

Symbols Defined

Faith, Hope, and Love

These three theological virtues are graces bestowed on us by God. We receive them at baptism and are guided by the Church through our lives to live them in perfection. St. Thomas Aquinas defined these virtues as our "ideal relationship to God."

Faith is the virtue that perfects the intellect by a supernatural light. It becomes the truth inside us that is guided by the supernatural truth given from God. With the virtue of Faith, we receive the power to believe in God and in all that he has revealed through Christ and His Church.

Hope is the virtue bestowed by God through which one trusts that God will grant eternal life and the means of obtaining it, if one is obedient. The virtue of Hope makes it possible for Christians to trust in God. It helps us to find comfort in Jesus' promise of eternal life. "I am the resurrection and the life: whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life." [John 11:25-26]

Charity/Love is considered the most important virtue. The Modern Catholic Dictionary defines it as "the infused supernatural virtue by which a person loves God

above all things for His [that is, God's] own sake, and loves others for God's sake." To love God means that we want to please him by doing good and avoiding sin. To love our neighbors means that we want good things for them, especially for them to reach heaven. "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him." [1 John 4:16].

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