



## **THE VIRTUE OF FORTITUDE/FINAL PART**

Today, in the times in which we live, is the Catholic hour for zealous priests, bishops and lay leaders to mount the campaign to spread and defend the Faith with zeal and fortitude. It is God who wills it. Ours is the honor and duty to defend and share the realities of Revelation. We should be teaching by practicing the virtues in our own lives, teaching and training our children in those virtues, teaching the Truths of our Faith, and waging an inexorable war on heresy and moral corruption.

St. Paul says “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” We ARE our brother’s keepers and Christ will ask of us “what did you do to bring your brother to a knowledge of my truth?” Every Catholic is supposed to radiate Christ along with His Truth and Love.

We are called to imitate the Apostles. We must be undeterred by humanist respect, humiliations, false brethren, earthly pleasures, the threats of political powers, the desire for honors and the credit of a great name on earth. Like the Apostles we ought to rejoice in these times of crisis to be able to suffer something for the name of Jesus. The apostles rejoiced at being able to suffer. They didn’t sit around and gripe “what on earth is happening to our Church?” They went right to the temple and preached Christ. Archbishop Fulton Sheen said that St. Peter gave more glory to God by suffering in prison for His name than when he was out preaching to the multitudes!

Zeal and Fortitude will lead us to behave magnanimously with manliness, humility, constancy, forbearance, firmness, compassion and perseverance. In the words of St. Augustine “Fortitude is a form of deep love which moves men and women to be willing to bear all trials and even undergo death for the glory of God.”

We ALL need to recall St. Paul’s advice to Timothy, “I admonish you Timothy to stir up the grace of God which is in you by the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and prudence. Do not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. Oh Timothy, trust in God and keep free from profane novelties, speech and the contradictions of the so-called knowledge, which some have professed and have fallen away from the faith. Be watchful in all things; bear with tribulations patiently (Fortitude) and work as a preacher. Fulfill your ministry.” (2 Tim. 1:6-10)

We need to beware of those who are always growing in knowledge but never arriving at the Truth. (This is the process of many of our modern Catholic universities where there is a tremendous amount of knowledge but very little or no faith in many instances. Many universities are CINO’s. Catholic in name only).

A word of caution: by being zealous and by practicing the virtue of Fortitude, Catholics will be attacked not only by the world but even by false brethren. Within the Church their zeal will be labeled as intolerance, their fidelity—backwardness, their virtue—stupidity, their defense of truth—contentiousness, their piety—mawkishness, their traditionalism—rigidity and their orthodoxy—superstition. But in response to this litany of calumnies these Catholics will rejoice in Christ and His Church as long as their hearts are riveted in Christ. They will never suffer an identity crisis or an inferiority complex. They will gladly become fulltime servants and friends of God and be free from earthly compromise. They will set themselves on self-effacement and exhibit a spontaneous, tenacious, audacious but humble adherence to the Faith and its missionary spread to all nations. They will never act to aspire to be above Our Lord and master and will never challenge the teachings of the infallible Magisterium. They will shun the prose of prudent inactivity, benign neglect or clergy inattention.

When these attacks on faith and morals call for courageous, zealous interventions to protect children and the whole flock of Christ, they will be in the front lines. The virtue of zeal and fortitude will never allow friends and followers of Christ to shrink from facing up to their vocation as vigorous Catholics to become the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Evil flourishes because the good do nothing to eradicate it. The zealous never expect salvation from the world, nor from politics nor from their own genius, nor from education, nor from the marvels of technocracy but solely from Jesus Christ and His Church.

**“Gloria in Excelsis Deo!” Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.**

**Phillip Bellini, D.R.E.**