

The Virtue of Justice

By Deacon Tim Sullivan

The next cardinal virtue for our consideration is justice.

Justice is defined in the Catechism as the constant and firm will to give what is due to God and neighbor. Most of us, when we think about justice, think about our legal system and what we call social justice. We don't often think of what we owe to God.

God created us. He gave us all of the created world. He has given us and continues to give us His love, manifested by the suffering and death of His Son, Jesus.

Just think about all the things that had to happen from the beginning of the universe just for any one of us to simply exist. We had no control over any of those details. So we owe everything to God, giving Him our love and our obedience.

Our duty to give justice to God carries over into justice for our neighbor, as our gratitude for our own lives and for God's love spills over into concern for our fellow human beings. We have a duty to respect the rights of every person and to contribute to the common good of society.

Treating one another justly is the glue that holds our communities together. We don't act with justice simply because the law requires it in specific situations. We act with justice voluntarily because it's the right thing to do.

Prayer to St. Anthony, Zealous for Justice: Dear St. Anthony, you were prompt to fulfill all justice. You gave God and His creation the service He required from you. You respected other people's rights and treated them with kindness and understanding. Teach me the beauty of the virtue of justice. Make me prompt in fulfilling all justice toward God and all creation. Amen."