

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*Spiritual growth does not come out of the constant drumbeat and presentations of chaos in the church, such as I send to inform you of what to avoid and what to embrace in today's church.*

*Certainly some growth comes from suffering the chaos.*

*Real spiritual growth is in the development of the virtues and grace, the only two things we can take with us in heaven, says priest and exorcist Fr. Chad Ripperger.*

*The way people use language is not always rooted in the depth of the concepts of the words that are spoken.*

*St. Thomas Aquinas provides that depth.*

*This short article gives us solid teaching for growth in the virtues.*

*This article, dedicated to **magnanimity**, helps man to overcome its corresponding vice of **envy**, that vice which is activated in man by the demons in order to destroy, to steal, or to corrupt those gifts of another which a man either does not possess or see in himself.*

***Magnanimity** develops a man's God given virtues for the edification of self and of others.*

## **MARIA: MATER MEA, FIDUCIA MEA — Confidence in Mary**

by Roberto de Mattei  
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In Rome, in the chapel of the Pontifical Major Seminary at St. John Lateran, an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary known by the title Our Lady of Confidence (Madonna della Fiducia) has been venerated for more than two centuries. This small picture, in which Our Lady lovingly holds the Child Jesus in her arms, has great theological and spiritual significance.

What in fact is trust, or confidence? St. Thomas Aquinas discusses it in Article 6 of Question 129 of the Summa Theologiae, Secunda-Secundae. *This article is dedicated to "magnanimity."* ***Magnanimity is what we call greatness of mind, nobility of character and spirit.***

Dominican theologian Father Antonio Royo Marin defines magnanimity as **"the virtue that inclines one to do great, splendid and honorable things in every kind of virtue"** (Theology of Christian Perfection, Edizioni Paoline, Rome 1965, p. 704). Confidence, which is a form of magnanimity, is certainly an expression of fortitude, but it does not merely oppose evil, it aspires to a great good, therefore, St. Thomas explains, "since fortitude properly hardens man against evil, while magnanimity hardens him in the attainment of good, it is clear that properly confidence falls more under magnanimity than under fortitude" (q. 129, art. 6, ad 2).

**Trust or Confidence is thus the virtue of the magnanimous, of those who exercise the virtue of fortitude because they aspire to great goods,** but it is also the virtue of those who hope, because they face the difficulties they face in the conviction that they will overcome and overcome them. From this union of fortitude and hope arises, in magnanimous and generous hearts, the virtue of trust, which can also be defined as a hope invigorated by fortitude. This is why St. Thomas defines trust: "spes roborata ex aliqua firma opinione":

trust is "hope strengthened by a firm conviction" (Summa Theologiae, q. 129, art. 6, ad 3).

**Hope is a theological virtue that makes us tend toward God, grounding us in his goodness and omnipotence. Trust goes beyond hope, or rather it is a stronger, more intense hope, which with more perfection surrenders to God's Will.** The difference between hope and trust, says Father Thomas de Saint-Laurent (1879-1949) in his famous Book of Trust, is not one of nature, but only of degree and intensity. "The uncertain lights of dawn and the dazzling lights of the sun at noon are part of the same day. So **confidence and hope belong to the same virtue: the one is but the full development of the other.**"

In Italy, Father de Saint-Laurent's Book of Trust has been republished several times by Edizioni Fiducia, who in their name wish to pay tribute to a virtue so little known among Christians, but so important for our spiritual life. "It is trust, nothing but trust, that must lead us to Love!" writes St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Complete Works, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, p. 197), who, with a magnanimous heart, goes so far as to say, "I always feel the same bold confidence to become a great Saint, because I do not rely on my own merits, since I have none, but I hope in Him who is Virtue. Holiness Himself: it is He alone who, being content with my feeble efforts, will raise me up to Him and, covering me with His infinite merits, make me a Saint" (Works, p. 210).

**Trust is a spiritual gift that we must insistently ask for through prayer.** Among the most beautiful prayers to obtain confidence is that of St. Claude de La Colombière (1641-1682), which reads as follows:

*"My Lord and my God, I am so convinced that You care for all those who hope in You, and that nothing can be lacking to those who expect everything from You, that I have decided, for*

*the future, to live without any worries and to pour out all my anxieties on You.*

*“Men may strip me of all possessions and my very honor; sickness may rob me of my strength and means to serve You; by sin I may lose even Your grace, but I will never, ever lose my trust in You. I will keep it to the very end of my life, and the devil, with all his efforts, will never succeed in snatching it from me.*

*“Let others expect their happiness from riches and their wits; let them also rely on the innocence of their lives, the rigors of their penances, the quantity of their good works and the fervor of their prayers; for me all my confidence is my own confidence; confidence that has never deceived anyone.*

*“That is why I have the absolute certainty that I am eternally happy, because I have the unshakable confidence to be so, and because I hope so solely from You.*

*“From my sad experience I must unfortunately acknowledge that I am weak and inconstant; I know how temptations can against the most established virtues; yet nothing, as long as I retain this firm trust in You, can frighten me; I will be safe from all misfortune and I will be sure to continue hoping, because I hope for this same unchanging hope.*

*“Finally, my God, I am intimately persuaded that the trust I have in You will never be too much and that, what I will obtain from You, will always be above what I will have hoped for.*

*“I also hope, Lord, that You will support me in facile weaknesses; You will sustain me in the most violent assaults; You will make my lassitude triumph over my dreaded enemies.*

*The “I have such confidence that You will always love me and that I, in turn, will also love You forever. And to carry this confidence of mine to the highest degree, O my Creator, I hope You from Yourself, for time and for eternity.”*

**Confidence** gives us the certainty that our prayers will be answered, and **the first thing we must ask for is precisely**

**trust**, which will infallibly get us all the spiritual goods we ask for and even the material ones, insofar as they do not prejudice the spiritual goods, to which everything must be ordered. Nothing, however, will be lost of our prayers, summarized by the invocation "Mater mea, fiducia mea."

The image of Our Lady of Trust that is venerated in the Roman Seminary expresses to us in her affectionate and consoling gaze this truth; nothing is denied to those who trust in Our Lady. Everything, in Her and for Her, is possible to us.