

## — OF VIRTUE —

For virtue – true virtue – to have any genuine virtuousness about it; if it is to have any real value about it; it is to have the worth demanded by the entire process of *CONVERSIO* (turning back); if it is to have any quality about it – the quality looked for by God, it has to be forged in the heart and it must be bought into shape by the fires of Love, Charity, and Humility. These fires burn with the usual *VIOLENCE* of fire – they burn in the furnace which is fixed in the very center of the heart of man. The materials needed for the perfection of virtue are not found in the precincts of a drafty and shiftily mind. If the advancement of virtue remains the activity of the mind, virtue will remain no more than a passing determination set in motion by a mental resolution. It becomes an agreement, usually terminal in nature, between two parties, namely God and man. The best that can be derived from this agreement – resolution – is the consoling but false feeling that results from the fleeting awareness that the terms of the agreement are being carried out obediently. Such an agreement or resolution or contract arrived at between God and man gives poor proof of the worth of man's desire for sanctity. Virtue does not reside in the performance of calculated or well ordered virtuous acts. Real virtue resides only in the heart and receives its life-giving breath from the fires that burn within the heart of man.

It is important to keep in mind, also, that virtue is not the end result of that which is acquired by a meticulous following of a set of rules – rules guiding ones every step on the road of life. Honest virtue is not the living out of a set of rules. It is also said with accuracy that Catholicity is not a set of rules. The foundations of virtue must be formed by love. Virtue must be sustained by love, which will unavoidably generate freedom. Love, in its perfection, generates freedom. When love is absent, everything – absolutely everything – in life becomes burdensome and bound with the heavy chains of slavery, a slavery dominated by a whole list of addictions. The proper development of virtue, if it is to be of any lasting profit, must be disciplined by wise, determined, and dedicated good will. The discipline needed for the formation of virtue must be consistent and unailing – there must be nothing false about it. It is, therefore, the disciplined and virtuous soul, when confronted with temptation or any other contrary problem, that will be best able to arrive at the correct solution. Without any need of a “rule book” the virtuous soul will know best what to do.

If we truly want to become saints of God, we must work for sanctity, and it is up to us to go seeking after the avenues that lead to sanctity. WE are the ones who have to do the work of learning and seeking. It is not up to God to go chasing after us, always removing dangerous obstacles