



## Know Yourself

*“To become a saint, it is not enough to be a sister but a prudent sister with the oil of love in the lamp of her heart”* Mother Eliswa.

**Virtues** are the essence of our character and when we keep the practice of **virtues** at the heart of everyday life, we live with purpose.

The **theological virtues** are the foundation of **Christian** moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. They inform and give life to all the moral **virtues**.

**CCC 1803** "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions

The **Carmelite tradition** begins in searching hearts. "Where have you hidden, beloved?" writes the **Carmelite** poet and mystic, John of the Cross.

**St. Teresa** - The life of prayer requires solid virtues. There is no true prayer without the practice of virtues; there is no virtue without constant practice of prayer. Virtues are the basis and the fruit of a life of prayer. Before speaking of prayer our holy mother St. Teresa proposes the practice of three fundamental Christian virtues: love, detachment and humility.

There should be flowers of virtues in your hearts is the advice given by Fr. Leopold ocd to the novices and the sisters in the year 1871. Mother Eliswa encourages her sisters in these words, "The foundation of all the virtues is God's love", "Know yourself and you will reach the perfection of virtues". "Our virtuous life spread out like a meadow".

Mother Eliswa's vision of salvation included everyone therefore she proposes that through your virtuous and exemplary life this little congregation may grow and be able to save many souls. It's certainly true. If Congregation of Teresian Carmelites has made historical presence in the world today then it is due to the virtuous life of the sisters; particularly our Foundress, Co-foundresses and the pioneers who toiled hard to lay the firm foundation with their virtuous life.

Virtue is like the sunshine. Even if we try to hide it, it cannot be always hidden. It will come to light one day. She gives due prominence to humility, patience, charity and repentance. It is most pleasing to the heart of Jesus if we his followers practice the virtue of obedience which was the hallmark of Jesus during his earthly life. When we possess a virtue other virtue will sprout out of it. You must grow in the spirit through modesty and humility. If you don't make effort and deny yourself in everything possible, you won't be able to attain holiness and serve God as he is.

On March 13, 2024, Pope Francis pointed to the saints, arguing that they should not be thought of as "the exceptions of humanity" or "a sort of restricted circle of champions who live beyond the limits of our species" but as "those who become themselves fully, who fulfill the vocation proper to every man or woman". "Therefore," the pope continued, "the exercise of the virtues is the fruit of long **germination, requiring effort and even suffering**".

*God, help me to make love my destiny, patience my companion and humility the highway. Amen!*

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