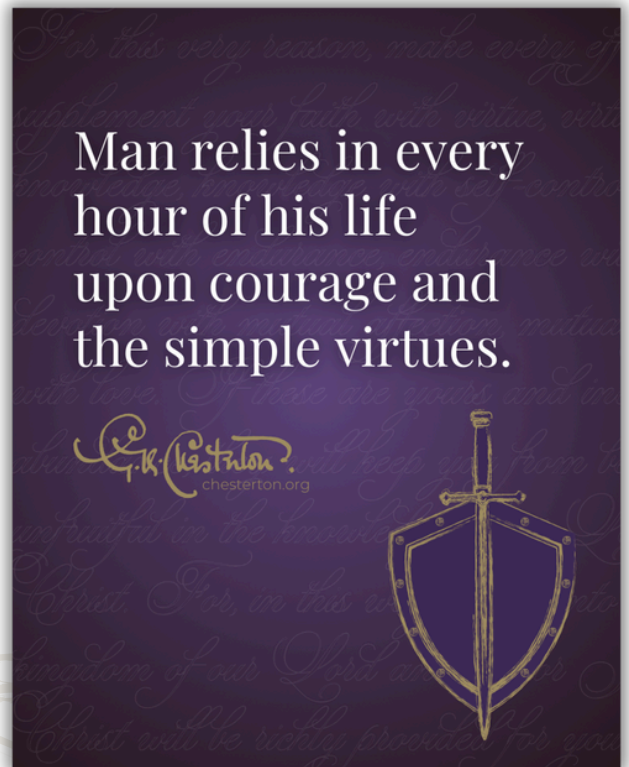
## Scripture Selection

Do not be afraid of sudden terror, of the ruin of the wicked when it comes; For the LORD will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from the snare.

-Proverbs 3:25-26

## Reflection

I love Chesterton's turn of phrase here: "simple virtues." What could that mean? I'm a middle-school catechist (pray for me!) every Wednesday night at my parish. We begin each evening with the simple question: "How did you see or experience God in your life this week?" I'm usually greeted with looks that would rival that of a deer in the headlights, but lately, they've been starting to get it. It's usually tough for the teens to answer because they tend to define those encounters with God as only the "mountaintop" or "super holy" moments, so they "rarely" have them. I have to remind them that God is in the small, quiet, ordinary, and simple moments in their lives as well as the huge holy ones. Yes, there are absolutely "huge and holy" ways that we can live out the virtues in our lives, but most of the time, virtues are cultivated in the simple silent moments of our ordinary, everyday lives. It doesn't have to be over-the-top. Think of Little Flower's Little Way as you reflect today on the small ways you display virtue in your life.



# Second Friday in Lent

*Fortitude*

## Today's Quotation

"For the only courage worth calling courage must necessarily mean that the soul passes a breaking point - and does not break."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Orthodoxy*)

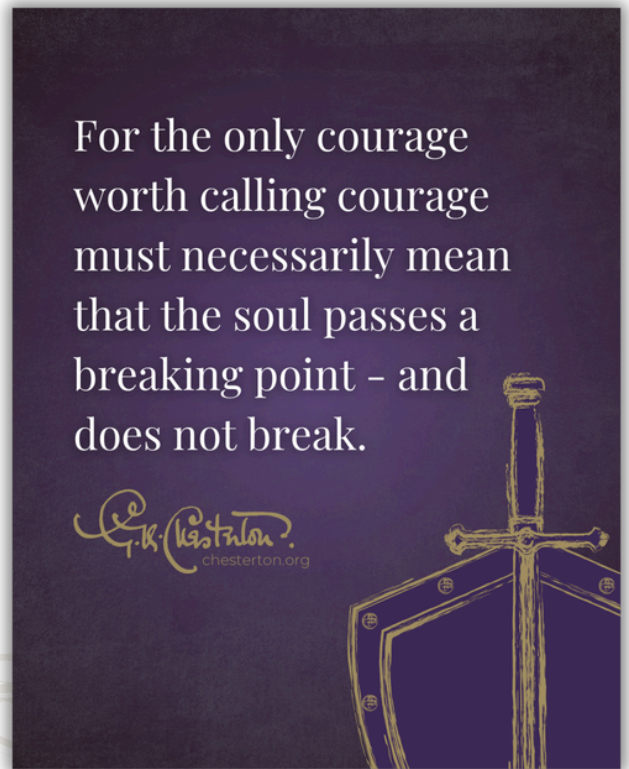
## Scripture Selection

"Take courage, my daughter!

May the Lord of heaven grant you joy in place of your grief!

Courage, my daughter!"

-Tobit 7:17



## Reflection

Have you ever heard of playing Bible Bingo? It's when you utter a quick prayer to the Holy Spirit, flip open your Bible, and let the Lord speak to you through the first verse your finger touches. I've received some pretty profound messages from the Lord this way, but none so perfectly comforting as the one I read the day I thought I was going to die.

Long story short, I began having heart-attack-like chest-pains and shortness of breath when I was 23. After having an initial chest x-ray and some tests done, I was told that I either had a pericardial effusion or that I had an abnormally large heart and would inevitably experience heart failure. Pretty intense news for a 23-year-old. All I could think was "I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die. I'm only 23 and I'm gonna die." I was at my breaking point and was beginning to despair. Well, as soon as I got home, I whipped out my Bible, prayed, "Come, Holy Spirit," flipped it open, and pointed. I kid you NOT, dear reader. My finger landed on today's scripture: Tobit 7:17. I can't begin to describe the absolute deluge of relief that washed over me. I knew it'd be OK. Everything would be all right. The Lord had me in hand. I felt like I could have died then and there and I knew all would be well. (Everything ended up fine. It was a pericardial effusion and a pleural effusion. I also have a cardiac anomaly and it's a miracle that I'm still alive. Praise God!)

Have you ever been at that breaking point that Chesterton describes? What did you do to call upon that courage from the Lord? Or maybe you're at that breaking point today. Allow the Lord to enter into this time of brokenness with you. Let the Divine Healer mend your soul. Take courage! Be not afraid!



# Second Saturday in Lent

*Fortitude*

## Today's Quotation

"We need not teach [children] to admire courage; they do admire courage."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, May 16, 1908)

## Scripture Selection

Children! be courageous and strong in keeping the law,  
for by it you shall be honored.

-1 Maccabees 2:64

## Reflection

Today, we're rounding out the first week of Lent by concluding our reflections on the virtue of fortitude. Chesterton absolutely nails it here. Not only do children admire courage, but everyone does. While children might need to be taught how to display courage, they don't need to be taught how to recognize it. Every child knows what it's like to be afraid. They might even be afraid to be brave until they see a great example of fortitude. Once they connect those dots, kids discover their own capacity for bravery. What we adults may consider a molehill, kids approach as a mountain, because from their angle, everything *is* mountainous. Everything is a challenge when you're small. That's why kids are so enamored with daddy being "the strongest and bravest." In their eyes, he's moving mountains that they could never budge. I think it's safe to say that a Chestertonian approach to the virtues, even the virtue of fortitude, would be one of child-like wonder. Reflect today on the virtue of fortitude in your life. How have you cultivated it this past week? Have those instances of bravery, whether they're big or small, filled you with wonder and awe? Take some time to think about it today, and give glory to God for the gift of this virtue.





# Second Sunday in Lent

## Prudence

### Today's Quotation

"For the wisdom of man alters with every age; his prudence has to fit perpetually shifting shapes of inconvenience or dilemma."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, September 9, 1910)

### Scripture Selection

I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence, and useful knowledge I have. [The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil;] Pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth I hate. Mine are counsel and advice; Mine is strength; I am understanding.

-Proverbs 8:12-14

### Reflection

During this second week of Lent, we'll focus on the virtue of **prudence**. Prudence certainly can have a negative connotation today. When we call someone a "prude," we insinuate that they are uptight, rigid, and possibly self-righteous. Nothing could be further from the actual definition of this beautiful virtue. To have the virtue of prudence is to have the ability to act rightly at the correct time at the service of the greater good. Prudence is the fruit of a well-formed intellect and conscience put into action for the glory of God.

I love the timelessness of Chesterton's words today. They were as true in his day as they are now. Chesterton knew that times would always be changing. The world spins madly on while the Cross stands firm. This is why the Cross is an excellent foundation for our intellect. The Truth never changes, even though everything else might. Chesterton encourages us here to stay vigilant; not to change with the times, but to notice that the times *are* changing. In order to be as cunning as serpents and innocent as doves, we need to be tuned in to the world whilst remaining detached from it.

In what ways could you grow in the virtue of prudence? In what ways do you already exhibit it? Lord, how can my intellect best serve you in these uncertain times?

For the wisdom of man  
alters with every age;  
his prudence has to fit  
perpetually shifting  
shapes of inconvenience  
or dilemma.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org



# Second Monday in Lent

*Prudence*

## Today's Quotation

"Be careful in choosing your carelessness."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Platitudes Undone*)

## Scripture Selection

By the gates at the approaches of the city, in the entryways [Wisdom] cries loud: "To you, O people, I call; my appeal is to you mortals. You naive ones, gain prudence, you fools, gain sense. Listen! for noble things I speak; my lips proclaim honest words.

-Proverbs 8: 3-6

## Reflection

One of the ways that we can show the virtue of prudence is by being careful. The Feast of St. Patrick is a date well-known for its total carelessness when it comes to celebrating the Apostle of Ireland. For most of the secular world, that means getting riotously inebriated and losing self-control. This is such an appropriate quotation from GKC for St. Patrick's Day. Chesterton saw nothing wrong with pipes, pints, and the occasional rowdy crowd. But he also cautioned against going overboard and being oblivious to your own limitations.

The Proverbs boldly challenge us to gain prudence. But how does one just *gain* prudence? The virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit build on one another. Understanding builds on knowledge. Wisdom springs from understanding. When we are open to receive the virtues, we become more docile to the Holy Spirit, who continually pours these graces into our souls. The virtue of Prudence knows what to do and when to do it because we have been formed by those other gifts. St. Patrick was certainly a prudent saint. He knew when to take advantage of his unfortunate situation to evangelize others and lead them to Christ. Reflect today on the ways you can honor St. Patrick by being prudent. How can you lead others to Christ today?



Be careful in  
choosing your  
carelessness.

G.K. Chesterton  
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# Second Tuesday in Lent

*Prudence*

## Today's Quotation

"Common sense is even a celestial thing; common sense is not of this world."

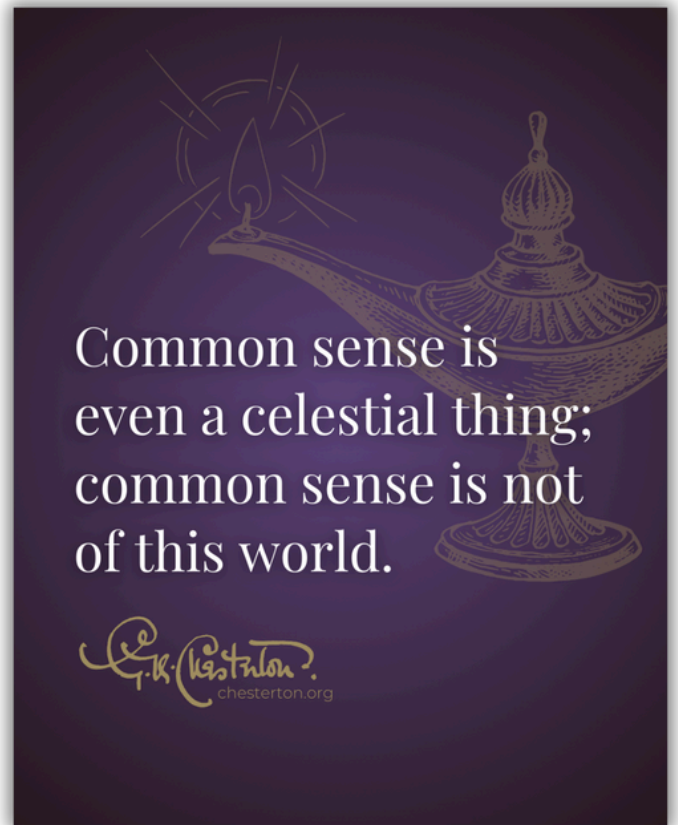
-G.K. Chesterton

(*Daily News*, March 16, 1907)

## Scripture Selection

Resplendent and unfading is Wisdom, and she is readily perceived by those who love her, and found by those who seek her. She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her; one who watches for her at dawn will not be disappointed, for she will be found sitting at the gate. For setting your heart on her is the perfection of prudence, and whoever keeps vigil for her is quickly free from care.

-Wisdom 6:12-15



## Reflection

Most of my favorite scripture verses are those "in praise of Wisdom." They can be found in the books of Sirach, Proverbs, Psalms, and Wisdom. I love wisdom so much because it has so much to do with understanding Truth. While Chesterton didn't pen the literal word, "prudence," very often, we all know that he wrote a lot about common sense. When we look around at today's world, we definitely see a lack of common sense and virtue. This is why Chesterton's writings and approach to the Faith are so suitable for the current state of, well, everything. I think it's safe to say that one could replace "common sense" in this quotation with the word "prudence," and it would still ring true. Prudence is simply putting common sense into action. But we need to go deeper than that. We need to know the "why" behind the "what" of our actions, especially when it comes to living out our Faith.

Seeking out wisdom is the perfection of prudence, writes king Solomon. The wise and prudent individual knows that they can always grow and change for the better, regardless of their goodness and sanctity. Wisdom and virtue are not of this world, they are a glimpse of heaven, which is why we are attracted to them. We know, deep down, that we need Christ and we long for Heaven. Wisdom does not disappoint. It assists us in all aspects of our lives, especially when it comes to common sense and prudence.

*Lord, increase my wisdom and common sense!*



# Third Wednesday in Lent

## Prudence

### Today's Quotation

"Prudence and an unruffled dignity are excellent things; and we have ourselves a rather unfashionable sympathy with the slow grace and grave deliberation of an older world."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*G.K.'s Weekly*, April 21, 1928)

### Scripture Selection

Be not hasty in your utterance and let not your heart be quick to utter a promise in God's presence. God is in heaven and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few. As dreams come along with many cares, so a fool's voice along with a multitude of words.

-Ecclesiastes 5:1-2



### Reflection

March 19th is the Solemnity of St. Joseph! A solemnity is the highest ranking liturgy in the Church calendar. Now you all know that I'm a fan-girl of St. Thomas Aquinas, but only slightly less well-known is my love of the Most Chaste Spouse and Foster Father of Our Lord. There is so much I could learn from him, particularly his silence, but mostly his prudence. I think St. Joseph perfectly personifies Chesterton's notion of "prudence and an unruffled dignity."

St. Joseph, more than anyone, knew what it meant to get up and go when the Lord told him to. He didn't balk, ask questions, or make excuses. He rose and obeyed in silence. Oh, to have that kind of virtue! It's difficult to trust and obey when we're full of uncertainty about what the Lord wants of us or where He's leading us. But we can always look to St. Joseph as a model of virtue. Of the members of the Holy Family, he was the one most like *us*! The words of Ecclesiastes that we chose absolutely describe the Terror of Demons: he wasn't hasty and his words were few. His words were never recorded in Scripture, just his actions. And that's because St. Joseph's actions speak louder than his words ever could!

How can you emulate the prudence and quiet dignity of good St. Joseph? Reflect today upon the virtues of the Mirror of Patience and ask his intercession. St. Joseph, the Most Chaste Spouse, pray for us!



# Third Thursday in Lent

*Prudence*

## Today's Quotation

"Nothing could be more contrary to common sense than this progressive notion of always preferring novelty to antiquity or action to repose."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The New Witness*, April 22, 1921)

## Scripture Selection

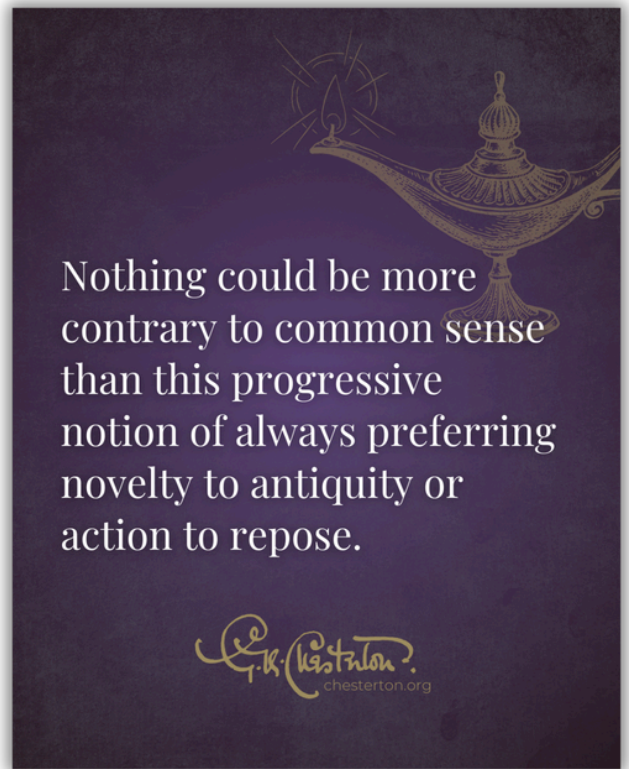
Therefore I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.

-Wisdom 7:7

## Reflection

Do you remember a fad from your childhood? Bell-bottoms? Leg warmers? Starter Jackets? Distressed Jeans? Chunky necklaces? Or maybe you're currently caught up in the Stanley tumbler fad. Notice how those fads didn't last very long before they faded into memory. Do you know the etymology of the word, "fad"? There are a few schools of thought. It might be an abbreviation of *fiddle-faddle*, which is akin to "stuff and nonsense." But my personal favorite take is that it might be from the Latin, *fatuus*, meaning "stupid," which also shares the same roots with "infatuation," which means "to make a fool of."

All word-nerdery aside, Chesterton maintains that when we give in to fads and novelty, we lose our common sense. This is why Chesterton found the Catholic Faith so appealing; he knew it was timeless. The Catholic Church has outlasted every fad and novelty for two thousand years, and it will continue to do so until the end of time. Sometimes it's difficult to walk slowly and carefully with tradition when everything around us is whipped up into a frenzy. We act prudently when we cling to the Cross, when we cling to the truths of the Faith. When we refuse to be temporarily enamored by material things or ideas, we remain unaltered by the fleeting cares of the world. When we take the time to reflect on the things that are truly fulfilling, we begin to realize that nothing else can fulfill us but the One that never fades.



# Third Friday in Lent

Prudence

## Today's Quotation

There is no subtle spiritual evil in the fact that people always brag about their vices; it is when they begin to brag about their virtues that they become insufferable.

-G.K. Chesterton  
(*Tremendous Trifles*)

## Scripture Selection

Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation.

-Romans 12:16

## Reflection

Have you ever won a humility contest? You know, the one where everyone competes to be the most humble? No? Me neither. Because they don't exist. Anyone who competes for humility isn't really being humble, is he? Of course, it's great to celebrate when we are victorious in virtue and able to avoid the vices, but once we dwell on them to puff up our egos, we cease to be virtuous. What's that phrase all the kids use these days? "Virtue signaling"? Isn't that when we do the right thing in front of everyone *just to appear* to be a shining example of virtue? That's quite a bit different from cultivating true virtue in your life; it's false modesty.

But who can really tell what's in a man's heart? What's in his heart usually has a certain way of coming out of his mouth to clue us all in. It's difficult to witness this kind of self-aggrandizement because we know that it's false. We feel the strain because our hearts long for truth. We see a person trying to do good, but we know they're doing it for the wrong reasons. Take some time to reflect today. Do I show-off my virtues? Do I display my virtues so others look to *me* as an example? Or do I live a virtuous life and quietly get out of the way so as to lead others to Christ?



There is no subtle spiritual evil in the fact that people always brag about their vices; it is when they begin to brag about their virtues that they become insufferable.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org

# Third Saturday in Lent

Prudence

## Today's Quotation

"It is unfortunate that common-sense has come to mean almost the contrary of the sense that is common."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, Jan 12, 1929).

## Scripture Selection

Learn where prudence is, where strength, where understanding; That you may know also where are length of days, and life, where light of the eyes, and peace.

-Baruch 3:14

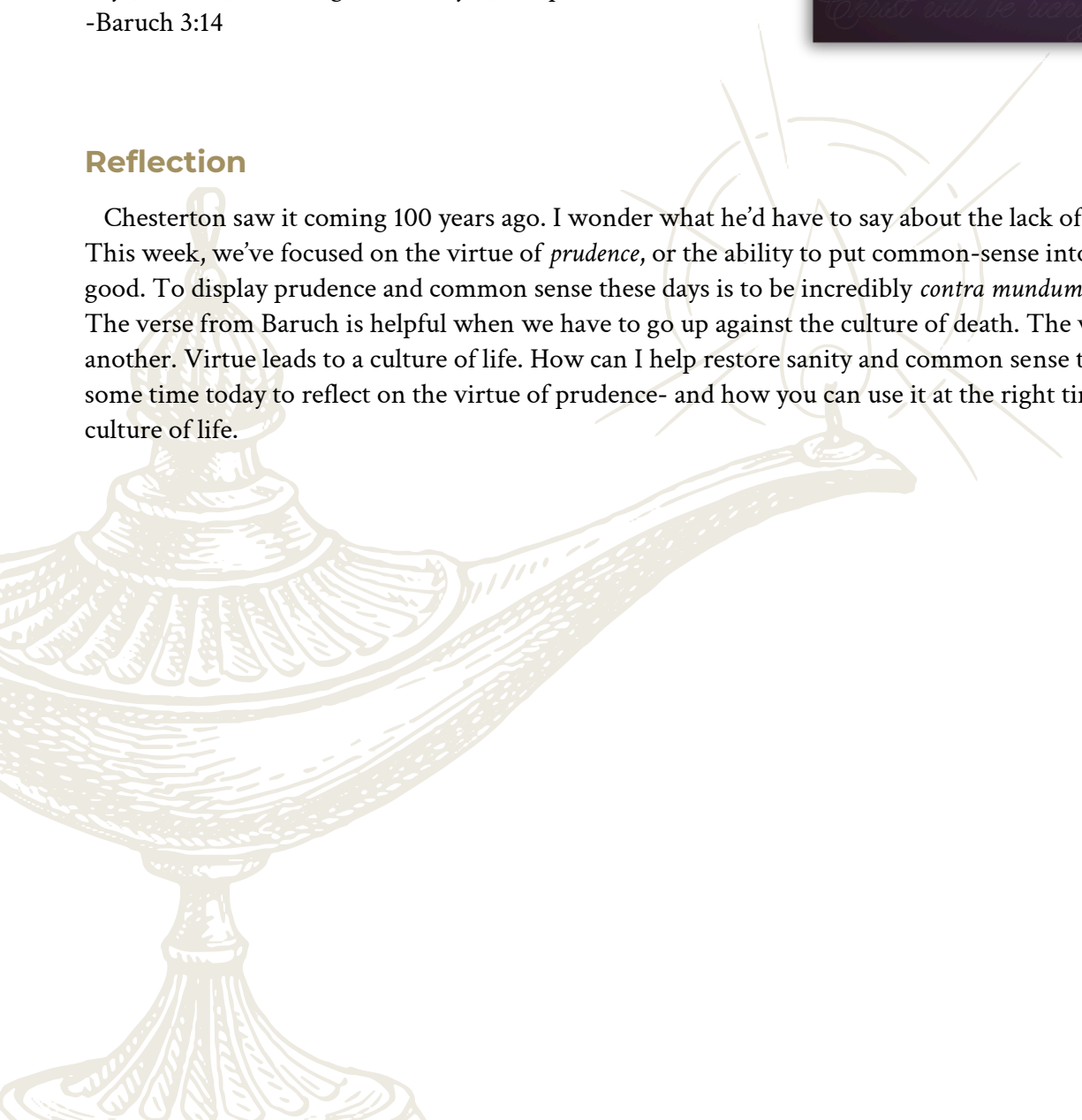
## Reflection

Chesterton saw it coming 100 years ago. I wonder what he'd have to say about the lack of common sense today. This week, we've focused on the virtue of *prudence*, or the ability to put common-sense into action for the greater good. To display prudence and common sense these days is to be incredibly *contra mundum*, against the world. The verse from Baruch is helpful when we have to go up against the culture of death. The virtues build on one another. Virtue leads to a culture of life. How can I help restore sanity and common sense to the culture? Take some time today to reflect on the virtue of prudence- and how you can use it at the right time to promote a culture of life.



There is no subtle spiritual evil in the fact that people always brag about their vices; it is when they begin to brag about their virtues that they become insufferable.

G.K. Chesterton.  
chesterton.org





# Third Sunday of Lent

*Justice*

## Today's Quotation

"Justice consists in finding out a certain thing due to a certain man and giving it to him."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Heretics*)

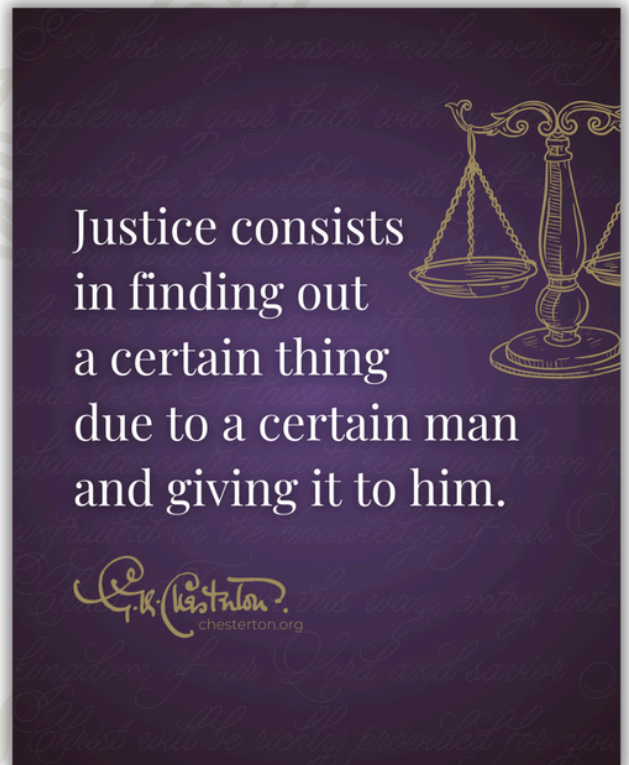
## Scripture Selection

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased. Upon him I have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations. A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench. He will faithfully bring forth justice. I, the LORD, have called you for justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations. -Isaiah 42:1,3,6

## Reflection

Today begins the third week of Lent, and we'll reflect on the virtue of **justice**. Like many of the virtues, justice is often misunderstood or misused. Sometimes people equate justice with strict and equal fairness, other times, justice is considered revenge: "they hit us so... we hit them back." But that's not justice, and Chesterton makes it very clear in his words to us today. The key words here are *giving due*. To embody the virtue of justice is to give what is due to God and to our neighbor. Today, let's focus on what we ought to give to God.

What is due to the Lord of Lords? Worship and adoration, above everything else. Adherence to His laws. Respect to the authority of His Church. How am I doing in this regard? Do I honor and adore the Creator of the universe? Do I give Him the bare minimum of what He expects of me, or more? Or less? Do I treat Christ as the central figure and purpose of my life, or do I only consider Him a tidy afterthought? Where am I in my relationship with the Lord right now? How could I be more just and giving in my relationship with Him? Take some time to reflect today and resolve to be more just in those areas of devotion that are lacking.





# Third Monday of Lent

*Justice*

## Today's Quotation

"Law, when it ceases to be justice, ceases even to be law."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*St. Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox*)

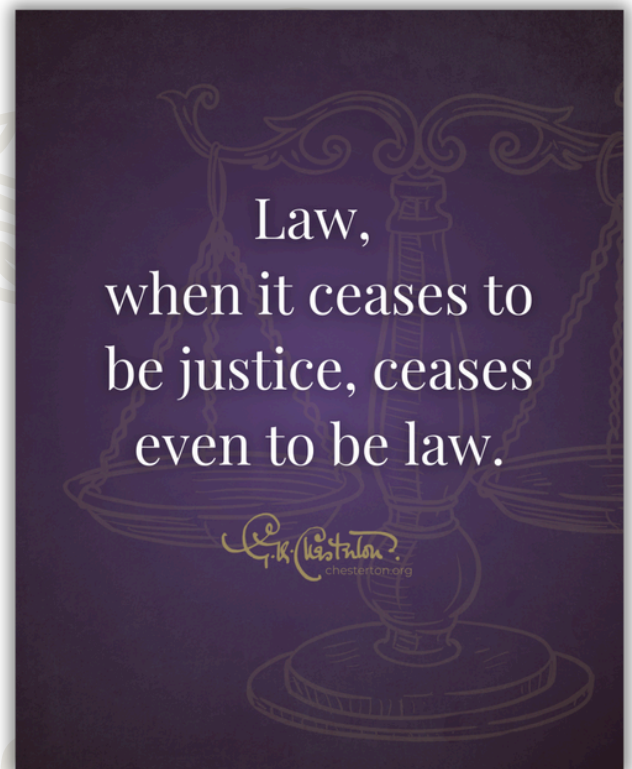
## Scripture Selection

Grant me justice, O God; defend me from a faithless people; from the deceitful and unjust rescue me.

-Psalm 43:1

## Reflection

Chesterton's words are bold and striking, but they're so true. To uphold justice is to uphold the greater good. This is why we have laws- to ensure good for *everyone*. This quote makes me think of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, a law which never upheld the greater good for anyone. It wounded countless mothers and exterminated millions of innocent babies. It was never a law to begin with because it disregarded the unborn child's dignity and life. There are still laws out there today that uphold abortion "rights." We have much work to do to defeat those false laws. All that being said, how can we act with compassionate justice towards women who are facing crisis pregnancies? How can we give them what is due- which, for many, means charitable assistance? Reach out to a local pregnancy center or women's shelter today to see how you can help. *Our Lady of the Unborn, pray for us!*



# Third Tuesday of Lent

*Justice*

## Today's Quotation

"For men desire Peace much, but they desire Justice more; for Justice is at the root of the very reason for living; nor was it only made by man."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*G.K.'s Weekly*, September 14, 1929)

For men desire Peace much, but they desire Justice more; for Justice is at the root of the very reason for living; nor was it only made by man.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org



## Scripture Selection

I will listen for what God, the LORD, has to say; surely he will speak of peace to his people and to his faithful. May they not turn to foolishness! Near indeed is his salvation for those who fear him; glory will dwell in our land. Love and truth will meet; justice and peace will kiss. Truth will spring from the earth; justice will look down from heaven. Yes, the LORD will grant his bounty; our land will yield its produce. Justice will march before him, and make a way for his footsteps.

-Psalm 85:9-14

## Reflection

As I've mentioned before, I'm a middle-school CCD teacher. And recently, we learned about the term "justification" in regards to Confession, mercy, and Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. And I think that this is the kind of justice that Chesterton describes today. The Justification that Christ gives us on the Cross allows us to go to Heaven, and this is the "very reason for living." The deepest desire of our hearts, whether we can recognize it or not, is to be in Heaven with Christ. Chesterton, in typical paradoxical form, contrasts *heavenly* justice (Christ's sacrifice) with *earthly* justice (man-made law) to make a point. We enjoy the benefits of earthly law, justice, and peace, but they are designed to point us to the greatest good, which is Heaven. Earthly virtues are but a shadow of the ultimate fulfillment of our hearts in Heaven. Once we realize this, our hearts are changed forever, and we don't want to go back to foolishness. And, if you happen to fall, Christ is always waiting for you in the confessional. If you haven't had the opportunity to receive this sacrament during Lent, take some time this week to experience Christ's mercy and forgiveness. *Our Lady of the Annunciation, pray for us!*

# Fourth Wednesday of Lent

*Justice*

## Today's Quotation

"It is true that there is a thing crudely called charity, which means charity to the deserving poor; but charity to the deserving is not charity at all, but justice."

-G.K. Chesterton  
(*Heretics*)

## Scripture Selection

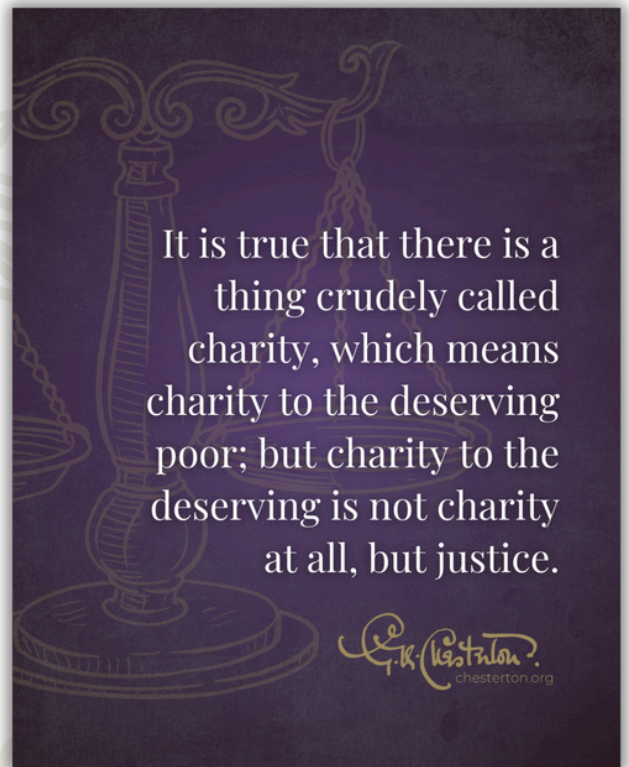
How long will you judge unjustly and favor the cause of the wicked? Defend the lowly and fatherless; render justice to the afflicted and needy. Rescue the lowly and poor; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

-Psalm 82: 2-4

## Reflection

Chesterton circles back to the misunderstanding of the virtues again. Justice is often confused with strict and equal fairness. But it's not. Virtuous justice, just as Christ's justification for us, is undeserved. There is nothing we could do to earn it. But we exemplify justice best when we serve others who are also undeserving. When we are moved by the needs of others, we remember how undeserving we are in our own right, and we remember Christ's justice and mercy in our own lives.

In what way have I recently assisted another person, knowing full well that they could never pay me back? Do something to assist someone in your life, and take the "burden of fairness" off of their shoulders. Refuse a payback to "make it even." Just give and give and give, like Christ gave for you on the Cross.





# Fourth Thursday of Lent

## Justice

### Today's Quotation

"I believe that all men have equal rights, including the right to a thing called justice, which is attested by a thing called conscience."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The New Witness*, December 3, 1920)

### Scripture Selection

Light dawns for the just, and gladness for the honest of heart. Rejoice in the LORD, you just, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

-Psalm 97:11-12

### Reflection

It's so important to rightly form our consciences during these days of insanity. We are up against so much. If we don't know how to live virtuously and seek out the good, the true, and the beautiful, it's going to be difficult to defend our beliefs when society calls us to the carpet on certain issues. What am I doing to better form my conscience? Do I receive the Sacraments? Read Scripture? Pray daily? Reflect on the saints or spiritual writings? Engage in spiritually uplifting conversations with others? Attend conferences? View faith-filled shows or podcasts? Go to adoration? Seek guidance from others who are trying to grow in virtue? How can I better prepare myself to stand up for faith and justice?



I believe that all men  
have equal rights,  
including the right to a  
thing called justice,  
which is attested by a  
thing called conscience.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org



# Fourth Friday of Lent

## Justice

### Today's Quotation

"Justice is not play of any sort, fair or otherwise; it is the attempt to find and state the cold truth."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The Daily News*, January 19, 1905)

### Scripture Selection

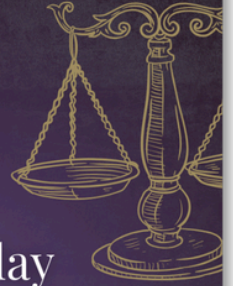
Your servant loves your promise; it has been proved by fire. Though belittled and despised, I do not forget your precepts. Your justice is forever right, your law true. Though distress and anguish come upon me, your commandments are my delight. Your testimonies are forever righteous; give me understanding that I may live.

-Psalm 119:140-144

### Reflection

I absolutely love this line from Chesterton about the *cold truth*. The truth is very hard to face sometimes. It hurts. We can't handle it. It's because Truth, Jesus Christ, demands change. When faced with Truth, we are able to see all the ways in our lives in which we've fallen short, given in to the lies, or even been deceitful ourselves. True justice bestows goodness on the undeserving. To believe that someone is undeserving of help because the situation was "their fault" or they should be "held/more responsible" is not justice. Justice doesn't keep score like that. It just gives without recompense. The reason we chose a scale to symbolize justice, and not the allegorical blindfolded figure holding scales, is because virtuous justice is not blind. It sees a need and moves forward to assist, regardless of the situation.

What cold truths are you facing about another person in your life right now? Perhaps you don't get along with that person. In what way can you show them mercy and virtuous justice?



Justice is not play  
of any sort, fair or  
otherwise; it is the  
attempt to find and  
state the cold truth.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org

# Fourth Saturday of Lent

*Justice*

## Today's Quotation

"Justice is not a cold thing; it is one of the hottest, fiercest, and most fundamental of the buried fires of our being."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The Daily News*, November 6, 1908)

## Scripture Selection

The LORD is king; let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad. Cloud and darkness surround him; justice and right are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him, consuming his foes on every side. His lightning illumines the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his justice; all peoples see his glory.

-Psalm 97: 1-6

## Reflection

I had to chuckle at the juxtaposition of today's quote with yesterday's. Chesterton was all about the hard, cold truth yesterday, and today, he's fire and brimstone. But this point about justice reminds me a lot about the concept of *fairness*.

Have you ever played a game (especially a playground game) with a 5-year-old? **Everything** must be FAIR and EQUAL and SHARED in DUE TURN. Kindergarten-2nd grade teachers, you know what I'm talking about. Just imagine the fierce and furious frenzy that is a 5 year old maintaining fairness. It's absolutely terrifying. But kids are pretty awesome like that; they rarely have a filter. They (for the most part) know right is right and they champion a level playing field. They tell it like it is: truth is truth, beauty is beauty, and fairness is fairness. Oh, that adults would have such a fierce passion for virtue!

It's hard to imagine the ferocity with which God loves us, isn't it? Imagine God loving you with the ferocity of a 5 year old trying to be fair. It's harder, still, to imagine the ferocious love that He has for our enemies and those we deem undeserving. "How is that even fair?!" pouts the Older Son while the Prodigal parties in the next room. But that isn't the case with God. If God were fair with all of us instead of merciful, where the heck would we all be? Exactly.

Reflect today on the great "unfairness" of God toward your enemies: how much He loves them. Then remember how much He loves you, and how someone else thinks *that* is unfair.

Justice is not a cold thing; it is one of the hottest, fiercest, and most fundamental of the buried fires of our being.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org



# Laetare Sunday

## Temperance

### Today's Quotation

"For the word Temperance is a part of the noble English language, which grew up out of the Christian religion and the common morality of European civilization. And the word Temperance, by its very existence, testifies to an infinitely higher, finer, more dignified and delicate ideal than any ideal of mere abstinence; that is, of mere negation. The very existence of the word testifies to the faith of our fathers that the gifts of God could and should be used in a certain recognized measure and moderation."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, Jan 30, 1932)

Temperance [...] testifies to the faith of our fathers that the gifts of God could and should be used in a certain recognized measure and moderation.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org



### Scripture Selection

Wine is very life to anyone, if taken in moderation. Does anyone really live who lacks the wine which from the beginning was created for joy? Joy of heart, good cheer, and delight is wine enough, drunk at the proper time. Headache, bitterness, and disgrace is wine drunk amid anger and strife. Wine in excess is a snare for the fool; it lessens strength and multiplies wounds.

-Sirach 31:27-30

### Reflection

It's Laetare Sunday! Rejoice! Time to take a break from the somber silence of Lent to party a bit. And that's why we're going to focus on **temperance** this week. Now hold up. Temperance, again, is another misused word. People rarely think of temperance as a virtue, but rather an antiquated battle cry to rally the masses against sinful alcohol. It was quite entertaining to select quotations for this week because, most of the time that Chesterton writes about temperance, he's annoyed with the way people only associate it with the Temperance Movement. And they, he maintains, even misused the word by equating it with total abstinence from alcohol.

Chesterton's definition here is absolutely sparkling. The virtue of temperance helps us to approach everything in moderation. Moderation is the key to temperance. Every good thing is a gift from God bestowed upon us for our benefit. It is up to us to approach it in the right way. This week, let's focus on one **thing** in our lives that could use some moderation. Is it food? Alcohol? Scrolling on your phone? Buying yarn? Relaxing to the point of sloth and laziness? Keep that **thing** at the forefront of your mind this week. Let's try hard to temper it- to approach it moderately. We don't want to give it up fully, but just bring it down a notch. In this way, the **thing** we've chosen can help to serve our lives for the better instead of lording over us like a tyrant. Godspeed!



# Fourth Monday in Lent

## Temperance

### Today's Quotation

"Temperance consists in finding out the proper limit of a particular indulgence and adhering to that."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Heretics*)

### Scripture Selection

My son, while you are well, govern your appetite, and see that you do not allow it what is bad for you. For not everything is good for everyone, nor is everything suited to every taste. Do not go to excess with any enjoyment, neither become a glutton for choice foods; For sickness comes with overeating, and gluttony brings on nausea. Through lack of self-control many have died, but the abstemious one prolongs life.

-Sirach 37:27-31

### Reflection

Chesterton's words work so well with the scripture verse today. So yesterday, we figured out the **thing** in our lives that we need to approach with temperance. So today, let's consider how we're going to temper the **thing** today. How do you plan to do that? What boundaries have you set for yourself: a time limit, budget, etc.? Make sure that you've set clear boundaries for yourself with the **thing** so that it may be well-ordered. When our desires are well-ordered, Chesterton says, we allow the good things to run wild within those boundaries. Stay strong within your measures of moderation!



Temperance consists  
in finding out the  
**proper limit** of a  
particular indulgence  
and adhering to that.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org

# Fourth Tuesday in Lent

## Temperance

### Today's Quotation

"The very real virtue of all such adventurers is a certain happy temper; an instantaneous instinct for seeking relief in laughter rather than lamentation; a readiness, when the world is overturned, to enjoy it if possible as a topsy-turvydom."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The New Witness*, April 5, 1917)

### Scripture Selection

Blessed be God who lives forever, because his kingship lasts for all ages. Happy are those who love you, and happy are those who rejoice in your peace. Happy too are all who grieve over all your afflictions, For they will rejoice over you and behold all your joy forever.

-Tobit 13:1,14

### Reflection

Living a life of virtue, Chesterton maintained, is an exhilarating adventure. Even though we're in the middle of the desert of Lent with Christ, our joy and happiness shouldn't go out the window. Life with Christ is never dull, and it's truly what makes our souls happy. This quote reminds me a lot of Chesterton's description of St. Francis standing on his head to see the world in a new way. When we respond to inconvenience and trial with joy and laughter, we gain the ability to see things from a different perspective. Our hearts are more willing to learn from the trial instead of having a pity party.

Hopefully, you won't fall victim to many pranks on April Fool's day. But, if you do, what a great opportunity to put Chesterton's words into action by reacting with a happy temper. And if you plan to prank, make it harmless. If it doesn't make everyone laugh, you're doing it wrong.

The very real virtue  
of all such adventurers  
is a certain happy temper;  
an instantaneous instinct  
for seeking **relief in laughter**  
**rather than lamentation;**  
a readiness, when the world  
is overturned, to enjoy it if  
possible as a topsy-turvydom.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org

# Fifth Wednesday in Lent

## Temperance

### Today's Quotation

"Temperance does not vary with the weather,  
but with the will."

-G.K. Chesterton

("Temperance and the Great Alliance," 1916)

### Scripture Selection

Do not let your passions be your guide, but keep your  
desires in check.

-Sirach 18:30

### Reflection

This quotation of Chesterton absolutely reeks of his hero, St. Thomas Aquinas, who said something along the lines of "to love is to will the best for the beloved." While virtues are bestowed on us as gifts, the more we live them, the more we get them, and the cycle continues. While virtues can certainly become habitual, to live them out is definitely a choice and act of the will. This is when prudence and temperance become partners. Prudence is knowing "when," and temperance is knowing "how much." It's up to us to decide "how much" *before* we get to that point. We do this in order to maintain control of our faculties and willpower. Otherwise, we're in danger of doing something that we should not or might not want to do.

So how are you doing with temperance? Sticking to your boundaries? If you've fallen, get back up and try again! Put your will-power into action. Onward!





# Fifth Thursday in Lent

## Temperance

### Today's Quotation

"A good-tempered man is not a saint; nor is a bad-tempered man necessarily a sinner."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, December 3, 1910)

### Scripture Selection

The patient are better than warriors, and those who rule their temper, better than the conqueror of a city.

-Proverbs 16:32

### Reflection

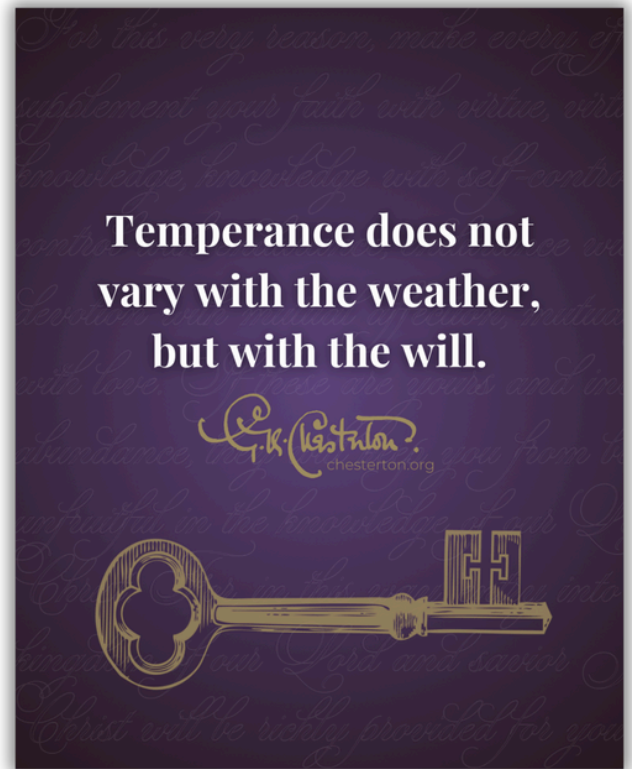
Do you struggle with anger? Do you have an explosive personality? I do. I'm a choleric, which means that I'm very passionate and fiery in my responses to things, even if those things are good or bad. You can always count on me for an entertaining reaction to a surprise, especially good news. While most of the time, my reactions to good things are explosively *good* or funny, my reactions to bad things, sadly, are explosively angry. I've been struggling with sinful anger for a long time. It's past the point of habituality. It's a daily cross that I struggle to carry with and for Christ. But it's a constant reminder of my path to sainthood: it's not going to be easy. I have to keep fighting against the brokenness in order to overcome and stay on the path.

It's so difficult to deal with our emotions sometimes. Our natural emotions aren't the problem or the sin, it's what we *do* with them that counts. Chesterton perfectly illustrates this point today by reminding us that it's the interior life that helps us grow in holiness. While the externals can certainly influence us, it's how we react with our *will* that counts. For example, I can appear to be in complete control over my emotions and not "lose it," but inside I might be harboring grudges, brooding hateful thoughts, or even thinking about revenge against another person. But as long as I don't *act* on those thoughts, I'm fine, right? Wrong. The brooding after the initial emotion *is* the action. That can hurt my soul just as much as verbally lashing out at someone.

On the other hand, what if I'm outwardly angry and perhaps loud about it? A hot-tempered person like me might be fully aware of their anger and is at least *trying to work on it*. Maybe I'm trying to improve by embracing the Cross I've been given and striving for sainthood even in my brokenness. Because, as Chesterton says, "a saint only means a man who really knows he is a sinner." We all sin; we all fall short. It's what we do in those moments of temptation or habitual sin, and after, that really indicate our holiness.

So. Back to the point. Do you have a hard time keeping your temper? How do you control your anger? If it's a constant struggle for you, perhaps seek the guidance of your pastor and take it to Adoration. Seek out those saints who were also known to be fiery: St. Jerome, St. Peter, St. Therese, and St. Catherine of Sienna.

*Lord, help me be a saint, even in my brokenness. Help me burn with the fire of your charity,  
and not be engulfed by the flames of pride!*



# Fifth Friday in Lent

## Temperance

### Today's Quotation

"It is plainly ludicrous to talk of being temperate in the use of something which one does not use. [...] Temperance in its nature implies indulgence."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, December 1, 1906)

### Scripture Selection

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.

-2 Timothy 1: 7

### Reflection

I can just hear the baffled tone in Chesterton's writing here. Again, he's addressing the misuse of the word "temperance" as a synonym for "total abstinence." But this simply isn't true. As we've learned, temperance is the virtue by which we know our limits and have the self-control to indulge in something enjoyable whilst not going overboard. This week, we are being challenged to grow in virtue by approaching one **thing** in our lives with temperance. How are you doing? Are you winning the battle? Have you been knocked down in the fight and had to start over? Is it a struggle daily? Wherever you are in regards to temperance, challenge yourself by committing to this prayer when you're tempted to over-indulge:

*Come Holy Spirit. Grant me the virtue of temperance.*

So often, we go overboard because we often set ourselves up for failure: the whole bag of chips is there so I'll just polish it off. The wine's free? Let's keep it flowing! I've got nothing else planned this afternoon, so I'll doom-scroll on my phone for hours on end. Keep recognizing the **thing** and give it boundaries. Enjoy it within those boundaries and move on: put it away, turn it off, leave the room.

*Come, Holy Spirit. Grant me the virtue of temperance. Amen.*

It is plainly ludicrous to talk of being temperate in the use of something which one does not use. [...] Temperance in its nature implies indulgence.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org

# Fifth Saturday in Lent

## Temperance

### Today's Quotation

"Temperance [...] is the object of morality in all matters—in wine, in war, in sex, in patriotism; temperance [...] desires, if possible, to have wine without drunkenness, war without massacre, love without profligacy."

-G.K. Chesterton

("The Patriotic Idea," 1904)

### Scripture Selection

If you allow yourself to satisfy your passions, they will make you the laughingstock of your enemies. Take no pleasure in too much luxury which brings on poverty redoubled. Do not become a glutton and a drunkard with nothing in your purse.

-Sirach 18:31-33

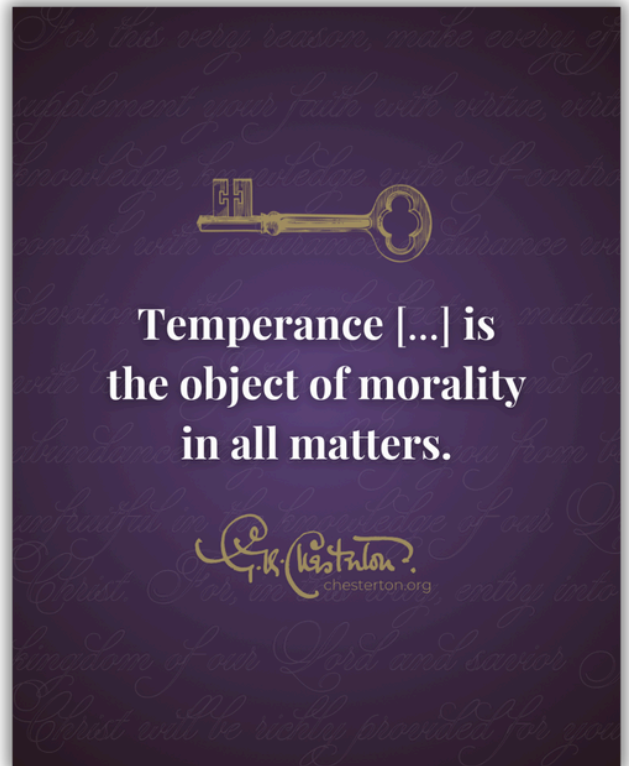
### Reflection

Today is the final day we focus on the virtue of **temperance**, and Chesterton gives us a great definition. It's short, punchy, and easy to remember. Let's break it down: "Temperance is ... morality in all matters." As my 7th and 8th graders learned this year, *morality* means the quality of our actions to be good or evil. Obviously, Chesterton is upholding the greater good with his words here. He goes on to show the differences between rightly ordered situations and the sinful outcomes of disordered passions. His words are supported by those we find today from the book of Sirach.

When we let our desires and passions rule our lives, the negative outcome tends to seep into every part of our lives. Not only does it affect our bodies and souls, but it can also impact the way we interact with others and how they perceive us. When we know our limitations, we gain the ability to unlock the virtue of temperance in our lives. The key to it is moderation.

So how did you do this week? What is easy for you to partake of your chosen **thing** in moderation? What was difficult? Would you approach it differently in the future? How did you see yourself grow in the virtue of temperance this week? Keep practicing! The more you practice temperance, the more it becomes a habit, and the more you'll grow in holiness.

*Come, Holy Spirit. Grant me the virtue of temperance. Amen.*





# Fifth Sunday of Lent

## Faith

### Today's Quotation

"Faith is always converting the age, not as an old religion but as a new religion. This truth is hidden from many by a convention that is too little noticed."

-G.K. Chesterton  
(*The Everlasting Man*)

### Scripture Selection

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise."

Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world." [...] When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

-John 11:21-27, 32

### Reflection

During this fifth week of Lent, we'll focus on **faith**, that great theological virtue by which we believe in God, all that He has revealed, and all that His Church teaches. We chose to concentrate on faith this week because it is at this point in scripture and Christ's ministry that people are really starting to have faith that Jesus is who He says He is. People are beginning to pick sides: they're following Him or forgetting Him.

So which side are you on right now? Where are you at in your faith journey? Are you close to Our Lord? Immersing yourself in the Word and the Sacraments? Do you have a healthy prayer life? Or maybe you're trying but it's a daily struggle. Maybe you have a hard time understanding the whys and whats of the Faith. Maybe you believe, but you just can't explain it, and that exasperates you. Or maybe you don't feel God at all right now, you're having a dark night of the soul and feel as far from God as ever. Or maybe you're angry at Our Lord for a loss or upheaval in your life. Maybe you don't know who Jesus is.

Wherever you are in your faith journey, know that Christ's love for you is abundant, and He's waiting to pour out virtue and grace upon you like a torrent. All you need do is ask. That's why I love the story of Martha and Mary so much. They *knew* who Jesus was. They believed. They *knew* He could do anything, so they asked. Not only did they ask, but they did it with a bit of sisterly admonition entangled in their grief.

Do you *know* Our Lord? Do you *know* that He can do all things for you? How can Our Lord help you grow in the virtue of faith this week? Ask Him. Reach out and say, "Lord, help my unbelief!"

Faith is always  
converting the age,  
not as an old religion  
but as a new religion.  
This truth is hidden  
from many by a  
convention that is  
too little noticed.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org

# Fifth Monday of Lent

## Faith

### Today's Quotation

"Faith is unfashionable, and it is customary on every side to cast against it the fact that it is a paradox."

-G.K. Chesterton  
(*Heretics*)

### Scripture Selection

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God.

-Ephesians 2:8

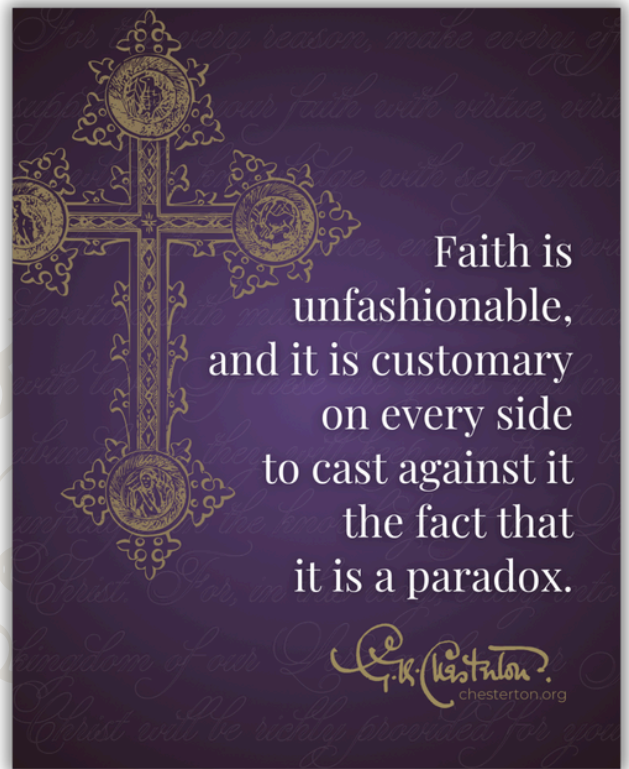
### Reflection

Such a great line from *Heretics* here. In this section of the book, Chesterton is writing about the paradoxical nature of the Theological virtues. His next line is: "Everybody mockingly repeats the famous childish definition that faith is 'the power of believing that which we know to be untrue'."

Faith is certainly paradoxical not because we believe untruths, but because of its unseen nature. To have faith, we have to believe in something that we can't fully understand, and to believe in someOne that we don't often see. Just because we don't understand it or don't see it doesn't mean it's not *true*. My faith is very intellectual. I love the *reason* and solid answers that it gives, which is why the *mysteries* of our faith often trip me up. I have to let go of the incessant need to be able to understand everything just so I can explain it. I'll never fully understand some things until I get to Heaven. And that's ok; it just increases my excitement for Heaven all the more. One day, I will know and understand ALL THE THINGS!

But right now, I have to maintain that healthy detachment in order to temper my pride. After all, God is God, and I am not. What was that one thing St. Augustine said? "If you think you fully understand God, what you understand isn't God." Super paraphrased there, but it absolutely illuminates the paradox of faith. We can only know so much before we just have to let go and take that first step out of the boat toward Christ.

*Lord, help me follow you in faith and trust!*





# Fifth Tuesday of Lent

*Faith*

## Today's Quotation

"Religion is revelation. In other words, it is a vision, and a vision received by faith; but it is a vision of reality. The faith consists in a conviction of its reality."

-G.K. Chesterton  
(*The Everlasting Man*)

## Scripture Selection

Whatever gains I had, these I have come to consider a loss because of Christ. More than that, I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having any righteousness of my own based on the law but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God, depending on faith to know him and the power of his resurrection and [the] sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

-Philippians 3:7-11

## Reflection

Chesterton wrote these words in *The Everlasting Man*, but they make me think of *The Dumb Ox*, his book on St. Thomas Aquinas. Chesterton tells us that Aquinas was "ready to take the lowest place for the examination of the lowest things" (66). In other words, St. Thomas was able to clearly perceive so many things about Our Lord because he simply took the time to look around and study the realities of the world. When he began with the smallest things, the doors kept opening to larger truths and revelations for the Angelic Doctor. Aquinas received visions and revelations, but his approach to illuminating the Truth was to use other truths to do it.

What truths do you see around you that point you to the Truth who is Jesus Christ? How is Truth evident in the small things in your life? How do these little truths convict you of *the Truth*? Take some time today to reflect on the small things in your life and give thanks for the way they convict you to follow Christ.



Religion is revelation.  
In other words, it is a  
vision, and a vision  
received by faith;  
*but it is a vision of reality.*  
The faith consists in a  
conviction of its reality.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org



# Sixth Wednesday in Lent

## Faith

### Today's Quotation

"The final act of faith fixes a man's mind because it satisfies his mind."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The Everlasting Man*)

### Scripture Selection

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely;

In all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths.

-Proverbs 3:5-6

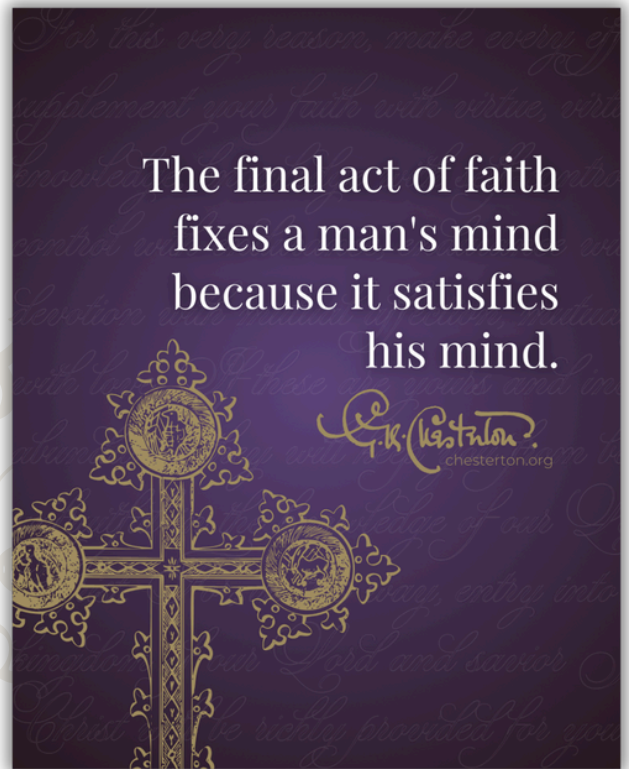
### Reflection

You can develop your faith in so many ways. There are many schools of thought, but it usually falls into two camps: the thinkers and the lovers. The readers and the huggers. The hand-folders and the hand-holders. Everyone's personal relationship with Christ is just that: personal. Everyone's path is unique and different, and they're all beautiful in their own way. What is your approach to the virtue of faith?

This quote of Chesterton is great because it illustrates how varied the personal faith of Christians can be. Acts of faith that satisfy *my* mind might just bore the heck out of yours. Acts of faith that make *your* heart skip a beat just might make me want to shrink back into the silence of my spiritual reading. Both approaches are great! The point is to live out your faith in a way that is best for you: it challenges you to grow in holiness by using your personal gifts.

What acts of faith satisfy your mind or heart the most? Do you have a particularly favorite saint or devotion? Do you love silent adoration, or do you prefer uplifting praise and worship music? Maybe your faith is bolstered by community work or evangelizing people where they're at. Regardless, take some time to reflect today on the ways you put your faith into action.

*Lord, help me live out my faith for the glory of Your Name!*



# Sixth Thursday in Lent

*Faith*

## Today's Quotation

"The incredible thing has happened again; the Faith has a better following among the young men than among the old."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The Everlasting Man*)

## Scripture Selection

For I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: for Jew first, and then Greek. For in it is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous by faith will live."

-Romans 1:16-17

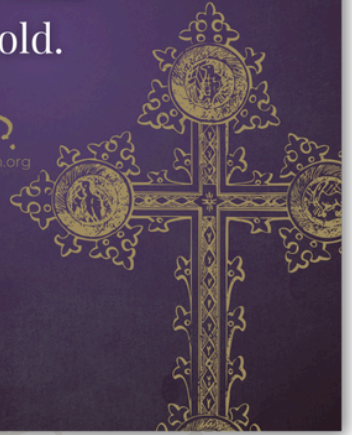
## Reflection

The scripture verse today is so powerful. There are two sentences that get me every time: "I am not ashamed of the gospel," and "The one who is righteous by faith will live." The first verse is absolutely imbued with the unabashed spirit of those young people who are on-fire for Christ, and the second verse explains *why*. When we live a life of virtue and holiness, we begin to shine with the light of Christ, and that is attractive. I'm not saying that we become more *physically* attractive, but the glowing spirit within us that illuminates our actions is what has the power to draw others to Christ. Holiness and virtue are attractive! Others who might be struggling or void of virtue in their lives see us and think, "Whoa. What's going on with that dude?! Whatever he has, I want it."

It was like that for me in my late-pre-conversion days when I was surrounded by other young people my age who were *authentically* Christian. They were trying to not only live out the Gospel, but they were actively bringing others to Jesus through their words and actions. Young people are attracted to the beauty of the Catholic Faith: the smells and bells, the chanting and lace, the reasons we use our reason. They love it, and they're hungry for more. The beauty of faithful holiness is attractive, and, as Chesterton says, it's an incredible thing.

The incredible thing  
has happened again;  
the Faith has a better  
following among the  
young men than  
among the old.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org



# Sixth Friday in Lent

## Faith

### Today's Quotation

"Faith is always at a disadvantage; it is a perpetually defeated thing which survives all its conquerors."

-G.K. Chesterton

(G.F. Watts, 1904)

### Scripture Selection

Answer me when I call, my saving God. When troubles hem me in, set me free; take pity on me, hear my prayer. How long, O people, will you be hard of heart? Why do you love what is worthless, chase after lies? Know that the LORD works wonders for his faithful one; the LORD hears when I call out to him. Tremble and sin no more; weep bitterly within your hearts, wail upon your beds, Offer fitting sacrifices and trust in the LORD.

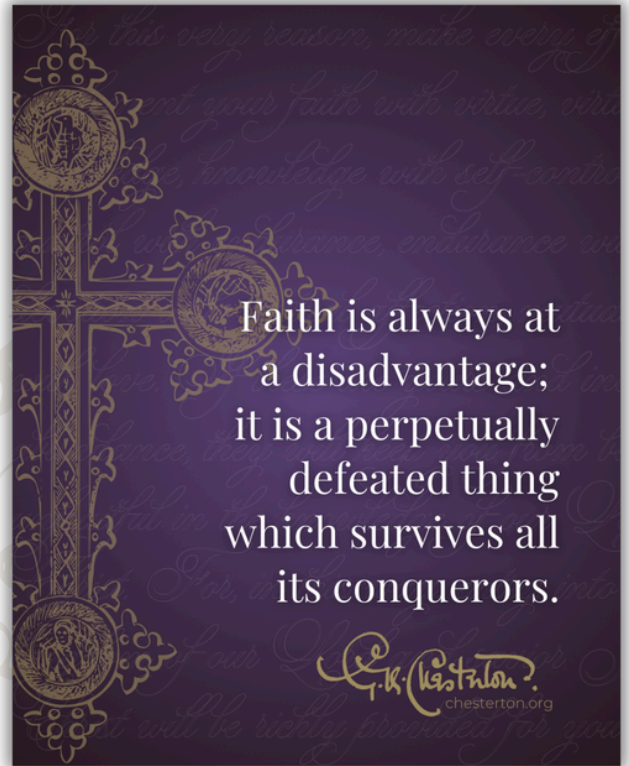
-Psalm 4:2-6

### Reflection

Are you familiar with St. Stanislaus? He was known as the "reluctant Bishop" of Krakow, and he was a martyr for the faith. Chesterton's paradoxical words today are definitely reminiscent of the martyrs. On the outside, it looked like the martyrs were being defeated by their executioners. But we know better, don't we? Their faith in Christ allowed them to go on to eternal life, while the memory of these holy heroes and devotion to them still lives on today. The saints are great examples of faith in action, and we would do well to follow their example and let them lead us closer to Christ. They can show us how to exhibit not only faith, but all of the virtues, especially joy in the face of impending death.

While most of us might not face a physical Christian (red) martyrdom, we can definitely strive for a different kind of martyrdom called spiritual martyrdom. This is when we try daily to die to ourselves, our wants and temptations, in order that Christ may fully live in us. Ask the intercession of a few of the martyrs who share your interests. Maybe you're a music lover- call on St. Cecilia. Perhaps you're an athlete- ask St. Sebastian's intercession. If you're a catechist, learn more about the martyrdom of Blessed Andrew of Phuò Yeàn. If you love debating, St. Catherine of Alexandria is your girl. There are so many saints in heaven just waiting to pray for us and assist us. Look to them and ask them to intercede for you!

*All you holy martyrs, pray for us!*





# Sixth Saturday in Lent

*Faith*

## Today's Quotation

"The Faith is not a survival. [...] It has not survived; it has returned again and again in this western world of rapid change and institutions perpetually perishing."

-G.K. Chesterton  
(*The Everlasting Man*)

## Scripture Selection

Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

-Romans 12:2

## Reflection

Today is the final day that we will focus on the virtue of **faith**. The words of Chesterton, when combined with today's scripture selection, form a real powerhouse. Chesterton's word choice here certainly grabs my attention: "institutions perpetually perishing" definitely made me do a double-take. Think about that phrase for a moment and relate it to the last 2000 years of history. Consider even a *few* of those institutions: how they came to be, how they worked, and how they fell into the mist of memory.

Now consider the Bride of Christ, the Church, and all those who have faith in the Resurrection. The faith of the believers can't be quelled in its entirety because the Church is not a man-made institution. While it is full of bumbling humans who make mistakes and sin a lot, it is also grounded solidly on the faith of the Cross and the hope for Heaven. This is the same reason St. Paul tells us not to be conformed to this world. Even back then, He understood the frenzied, revolving patterns in society. He knew that the world would never stand still, but its members can stand firm in the Lord.

While we might be a part of a world that will eventually pass away, we can be confident in faith. Take some time to reflect on the virtue of faith. How did you grow in virtue this week? How can you keep cultivating this virtue in your life? What influences your faith the most? Cling close to Jesus so as not to be caught up in those things that perish. Instead, follow in faith the one who gives us eternal life.

*Lord, increase our faith!*

The Faith is not a survival.  
[...] It has not survived;  
it has returned again and  
again in this western  
world of rapid change and  
institutions perpetually  
perishing.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org

# Palm Sunday

Hope

## Today's Quotation

"Who shall say that all is dark before us when this bright star of hope hovers over the path?"

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, October 11, 1924)

## Scripture Selection

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.

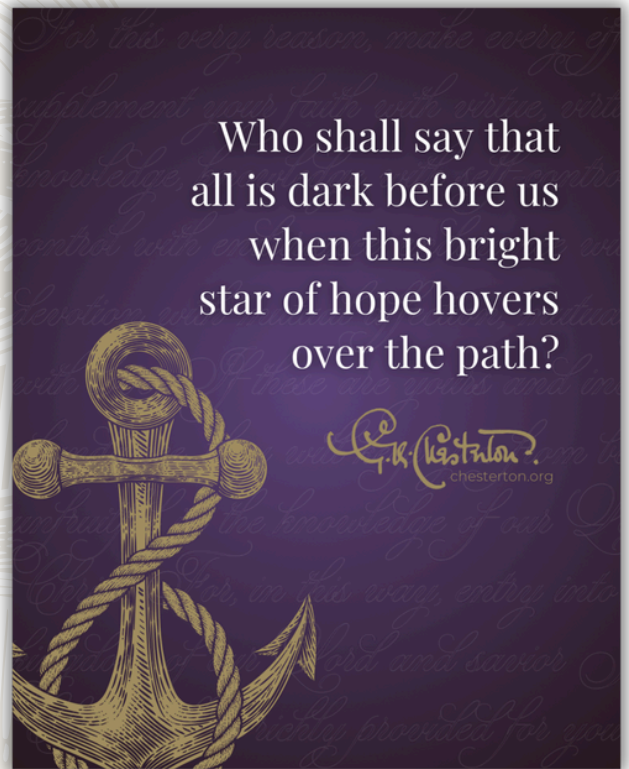
-Romans 12:12

## Reflection

Today begins the holiest week of the year. This week's observances walk us through the last and most meaningful moments in Christ's ministry and the culmination of His mission. It is, as Gandalf would say, "the deep breath before the plunge." Did you ever think of that? **Hope** is the deep breath we take before plunging into the depths of darkness. The virtue of hope is to desire the Kingdom of God, eternal life, and to place our trust in God's promises to us. As we learned last Advent, Chesterton had much to say about the paradoxical nature of hope; it lies dormant until the moment in which we need it.

The next few days will be some of the darkest days described in scripture. But, Chesterton reminds us, all is not dark. We still have, like the apostles, that bright star of hope: the hope that Jesus is who He says He is and He'll do what He said He would. Hope begins to dawn at the darkest moments. It is that hope which anchors us and encourages us to call upon the other virtues to keep following the Lord, even when we're unsure of the next step.

Reflect today about your approach to Holy Week. Do you participate in ALL the things? Or do you have a particular devotion that is your favorite (Ahem, *Tenebrae*)? If you've never fully dove into everything the Church has to offer during Holy Week, try it this year. One by one, the lights will go out until we are left in the cold dark tomb, and the only glimmer we have left is the hope in our own hearts. Get ready. Hope in the Lord!





# Monday of Holy Week

*Hope*

## Today's Quotation

"In a sense we renew hope when we renounce expectation."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The New Witness*, March 15, 1918)

## Scripture Selection

Happy those whose mouth causes them no grief, those who are not stung by remorse for sin. Happy are those whose conscience does not reproach them, those who have not lost hope.

-Sirach 14:1-2

## Reflection

How did I do this Lent? What did I decide to give up this year? Did I stick to it? Did I falter but keep trying? Did I completely forget about it? Did I get frustrated and give up? There's still time to start over! There's always a chance to start over with Christ- especially in the Sacrament of Confession. While we are trying to be saints, we've got to come to terms with the fact that we aren't perfect... *yet*. We aren't saints... *yet*. When we focus less on our scruples and more on the *reason* for our hope, our hearts rejoice and gain the resolve we need to move forward. So no matter where you are in your Lenten journey, you can start again today at the 11th hour. Don't allow despair to creep in because of your mistake or sin. Face it, confess it, and begin again.

*Lord, renew our Hope!*





# Tuesday of Holy Week

Hope

## Today's Quotation

"What that universal yet fighting faith brought into the world was hope."

-G.K. Chesterton  
(*The Everlasting Man*)

## Scripture Selection

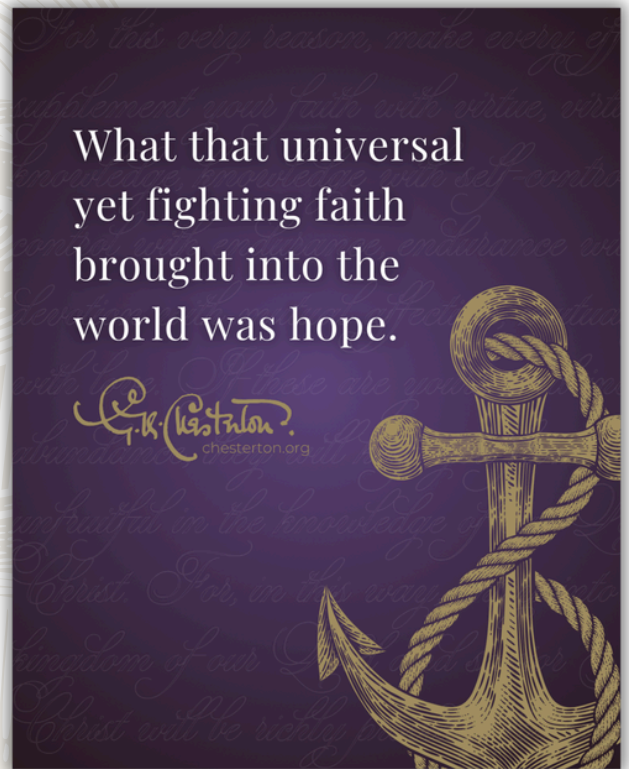
For through the Spirit, by faith, we await the hope of righteousness.

-Galatians 5:5

## Reflection

So in this particular section of *The Everlasting Man*, Chesterton is writing about the Church Militant- the members of the Church on earth who are in a constant battle against the forces of evil. We are all engaged in the battle against evil, and we are on the same side, and we all know the Truth, and it's worth the fight. While some of us might not be aggressive or ferocious in our battle tactics, the reason behind our fight is one and the same: the hope of the Resurrection. Think about it. Why do we evangelize? To bring others closer to Christ. Why do we want to bring people closer to Christ? So they can know the Truth and be set free from the slavery of sin to ultimately be happy with Him in Heaven. That is the hope that makes the fight worthwhile. Heaven is our only hope.

How do you fight for hope in your life? How do you fight for others and bring this hope to their lives? What gifts has God given you to bring others to Him? Take some time today to reflect on your role as a member of the Church Militant. And, if you haven't been a very active soldier, resolve to join the fight.



# Wednesday of Holy Week

Hope

## Today's Quotation

"Vices always grow like weeds wherever they can; they grow out of human weakness, but they are not encouraged by human strength."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*G.K.'s Weekly*, May 4, 1929)

## Scripture Selection

Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.

-Romans 12:21

## Reflection

Judas.

It's indescribable- the pain, suffering, and disappointment that I feel when I reflect on Judas and his part. It's sadness doubled by pity and filled with heartache. It's difficult to discuss because it's just so unfathomable. So let's jump in, shall we? He was one of the Twelve. One of the chosen, hand-picked by Christ for a unique and unrepeatable purpose. He was given a mission by God to live, walk, work, and eat by His side. And he did. He did it faithfully, lovingly, obediently, and virtuously.

Until he didn't.

When do you suppose that the first "weed" of vice popped up in the heart of Judas? We get a hint in John 6, after Jesus has spent some time ministering, preaching, healing, and performing miracles. Jesus already knew who would follow and forget, who would believe and betray, and still He loved them. We don't actually see the weeds or "false fruits" of Judas until John 12, during the Anointing at Bethany. Instead of seeing her actions with a pure heart, Judas complains about the way in which Mary "wastes" the oil on Jesus. John makes it clear that Judas was a virtue-signaling thief.

What I find baffling is not only Christ's love for the one who would betray him, but also the many *chances* he gives to Judas, through admonition, to come back to Him. But the heart of Judas is covered with vicious weeds choking the virtuous fruits. He stops listening to the voice of Truth and begins listening to himself and his demons instead.

We've concentrated on the virtues this Lent, and we haven't mentioned the vices. We're all aware of our vices, and sometimes it's a struggle to deal with them. It's much easier to cut these weeds off at the root than to deal with the rotten fruit they bear. The thing that kills me the most about Judas is that he stood toe to toe with Jesus and just ignored him. Truth was staring him in the face, and he chose to look the other way.

And we are just like Judas sometimes. We know and love Jesus, but sometimes we choose to give in to temptation or vice. We choose to look the other way. But the big difference here is that we *still have a chance*. We have the chance to come back to Christ, to be reconciled, and to keep weeding and tending the garden of our hearts. I'm reminded of the last verse of one of my favorite songs, "Matthias Replaces Judas," by *Showbread*. (If you've never heard it before, find it online and give it a listen. Have a box of tissues handy):

*Jesus, my heart is all I have to give to you. So weak and so unworthy, this simply will not do.  
No alabaster jar, no diamond in the rough. For your body that was broken, how can this be enough?  
By me you were abandoned, by me you were betrayed, Yet in your arms and in your heart forever I have stayed.  
Your glory illuminates my life, no darkness will descend, For you have loved me forever and your love will never end.*

How am I like Judas? How have I allowed my vices to come between me and Jesus? How have I betrayed Our Lord? Have I stopped listening? Given over to despair? Cultivated sinful habits and vices in my life?

Take advantage of the Sacrament of Confession this week- even if you haven't in a very long time. Christ is waiting for you in the Confessional. He sees you. He is hurt by your betrayal, but he desperately loves you and wants you to come back to him. Do not be overcome! Hope in his mercy! *Jesus, my heart is all I have to give to you.*



Vices always grow like weeds wherever they can; they grow out of human weakness, but they are not encouraged by human strength.

*G.K. Chesterton*  
chesterton.org



# Holy Thursday

Hope

## Today's Quotation

"Catholics believe that in the Blessed Sacrament Christ is present, not merely as a thought is present in a mind, but as a person is present in a room."

-G.K. Chesterton

("Roman Catholicism," *An Outline of Christianity*)

## Scripture Selection

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way." Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

-John 14:1-6

## Reflection

The last line of today's scripture selection is my favorite verse of all time. Truth is my favorite title for Our Lord. During my pre-conversion days, I was living a life of sin and believing all the lies that society and satan fed to me. When I met the Truth who is Christ Jesus, He pulled the rug from under my life and turned my world topsy-turvy. If we ever meet in person, ask me to tell you my conversion story. It's a riot.

For today's reflection, let's take some time to meditate on one of the most beautiful hymns to the Eucharist ever penned: *Adoro te Devote* by St. Thomas Aquinas. My favorite line is, of course, the last line of the second stanza: "Truth himself speaks truly or there's nothing true." It's such a baffling paradox- it grips my heart in delight whenever I sing it. Today, carefully read through the text of this resplendent hymn until one line jumps out at you. Pray that line over and over again. Let the Lord speak to you through it. *Come, Holy Spirit!*

Godhead here in hiding whom I do adore  
Masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more.  
See, Lord, at thy service low lies here a heart  
Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art.

Seeing, touching, tasting are in thee deceived;  
How says trusty hearing? that shall be believed;  
What God's Son has told me, take for truth I do;  
Truth himself speaks truly or there's nothing true.

On the cross thy godhead made no sign to men;  
Here thy very manhood steals from human ken:  
Both are my confession, both are my belief,  
And I pray the prayer made by the dying thief.

I am not like Thomas, wounds I cannot see,  
But I plainly call thee Lord and God as he:  
This faith each day deeper be my holding of,  
Daily make me harder hope and dearer love.

O thou, our reminder of the Crucified, Living Bread,  
the life of us for whom he died,  
Lend this life to me, then; feed and feast my mind,  
There be thou the sweetness man was meant to find.

Like what tender tales tell of the Pelican, Bathe me,  
Jesus Lord, in what thy bosom ran--  
Blood that but one drop of has the pow'r to win  
All the world forgiveness of its world of sin.

Jesus whom I look at shrouded here below,  
I beseech thee, send me what I thirst for so,  
Some day to gaze on thee face to face in light  
And be blest forever with thy glory's sight.

Catholics believe that in  
the Blessed Sacrament  
Christ is *present*,  
not merely as a thought  
is present in a mind,  
but as a *person* is  
present in a room.

G.K. Chesterton  
chesterton.org





# Good Friday

## Hope

### Today's Quotation

"If the darkest hour did come, some of the wisest men would for the first time begin to hope."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, October 11, 1924)

### Scripture Selection

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

-John 19: 26-30

### Reflection

Remain at the foot of the Cross today with Mary, our Mother. If you can, spend 15-30 minutes in absolute silence and stillness at 3 o'clock, reflecting on the last words of Christ: "It is finished." Today is a dark day, a bleak day, a somber and still day. But the work is done. And while we wait in darkness, the best is yet to come.

If the darkest hour did come,  
some of the wisest men  
would for the first time  
begin to hope.

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# Holy Saturday

Hope

## Today's Quotation

"When, therefore, our hopes for the coming time seem disturbed or doubtful, [...] let us remember that it is really our disappointment that is an illusion. It is our rescue that is a reality."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, January 3, 1920)

## Scripture Selection

Let integrity and virtue preserve me, for in you I place my hope.

-Psalm 25:21

## Reflection

The paradox of the Cross: the end of the mission is only the beginning of salvation. This week, we've meditated on the virtue of hope. Today, as we remain in the still and silent sepulcher awaiting our Lord, recall the ways in which you hope in life everlasting. Think back to those darkest moments in your life and realize that Christ was with you in your own tomb of suffering and doubt.

When, therefore, our hopes for the coming time seem disturbed or doubtful, [...] let us remember that it is really our disappointment that is an illusion. It is our rescue that is a reality.

G.K. Chesterton  
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# Easter Sunday

## Charity

### Today's Quotation

"The only kind of charity which any weak spirit wants, or which any generous spirit feels, is the charity which forgives the sins that are like scarlet."

-G.K. Chesterton  
(*Heretics*)

### Scripture Selection

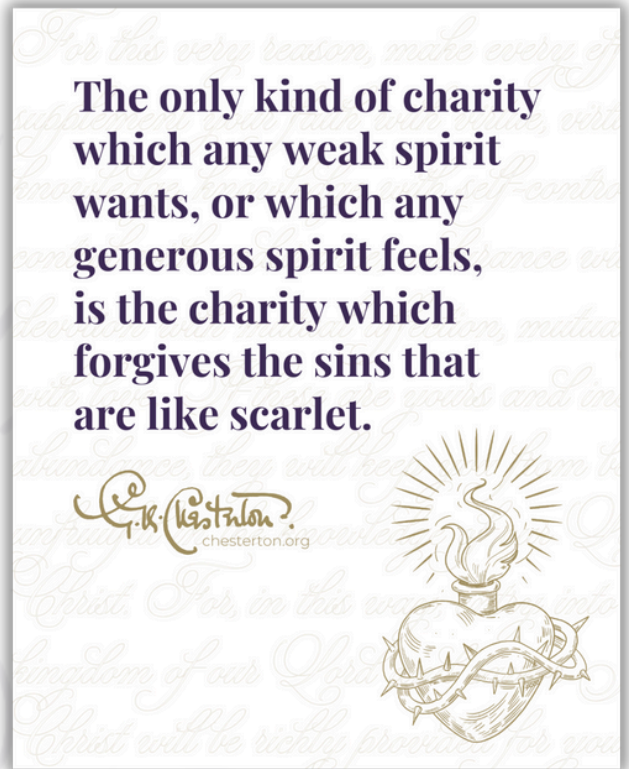
Let integrity and virtue preserve me, for in you I place my hope.

-Psalm 25:21

### Reflection

He is Risen! Happy Easter! Today we begin to celebrate 50 glorious days of the Easter season. It's a time to celebrate the love that conquers death, so this week we'll be reflecting on the greatest Theological virtue: **charity**. Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all things and love our neighbors as ourselves for the love of God. Today's scripture is one of my favorites- a jarring image of how the precious Blood of Christ can cleanse us from our sin. Today we celebrate the Resurrection- the hope that we have for eternal life wherein we will finally see love face-to-face. Today is indeed the day to celebrate our Love of God, but let's focus this week on how well we also love our neighbors: friends, families, and enemies, especially as we are sitting down to a family meal or hunting for Easter eggs. Let's think to ourselves, how can I best model the charity of Christ to others today?

*He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!*





# Easter Monday

## Charity

### Today's Quotation

"Every generous person will admit that the one kind of sin which charity should cover is the sin which is inexcusable."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Heretics*)

### Scripture Selection

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good.

-Romans 12:9

### Reflection

This passage from *Heretics* definitely has the ability to make people squirm. What?! Excuse sin?! But what if he... or how about the time she... or what if they did something REALLY BAD?! Sometimes people conflate "charity" with "condone." When I'm acting charitable toward someone who has exhibited abhorrent behavior or sin, I'm not condoning or excusing their awful behavior; I'm seeing past it to the broken person on the other side, because that's what Christ would do. He loves us in our brokenness, but calls us to greater glory.

Charity covers a multitude of sins, and it must be sincere- without show or expectation of reward. Think of a time in your life when you were on the receiving end of this kind of undeserving charity from another person. How did that impact your life? Did it challenge you to change? Did it influence you to be more charitable towards others when they stumble, to help them get back up? Recall the person who showed true charity to you, and pray for them today.



**Every generous person  
will admit that the one  
kind of sin which charity  
should cover is the sin  
which is inexcusable.**

*G.K. Chesterton*  
chesterton.org

# Easter Tuesday

## Charity

### Today's Quotation

"Love is not a mild thing at all; love is not a peaceable thing at all, as is proved by the enormous amount of trouble which it creates by coming into the world."

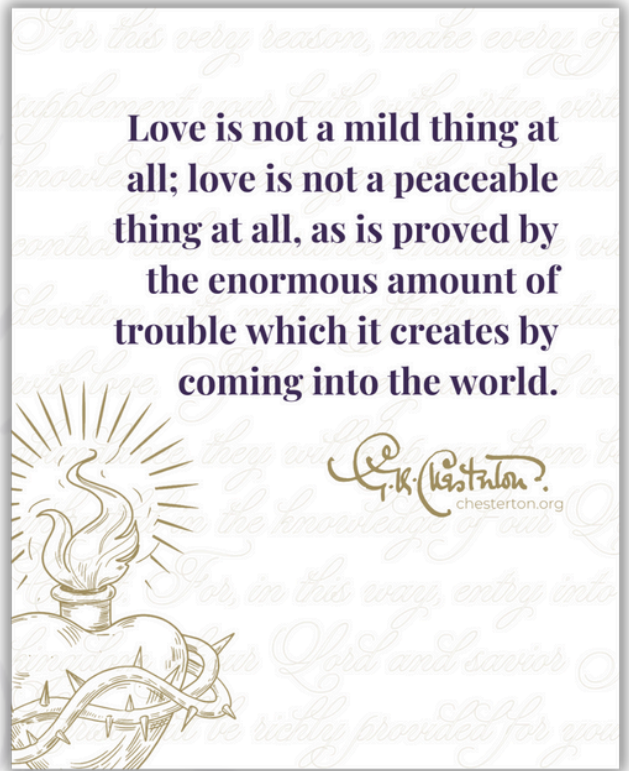
-G.K. Chesterton

(*The Daily News*, December 23, 1905)

### Scripture Selection

"I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! [...] Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division."

-Luke 12:49, 51



### Reflection

It's interesting how Chesterton's words work so well with the scripture verse today. The word choice is definitely confrontational and a bit shocking. When we think of *love* or *charity* according to worldly standards, we think of quiet, mild manners and tolerance. But **true** charity demands sacrifice, it demands change, it demands that we choose a side. And, most times, this choice is a difficult one to make because it can cause an "enormous amount of trouble" in our lives. And sometimes that "trouble" is a scary thing to face! When we choose to follow Christ and answer His call to set the world ablaze, we can face pushback from other people.

True charity not only challenges us, but it challenges other people when they see it, too. This is why it can be such a cause for division, even among family members! I remember back during the early days of my conversion- I lost a lot of my friends who were lukewarm Christians because they just couldn't handle the change in my life. While I certainly mourned the loss of these friends in my life, I mourned more for their souls and their unwillingness to come to the Truth who grants abundant life.

Has your love of Christ ever caused division in your life? Have you had the unfortunate experience of losing friends or family members because you answered Christ's call? Take some time to pray for those people today, that they may know the true meaning of charity and that the Holy Spirit may give them the grace to follow Christ.

*Lord, set my heart ablaze with the fire of Your love!*

# Easter Wednesday

*Charity*

## Today's Quotation

"Love is never free."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Platitudes Undone*)

## Scripture Selection

For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. [...] For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love.

-Galatians 5:1, 13

## Reflection

When we say "yes" to Christ, and follow Him out of love, we have to say "no" to a LOT of other things: bad habits, worldly ways, sinful activities, the near occasion of sin, and so on. There is always some type of cost involved in love. It's this cost that can make or break us when we decide to abandon it all in order to love Jesus with our whole hearts.

In what ways have you said "no" to the world because you follow Christ? What have you given up for Jesus? What crosses have you taken up for Him? Take some time to give thanks and praise to Our Lord for giving you the virtues you need to remain close to Him and separate from the world.





# Easter Thursday

## Charity

### Today's Quotation

"It is possible to love our enemies. But we never love them so much as when we are fighting them fairly. And we certainly never hate them so much as when we are running away from them."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*The Daily News*, December 23, 1905)

### Scripture Selection

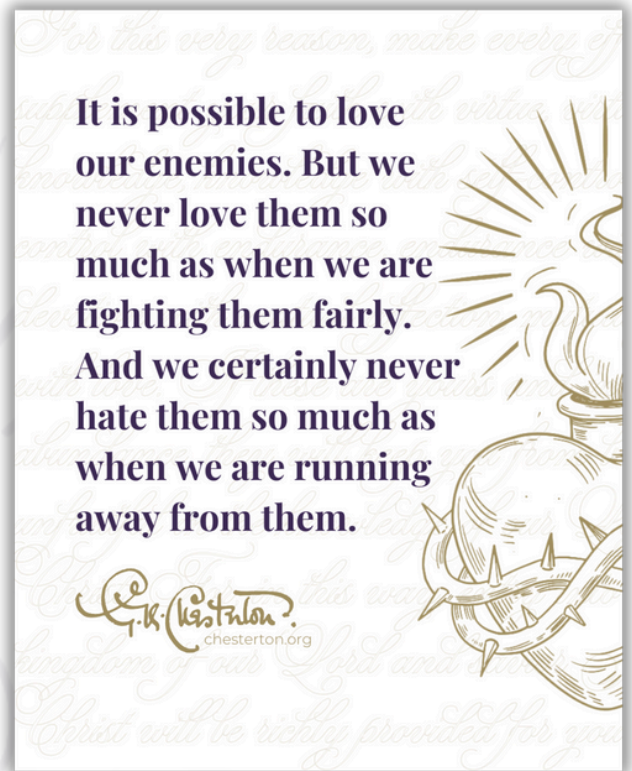
Your every act should be done with love.

-1 Corinthians 16:14

### Reflection

Chesterton was a champion of charity toward his enemies and opponents. Why? Because he loved them. He didn't allow their disagreements and debates to define his relationship with the other person. He saw each person as a child of God, equal in dignity to himself. He knew best how to have an argument without having a quarrel, and he explains here that fighting doesn't mean what society thinks it means. Remember, we are the Church Militant engaged in constant spiritual battle not only for our souls, but for the souls of others.

Chesterton knew this and displayed the virtue of charity beautifully by fighting for the souls of his opponents. I definitely need to learn from Chesterton's playbook when it comes to loving my enemies and fighting for their souls. Usually, I do just the opposite: I run in the other direction. The Apostle of Common Sense is really calling me out here. I should be running straight into battle, like a good soldier should, and not chickening out like a coward. Loving our enemies and fighting the good fight for them looks different for everyone. How does that battle look for you? How are you tending to the souls of your enemies and opponents? How are you leading them to Christ in a charitable way?



# Easter Friday

## Charity

### Today's Quotation

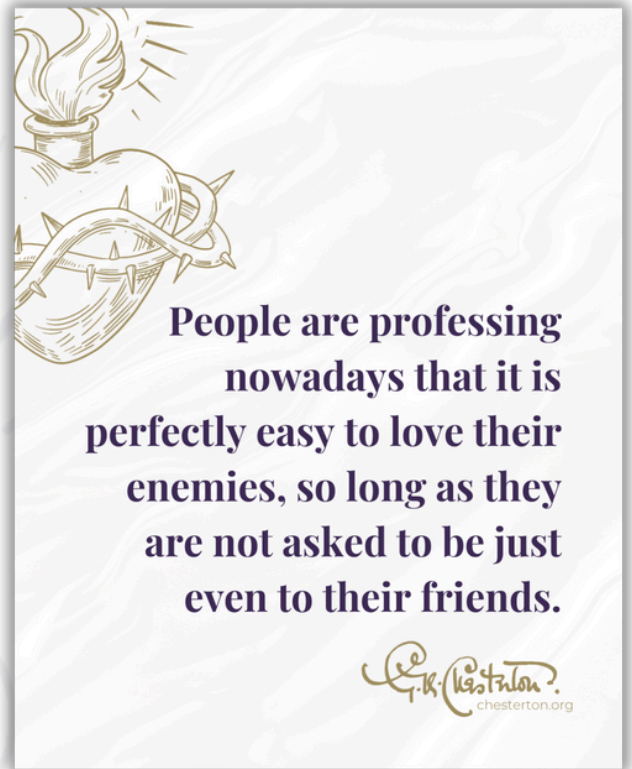
"People are professing nowadays that it is perfectly easy to love their enemies, so long as they are not asked to be just even to their friends."

-G.K. Chesterton

(*Illustrated London News*, December 3, 1921)

### Scripture Selection

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves,  
-Philippians 2:1-3



### Reflection

What a jarring juxtaposition from Chesterton's words yesterday! This one really makes me think: "just what in the heck is the Prince of Paradox talking about here?!" I love how he touches on the virtues of charity and justice at the same time. Charity is loving God and neighbor; justice is giving that which is due to God and neighbor. I think that Chesterton is confronting our complacency. It can certainly be easy, well *easier*, to love our enemies when we understand how to do it and put it into practice. But what about our friends who are in the same boat with us? What justice do we owe to them? Do we challenge them to grow in virtue? Or do we just sit back and let them be? Are we afraid to encourage them along because they appear to be doing just fine? How can we be loving and just to our friends by giving them what is due to the glory of God? Think today about your closest friend and how much you love them. What can you do in your relationship with that person to point you both to Christ?

*Lord, help me love my friends for love of You!*

# Easter Saturday

Charity

## Today's Quotation

"For the Catholic, faith is mixed up with the mystery of freedom, so love is mixed up with the mystery of chivalry."

-G.K. Chesterton

("Preface," *To the Messenger of the Snow*, 1931)

## Scripture Selection

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

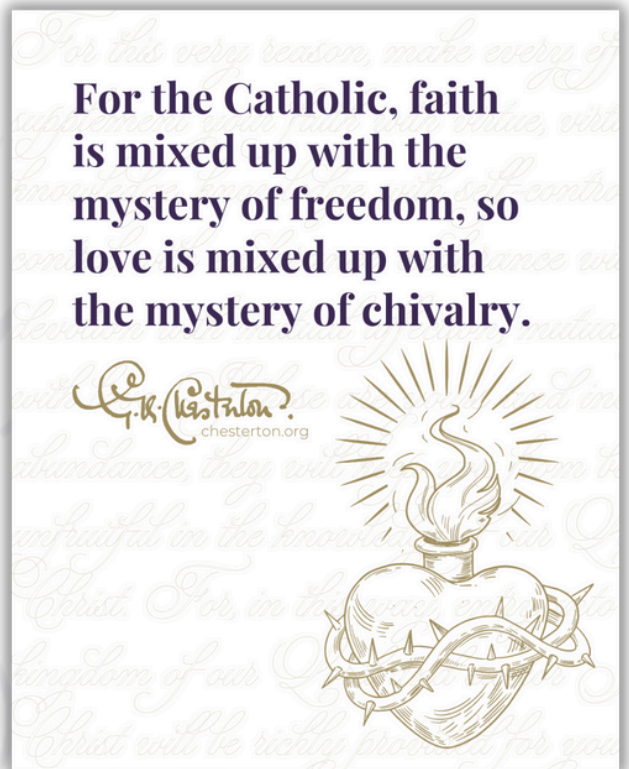
-Philippians 2:5-11

## Reflection

How has your faith in Jesus Christ set you free?

How has His love led you to serve others?

How are you living a life of virtue?





# Divine Mercy Sunday

*Charity*

## Today's Quotation

"We believe in living according to a set of virtues which include charity and justice, of qualities which include common-sense and proportion; we shall attack until we die a system which divorces a man from his stomach, his mind and his will."

-G.K. Chesterton

(G.K.'s Weekly, June 8, 1929)

## Scripture Selection

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love. If these are yours and increase in abundance, they will keep you from being idle or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For, in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

-2 Peter 1:5-8,11

## Reflection

Today, on Divine Mercy Sunday, we conclude our meditations on virtue with Chesterton. I love the ferocity with which he writes today's words. Chesterton understood that living a life of virtue was living a life against the world. It means being a live fish going against the stream while everyone else floats by on the current, dead and deaf to the voice of truth and reason. I love this quotation because it perfectly sums up all that we have considered during the last seven weeks. A life lived in virtue is one worth fighting for because we're fighting for our souls. To live a life of virtue is to remain unbothered by the cares and standards of a world that seeks to destroy what Christ has given to us- a body *and* a soul. Chesterton had the ability to recognize this battle almost 100 years ago, and his words still ring true today.

How has Chesterton challenged you to grow in virtue? Do you recognize any differences in your life? How will you continue to cultivate these virtues in your life? How will you keep fighting the good fight?

*Thank you, Lord, for allowing me to come to you in my brokenness and need. Thank you for helping me realize the virtues that I live out and the virtues I lack. Please keep my heart open to Your guidance and grace, and allow the virtues of the Apostle of Common sense to continue to inspire me along the path of virtue. Amen.*

*G.K. Chesterton, pray for us!*

*Jesus, I trust in You!*

We believe in living according to a set of *virtues* which include charity and justice, of qualities which include common-sense and proportion; we shall attack until we die a system which divorces a man from his stomach, his mind and his will.

G.K. Chesterton?  
chesterton.org

# Cultivating Virtue

*Daily Lenten Reflections with G.K. Chesterton*



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