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J.M.J.

# THE VIRTUE OF TEMPERANCE

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*As it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet:  
A voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
“Prepare ye the way of the Lord,  
make straight his paths.” — Luke 3:4*

## TEMPERANCE

*(NB What is said here applies equally to boys and girls, men and women.)*

### **1. Temperance is the virtue that helps us to practice self-control.**

It is a matter of moderation, going for what is right and in the right way, neither too much nor too little.

We all need to moderate our appetite for the things we find enjoyable, pleasurable, satisfying to our taste.

We all need self-control.

We need to be able to say no at times to our longings, wants, and supposed needs.

A person who can control his appetites is also a person who has control over his thoughts, words and actions,

A temperate person has control of his will and can use it to make wise choices.

### **2. In order to acquire the virtue of temperance a person must learn to say no to:**

-a second helping, another cookie, a chocolate or piece of candy.

-constantly thinking about food: what's for breakfast, what's for dinner, what's for dessert, etc.

-slouching in the chair, always lying on the bed or couch to read or watch TV.

-spending endless hours on video games.

-listening constantly to music.

-spending too much time watching sporting events on TV.

-talking constantly.

### **3. We need to practice saying no because:**

-in this way to build up our will-power: the capacity to say Yes! in doing what is right.

-we do not find it easy to do what is right. We tend instead to do that which pleases us even if at the time, it is not really right or good for us.

-otherwise we will lack will-power and not be able to focus our time, talents and energies on

worthwhile goals.

-there are situations we will face in life which will require a strong will in order to resist temptation.

-in that way we will find great satisfaction in doing what is clearly for our happiness (and holiness!).

#### **4. Besides, a temperate person, with self control:**

-gives good example to others (at the dinner table, in the lunchroom at school, at snack time, etc.).

-helps others to be thankful for the good things in life but helps them not to overdue it.

-is very grateful for what she has and can rightly enjoy.

-is not upset or envious because others have more.

-is happy to be able to offer the sacrifice of not overdoing the good things, the treats.

#### **5. I want to live the virtue of temperance and so:**

-I will practice saying No! to some pleasures.

-I will try to develop my will-power so as never to give in to anything sinful.

-even if my friends pressure me to go against my conscience, I will not give in. I will stand firm in saying No!

-I will not be soft on myself. I will set high goals for myself and try diligently to attain them.

-I will not consent to going along with the crowd if the others are not doing what is right.

-I will do my best to put quickly out of my mind any pleasurable thought or plan which is clearly not in keeping with what Our Lord would think or plan.

#### **6. As a Christian I want to:**

-follow Christ's example of moderation in eating, drinking, sleeping, etc.

-limit the time I devote to play and games.

-make good use of my time,

talents and energies to do my studies well and to fulfill all my other duties.

-choose always that which is most pleasing to God, even though I might find that hard.

-follow the example of the saints who have refrained from overindulging in the pleasures of this life.

-follow the example left us by Jesus, Mary and Joseph: a simple and humble life lived in Nazareth for so many years, in ordinary surroundings, with daily responsibilities and service joyfully offered to family and friends.

-follow the advice of St. Paul: "Whether you eat or drink, or do anything else, do all for the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31)

-follow St. Paul also as he advises us: "In all things give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus regarding you all." (1 Th. 5:18) rjs

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