

# PATIENCE

Since “Patience is a virtue” is a common phrase, we decided to devote one of the virtues to its exploration. Though a common phrase, it seems that sometimes patience can be an uncommon virtue. With the increased busyness of our lives and the increase in concerns and stresses, patience can often be in short supply. We might even be tempted to pray, “Lord, give me patience, but make it quick!” Remaining calm in the midst of chaos can be tough. Relating with others can sometimes test our limits. Consecutively failing at a task can set us to muttering. Perhaps what is needed is for us to develop the ability to create “pregnant pauses” within our days and conversations, giving us the time to choose our reactions or our words a little more carefully. As with the virtue of silence, it is in these pauses that we allow God to enter and to help form our perceptions and responses. Each time we are able to respond with a bit more patience makes the next time a little easier.

“A person is as big as the things that make them angry.”

Another definition of patience is “long-suffering.” How do we react when faced with chronic illness, continual disappointment, or sudden changes in our lives? Our parish mural of Peter faltering in his belief in the midst of a storm can be very symbolic of our response to these situations. We can too easily lose heart or lose our trust in God and begin to sink. We fear the storms of life, but we fail to realize the strength they create in us, or the insight they develop in us. But, staying with a difficult situation to resolve it rather than trying to escape it gives God the chance to complete what such an experience was meant to effect in us. We are all works in progress and need to use all situations to allow God to continue the work.

“Jesus did not eliminate the storm; he simply saved the people on board the sinking ship from giving in to it.” Sr. Joan Chittister

“Your heart must be broken by the things that break the heart of God.”  
Anonymous

For the next month, we invite you to focus on patience and to pray for the virtue for yourself, to thank God for the gift where it already appears, and to think of those persons you know who are examples of this virtue. Once you have identified these people, we encourage you to call them or write a note to them, telling them that you see the virtue of patience in their lives. A few examples might be:

- Persons who seem to ride the waves of life and who know how to distinguish between the small stuff and what is truly important.
- Those who remain a calm presence when others around them are violent or angry.
- Parents who choose their battles wisely and who do not over react to every situation with their children.
- Someone who has weathered many storms in their life and kept a strong faith and belief in the goodness of God and of life.
- Those who are able to see life’s setbacks as learning experiences and as ways to allow God to work in their lives.

### **Prayer for the virtue of silence:**

Loving God, thank you for giving me the gift of your Son who has shown me the path to you. Your desire for my life is to continually draw closer to you, and so I ask for the virtue of patience. Calm my spirit and create within me the ability to be slow to speak and gentle in my actions. When I am tired or feeling pulled in too many directions, teach me to reach within myself to quiet my escalating emotions. Strengthen me in the face of adversity. Give me the wisdom to see the difference between what is trivial and what is important. Indeed, may I focus on those things that you would deem important – that would break your heart - and help me to quietly let the rest slip from my mind. Thank you for your patience with me as I struggle to become more like you. May I mirror this patience to others. Amen.