



VIRTUE CORNER

Magnanimity is the virtue which prompts one to do morally good acts of exceptional quality. Magnanimous persons are disposed to perform actions of extraordinary generosity, kindness, fortitude and charity; not in order to gain fame, glory or recognition, but simply to do what is right, good, just or needed. Magnanimous actions are usually only possible for those who, as a matter of habit and custom, practice the other virtues with great regularity and ease. Magnanimity supports and enhances Fortitude, and it is one of the highest forms of charitable self-sacrifice.

Lumen places this virtue under the section of "Leadership". A leader has a "big heart, big aspirations, big desire to serve others." Striving for greatness is at the heart of "magnanimity," which means "greatness of soul." This is the virtue by which man pursues what is great and honorable in the eyes of God, even if it is difficult. St. Thomas Aquinas describes it as a "stretching forth of the mind to great things." cfr St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica II-II, Q. 129, Art. 1.

This is not opposed to humility because he pines after the great things that God wants as well; greatness in service, in using his God given gifts for the Kingdom. As Aquinas explains, "Magnanimity makes a man deem himself worthy of great things in consideration of the gifts he holds from God."

The vice that opposes magnanimity is called pusillanimity that means "smallness of soul." Whereas the magnanimous man seeks what is best, even if it is difficult, the pusillanimous man shies away from noble, arduous tasks because they will demand a lot out of him. He instead pursues the path of least resistance, opting for whatever is easier.

According to Aquinas, one reason the pusillanimous man shrinks from great things is ignorance of one's own qualification. Many people do not think they are capable of great things, or great things in a particular area. For example, a Lumen member may think "I can't be holy." Or "that is too much prayer or service or kindness for me to exercise." Or "That kind of life is for the varsity team and I am just freshman or JV."

Yet, the magnanimous person has a big heart because he trusts the big heart of God his Father who wants to give him all that is good. He prays with a big heart, gives with a big heart, loves others with a big heart. He doesn't place limits on himself but trusts in God and lets God set the limit. A magnanimous soul is aware that Jesus gives us graces to achieve what we could never do on our own.

It is clear then how magnanimity is related to the greatness and excellence a Lumen member must pursue. Let us call on God's grace to give us what a magnanimous heart desires.

"We should be too big to take offense and too noble to give it."

Abraham Lincoln



GOSPEL REFLECTION (30 MIN)

Matthew 20:1-16

The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.' So they went off. And he went out again around noon, and around three o'clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o'clock, he found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard.' When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the heat.' He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?' Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Context. At the end of Chapter 19 Peter had asked what Jesus would give them for following him. Jesus promises they will be blessed a hundred times over, but that many who are last will be first and many who are first will be last. This passage explains that those who are called later will still be blessed. God is just and magnanimous.
2. What might the vineyard represent in this passage? To whom does the landowner refer? Who do the workers represent?
3. Jesus tells how the landowner goes out to call at different times during the day. What does that tell us about the call of God? Does he ever get tired or fed up? What drives him to come "again and again".
4. He agrees to pay the first a day's wage for the chance to work all day. Does the land owner do them a favor and a kindness in giving them work, in offering them a chance to earn their keep and provide for their needs? Do I see God calling me to his vineyard as an honor? Do I consider it a blessing to be called to work as his farm hand in the field of his souls?
5. At the end of the day, all are paid the same. The last ones hired are paid extra generously, while the first hired are paid an honest day's wage. Is it unjust towards some to be generous with others? Do we get upset at times to see God bless others more than us?
6. This parable is about magnanimity. Though it is already a blessing that God gives us a chance to work for him, He then pays us with heaven! Do I do all I can to help others hear the call to work in his vineyard? How might we work more in his vineyard?





CASE DISCUSSION (30 MIN)

2 ways to go about it. Read the Case and discuss afterwards how it can apply to your life. Or ask a member to voluntarily offer their challenges in living out this month's lumen virtue at home, in the work place or in their lumen action (volunteer work). The circle can offer some personal experiences on how they have confronted and resolved similar difficulties.

Being a generous hearted person with others is often very simple. Chad Rose of Lowell, Michigan ended up with an extra live Christmas tree, so he went to Craigslist and put up a listing to give away the tree to someone for free. Mr. Rose received more than forty emails from families in need who could not afford to buy a non-essential item like a Christmas tree, although the addition of one in their house would be a wonderful thing. "Hello," began one e-mail. "My husband and I have 6 kids so you can imagine Christmas time is rough for us. We also have three birthdays at the end of the year. Having a real Christmas tree would be such a great blessing this year (because) usually we draw a Christmas tree on a large poster and hang it in the corner." Another answered "You are a blessing! I was just getting ready to explain to my 6 year old daughter that Christmas is not just about a tree," another person emailed. So instead of giving that one tree to just one family, he went out and bought forty more and gave them to the people who wrote in. Another person was inspired by his generosity and donated ornaments to each recipient.

Here is another example of being big hearted. On Thanksgiving weekend a homeless man in Atlanta was digging in the trash outside of the Omni Hotel when he found a wallet. Joel Hartman then took the wallet to the hotel to give it back to the guest. The hotel management was so impressed with Hartman's honesty that they gave him a room for the weekend, free room service, a new wardrobe and even a make-over. But that's not the end of the story. When the media got hold of the story, his family, who had been looking for him for years, finally found him. And Hartman — who suffered from severe short term memory loss — was offered the medical help he needed.

How about generous tip-giving? When Seth Collins' brother Aaron Collins died, his will stated that his family go out to dinner and leave an "awesome tip." The first time Seth Collins went out and left a huge gratuity, the story went viral and donations started to pour in for the family to go out and leave even more tips. They received about \$50,000. Since then, Seth Collins has been traveling around the country and leaving a huge tip in each state. One can go to the Instagram feed @tipsforjesus and see many of these generous tipping stories.

Finally, Aga Bojaxhiu was content as a nun who taught upper class high school girls in India. She felt that God wanted her to satisfy his thirst of serving the poorest of the poor. She followed that inspiration to move out of the convent, and started picking up random sick people off the streets in Calcutta. That one act of magnanimity by Mother Theresa opened the way to many more which lead her to a life of service to the poor, and to the founding of the Missionaries of Charity that now numbers 4,500 nuns.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Am I capable of random acts of magnanimity towards people I don't know?
2. Am I capable, on a regular basis, of those same random acts with those with whom I live or work?
3. Mother Theresa started with a very doable act of Magnanimity – helping a sick person. What act might God be asking of me?
4. What about the striving to build a successful business or serving a client so that employees and stake holders can flourish? Working hard with big ideals, is that a form of magnanimity?

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Character



Faith



Leadership

Magnanimity in Practice

Magnanimity Does...

- Think big – instead of sponsoring a starving child it builds an orphanage, when it can
- Choose to invest available resources in order to have the maximum return
- Pay sincere attention to and take a sincere interest in the needs, problems, and points of view of everyone else – from the littlest child to the eldest granddad
- Help in little ways all the time – e.g. send flowers to an employee's hospitalized spouse
- Find solutions – e.g. extends severance pay for a laid off employee who has particularly serious financial needs
- The unexpected – e.g. visit in prison the ruthless criminal being vilified in all the news reports

Magnanimity Doesn't...

- Close its eyes to its neighbor's needs
- Say "that's THEIR problem, not mine"
- Wait around for somebody to figure out solutions
- Complain about the inconvenience of doing more
- Broadcast its good deeds out of vanity
- Neglect one's own duties to God, family, and profession in order to do flashy service projects
- Pass judgment on others
- Impose its viewpoint
- Get tired of doing good for others

How can you grow in magnanimity?

1. Start with little things. Form the habit of thinking in terms of others' needs and desires by doing one small act of charity (or kindness) for a family member every day. Do it in a hidden way, without trying to draw attention to yourself. Soon this one little act will open your soul and blossom into a steady flow of ingenious charity that spreads happiness into everyone in your life.
2. Do good to people you don't like. The colleague or acquaintance or employee that naturally rubs you the wrong way is the perfect target for acts of charity and kindness, if you want to expand the reach of your soul. Magnanimity, to be authentic and have a real impact, has to spring from the depths of your heart, but you can't get down that deep unless you peel off your protective covering of selfishness and self-righteousness. This is the only way to do so.
3. Make a list. Keep a running list of complaints and problems – yours and those you hear about. Read over that list frequently, and bring those things to Christ in prayer, asking what he would have you do about them. At some point, you will start getting some ideas. Implement them. There is no shorter way to magnanimity than by doing magnanimous things.



UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Manhattan Chapter

- Leadership Circles:
 - Greenwich March 20th April 17th
 - Manhattan March 21st April 18th
 - Rye March 21st April 11th
 - Summit March 14th April 11th
 - Naples March 12th

Atlanta

- Leadership Circle

Houston

- Leadership Circle March 6th April 3rd

Chicago

- Leadership Circle March 21st April 18th

WDC

- Leadership Circle March 20th April 17th
- Couples night April 7th

Nationally:

- National Retreat in New York City – September 14 – 16, 2018
- Pilgrimage to the Holy Land June 1 to 10
- Pilgrimage to Rome – June 11 to 17
- Women’s Mission – April 15 – 17 – Our Lady of Bethesda – WDC



Lumen Core Values Self-Assessment (10 minutes)

Core Values Assessment. Spend 10 minutes in silence assessing positive and negative examples of how you live this core virtue. The below quadrant can help in jotting down some of your assessment as well as a tool for the whole Lumen Circle and how you can let it be a leaven in your life.

What struck me in this circle and how I might apply this core virtue to my THINKING. What CRITICAL ISSUES am I facing in one of the below sectors of my life and what OPPORTUNITIES does it present.

Prayer:

Family:

Business:

Lumen Action:

What ACTION STEPS can I take now or long term? Develop a concrete resolution for how you can improve in your efforts to exercise Christian charity in you interactions with others during the next month. Your resolution should be a specific action or activity that is easily measured.

