

The Seven Capital Virtues

The Seven Virtues

(Also called the Seven Contrary Virtues or Seven Heavenly Virtues)

The concept of the seven capital virtues has been an aspect of Catholic Faith for several centuries, having gained recognition and popularity in the middle ages. This list of seven virtues is a set of virtues which are to counter the temptation to succumb to the [seven capital sins](#). For this reason, they are sometimes also called the seven contrary virtues; they represent the opposite of the seven sins.

The list of seven capital virtues stems from the subject matter of an epic poem written by an early Christian poet, Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, at the end of the 4th century. The poem, *Psychomachia* (meaning Battle of Souls), is an allegory which describes seven virtues defeating seven vices.

The seven contrary or capital virtues are as follows:

Humility – Humility is the virtue that counters pride. As pride leads to other sin, true humility clears a path for holiness. Pride is a sin based on undue and inappropriate appreciation of one's self worth. Conversely, the virtue of humility is about modest behavior, selflessness and the giving of respect.

Liberality – Liberality, or generosity, is the virtue that is counter to greed – the sin of immoderate desire for earthly things. The virtue of liberality is focused not merely on the appropriate concern regarding one's earthly things, but furthermore on generosity and a willingness to give, freely and without request for commendation.

Chastity – Chastity is the counter-virtue to the sin of lust. Chastity embraces moral wholesomeness and purity, and in both thought and action treats God's gift of sexuality with due reverence and respect.

Meekness – Meekness, or patience, is the virtue that counters the sin of unjust anger, also called wrath or rage. Where the sin of wrath is about quick temper and unnecessary vengeance, the virtue of meekness focuses on patiently seeking appropriate resolution to conflicts, and on the ability to forgive and show mercy.

Temperance – The virtue of temperance or abstinence counters the sin of gluttony. To be gluttonous is to over-indulge. On the opposite hand, the virtue of temperance is centered on self-control and moderation.

Kindness – Kindness, or brotherly love or love for one's neighbor, is the virtue which counters the sin of envy. Envy, in contradiction to God's law of love, is manifest in a person's sorrow and distress over the good fortune of another person. Conversely, kindness and brotherly love is manifest in the unprejudiced, compassionate and charitable concern for others.

Diligence – Diligence, or persistence, is the virtue which acts as a counter to the sin of sloth. Sloth, as a capital sin, refers to laziness in matters of Faith. Diligence in matters of the spiritual combat laziness and this virtue is manifest in appropriately zealous attitudes toward living and sharing the Faith.

This article used information from [Wikipedia](#) and [Fisheaters](#).