

Virtue of the Month

January

“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.” Phil 4:8

Growing Together in Virtue!

This year at St. Peter School, preschoolers through 8th grade are "**Growing Together in Virtue!**" Each month throughout the school year every student in every grade is learning about a specific virtue and is being guided by teachers in the understanding and practice of the virtue. Instilling virtue isn't easy, and takes prayer, discipline, and encouragement, not only at school but even more importantly at home. We pray that through God's grace, we all grow closer to God as we work to cultivate virtue in the hearts of our children.

What are virtues? Virtues are firm habits to do what is right and good. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that “a virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best himself.” (CCC 1803). Virtues open us up to a good and meaningful life. They guide us to live morally, control our emotions and avoid what is sinful. In doing so, virtues help us become „fully human” and tap into the rich potential given to us by God. Virtues are connected to our conscience. The conscience is where we recognize the moral quality of each and every action. It is our most secret core - the place where we are alone with God, able to hear His voice. Virtues help us „form” our conscience so that we clearly hear what God is saying and competently carry out what is right, good, true and beautiful. As a parent, what do you think is the most important part of virtue training? Is it understanding the virtues and knowing what each means? Is it explaining each virtue to your children and then monitoring the development in their lives? Or, is it selecting one or two virtues to „showcase” in your own life? As is the case with any habit, developing a virtuous life is a lifelong process. It takes a great deal of time and energy to become skilled at choosing what is right. Be assured that virtuous competence is worth the effort it takes. Parents that commit to this long and exacting work will enjoy fulfilling relationships and finds contentment in family life.

(from http://www.dioceseoflacrosse.com/ministry_resources/family_life/parentsplace/virtues.htm)

The virtue for the month of January is **Obedience**.



Obedience



Definition

Obedience is, doing willingly what one is told to do; immediately acting on a command while following both the spirit and the letter of a rule or request. Responding immediately when asked to do something out of love and respect for God and for those giving the command.

Obedience can also be thought of as our call to *charity* and *mercy*, for Christ Himself, who in His love for us obediently died on a cross for our redemption, commanded us to love others as He has loved us.

For Teacher Use

Obedience is something to be learned by all Christians and loved for itself alone for Christ's sake, who was "obedient unto death on the Cross." It is the key to humility. While there is need for us to teach our children to "use their heads," to "reason things out," there is also need to teach them that where obedience to an authority under God is concerned, in all things excepting sin there is no act more meritorious than obedience even when we question the wisdom of the commands we are given. We never lose when we are obedient for the love of God. The "duly constituted authorities" in a child's life are his parents first, after them his teachers, the police officers protecting him, his bus driver, Scout leader, and so forth, and of course in a special way his bishop, his pastor and the other priests of his parish.

Activity Source: Saints and Our Children, The by Mary Reed Newland, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, New York; reprinted by TAN Publishers, 1958

Obedience comes from two Latin words that mean "to listen." Obedience is the sacrifice of the will. Dying to self is actually found in the middle of the word **obedi**ence! This dying to self takes humility. There is no obeying until and unless you enter into a state of humility. It is pride that destroys peace. Pride fights obedience.

- Humility is understanding the proper relationship between oneself and God.

Catechism of the Catholic Church Quotes

To obey (from the Latin *ob-audire*, to "hear or listen to") in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself.

Abraham is the model of such obedience offered us by Sacred Scripture. The Virgin Mary is its most perfect embodiment. CCC 144

The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the virtue of obedience, even calling it a duty. “The duty of obedience requires all to give due honor to authority and to treat those who are charged to exercise it with respect, and, insofar as it is deserved, with gratitude and good-will.” CCC 1900

Scripture Quotes

“If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in happiness.” **Job 36:11**

“For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.” **Romans 2:13**

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” **Ephesians 6:1**

“Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”

John 14:23-24

... But Peter and the apostles said in reply, “we must obey God rather than men.”

Acts 5:29

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother: That grace may be added to your head, and a chain of gold to your neck. **Proverbs 1:7-9**

Explanation to help teachers: “fear of the Lord” means a profound awe and reverence for God that expresses itself in every area of life whereas foolishness is simply awe for oneself.

It is not to do My own will that I have come down from heaven, but to do the will of Him who sent Me. **John 6:38**

For what man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows in the flesh, from the flesh also will reap corruption. But he who sows in the spirit from the spirit will reap life everlasting. And in doing good let us not grow tired; for in due time we shall reap if we do not relax.”

Galatians 6: 8-10

Other Quotes

Anyone who is serious about obtaining Everlasting Life in Heaven will do all he can to increase in the virtue of obedience. For without it, one will never please the Lord, Who is our benevolent Creator and compassionate Master.

~Monsignor Charles Mangan

Let thy child's first lesson be obedience, and the second will be what thou wilt.

- Benjamin Franklin

Let them obey that know not how to rule.

-William Shakespeare

“An obedient person accepts as his own decisions those which come from whoever holds and expresses authority, provided they do not go against justice, and he carries out promptly what has been decided, striving faithfully to interpret the will of him who commands.”

~St. Ignatius of Loyola

“Obedience is the foundation stone of all perfection.”

~St. Paul of the Cross

“Obedience is the core of character... All high character depends on inward obedience to moral law... God is no friend of undisciplined living.”

~Harry Emerson Fosdick

“The virtue of obedience is not slavery. If someone were to obey on the outside but be rebellious on the inside there would be no virtue there. The virtue in obeying exists when one does something because one recognizes the authority of the person who issues the commands.”

~ Dr. David Issacs

“One of the fundamental truths we have to learn is that freedom comes from obedience.”

~ Monsignor Graham Leonard.

When children obey their parents and all just authority, they are actually practicing the virtue of piety. “Piety requires that we should give due honor and service to our parents.”

~ Dr. David Issacs

“Never did I hear one of us at home say a disrespectful word to our parents, nor even an off-hand one. We did not question an order received; it never even occurred to anyone. We obeyed from love.”
~ Celine Martin (one of St. Therese of Liseux sisters)

Several examples of the virtue of obedience in action spring to mind.

The Virtue of Obedience: Our Duty, Our Crown by Monsignor Charles M. Mangan Catholic Online

+ Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, obeyed His Father by becoming man through the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, later going to His obedience-inspired salvific Death on Calvary.

+ Our Blessed Lady obeyed the Almighty by consenting to become the Virgin-Mother of the long-awaited Messiah.

+ Saint Joseph heeded the Angel of the Lord and took Jesus and Mary to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill the Baby.

+ All baptized Christians are moved by the obedience of faith to listen and submit to the Word of God.

+ Children obey, respect and pray for their parents, grateful that God has given their fathers and mothers to them.

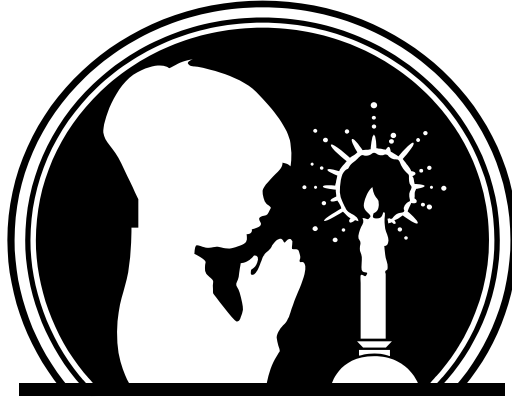
+ Priests obey their Bishops or Superiors, for example by accepting new assignments from them.

+ Those who are consecrated to Christ by the profession of the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience obey their Religious Superiors regarding what apostolic work they are to do.

+ Catholics obey God and the Church by heeding the Commandments and the Precepts of the Church, for example by attending the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, following the Church's laws concerning the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, etc.

+ Citizens pay taxes to the rightful authority and defend their country from hostile foreign attack.

Father Hardon added: “As a virtue, (obedience) is pleasing to God because it means the sacrifice of one's will out of love for God.” (ibid.)



Prayer for Obedience

Savior, Teach Me, Day By Day

Savior, teach me, day by day,
Love's sweet lesson to obey;
Sweeter lesson cannot be,
Loving Him who first loved me.

With a child's glad heart of love,
At Thy bidding may I move,
Prompt to serve and follow Thee,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Teach me thus Thy steps to trace,
Strong to follow in Thy grace,
Learning how to love from Thee,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Love in loving finds employ,
In obedience all her joy;
Ever new that joy will be,
Loving Him who first loved me.



Prayers of Obedience

Simple prayer of Christ: "Not my will, but yours be done."

A PRAYER FOR THE VIRTUE OF OBEDIENCE

Jesus, Almighty King of kings, You Who obeyed Your Father to the end, Teach me the meaning of obedience. My soul burns to comply to Your Will, Striving to charm Your Divinity. While my worldly nature seeks one way, my spiritual nature seeks another. Bless me with the strength to obey, that my soul may subdue both natures, blending them as a fair aromatic bloom. I always seek favour in Your eyes, to always obey You until my last breath.

Amen.

Saints and how they lived the Virtue of Obedience:



St. Joseph,

St. Joseph was an ordinary sort of man on whom God relied to do great things. He did exactly what the Lord wanted him to do, in each and every event that went to make up his life

We know Joseph was man of faith, obedient to whatever God asked of him without knowing the outcome. When the angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him the truth about the child Mary was carrying, Joseph immediately and without question or concern for gossip, took Mary as his wife. When the angel came again to tell him that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned, all his family and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby. He waited in Egypt without question until the angel told him it was safe to go back (Matthew 2:13-23).

We know Joseph loved Jesus. His one concern was for the safety of this child entrusted to him. Not only did he leave his home to protect Jesus, but upon his return settled in the obscure town of Nazareth out of fear for his life. When Jesus stayed in the Temple we are told Joseph (along with Mary) searched with great anxiety for three days for him (Luke 2:48). We also know that Joseph treated Jesus as his own son for ever and over the people of Nazareth say of Jesus, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" (Luke 4:22)

We know Joseph respected God. He followed God's commands in handling the situation with Mary and going to Jerusalem to have Jesus circumcised and Mary purified after Jesus' birth. We are told that he took his family to Jerusalem every year for Passover, something that could not have been easy for a working man.

Since Joseph does not appear in Jesus' public life, at his death, or resurrection, many historians believe Joseph probably had died before Jesus entered public ministry.

Joseph is the patron of the dying because, assuming he died before Jesus' public life, he died with Jesus and Mary close to him, the way we all would like to leave this earth.

Joseph is also patron of the universal Church, fathers, carpenters, and social justice.

We celebrate two feast days for Joseph: March 19 for Joseph the Husband of Mary and May 1 for Joseph the Worker.

There is much we wish we could know about Joseph -- where and when he was born, how he spent his days, when and how he died. But Scripture has left us with the most important knowledge: who he was -- "a righteous man" (Matthew 1:18).

Saints and How They Lived the Virtue of Obedience



St. Joseph

St. Joseph was the foster father of Jesus and he was a man of great faith and obedience. He did whatever God asked of him right away and without complaining or even understanding.

Joseph and Mary were not yet married when Joseph found out that Mary had been chosen to be the Mother of God, created to give birth and take care of Jesus. Mary and Jesus would need someone to care for them. That person was St. Joseph.

Through an angel, God asked Joseph to take Mary to be his wife. This was so that Jesus could grow up in a holy family with two holy parents. It was very important that Mary and Jesus have someone to care for both of them. Joseph was a hard-working carpenter, so he was able to give Mary and Jesus the things they needed to live. Joseph gladly gave of himself to be a husband to Mary and a father to Jesus. Although it is such a big job to take care of a family, it was even more important when you consider that the family he was caring for were Mary, the Mother of God, and Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus was also a good worker. When Jesus was a child, until it was time for him to go out into the world, He helped his foster father St. Joseph with the carpentry work that needed to be done. We know that because Jesus never sinned, He certainly would have followed God's commandment to honor His parents. It is certain that Jesus never dishonored St. Joseph by refusing to do the work which St. Joseph asked Him to do.

Families help each other to be holy when they are obedient to their parents, both their earthly parents and heavenly parents. Ask Jesus and St. Joseph to help you to be strong inside so that you can be obedient in all things great and small, and most importantly, to serve each other for the sake of God's Kingdom.

Scripture Passages on Obedience

For Entering into notebooks and Discussing



True Blessedness

While he was speaking, a woman from the crowd called out and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that carried you and the breast at which you nursed.” He replied, “Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it”
Luke 11:27-28

In this Gospel a woman publicly praises Jesus’ mother and He seems to deflect it. Fr. Dominic explains this is not so and instead praises her obedience. Father exhorts us to strive for greater and greater obedience in imitation of Mary. He continues to explain we need to hear the word of God by actively seeking it out and learning it and come to know it so we can put it into practice in our lives. We need to diligently and perfectly live God’s word in service and obedience to His will as Mary did.

Oct 09 – Homily – Fr Dominic: The Virtue of Obedience

The Two Foundations

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

Matthew 7:24-27

In this Gospel God reminds us of his love and protection. When we are obedient we grow in wisdom and truth, which brings peace and joy to our lives. In all of life there are rules: parents have rules, schools, games, traffic, etc. This is because without rules the world would be in “ruins”! Think and pray how God is calling you to build your life on the obedience of His word, so you will be able to stand strong when hardships come your way.

The Parable of the Two Sons

“What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ He said in reply, ‘I will not, but afterwards he changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, ‘Yes, sir,’ but did not go. Which of the two did his father’s will?”

Matthew 21:28-31

The answer is the first. For obedience requires action. Your heart, perhaps a “change” of heart, leads you to “do” what is pleasing and good in the sight of God. Obedience always requires an act of the will. It takes effort on our part to do the will of God. We must cooperate with God’s grace, choosing to work to bring about His kingdom in our lives and in the world.



Stories & Poems & Feast Day

For Obedience

- Feast of the Baptism of our Lord
- The Fox and the Crab Aesop's Fables
- Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi
- The story of St. Francis and the cabbages by Mary Reed (from Saints and Our Children)
- The Robin Redbreasts by Mrs. Hawkshawe
- Noah's Ark and the Flood by Mary Fairchild (Genesis)
- Games & Obedience
- William Tell taken from Silver Sails (A Beka book reading program)
- Songs of Obedience

MONTHLY FEAST DAY

CELEBRATE: *January 9, BAPTISM OF OUR LORD*

On this day, we are reminded of the mystery of Christ's person and mission. "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." On this Holy Day we are reminded of our call to be obedient to Christ. We see not only the obedience of Christ, but that of John the Baptist who is unworthy to unfasten Christ sandal yet submits to Jesus' request "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Matt. 3:15 "This is a good time to renew our own baptismal commitment we made through our parents and godparents, particularly our loyalty to Christ and our determination to struggle against temptation." John Paul II

Renewal of Baptismal Promises:

Do you reject Satan?

I do.

And all his works?

I do.

And all his empty promises?

I do.

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

I do.

God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

Amen.

Pinocchio

By Carlo Collodi

Once upon a time, there was a piece of wood - that's right, just a common piece of wood. It was going to be made into a table leg by a carpenter. But just as the carpenter lifted his ax to cut this piece of wood, he heard a small voice begging, "Do not strike me so hard." He searched the room to find out where the voice was coming from. Much to his amazement, the carpenter realized that the piece of wood itself was talking!

The Carpenter brought the piece of wood to his friend Geppetto, who wanted to turn it into a dancing puppet. Amazingly, the piece of wood insulted Geppetto and struck him in his shins. Geppetto was a gracious man, so he went ahead anyway and turned the wood into an intricate puppet. But the wood was still rude and disrespectful.

The puppet was named Pinocchio, and he talked back, kicked his maker, and even ran away. Pinocchio thought he knew everything and couldn't stand to be corrected.

In the following two chapters let us see what we can learn from Pinocchio's choices. Because of Pinocchio's disobedience and ungratefulness, Geppetto has just been put in prison.

Chapter 4

Very little time did it take to get poor old Geppetto to prison. In the meantime that rascal, Pinocchio, free now from the clutches of the Carabineer, was running wildly across fields and meadows, taking one short cut after another toward home. In his wild flight, he leaped over brambles and bushes, and across brooks and ponds, as if he were a goat or a hare chased by hounds. On reaching home, he found the house door half open. He slipped into the room, locked the door, and threw himself on the floor, happy at his escape. But his happiness lasted only a short time, for just then he heard someone saying:

"Cri-cri-cri!"

"Who is calling me?" asked Pinocchio, greatly frightened.

"I am!"

Pinocchio turned and saw a large cricket crawling slowly up the wall.

"Tell me, Cricket, who are you?"

"I am the Talking Cricket and I have been living in this room for more than one hundred years."

"Today, however, this room is mine," said the Marionette, "and if you wish to do me a favor, get out now, and don't turn around even once."

"I refuse to leave this spot," answered the Cricket, "until I have told you a great truth." "Tell it, then, and hurry."

"Woe to boys who refuse to obey their parents and run away from home! They will never be happy in this world, and when they are older they will be very sorry for it."

"Sing on, Cricket mine, as you please. What I know is, that tomorrow, at dawn, I leave this place forever. If I stay here the same thing will happen to me which happens to all other boys and girls. They are sent to school, and whether they want to or not, they must study. As for me, let me tell you, I hate to study! It's much more fun, I think, to chase

after butterflies, climb trees, and steal birds' nests."

"Poor little silly! Don't you know that if you go on like that, you will grow into a perfect donkey and that you'll be the laughingstock of everyone?"

"Keep still, you ugly Cricket!" cried Pinocchio.

But the Cricket, who was a wise old philosopher, instead of being offended at Pinocchio's impudence, continued in the same tone: "If you do not like going to school, why don't you at least learn a trade, so that you can earn an honest living?"

"Shall I tell you something?" asked Pinocchio, who was beginning to lose patience. "Of all the trades in the world, there is only one that really suits me."

"And what can that be?"

"That of eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, and wandering around from morning till night."

"Let me tell you, for your own good, Pinocchio," said the Talking Cricket in his calm voice, "that those who follow that trade always end up in the hospital or in prison."

"Careful, ugly Cricket! If you make me angry, you'll be sorry!"

"Poor Pinocchio, I am sorry for you."

"Why?"

"Because you are a Marionette and, what is much worse, you have a wooden head."

At these last words, Pinocchio jumped up in a fury, took a hammer from the bench, and threw it with all his strength at the Talking Cricket. Perhaps he did not think he would strike it. But, sad to relate, my dear children, he did hit the Cricket, straight on its head. With a last weak "cri-cri-cri" the poor Cricket fell from the wall, dead!

Chapter 5

If the Cricket's death scared Pinocchio at all, it was only for a very few moments. For, as night came on, a queer, empty feeling at the pit of his stomach reminded the Marionette that he had eaten nothing as yet. A boy's appetite grows very fast, and in a few moments the queer, empty feeling had become hunger, and the hunger grew bigger and bigger, until soon he was as ravenous as a bear. Poor Pinocchio ran to the fireplace where the pot was boiling and stretched out his hand to take the cover off, but to his amazement the pot was only painted! Think how he felt! His long nose became at least two inches longer.

He ran about the room, dug in all the boxes and drawers, and even looked under the bed in search of a piece of bread, hard though it might be, or a cookie, or perhaps a bit of fish. A bone left by a dog would have tasted good to him! But he found nothing. And meanwhile his hunger grew and grew. The only relief poor Pinocchio had was to yawn; and he certainly did yawn, such a big yawn that his mouth stretched out to the tips of his ears. Soon he became dizzy and faint. He wept and wailed to himself: "The Talking Cricket was right. It was wrong of me to disobey Father and to run away from home. If he were here now, I wouldn't be so hungry! Oh, how horrible it is to be hungry!"

Suddenly, he saw, among the sweepings in a corner, something round and white that looked very much like a hen's egg. In a jiffy he pounced upon it. It was an egg. The Marionette's joy knew no bounds. It is impossible to describe it, you must picture it to yourself. Certain that he was dreaming, he turned the egg over and over in his hands, after butterflies, climb trees, and steal birds' nests."

"Poor little silly! Don't you know that if you go on like that, you will grow into a perfect donkey and that you'll be the laughingstock of everyone?" "

fondled it, kissed it, and talked to it: "And now, how shall I cook you? Shall I make an omelet? No, it is better to fry you in a pan! Or shall I drink you? No, the best way is to fry you in the pan. You will taste better."

No sooner said than done. He placed a little pan over a foot warmer full of hot coals. In the pan, instead of oil or butter, he poured a little water. As soon as the water started to boil--tac!--he broke the eggshell. But in place of the white and the yolk of the egg, a little yellow Chick, fluffy and gay and smiling, escaped from it.

Bowing politely to Pinocchio, he said to him: "Many, many thanks, indeed, Mr. Pinocchio, for having saved me the trouble of breaking my shell! Good-bye and good luck to you and remember me to the family!" With these words he spread out his wings and, darting to the open window, he flew away into space till he was out of sight.

The poor Marionette stood as if turned to stone, with wide eyes, open mouth, and the empty halves of the eggshell in his hands. When he came to himself, he began to cry and shriek at the top of his lungs, stamping his feet on the ground and wailing all the while:

"The Talking Cricket was right! If I had not run away from home and if Father were here now, I should not be dying of hunger. Oh, how horrible it is to be hungry!"

And as his stomach kept grumbling more than ever and he had nothing to quiet it with, he thought of going out for a walk to the near-by village, in the hope of finding some charitable person who might give him a bit of bread.

Obedience – It Is A Choice

To do it or not to do it! To obey or not to obey.

There will be a consequence though for every choice. When we make a wise choice and do the right thing there will be a good consequence. When we make a bad choice and do the wrong thing there will be a bad consequence. Consequences can be both good and bad. The Bible talks of Blessings and Curses though these words aren't a part of our everyday language the message is that when you choose good, there will be a positive consequence, a reward, a blessing. When you choose bad/evil, there will be a negative consequence, a penalty.



Think of the story of Pinocchio - What were some consequences as a result of Pinocchio disobeying his father and the “wise” cricket?

(some content taken from www.lifestyle-homeschool.com)

The story of St. Francis and the cabbages

Illustrating the importance of obedience.

Almost everyone knows the story of St. Francis of Assisi, christened Francis Bernadone, the son of a wealthy merchant who expected his boy to win honor and glory for the family name in the wars, then settle down to a life of pleasure and riches as partner in the family business. But Francis fell in love with God and left all things to become a beggar for Christ.

There are many stories about St. Francis; among our favorites is a legend from the friary at Monte Casale. Here every year the brethren plant a cabbage in the garden and let it flower to remind them of the time the saint bade two young brothers plant some cabbage plants upside down. One did, but the other knew better and planted his right side up. St. Francis dismissed the second brother, for, he said, it had been a test of obedience, not of planting cabbages.

Activity Source: Saints and Our Children, The by Mary Reed Newland, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, New York; reprinted by TAN Publishers, 1958

Obedience

DONALD DEMARCO

Comand performance

Obeying God is so important that He commands us to obey Him. The matter is not negotiable:

I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command this day, to go after other gods which you have not known (Deut. 11:26-28).

God does not *invite* us to obey Him. Such a tepid disposition would suggest a less-than-fervent love. Disobeying Him is not an option that He cordially extends to us. He *commands* us to obey. Similarly, when Queen Elizabeth II mailed personal announcements regarding the wedding of her son, the Prince of Wales to Lady Diana, she *commanded* her subjects to be present at the wedding. The Queen *commands* obedience; she does not invite it. One obeys the Queen. *A fortiori*, one obeys the Lord.

True freedom

It is most reasonable (prudent) to obey the person who loves you and knows the truth about your being. In this regard, a certain French philosopher speaks well when he writes, "Love makes obedience lighter than liberty." The virtue of obedience is not contrary to freedom, nor does it represent a master/slave or dominance/submission relationship. It both presupposes and anticipates freedom. Moreover, it establishes and perfects a relationship of love.

Obedience, therefore, is closely allied to *service*. Hence the expressions "your will is my command" and "it is a pleasure to serve you." The person who loves is happy to serve, eager to obey the needs and desires (legitimate ones, of course) of the beloved. Obedience allows a person to transcend the narrow confines of egotism and respond to the good of those he loves with alacrity, enthusiasm, and cheerfulness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT Donald DeMarco. "Obedience." *Lay Witness* (March 2001).

Noah's Ark and the Flood - Story Summary:

Genesis 6:1 - 9:17

This story would teach children that obedience is a virtue and it always brings good results and it also teaches that most of the people might do what is wrong but that does not mean that we also become a part of the gang.

God saw how great wickedness had become and decided to wipe mankind from the face of the earth. However, one righteous man among all the people of that time, Noah, found favor in God's eyes. With very specific instructions, God told Noah to build an ark for him and his family in preparation for a catastrophic flood that would destroy every living thing on earth.

God also instructed Noah to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, along with every kind of food to be stored as food for the animals and his family while on the ark. Noah obeyed everything God commanded him to do.

After they entered the ark, rain fell on the earth for a period of forty days and nights. The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days, and every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out. As the waters receded, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. Noah and his family continued to wait for almost eight more months while the surface of the earth dried out.

Finally after an entire year, God invited Noah to come out of the ark. Immediately, he built an altar and worshiped the Lord with burnt offerings from some of the clean animals. God was pleased with the offerings and promised never again to destroy all the living creatures as he had just done. Later God established a covenant with Noah: "Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth." As a sign of this everlasting covenant God set a rainbow in the clouds.

By Mary Fairchild

Points of Interest from the Story:

- God's purpose in the flood was not to destroy people, but to destroy wickedness and sin.

What points can you add?

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Songs of Obedience (Listen on YouTube)

O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E song:

"Obedience is the very best way
To show that you believe:
Doing exactly what the Lord commands,
Doing it happily.
Action is the key--do it immediately,
The joy you will receive!
Obedience is the very best way
To show that you believe.
O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E (Yes, sir!)
Obedience is the very best way
To show that you believe."

Obedience

Daniel S. Warner

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1. By Thy blessed word obeying,
Lord, we prove our love sincere;
For we hear Thee gently saying,
"Love will do as well as hear."

Refrain:

Dear Redeemer, we would hallow All Thy word so firm and true;

- In Thy footsteps meekly follow,
Thy commands we love to do.
- 2. Feigned hearts Thy name professing,
Thy commandments cast aside;
But we feel Thy great salvation,
And in all Thy truth abide.
- 3. Every word Thy mouth hath spoken
Is essential to our life;
All Thy mandates love betoken,
To oppose them is but strife.
- 4. In Thy wisdom, Lord, confiding,
We will follow in Thy way;
With Thy love in us abiding,
'Tis delightful to obey.
- 5. Each commandment Thou hast given
Is a waymark on the road;
Leading up from earth to heaven,
To the blessed throne of God.

Examination of Conscience Questions for Obedience

(One or two to be asked of students at the end of each day)

Was I obedient today to my parents, teachers, and all those in authority?

Was I respectful in my obedience, doing what I was asked promptly and with humility?

Do I willfully comply to persons of authority?

Do I obey out of love or begrudgingly?

Am I willing to sacrifice what I want (my will) to be obedient (God's Will)?

Am I obedient to my Catholic Faith trusting and following its teachings in my life?

Do I take correction well? Seeing it as an opportunity to improve.

Do I make excuses for not listening? Do I try to justify disobedience?

Am I obedient to God's Ten Commandments...?

1. I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

-Do I give God time every day in prayer?

-Do I seek to love Him with my whole heart?

-Do I see to surrender myself to God's word as taught by the Church?

-Are there other "gods" in my life? People, Money, Security, Power, etc.?

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

-Have I used God's name in vain: lightly or carelessly?

-Have I been angry with God?

-Have I wished evil upon any other person?

-Have I insulted a sacred person or abused a sacred object?

1. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

-Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation?

-Have I tried to observe Sunday as a family day and a day of rest?

2. Honor your father and your mother.

- Do I honor and obey my parents?

-Do I help with chores to ease the burden of other family members?

-Do I try to bring peace into my home life?

3. You shall not kill.

-Have I physically harmed anyone?

-Have I been angry or resentful?

-Have I participated in or approved of sins against human life?

4. You shall not commit adultery.

-Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action?

-Do I seek to be chaste in my thoughts, words, and actions?

-Am I careful to dress modestly?

5. You shall not steal.

-Have I stolen what is not mine?

-Have I returned or made restitution for what I have stolen?

-Do I waste time at school, or home?

-Do I seek to share what I have with the poor?

6. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

-Have I lied? Have I gossiped?

-Do I speak badly of others behind their back?

-Am I critical, negative or uncharitable in my thoughts of others?

-Do I keep secret what should be kept confidential?

-Have I injured the reputation of others by slanders?

1. You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.

-Have I consented to impure thoughts?

-Have I caused them by impure reading, movies, television, conversation or curiosity?

-Have I behaved in an inappropriate way with others?

2. You shall not desire your neighbor's goods.

-Am I jealous of what other people have?

-Am I greedy or selfish?

-Do I envy the families or possessions of others?