

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

Below is an article about making good decisions. Much of the suffering we experience in this fallen world is unavoidable, illness, accidents, etc. But a lot of our suffering is self-inflicted because we make bad decisions including when we choose to sin. So Ms. Hogan's advice is very helpful. I will however add one more point to her "secrets." It is that all of our decisions should be "God-decisions." By that I mean they should always lead us and others affected by them closer to God.

With my prayers,
Fr. Conley

Three Secrets for Making Good Decisions by Julia Hogan, *Mind and Spirit Magazine*

We are faced with many different types of decisions, big and small, throughout life. These decisions range from the best way to communicate with a family member about a difficult topic to whether or not to take a new job offer. The key virtue for making good decisions is *prudence*. But what does making a prudent decision actually look like?

Prudence tends to carry the connotation of being conservative in action. We think of the prudent person as slow to act or maybe even timid. However, sometimes being prudent requires making swift and decisive actions. In fact, as a priest recently reminded me, Jesus' anger at the money changers in the Temple was a prudent action and that was far from being slow and deliberate. So what exactly is prudence? Prudence is the virtue that helps us to know what the right course of action is in a given situation. A prudent decision might mean taking no action, making moderate changes, or taking swift and decisive action.

St. Thomas Aquinas described three functions to prudence: to identify potential courses of action in the given situation, to weigh each option to judge which is best, and then to carry out that action. Aristotle states that "virtue lies in the mean and prudence helps us to discern what course of action is most effective." Sometimes that course of action demands meekness, other times, courage, etc. At its most basic and simplest level, prudence helps you discern what is best to do in a given situation. That being said, it can be difficult to know a practical implementation of prudence looks like. How do you know what exactly the right decision is? In a recent panel discussion for young professionals, I offered three secrets to help cultivate a state of mind that fosters your ability to make the best decision.

1) Know Your State of Mind

Depending on your state of mind, knowing the prudent course of action can either be straightforward or very difficult. I think we've all experienced those times

where we look back on a decision we made and wonder, "What on earth was I thinking?" Chances are, your state of mind wasn't helping you think clearly. For example, when you're feeling under pressure and think that you need to make a decision right this instant, you don't have time to carefully consider all of your options and instead may just go with the first action that comes to mind.

A popular acronym in the world of psychotherapy is HALT which stands for Hungry, Angry, Lonely, and Tired and it's generally a good idea to avoid making decisions when you are in any of these four states. You've probably heard of the term "hangry" (when someone is hungry and therefore crabby) and it's a great example of how it's harder to make the best decision because it's difficult to focus when your body is running low on the fuel it needs to function at its best. So if you need to make a decision but are feeling hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, your best bet is to take care of these before making any decision if it's at all possible. Eat, get some sleep, reach out to family and friends, and wait for your anger to die down. Then, consider your options. The HALT acronym is a simple way to help you assess whether or not you're in the best frame of mind to make a prudent decision.

2) Identify Your Motivation

Another helpful practice to foster when making decisions is to assess your motivation for each option you are considering. In other words, are you making a decision based on fear (moving away from something you are afraid of) or towards something that is good for you? Often, when we respond out of fear, we aren't thinking with the clearest mind. Similar to when we're feeling hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, being afraid creates a sense of pressure to make a decision as soon as possible to get away from whatever the source of fear is. But this can mean that you're thinking of short-term, band aid solutions, rather than what's best for you long term.

Instead of reacting strongly to something out of fear, consider instead making one small change to minimize your sense of fear so that you can take the time to make a prudent decision. For example, if your project proposal doesn't go as well as expected, you might find yourself feeling the need to prove that you are a valuable asset to your boss. In this mindset of fear or feeling threatened, your first reaction might be to confront your boss and ask why he or she didn't like your proposal. However, that may have more negative consequences than the positive ones you are looking for. Instead, a small decision you can make would be to take a ten minute brisk walk to get out all of your frustration and then decide how you'd like to ask for feedback from your boss. You're more likely to make a decision that will be best for you long term.

3) Consult with People Whose Opinion You Value

Instead of going with your gut feeling or looking for signs, consulting with the people in your life you are close to and trust can help you discern what course of action is best for you. Sometimes, when we're faced with making big, life-changing decisions like a job change, relationship change, or discerning our vocation, we look for signs to tell us what to do. While it's true that God sometimes points us in the right direction through signs, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed and confused by the things in your life that may or may not be signs. "Is this a sign that I should quit my job or is it a sign that I should stay?"

It can be very distressing living this way. Instead of searching for signs, share the decision you are facing with trustworthy people in your life. These people know you, your personality, your hopes and dreams, what makes you thrive, and what environments are more challenging for you. They can help you get a clearer picture of what the best course of action may be.

Using prudence to make the best decision doesn't have to be a mysterious or difficult process. Knowing your state of mind, your motivations, and gather the perspectives of others can help you pinpoint the best decision for you. These strategies help you practically apply the virtue of prudence to both the decisions you make in your everyday life and the more significant decisions in life.

ST. MARY'S HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY

The mission of our healing prayer ministry is to help people to have a personal encounter with the Lord and experience his healing love. We do this by praying with people who are seeking physical, emotional and spiritual healing. Our healing prayer ministry is founded on our confidence in God the Father, who was given us every spiritual blessing in the heavens; Jesus Christ the Son who has redeemed us by his blood; And the Holy Spirit who fills us with the fire of his love. Persons seeking prayer from the healing prayer ministry will be given the opportunity to make an appointment with a prayer team for one or two confidential prayer sessions. To make an appointment to meet with one of our healing prayer teams, please contact Kaye Oliver at 240-682-0646 or Sam Oliver at 301-848-3206. Email can be sent to Samuel_Oliver @comcast.net If you have any questions about this new ministry in our parish, Father Conley would be happy to speak to you about it. You may call him at 301-870-2220, ext 13 or email at frconley@comcast.net

ST. MARY'S WILL HAVE BREAKFAST AFTER THE 8:00 AM & 10:00 AM MASSES NEXT SUNDAY.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE PRAYER FOR HEALING AND YOUR NEEDS RIGHT AFTER MASS?

As part of our new healing ministry, next weekend trained prayer teams will be available after each Mass to pray briefly and confidentially for you and your intentions. The prayer teams will be located around the altar area. This ministry will be offered at each Mass on the third Sunday of the month. We ask everyone to observe quiet reverence while people are receiving prayer.

FALL DINNERFEST

Mark your calendar as the Annual Parish Dinnerfest is fast approaching. This year's event will be on Sunday, Nov. 4th. If we are to continue this wonderful Parish event we **NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS** to help with the planning and running of the event. For more info please contact Ellen Bowles @ 301-472-4247 or heresellen@hotmail.com

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL \$60,000 RAFFLE You may purchase a ticket on your own for \$100 or consider purchasing a ticket with your friends, family or co-workers. Split the ticket cost and the winnings. There are 20 opportunities to win cash prizes adding up to \$60,000. Your ticket enters you in all 20 drawings. **Our first drawing for \$1,000 will be held this Friday, October 19th at the school's Annual Fall Festival.** The Grand Prize Drawing of \$20,000 will be held on March 1, 2019.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

SUN: 8am Parishioners, 10am Maurice Long, Sr., 12N: Lacy Jenkins, **MON:** 8am Rose DiCianna, **TUES:** 8am Edna Wills, **WED:** 8am Jessie Chlysta, **THURS:** 8am Kathleen Conway, **FRI:** 9:30am Joseph F. Weingarden, III., & Marianne Femiano, **SAT:** 9am Ernest J. Keller, Jr., 4pm Allison Clements.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY

PRAYERS: Stephen Balenger, Mary Bowes, Brenda Callahan, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, Susan Welch Day, Kendall Farrell, Keith Van Gadson, Arlene Gandolfi, Martha Gehring, James Gibson, Zynae Green, Judy Istvan-Windsor, Irma Johnson, Regina Kijesky, Marie Knobel, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Ryan Myers, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Jean Turner, Eva Washington, Beth Weise, Pat Werner, Brice Zimmer.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND:

\$11,486.93. The unidentified donations totaled \$956.43. We received \$760.00 for our School Support.