



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

These are times of great consequence.

Today, the United States Supreme Court issued its opinion in the *Dobbs* case and returned to the states the question of how to address the problem of abortion. This historic decision comes down against the backdrop of extraordinary conflict and division in our nation and in our world. The *Dobbs* decision is the latest occasion that demands of us how we as Catholics, as Americans, and as human beings, will respond to the challenges of the present day.

In times of great consequence, when decisions that are made carry with them the opportunity for some to assume victory and some to assume defeat, the mark of an evolved society will be the extent to which Prudence is invited, no, invoked and embraced to lead its citizens to the higher ground on which all are called to stand. As the scriptures remind us, “pride goes before disaster, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (*Prov* 16:18)

I remember Prudence, “the charioteer of the virtues.”¹ So thoughtful and so helpful, Prudence was willing to join any meeting or discussion. When invited, Prudence was sure to be there. Listening, Prudence would hear not only what was being said, but Prudence heard what was unspoken, maybe even more important to the matter at hand than the actual words. Prudence was somehow able to pick up on an unspoken need, or fear. Prudence brought a keen insight that avoided going down a path of misunderstanding and misguided notions.

Do you remember how Prudence would always repeat the old adages, “Think before you speak,” “Count to ten before you get angry,” and some others that we’d heard from our folks since we were young? Prudence always seemed to remember them out loud and we would roll our eyes. Do you remember Prudence?

Another good one Prudence always seemed to bring to the table: “Look before you leap!” when there were unforeseen consequences that Prudence saw when we were moving too quickly or were letting our emotions run fast and unchecked. How many times Prudence put on the brakes! Oh, and when we laughed at Prudence, ridiculed Prudence or for the sake of expediency we rejected the counsels of Prudence, what a mess!

In times such as the ones that challenge us now, I remember Prudence. As a matter of fact, I recently found this written about our colleague and friend:

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 1806

“Prudence makes it possible to make decisions that are consistent, and to make them with realism and a sense of responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions.”²

Prudence may sometimes seem a roadblock but always seems to live up to this interesting description of the virtue bearing the name:

The **exercise** of prudence calls for a **progressive formation** in order to acquire the necessary **qualities**:

Memory as the capacity to **remember** one’s own past experience with objectivity, **without falsification**;

Docility that allows one to **learn from others** and to profit from their experience on the basis of an **authentic love for truth**;

Diligence, that is, the ability to **face the unexpected** with objectivity in order to turn every **situation to the service of good**, overcoming the temptation of intemperance, injustice, and cowardice;

Foresight which is the capacity of weighing the efficacy of a given conduct for the attainment of a **moral end**;

Circumspection or the capacity of weighing the **circumstances** that contribute to the **creation of the situation** in which a given action will be carried out.³

May Prudence, found fully in the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Knowledge, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord), yield the Fruits of those Gifts in our time (Peace, Charity, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Modesty, Joy, Gentleness, Chastity and Self-Control).

Every kingdom on earth, every rule of law, every governing body and form of government in this world is of its very nature a human attempt at preserving a way of life. If those attempts are to conform in mind and heart and expression to the design and will of Almighty God, it is clear that Prudence is all the more essential in our vision for growth into peaceful stability.

And so, from this day forward and always, let us remember Prudence.

Faithfully yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci
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² *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, § 548

³ *Id.*, § 548 (n. 1147) (emphasis added)