**Virtue**

**America's Founders: The word "virtue," which to the ancients meant putting the common good ahead of self, appeared more often in the writings of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison than "republic" did. They considered their project doomed absent virtue, and Washington modeled the ideal when he twice stepped away from power, knowingly following the example of the revered Roman general Cincinnatus. Adams idolized Cicero instead, while Jefferson sneaked Epicurean philosophy into the Declaration of Independence. Madison, the youngest of the four, "proved the most intellectually dynamic." He rejected the naivete of a belief in virtue when he devised a government of checks and balances. (The Week magazine, December 11, 2020)**

**There is no doubt that it is around the family and the home that all the greatest virtues, the most dominating virtues of human society are created, strengthened and maintained. (Winston Churchill)**

**Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others. (Cicero)**

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**Confucius was once asked the meaning of virtue, to which he replied: “To be able everywhere one goes to carry five things into practice constitutes virtue. They are courtesy, magnanimity, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness. With courtesy you avoid insult. With magnanimity you win all. With sincerity men will trust you. With earnestness you will have success. With kindness you will be fit to command others.” *(Good Reading)***

**Humility is the foundation of all the virtues. *(Confucius)***

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**As part of the pre-confirmation training, my daughter, Cathy, had to select a virtue she promised to work on. She chose perseverance. Then she learned she had to embroider that word on a sash for the confirmation ceremony. “I’m switching virtues, Dad.” Cathy informed me. “To what?” “Joy.” *(James Maguire, in Reader’s Digest)***

**All four early Presidents, if they could see America today, would have been both pleased that the republic endures and appalled by money's effect on politics. Virtue has virtually disappeared, as Madison might have predicted. Still, "he probably could not have imagined a political world in which it doesn't even receive lip service." (The Week magazine, December 11, 2020)**

**Good manners are but the visible parts of unseen virtues. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Wickedness is always easier than virtue, for it takes a shortcut to everything. *(Samuel Johnson)***

**A man’s virtue may be but the defect of his desire, as his crime may be but a function of his virtue*. (Robert Penn Warren)***

**Patience is a minor form of despair disguised as a virtue. *(Ambrose Bierce)***

**Virtue, goes the old saying, is its own reward. But a new study has found that self-disciplined, highly organized people get a bonus: They’re less susceptible to Alzheimer’s disease. The study which looked at how personality and behavior may affect the incidence of Alzheimer’s, began with a personality survey of 997 healthy but elderly Catholic nuns and priests in the Chicago area. Researchers then tracked their mental states between the years 1994 and 2006. Nuns and priests who received a high score for “consciousness” were 89 percent less likely to develop Alzheimer’s-type dementia than their less-meticulous peers. “These are people who control impulses, and tend to follow norms and rules,” study author Robert Wilson tells New Scientist. Curiously, autopsies on the subjects who died during the study found no reduced incidence of Alzheimer’s brain plaques among those with conscientious personalities; in fact, researchers found that the brains of the various personality types showed equal rates of tangled proteins associated with the disease. Wilson suggests that the difference may be in the way that disciplined people use their brains – they’re more likely to think with their frontal lobes. Using this part of the brain, which is responsible for decision-making and planning, may make one less vulnerable to impaired thinking caused by lesions in other areas, he says. *(The Week magazine, October 19, 2007)***

**Public virtue is a kind of ghost town into which anyone can move and declare himself sheriff. *(Saul Bellow)***

**Thank God – every morning when you get up – that you have something to do which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work, and forced to do your best, will breed in you a hundred virtues which the idle never know. *(Charles Kingsley)***

**Cultivate Virtue in yourself, and Virtue will be real.  
Cultivate Virtue in the family, and Virtue will flourish.  
Cultivate Virtue in the village, and Virtue will spread.  
Cultivate Virtue in the nation, and Virtue will be abundant.  
Cultivate Virtue in the world and Virtue will triumph everywhere. *(Lao Tsu)***

**Virtue would not go far without vanity to escort her. *(Francois, Duc de La Rochefoucauld***

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