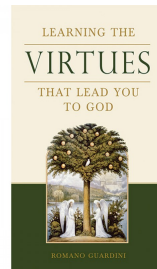


Book Reference



Reading Context

#1: Patience, however, is something quite other than the indiscriminate acceptance of any and every evil: “The patient man is not the one who does not flee from evil, but the one who does not allow himself to be made inordinately sorrowful thereby.” To be patient means to preserve cheerfulness and serenity of mind in spite of injuries that result from the realization of the good. Patience does not imply the exclusion of energetic, forceful activity, but simply, explicitly and solely the exclusion of sadness and confusion of heart. Patience keeps man from the danger that his spirit may be broken by grief and lose its greatness. Patience, therefore, is not the tear-veiled mirror of a “broken” life (as one might easily assume in the face of what is frequently presented and praised under this name), but the radiant embodiment of ultimate integrity. In the words of Hildegard of Bingen, patience is “the pillar which nothing can soften.” And Thomas following Holy Scripture (Luke 21,19), summarizes with superb precision: “Through patience man possesses his soul.”

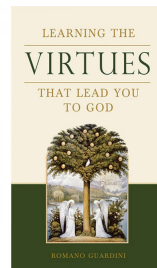
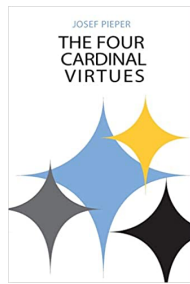
2: Patience demands strength - great strength. The supreme patience rests upon omnipotence. Because God is the omnipotent, He can be patient with the world. Only the strong man can exercise living patience, can take upon himself again and again the things that are; only he can always begin anew. Patience without strength is mere passivity, dull acceptance, growing accustomed to being a mere thing.

#3: It can be very difficult to be bound to a person whom one gradually comes to know intimately: how he speaks, how he thinks, and what his attitude toward everything is. One would like to put him away and take another. Faithfulness here is pre-eminently patience with what he is, how he is and acts. and what he does. If this patience is not exercised, everything goes to pieces and the possibilities that lay in the relationship are lost.

#4: But we must also have patience with ourselves. We know to some extent, in the form of a more or less definite wish, how we should like to be. We would like to be rid of one characteristic, or to possess another, and we are annoyed at being just what we are. It is difficult to be obliged to remain the person we are, humiliating always to find in ourselves the same faults, weaknesses, and

deficiencies.

Book Reference



Questions focusing on the relation of patience to the “interior” life

Q. Could a person at the loss of cheerfulness yet be patient?

Q. Patience and perseverance, if we have them, overcome mountains of difficulties - *Mahatma Gandhi* - In light of Pieper and Guardini do we agree?

Q. Can the challenges of life grow weak and diminish as we steadily build our interior life through mindful prayer and thanksgiving?

Q. What are the challenges we face in forgiving others. What is the importance of forgiveness regardless of the circumstance?

Questions focusing on the relation of patience to the “external” life

Q. Does Pieper’s text contain a warning that avoiding energetic, forceful activity (avoiding dangers), by simply accepting all evils, is not the right path to the virtue of patience? How does this relate to the fact that patience is part of the virtue of fortitude?

Q. Is a long fruitful relationship possible if, at its very core - patience is not present?

Q. If we are perfectionists, we get upset when events or persons do not meet our expectations. Does patience help us to express the ideal of Christian life without confusing it with perfectionism? Does patience lead us to live with and accept our own weaknesses and those of others?