

REFLECTIONS ON THE VIRTUES OF MOTHER FRANCES STREITEL

TEMPERANCE



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Temperance



DEFINITION

Temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable. The temperate person directs the sensitive appetites toward what is good and maintains a healthy discretion, does not follow his own inclination and strength, walking according to the desires of his own heart.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church #1809)

The life of M. Frances Servant of God was always imbued with temperance. Looking at the different phases of her life, we realize that both temperance and her love for God increased as time passed. She ate and drank sparingly. She slept only when needed and sometimes even less. She did not participate in the comforts of life. She was temperate in talking and acting. During the last fifteen years of her life she was an example of discretion and calmness, especially during the time of her illness.



TESTIMONIALS ... of the past ...

She was very mortified in eating and drinking; she was content with what was offered to her. She never complained of the food because it was poor.

(Sr. M. Bernarda Hümpfner)



SOURCES

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Tit. 2:1-8) 1 Thes. 5:6 1 Pt. 4:7-8

OUR WAY OF LIFE: Articles: #5, 6, 44, 39

WRITINGS OF MOTHER FRANCES

Letters to Fr. J. F. Jordan: Letter 4 (3), February 19, 1883, #3
Letter 24 (14), March 25, 1883, #2
Letter 80 (82), December 1883, #4
Letter 81 (68), January 1, 1884, #2



REFLECTIONS

COMMUNITY QUESTION:

In what ways do we as a community demonstrate responsibility for the use of natural resources such as water, electricity and fuel?

PERSONAL QUESTION:

When have you been invited to risk your own comfort to serve the needs of others?



TESTIMONIALS... of today ...

Among the many things that impress me about Mother Frances' life, there is one aspect that always stands out, and it is summed up in the phrase "He guided her on unexpected and unusual ways to strengthen her fidelity in His chosen service" (Letter to Fr. Jordan #2). I relate this to the journey that Mother Frances made throughout her life: her desire and passion to seek God's will, not content with the first answers she received, but always seeking a deeper relationship in which she could feel "at the center of His heart" (see spiritual exercises 1896). There, and only there, she wished to stay and remain even when she faced the greatest trials. I believe that this passion for seeking God's will, which has a strong Franciscan echo, "Lord, what do you want me to do?", is one of the things that helps me the most in my life as a Franciscan Sister of the Sorrowful Mother.

Sr. Elisabetta Maria (Italy)



On the Virtue of Temperance

In what ways do I demonstrate responsibility for the use of natural resources such as water, electricity and fuel?

At an early age, I was taught to conserve water and to use paper products sparingly. We recycled before Recycling was a thing. We wiped out plastic bags, reused aluminum foil, saved water to water the plants, only ran water when needed. We always turned off the light when leaving a room. We turned the thermostat down. As an adult, I still do these things including arrange my errands without having to criss-cross around town to save gas.

Pat, SSM Associates (USA)

I would like to share with you an aspect of Mother Frances' life and spiritual journey that significantly influenced my life: Mother Frances gave completely her life to God only to find and to live the will of God and she get the will of God in her life through her obedience to God for example she left the convent of Carmel and of the Franciscan sisters of Maria Stern but was only to find the will of God in her life and not her own will. This influenced also my journey that I should find the will of God even in difficulty and challenges also in happy way.

Post. Salome (Tanzania)



In reflecting on the life of Venerable Mother Frances Streitel, one aspect became increasingly important to me: availability. This availability, which Mother Frances lived so impressively, is an example and motivation for me. I too try to be available in my life—for God, for people, and for all of creation, of which I am also a part.

But time and again, I have to recognize how challenging, even difficult, it is to live this availability in everyday life. It does not mean freeing oneself from work and waiting to see what the day brings.



Rather, availability means doing my daily work with all the tasks that have been entrusted to me and yet being open to people who are old, sick, in pain, sad, lonely, powerless, miserable, poor, disappointed in life, full of fear... Then putting everyday tasks aside, being there, actively helping, not neglecting everyday tasks, and not forgetting prayer—that is what Mother Frances meant and exemplified.

I try to do this every day in my life so that, as Mother Frances said, I can be like a “lighthouse whose rays shine far into the surging waves of human misery.

Petra, SSM Associates (Germany)



Before anything else, Jesus offers him silent closeness, through gestures that speak of a profound encounter: He touches this man's ears and tongue (cf. v. 33b). Jesus does not use many words; He says only what is necessary in that moment: “Be opened!” (v. 34).

Pope Leo XIV,
General Audience,
July 30, 2025