

A man went into the woods to meet a hermit. This hermit had been living alone for over seven years. When the man found him, he asked the hermit: "Tell me about yourself."

The hermit told him, "When I lived in the world, I was a very impatient man. I'd always lose my temper with people when they would ask me questions. So I came out into the woods to pray and work on growing in patience."

The man asked the hermit, "So, how has that helped you with being more patient?"

The hermit snapped, "Be quiet! I've had it with your questions!"

In the second reading, St. James exhorts his listeners, and us to:

"Be patient until the coming of the Lord."

We all desire to grow in the various virtues ...

I need to deal with my impatience ... RIGHT NOW!

I'd like to do something about my procrastination ... MAYBE TOMORROW.

The virtues are tricky things. We all recognize what they are when we see them, but we never quite seem to get very good at them.

The ancient philosophers and medieval theologians classified virtues in several ways. The moral virtues are each attached to a different faculty.

In the area of the intellect,
we have the virtue of PRUDENCE.

In the area of the will,
we have the virtue of JUSTICE.

In the area of the passions,
we have the virtues of FORTITUDE and
TEMPERANCE.

We can use our minds, our hearts, or our bodies for good or for bad. And the virtues dispose us to right use of our God-given faculties.

The way that anyone grows in virtue is to practice acts of that virtue.

You want to be more patient

- you've got to act more patient.

You want to be more loving

- you've got to act more loving.

You want to be more humble

- you've got to act more humble.

The virtues are good habits that act against our bad habits. But if we act as though our habits are somehow, built-in ... well, then we've already thrown in the towel and given ourselves over to the vices.

Today as we approach this altar to receive the sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for the graces we need to grow in the virtues we so desire. Let us allow God's love and mercy to transform us from what we are - into what we are called to be ... daughters and sons of God the Father, redeemed in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.