

As I traveled this past week I put together this reflection for you.

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that since the Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity have as their goal the end of life, the Virtue of Perseverance, a derivative of Fortitude, allows us to hold on to these higher virtues. And “Perseverance” as a virtue cannot succeed with human effort alone. It also requires the help of God sustaining us until the end of life.”

This explanation of Perseverance reminds us not only that Faith is a gift that we did not deserve, but that remaining in God’s love is also an unmerited gift. We work out our salvation in fear and trembling in part because any day we are capable of turning away from God.

This “turning away” rarely occurs as a sudden act of rebellion; it typically happens slowly – we skip prayers, yield to small temptations, elevate something worldly over the “Things of Faith.” This negative momentum can gradually turn us away from God and put the emphasis on ourselves. Eventually the gift of Faith that God has given us becomes stale, brittle, insipid. HAD WE CALLED UPON THE LORD DAILY, He would have answered.

I believe the gift of Faith, which includes Fortitude/Perseverance, is the daily antidote against this slow selfish turning away from the things of God that sustain us, even during the difficult times. The antidote: We simply ask for it everyday.

A simple way to do this: As I start a Rosary: On one of the 1st 3 rosary beads for the 3 “Hail Mary Prayers (After the Creed, and Our Father Bead) ” I simply say “For an increase of the Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity,” and then I pray the Hail Mary for that particular Rosary Bead. If we ask for an increase in Faith (a gift from God); then certainly we can receive the gift of Fortitude/Perseverance (the fruit) of Faith.

This Lent may we receive a deepened Faith steeped in Fortitude/Perseverance that will sustain us to endure our earthly trials until we “One Day” enter into the fullness of our existence in the Embrace of Divine Love Itself - GOD!...As we enter the gates of Heaven; our final destination and home.

Vivat Jesus - Father Vic Gournas