



**SECOND YEAR
MEETING FOUR**

THE CALL TO PRUDENCE

1. Introduction

Prudence is a cardinal virtue infused in our mind to choose in every action the best means to attain God. Despite its sometimes bad reputation, prudence is a positive good; it is a managerial or guiding virtue and, without it, no other virtue can be practiced to perfection because prudence applies all virtues to Particular, concrete situations.

2. Exemplar: Catherine Jarrige

Catherine Jarrige was a French Dominican Tertiary who was born near Mauriac in 1754. She died in 1836 and her cause for beatification was proposed in 1949.

The youngest of seven children, by the age of 22, she had been part of many family tragedies and decided to become a lay Dominican. She conformed her life to the Rule and its ideals for the rest of her life.

She was employed as a lace worker and spent her spare time aiding the poor and the sick. It was during the French Revolution that she found her real vocation and it is impressive for living out the virtue of prudence.

She set up an underground for priests hunted down by the Reign of Terror. She set up her headquarters in a forest that had been a hideout for robbers. There she concealed priest providing them with food, shelter, transportation and if needed, forged papers.

To them, she bought babies to be baptized; she guided the priests to sickbeds and to those who wanted to go to confession. She saved many priests from the guillotine by her actions, and when she accompanied one this death by the guillotine, she summoned a blind man who stood nearby

to touch his eyes with one martyr's blood he was immediately cured as the executioner said, "I am lost. I have killed a saint; I am lost."

When confronted by the revolutionaries who asked if she associated with priests, she hesitated only a moment as she saw an apostate priest in the judge's bench and she said, "Associating with priests? No more than I am right now."

She hid two priests in a root cellar and dressed them as revolutionaries with red mobcaps. She threw liquor over them, told them to stagger as they walked. As they did, she walked among those who were hunting down priests. One "hunter" said to one priest, "Citizen, if I had a wife like that, I would take her to the nearest river and drown her."

They fled as soon as they could be free of the hunters and for two more years, Catherine hid the priests.

In many ways, the religious life of the area around Mauriac depended on her; she made sure that babies were baptized and those sick and dying received the sacraments. She begged for everything she needed, even for leather pockets to hold the things she received as she begged. The pockets lasted her for thirty years.

She went to jail, accompanied by a Freethinker who was her benefactress, for giving charity to those in need. After the Revolution was over, she could freely visit the jails with no one stopping her. She worked to restore the parish church, making sure that it was refurbished and the vestments, linens, etc. were all in order. She also saw to it that marriages were regularized, the children baptized and instructed and toiled for the good of the parish community.

At 82, she stopped her labors and prepared for death, unable to work any more. Before her death, she was dressed in the Dominican habit and died in 1856.

This is but a brief biography of Catherine Jarrige, but read between the lines and behind them to see the planning, the courage, and actions she took to achieve her goal. She accomplished what she did because she looked at the situation, evaluated what was to be done for God's glory, and then did it.

PRUDENCE

The virtue of prudence is the wisdom of living and acting according to the norms of eternal law, natural law (reason) and conscience. We know from both the Old Testament, especially in the book of Sirach and throughout the New Testament, the profound insight that, though we are created by God, we are free to make our own decisions.

Natural prudence is related to the natural order and is concerned with our natural happiness. The infused virtue of prudence is concerned with our supernatural happiness that is our sanctity and eternal salvation.

It is often hard, in the every day events of our lives, to distinguish between natural prudence and the virtue of prudence. Both depend upon the persons doing the acts, but the end or the final reason for doing the particular act determines the essential difference between them.

Since prudence is made up of deliberation, judgment and command, it is a capability with which we are born and we don't automatically acquire it. We grow in prudence as we become capable of discerning good and evil. We become, therefore, responsible both for our conscience, and to it in our actions as we acquire and develop the habit of being prudent.

Prudent has eight integral parts:

1. Memory----We are able to learn from past experience and hence the young cannot be prudent.
2. Understanding ---An insight to the meaning of the present.
3. Docility---Ability to accept counsel from those of more experience which leads, therefore, to respect for our elders.
4. Sagacity---The wisdom to act rightly and well in an urgent situation when there is “no time to think.”
5. Reasoning---The use of intelligence to judge rightly what to do.
6. Foresight---To look ahead and see possible consequences in making the judgment of how to act.
7. Circumspection---The ability to look at angles, perspectives of a situation to get a broader view of the problem to be faced.
8. Caution---To pause, evaluate and then act.

St. Thomas gives us three ways that we may grow in prudence.

1. We grow as we use the gift of reason and learn to do good and to avoid evil.
2. We begin with approaching our life situation with common sense. We must, as we grow in other areas, grow in our moral formation which is our response to God I s call to be like Him.
3. We grow as we respond to the gift of counsel.

With his usual practicality, St. Thomas gives us guides on how we acquire the habit of prudence and practice it in our lives. These are the parts of the habit that will help us to be exemplars of prudence: to reflect before we act; not wait until the last minute before making decisions; to look at effects and circumstances surrounding our judgment, decision and action; to avoid rationalization to excuse actions we shouldn't do or to avoid actions we should; to practice paying attention to the duty of the moment; and above all, to trust in God, asking ourselves these questions; what does this action profit toward eternal salvation. As we practice these parts, we come, more and more to unite ourselves with the Most Holy Trinity.

Once more, the vices opposed to prudence are clearly defined by the Angelic Doctor. They are many but neatly categorized for our understanding.

Those that are due to lust, anger or envy are under the heading of imprudence or the negligence to acquire the knowledge one can and ought to have to make decisions. Imprudence can be overcome by getting counsel from those more prudent as well as by the process of developing the virtue in oneself.

Those vices that are against the three parts that make up prudence are clearly identified. Those against deliberation are haste or foolhardiness or precipitousness; those against judgment are impetuosity and inconsideration; and those against command are fickleness or inconstancy and negligence.

Those vices that are due to avarice are sometimes the most difficult to overcome because they may appear to be good or something we ought to be or do. Among these are self-love which is carnal prudence; craftiness in actions which is deceit or words which is diplomacy or guile; fraud; and excessive solitude for temporal goods or about future events which is anxiety.

There are all kinds of prudence and the adjectives to describe it depend on a particular persons field of action. Thus there may be parental, pastoral, political, military, managerial, etc., kinds of prudence.

For us, as Dominicans, prudence means trusting in God our Father to form us in the habit of life so that we apply to a particular situation, our senses of initiative and responsibility. We consider the risks and the outcomes as we act.

If we attempt to correct those whom we consider to be imprudent, we must be prudent. That is, out of the correction, some good must come. We must think before we speak, deliberating carefully, deciding judiciously the time, the place, the how of what we say and then enacting our decision so that the correction is well taken or understood and greater harmony is achieved. If the imprudent one is under our jurisdiction, we are bound to correct the person if the common good would otherwise suffer and if some good will comes of our effort to correct.

THE GIFT OF COUNSEL

Counsel is the gift of the Holy Spirit which makes us receptive to help in “sorting out,” in making our decisions. It is the perfection of the virtue of prudence.

While prudence operates according to the dictates of reason, enlightened by faith, Counsel perfects prudence because the person, acting under the influence of the Holy Spirit, rightly judges what ought to be done.

The impulse of the Holy Spirit, commands actions for which human reason could never give an explanation for the practical and particular judgment.

Counsel is most necessary and evident in cases where immediate judgment is required but there is neither the ability nor the opportunity to make a decision under the virtue of prudence. For example, how is the person, given an immediate and pressing situation, to balance between any of these pairs:

1. Guarding secrets and speaking the truth.
2. The demands of the interior life and of the apostolate.
3. The demands of chastity and the desires of affectionate love.

We may not be sure whether we are acting in virtue of prudence or under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, but that does not matter. What does matter is that we are faithful, grateful and docile to the Holy Spirit. We do know that these are the effects of counsel; we are preserved from a false conscience and we are provided with the solution to difficult and unexpected situation and problems.

Under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, the solution may not be what prudence would suggest or reason would approve, but as a work of the Holy Spirit, the solution is always the right solution.

Counsel is especially needed and given to superiors whether religious, spiritual directors or parents, so that they may be provided with the most apt means for governing others. Counsel also increases one's ability to legitimate superiors and helps to clarify the relationship.

The vices that are opposed to counsel are similar to those noted under the virtue of prudence.

1. They are precipitation or not waiting for the Holy Spirit and acting on one's own.
2. Tenacity or holding one's own judgments and depending on one's efforts instead of deferring and recognizing the actions of the Holy Spirit.
3. Procrastination which is recognizing the impulse of the Holy Spirit but not responding by delaying and thereby losing the occasion to act at all.

The gift of the Holy Spirit will be more operative within use if we are more predisposed to receive the gift of counsel. The ways to become predisposed are simple, but not easy. They include:

1. Cultivating profound humility and asking the help of the Holy Spirit in our areas of weakness.
2. Proceeding with reflection and without haste in our important decisions and actions. We must realize that in some circumstances, we are powerless and that the Holy Spirit alone can perform what must be done in us. We must not wait for supernatural signs but proceed as best we can, entrusting ourselves to the Holy Spirit as we go.
3. Listening in silence to the voice of God and resting in Him away from the tumult and stress of our present world.
4. Practicing docility and obedience to those whom God has placed over us and having compassion toward those whom God has placed to be with us.

BEATITUDE

“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy (Mt. 5: 7)

This Beatitude is not found in Luke

All the beatitudes contain paradoxes. In this one, the relationship to the virtue of Prudence and to the Holy Spirit’s gift of counsel may seem at least a bit of a paradox. But consider, when we act in the habit of the supernatural virtue of prudence, we are acting as best we can with our eternal salvation in view. We have particular problems and situations, usually tough ones for us to face when prudence has come into play.

If we allow the anger to seep into our being, all the vices that are listed as opposites to the virtue of prudence can come into play: anger, lust, envy, hast, foolhardiness, inconsideration, inconstancy,

If we are prudent, looking toward our salvation, we deliberate what we are about to decide, make our judgment and act with that end in view. The more we respond to the Holy Spirit’s gift of counsel, the more we look with mercy or compassion on the situation we are in. We see it from God’s eyes. We can then forgive ourselves for the problem in which we can look with compassion on others, even if they are the apparent cause(s) of the problem and forgive them.

It is a Divine sort of mercy that we begin to practice in our relationship with ourselves and with others. As we confront the problem with prudence and counsel, we take it upon ourselves to solve the problem, to right the wrong, to do what must be done. We try to restore harmony, correcting in a way that will do the most good. We might say: “We are both to blame for the situation, what can we do to resolve the matter?” These are the sort of spiritual works of mercy that involve comfort and compassion, gentle admonition and or correction. These are the healing of the Spirit that comes when the virtue of prudence is enacted.

Similarly, the corporal works of mercy, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless in any and all the ways we meet the physical needs of those who cross our path, of showing mercy.

In the mercy we show, of whatever kind, we imitate Christ. It is important to note that Matthew and James emphasizes almsgiving as most beneficial. We give of ourselves, of our wealth as God gave of His wealth of creation, of beauty, of His Son and join with Him in sharing to bring happiness to others. As we give, we are forgiven because we love much. As we love, mercy or compassion is given to us and we shall obtain the forgiveness, the mercy of God which is both the source and end of our life.

**HOMEWORK
YEAR TWO
LESSON FOUR**

<u>DAYS</u>	SCRIPTURE	CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH	DOMINICANA
	Revelations The		Dialogue of St. Catherine
FIRST WEEK	Apocalypse		of Sienna
MONDAY	19-20	2160-2167	Tears
TUESDAY	21-22	2168-2173	
WEDNESDAY	Acts-1-2	2174-2179	
THURSDAY	3-4	2180-2188	
FRIDAY	5-6	2189-2195	
SECOND WEEK			
MONDAY	7-8	2196-2200	Truth
TUESDAY	9	2201-2206	
WEDNESDAY	10	2207-2213	
THURSDAY	11-12	2214-2220	
FRIDAY	13	2221-2226	
THIRD WEEK			
MONDAY	14-15	2227-2231	The Mystical Body of the
TUESDAY	16-17	2232-2237	Church pg.205-220
WEDNESDAY	18-19	2238-2246	
THURSDAY	20	2247-2257	
FRIDAY	21	2258-2267	
		2268-2275	
FOURTH WEEK			
MONDAY	22	2275-2283	The Mystical Body of the
TUESDAY	23	2284-2287	Church pg.220-243
WEDNESDAY	24	2288-2291	
THURSDAY	25-26	2292-2296	
FRIDAY	27-28	2297-2301	

On a separate piece of paper briefly outline your thoughts or questions on the articles you have read for your homework, to be turned in next time we meet

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