



Transcending Contempt  
Session Two  
January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
The Rev. Christopher H. Martin  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
San Rafael, California

Learning to Be Good

#### Agenda

- 9:00 Gather in both Duncan Hall and Zoom
- 9:05 Break into groups of three
- 9:20 Gather back into two larger groups, in Duncan Hall and Zoom
- 9:30 Zoom feed switches to Duncan Hall. Tanner and Christopher report back
- 9:35 Teaching
- 9:55 Q & A

#### Teaching

- I. Introduction
  - A. We have been Practicing WAG; now add a new practice
  - B. Words: Hierarchy, Participation (Trace, Image, Likeness), Virtue, Magnanimity
  - C. Each human being created equal: Scripture, Declaration of Independence, UN Declaration of Human Rights

II. Hierarchy

- A. On Inhumanity and the consistent pattern toward Genocide
- B. Good Hierarchy v. Bad Hierarchy
- C. The Great Chain of Being, from God down to Prime Matter

III. Participation

- A. Trace, Image and Likeness
- B. Invitation to non-anxiety: We always participate in two out of three
- C. Likeness is Virtue - The Seven Classic Virtues

IV. Magnanimity

- A. Identifying a Keystone Virtue like Jane Austen's Constancy
- B. Magnanimity as the middle way between Grinch-hearted and vainglorious and the middle way between the head and the guts
- C. Nurturing Magnanimity as a Practice that Counters Contempt

Question for Groups of Three at the beginning of Session Three:

What are the regular experiences and practices in your life that indicate that you have given your heart to something larger than yourself, like my example of certain kinds of music in certain contexts? What helps you nurture magnanimity?

Supplemental Material

1. An excerpt from David Livingstone Smith's On Inhumanity
2. A chart of the Great Chain of Being from Peter Kreeft's Summa of the Summa
3. A description of Image, Likeness and Vestige (Trace) from Andrew Davison's Participation in God
4. Three reflections on Magnanimity by Christopher, delivered as meditations June 2023 at The Family, a men's arts club

The Five Practices

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ING \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ ING \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ ING \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ ING \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ ING \_\_\_\_\_

and I wouldn't see. They saw beings with a human form, beings who in every observable respect were indistinguishable from those whom we regard as human beings. But the killers *interpreted* what they saw differently than how you and I would. They believed that the humanity of these others was only skin deep. They thought that these people merely appeared human—much like counterfeit money appears to be real money—but *that their victims were not really human. They were something else. Something that's malevolent and despicable. Something that needs killing.*

Genocide is the most disturbing example of dehumanization's destructive power. It follows a regular pattern, time and time again. First the dominant majority singles out an ethnic or racial minority as a threat. ① They label them murderers, rapists, or freeloading parasites sucking the life out of the body of the state. Next, they subject them to discrimination and abuse, segregate them, and humiliate them. ② Finally—and this step is crucial to the emergence of full-blown genocidal violence—they no longer see and treat the victims as human beings, but as filthy, subhuman creatures that must be eradicated, ravenous predators that must be hunted down, or animals to be tamed, abused, and exploited. ③

Why should anyone care about dehumanization? Dehumanization fuels the worst brutalities that human beings perpetrate against one another. It's not just a problem of the modern, industrialized world: it's haunted humanity for millennia. We find traces of it in writings from the ancient civilizations of Egypt, China, and Mesopotamia, in Medieval European characterizations of Jews, and Medieval Arabs' characterizations of Black Africans, and in far-flung indigenous cultures, such as the headhunting

Munduruku people of Brazil who referred to their human prey as *pariwat*—a word that's otherwise reserved for game animals.

Dehumanization is a worldwide problem with deep historical roots, but it is also a *growing* problem around the world that promises to worsen in a future in which climate crises will turn more and more of us into refugees on foreign soil. In order to know how to deal with the problem of dehumanization, we have to understand what it is and how it works.

Dehumanization isn't only a factor in genocide. It also creeps into how we think of enemies during wartime, and wartime propaganda often zeros in on the dehumanizing mindset, exploiting the chinks in our psychological armor. For most people, killing others isn't something that's easy to do. For most of us, there are massive psychological barriers that must be overcome before we can find it in ourselves to pull a lethal trigger or plunge a blade into a person's viscera. To surmount these barriers, wartime propaganda presents "our" cause as a morally righteous one that no decent human being should have qualms about participating in. The story's been told many times and in many places: we kill to save the world, to stamp out evil, to liberate, to keep us free. But even those who've drunk the patriotic Kool-Aid are likely to find it hard to take the lives of others. So, propagandists, such as the militant Hutus, as we saw, often deploy another, different rhetorical strategy. They represent the enemy as subhuman.

World War II is an especially rich source for examples of dehumanizing propaganda, and not just by our enemies. "We are not dealing with humans as we know them . . .," remarked Sir Thomas A. Blamey, commander of the Allied land forces in New Guinea, in an interview on the front page of the *New York Times*.

the reason why it is cognitive; and according to the mode of immateriality is the mode of knowledge. Hence, it is said in *De Anima* ii that plants do not know, because they are wholly material.<sup>112</sup> But sense is cognitive because it can receive images free from matter, and the intellect is still further cognitive, because it is more separated from matter and unmixed, as said in *De Anima* iii. Since therefore God is in the highest degree of immateriality as stated above (Q. 7, A. 1), it follows that He occupies the highest place in knowledge. . . .

on 14

Knowledge

ientia] in God?

ys, O the depth of the riches of the  
i (Rom 11:33).

sts the most perfect knowledge.  
ntelligent beings are distinguished  
t the latter possess only their own  
g is naturally adapted to have<sup>109</sup>  
; for the idea of the thing known  
nifest that the nature of a non-  
d and limited; whereas the nature  
amplitude and extension; there-  
ma iii) that the soul is in a sense all  
e form comes from the matter.<sup>111</sup>  
7, A. 1) forms according as they  
ach more nearly to a kind of  
t the immateriality of a thing is

g a form. Only knowers have forms  
orm of his species (humanity) in his  
ns, which he knows (e.g., treeness,

now (thus possess in its intellect) any

gginess as a form, is contracted and  
o the particular matter of Spot. Spot  
addition to the form dogginess Spot

<sup>112</sup> St. Thomas uses "soul" in a broader way than modernity does, for animals and even plants are said to have souls (sources of life). But the plant soul is wholly material and non-cognitive: a hill of beans does not know a hill of beans. Animals do know, but only sensorially and imagistically. The whole cosmic hierarchy may be set out as follows:

	Name	Science	Matter & Form	Potency & Act	Kind of Knowledge
8	God	theology	pure form	pure act	knowledge = one with being
7	angels	angelology	pure form	essence (potency) & existence (act)	intuitive
6	men	anthropology psychology	rational soul = form of body	essence & existence and matter & form	rational
5	animals	zoology	sensitive soul	"	sensory
4	plants	botany	vegetative soul	"	none
3	things	physics	no soul; purely material forms	"	"
2	chemical elements	chemistry	first rudimentary forms (wet/dry, hot/cold)	"	"
1	prime matter	none	formless matter	pure potency	"

centuries earlier, for instance in his that 'the Word itself of the Creator things is invested with form', each ge of the perfect word'.<sup>60</sup>

: AQUINAS

id Maximus, much of what Chris- the divine ideas had been said. All ot without problems. A particular Patristic times, as we have seen, lar of Christian doctrine, and an One. Among other things, divine might mean by God's 'thoughts' ughts are not one thing and God ights, and God's thoughts are God John's Gospel was influential here, l was God'. However, on the other ultiple, in as much as God knows id so on. Proposing exemplars for sis, seems to risk breaking divine

iddle Ages, Aquinas among them, solution to this conundrum. God's as wrote, because the object of this is supremely simple.<sup>61</sup> For God to one, and the angel is not for God her, God knows himself perfectly t of knowledge, God consequently ding all the ways in which he could r creature he might create. Aquinas in that knowledge:

e perfectly, He knows it according to ow it can be known not only as it is in creatures according to some degree of

wider history in 'Divine Ideas in Christian

likeness. But every creature has its own proper species, according to which it participates in some degree in likeness to the divine essence. So far, therefore, as God knows His essence as capable of such imitation by any creature, He knows it as the particular type and idea of that creature; and in like manner as regards other creatures. So it is clear that God understands many particular types of things and these are many ideas.<sup>62</sup>

We can only understand God in terms of many ideas, which can make the character of God seem pluriform and complex from our perspective. God, however, understands himself in a way that we cannot: in his simplicity. God's knowledge of himself does not involve enumeration of a sequential list of characteristics. Rather, in a single and simple act of knowing, God knows himself so fully that all that belongs to what it means for God to be God – including all that a creature could imitate of God, which for the creature involves multiplicity – is also enfolded in that one simple and perfect knowledge of God by God.

PARTICIPATION: IMAGE, LIKENESS, VESTIGE

The claim of theology in its participatory vein is that the world receives all that it is from God. All the same, we might not want to talk about that reception in absolutely uniform terms, across all creatures, using exactly the same terminology. Different theologians have come up with different distinctions here. For his part, Aquinas proposed 'likeness' as the broadest category.<sup>63</sup> Within that overarching idea of likeness, he reserved 'image', as a stronger term, for intellectual creatures, and 'trace' for creatures that do not think and desire as intelligent creatures do (although he would also add that anything with 'any sort of likeness to God, participates in some

<sup>62</sup> ST I.15.2. Bonaventure responds in a similar fashion in *Breviloquium*, I.8.5-7 and his *Commentary on the Sentences*, book I, dist. 27, part 2, a. un., q. 2. He also writes that things have their origin in God in three ways: in that he is the principle that produces, the example that is expressed, and the end that conserves. This gives a characteristically Bonaventurian threefold inflection to the way in which the ideas (*rationes*) of things are in God, along the lines of Chapter 2 of this book: as an idea in relation to power (*ratione potentiae*), as a word in reaction to meaning (*ratione notitiae*), and as an idea in relation to will (*ratione voluntatis*) (*Commentary on the Sentences*, book I, dist. 36, a. 2, q. 1).

<sup>63</sup> In the *Commentary on Colossians*, Aquinas placed the concepts of image and likeness within an even broader framework, which he called similarity. Every likeness is a matter of similarity, but not every example of similarity is one of likeness: two eggs are 'similar' to each other, but they are not a likeness one of the other, because there is no imitation or derivation one from the other (*Commentary on Colossians*, chap. 1, lec. 4, n. 31).

degree the nature of an image').<sup>64</sup> His justification for associating the language of image with human beings (and also with angels) comes from the Biblical description of human beings as being in the image of God (Gen. 1.26-7).

Aquinas is not entirely consistent about the extent of the likeness in such a 'trace'. In *Summa theologiae* I.45.7, he begins seeming to minimise the extent of likeness in a trace, writing that a trace shows no more than that something caused the effect. However, later in the same *responsio* he writes that 'in all creatures there is found the trace of the Trinity', and now the trace seems to be in the way that the creature is, not only that it is.

Bonaventure, as a different but comparable figure, uses a variety of terms for divine likeness in the *Itinerarium*,<sup>65</sup> while in the *Breviloquium* he lays out a threefold scheme:

We may gather that the universe is like a book reflecting, representing, and describing its Maker, the Trinity, at three different levels of expression: as a trace, an image, and a likeness. The aspect of trace is found in every creature; the aspect of image, in the intellectual creatures or rational spirits; the aspect of likeness, only in those who are God-conformed. Through these successive levels, comparable to the rungs of a ladder, the human mind is designed to ascend gradually to the supreme Principle who is God.<sup>66</sup>

The Latin for 'trace' is *vestigium*, which can also be translated as 'footprint'. It is a similar visual metaphor to the language of a finite creature being towards God as an impression is to the seal that made it. We have seen Philo deploy this image, and so did Dionysius.<sup>67</sup> At the heart of the participatory vision lies this contention that in every creature 'there is some kind of likeness to God': at least that trace.<sup>68</sup> We might, however, go further and say that each creature is *nothing more*, and nothing less, than this trace.<sup>69</sup> The creature's whole being is found in being God's imprint. A rock, in this sense, is not a trace of God made real as a creature;

<sup>64</sup> ST I.93.2 and 6; I.93.2 ad 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, trans. Zachary Hayes, Franciscan Institute Publications. Works of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002), 47, 77.

<sup>66</sup> *Breviloquium*, II.12.1, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, NJ: St Anthony Guild Press, 1963), 104. On the roots in Irenaeus of the idea that the image is given in nature and the likeness through union with Christ, see *Against Heresies*, V.10.1-2 and V.6.1, and Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 211-6.

<sup>67</sup> *On the Divine Names*, II.5. <sup>68</sup> ST I.93.6.

<sup>69</sup> 'Trace' does not have the same sense here as in the works of Derrida: of the presence of the opposite within any meaning, as in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty

its whole reality derives from being. Milbank puts it, 'the "resemblance" of Aquinas is some sort of all-too-high existence at all'.<sup>70</sup> Aquinas wrote to the *gentiles*: 'All creatures are nothing but a representation of those things which are in the divine Word; wherefore the creature is in the Word.<sup>71</sup> The whole existence of the creature, than-nothing, is as finite expression of the divine Word. As creatures, of some aspect of which that said, the language of imprint is an unlikeness as well as likeness. I am not me; the creature is not God; the creature is the perfect image of the Father, as the writers have made something of it in the book of Genesis: the human being is in the image of God in the sense that he or she is an imprint of the divine Image: an image of the Son.'<sup>72</sup>

#### IDEAS AND

The first half of this book looks at the language of causation. In this chapter, on the participation of the character in the broadly participatory vision, we ask what is participated, as we note that the creature's character is derived from God. One considers the derivation of character from God. In this way, the creature's character is a divine idea. The other half of the book looks at imitation of various divine perfect

Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 199. *Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2003), 199.

<sup>70</sup> John Milbank, 'Christianity and Participation', in *Divine Energies: Ecumenical Reflections* (London: Continuum, 2003), 199.

<sup>71</sup> SCG IV.42.3. He is alluding to John 1.14.

<sup>72</sup> See later, however, on the *imago dei*.

image v.  
finite/verbe

justification for associating the (and also with angels) comes from as being in the image of God

but the extent of the likeness in, he begins seeming to minimise that a trace shows no more than, later in the same *responsio* he around the trace of the Trinity', why that the creature is, not only

variable figure, uses a variety of *m*,<sup>65</sup> while in the *Breviloquium*

book reflecting, representing, and different levels of expression: as a trace, is found in every creature; the aspect of spirits; the aspect of likeness, only these successive levels, comparable to assigned to ascend gradually to the

can also be translated as 'foot- the language of a finite creature the seal that made it. We have Dionysius.<sup>67</sup> At the heart of the that in every creature 'there is that trace.<sup>68</sup> We might, however, nothing more, and nothing less, being is found in being God's of God made real as a creature;

eyes, Franciscan Institute Publications. Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002),

son, NJ: St Anthony Guild Press, 1963), image is given in nature and the likeness V.10.1-2 and V.6.1, and Eric Osborn, ersity Press, 2001), 211-6.

he works of Derrida: of the presence of *matology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty

its whole reality derives from being a trace of God's likeness. As John Milbank puts it, 'the "resemblance" to God of creatures is not for Aquinas some sort of all-too-light burden that they incidentally bear: it is rather, exactly as it is for Dionysius, their very condition of being in existence at all'.<sup>70</sup> Aquinas wrote something similar in the *Summa contra gentiles*: 'All creatures are nothing but a kind of real expression and representation of those things which are comprehended in the conception of the divine Word; wherefore all things are said to be made by the Word.'<sup>71</sup> The whole existence of creatures, their whole being-more-than-nothing, is as finite expressions and representations, realised-as-creatures, of some aspect of what is comprehended in the Word. With that said, the language of imprint or footprint is also useful for stressing unlikeness as well as likeness. I am not my footprint, and my footprint is not me; the creature is not God; nor is God the creature. Only the Son is the perfect image of the Father, and equal to him. For this reason, Western writers have made something of the preposition *ad*, or 'to', in the Vulgate of Genesis: the human being is *ad imaginem dei*, 'to the image of God', in the sense that he or she is an image to, towards, or of, the truly perfect Image: an image of the Son.<sup>72</sup>

IDEAS AND PERFECTIONS

The first half of this book looks at participation from the perspective of causation. In this chapter, on God as exemplar cause, we are looking at the participation of the characterful particularity of the creature. Within a broadly participatory vision, we find two distinct approaches towards what is participated, as we noted towards the beginning of this chapter. One considers the derivation of the integrated entirety of the creature's character from God. In this way, it imitates God after the fashion of its respective divine idea. The other way is to consider the creature as it imitates various divine perfections. This bifurcation is somewhat rarely

Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) and *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>70</sup> John Milbank, 'Christianity and Platonism in East and West', in *Divine Essence and Divine Energies: Ecumenical Reflections on the Presence of God in Eastern Orthodoxy*, ed. Constantinos Athanasopoulos and Christoph Schneider (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2013), 199.

<sup>71</sup> SCG IV.42.3. He is alluding to John 1.3.

<sup>72</sup> See later, however, on the *imago dei* as a likeness to God as Trinity.

The Keystone Virtue  
The Rev. Christopher H. Martin  
June 2023  
The Family Farm  
The Annual Hour of Music and Reflection

I.

Good morning gentlemen! It's a pleasure and an honor to be here with you in our beloved Hamilton Circle, where gentlemen have been gathering since 1909 to enjoy music, rituals and each other's company. Not surprisingly, we find this a proper place to practice many of the virtues, and even some of the vices of a modern gentleman.

Personally, I aspire to be a true gentleman. I try to be a true gentleman, and sometimes I believe, I succeed, and other times I fail- I fall down and I get up again, I fall down and I get up again. This morning, I invite you to reflect with me on the nature of a true gentleman, and specifically on the virtues of a true gentleman. What are those virtues? How can we learn them and grow in them?

We live in an era, in America and in the West, when it is not easy or straightforward to pursue a life of virtue. The most important book about virtue in the last fifty years is the book *After Virtue* by Alisdair MacIntyre. As you can guess from the title, MacIntyre persuasively argues that, for the last two hundred years, the cultures of Europe and America have generally not known how to form its citizens in an integrated life of virtue, of moral excellence. Since at least 1800, he argues, the commonly understood codes of behavior that constituted a virtuous woman or a virtuous man has lost integrity. A mode of being human from ancient Greece and Rome all the way through the Renaissance and enlightenment, has lost its authority.

MacIntyre gives examples from these previous eras when there were widely held and commonly pursued lists of virtue. For the Romans, building on the Greeks, there were the four cardinal virtues and these four contained within them all the other possible virtues. These four Cardinal virtues were Courage, Temperance, Prudence and Justice. Christian Europe added the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love, to make seven virtues. So Greeks and Romans had their list of four and the Christian Europeans up until about 1800 had their list of seven.

I cannot think of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century American equivalent list of virtues that we all strive to live by. "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" gives us a playing field within which each of us is free to be good or bad, to be virtuous or degenerate. Coming up with a list of virtues to help orient us toward a good life is up to each one of us- we



won't find such a list in our founding documents. Further, we are a multi-cultural nation, which I believe is a very good thing, on the whole. But that means we don't share one culture, and among the characteristics of a healthy culture is to teach its people how to be good.

But we're not good people automatically. I believe we all have to work at it. We fall down and we get up again, we fall down and we get up again, and in that struggle to be good, it helps to have criteria. What does it look like to be a good gentleman? What are the standards to which we aspire? What are our virtues?

One way to get back into a life of virtue is to know and pursue a keystone virtue. A keystone virtue is a single virtue that, like the keystone of an arch, is both higher than all the other virtues and is supported by them.

A Let me give you an example of a keystone virtue. McCintyre believes one of the last great exemplars of an integrated life of virtue was Jane Austen. He identifies Austen's keystone virtue as constancy, a word she uses frequently. Constancy means being steadfast and dependable. So, for example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet has to choose between charming and courteous Wickham and seemingly proud and aloof Darcy. The twists and turns of the plot eventually reveal that Wickham is actually an inconstant rake, and Darcy is in fact humble, generous and constant, he is steadfast and dependable. In each of her novels the satisfaction is that the constant man and the constant woman eventually find each other and are married. The virtuous man and the virtuous woman are united.

Constancy is a good candidate for the keystone virtue of a gentleman, but I have different one to propose. What do you believe might be the keystone virtue of a true gentleman?

II

Gentlemen, I am going to propose a word for the keystone virtue of a true gentleman: magnanimity.

This word, magnanimity, was used frequently in 1800, experienced a gradual decline through the 19th century and hit a sharp decline in the 20th Century such that, for the last hundred years, it is hardly used. If we adopt this word and make it our own, we will be swimming against the tide.

The word magnanimous comes from Latin. “Magna” means large, like a magnum of wine. Anima means “soul” or life, as in someone who is animated. In English, the soul part has always been translated as “heart.” So Magnanimous means, most simply, great hearted. I think it’s time to take back this powerful word and to make it our own, not merely in speech, but in our actions and in our very character.

When I propose magnanimity as the keystone virtue, I’m proposing that we go back to the foundational book of western virtue, Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics. As recently as 1900, Winston Churchill was given the book to read for the first time as a young man. He consumed it quickly, returned it and said, “I already knew all of that.” Of course he did! He had been formed, in his family, in his schools and in his culture, to be good much in the way that Aristotle conceived of it in the Nicomachean Ethics.

B [ In that book, Aristotle writes that magnanimity is the “crown of the virtues... a sort of adornment of the moral virtues; for it makes them greater, and it does not arise without them.” It is the keystone, building on the other virtues, whatever they might be for you, and making them even stronger. The key, then, to being truly virtuous is a strong, right-sized heart.

The phrase “right-sized” is important here. For Aristotle, we can go wrong in one of two ways. Our hearts can be small, tight and ungenerous. That’s its deficiency. Or our hearts can be large, puffed up and vain. That’s its excess. I tend towards the tight extreme while my best friend in college, Adam, tended toward being puffed up. We were both in a singing group that was fond of giving nicknames to each of its members. For a while I was known as “calculus” because of my reserve and calculating nature. He was known as “Chuck Norris” for the way he would fight to get more solos, more attention.

We were both also actors, and once, in an acting class, we did a scene from the Odd Couple. I, of course, played anal, tight, controlling Felix and he played slovenly and emotional Oscar. We did a good job, but then the teacher shrewdly invited us to switch roles the next week. For a variety of reasons we never did it, but I wish we had, for I’m sure it would have been good for both of us. I needed to open up my little grinch heart, and some time pretending to the slovenly and affectionate Oscar might have been just the ticket. Adam needed to pull back and be more controlled with his desires and emotions, and so being Felix may have helped right-size his heart.

How is it with your heart? Do you tend to be more tight hearted or more puffed up? More Calculus or more Chuck Norris? More Felix or more Oscar? Perhaps, as I can be, you are a bit of an emotional hoarder, not relaxing and letting your affection for

others show. Perhaps you are a bit vain, puffed up, and so require a dose of humility, of regarding the needs of others more than yourself.

As we drop back into music, I invite you to examine your heart. It's like Goldilocks and the three bears with the three bowls of porridge. One is too cold, one is too hot and one is just right. Are you tight, and need to open up? Or are you puffed up, and need some humility? Is your heart right-sized?

III.

Magnanimity is a strong, right-sized heart. In my last reflection I followed the lead of Aristotle and suggested that magnanimity is the *middle way* between the deficiency of a heart that is tight and ungenerous and the excess of a heart that is puffed up and vain.

By definition, magnanimity is a virtue of the heart and the heart itself is the *middle way* between our heads and our guts. The heart is what connects the head, the seat of our thoughts, and our guts, the seat of our appetites. When we nurture the virtue of magnanimity, because we are attending to our heart, we nurture a virtue at the center of our being.

CS Lewis was well aware of this. One of his most powerful writings is actually a lecture he gave in the mid 1940s called *Men Without Chests*. He claimed that modernity is very adept at forming and training the intellect, what's in our heads, and in modernity we sure know how to satisfy appetites, what's in our guts, but we don't know how to train the heart. He concludes the lecture by saying "In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ (that is, the heart) and demand the function. We make men without chests and demand of them virtue and enterprise."

So what are we to do? If we live in a culture where the words for virtues have grown flabby and disconnected, as suggested by McIntyre, and if, further, the virtue we want to pursue is a virtue of the heart and we no longer know how to train the heart, as suggested by Lewis, how do we get started? What are the practices that can help us to become great-hearted gentlemen?

Lewis suggests one way to begin training our hearts is to focus our hearts on what he calls "just" sentiments. That is "just" as in "justice," not just as in "only." Justice is when we give a thing its right due, in the right proportions.

"Just sentiments" are when we give our hearts to something greater and nobler than ourselves. Notice, those of us who are tight with our hearts are invited to give our hearts. Those who are puffed up with their hearts are invited to dedicate their hearts

to something greater and nobler than themselves. Either way, attention to just-sentiments is a path to a strong, right-sized heart. Just sentiments are good for both Felix and Oscar.

Aristotle was writing for Athenian Gentleman and so a just sentiment was devotion to the great city of Athens. Lewis was a medievalist and he envied the “just sentiments” in the Medieval Code of Chivalry. Knights were trained from a young age to be great-hearted, to be magnanimous, in two almost contradictory ways. They were trained to be nearly recklessly courageous in battle and, at the same time to be vulnerable, tender and faithful in romance. Think of the relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere.

We don’t live in ancient Athens, and, as Lewis well knew, we don’t live in a Medieval Castle. Yet surely there are noble things in our lives, things larger than ourselves that are worth giving our hearts to. But how? I have one type of experience to share with you that is a regular opportunity to exercise my heart in the practice of “just sentiments.”

My grinch heart often swells up a size or two to great music, and there are certain songs that, I believe, draw my heart with “just sentiments” towards things greater and nobler than myself. Here are three examples:

One, there are certain hymns which, song on sacred occasions like funerals and high feasts make my heart swell such that I am no longer capable of singing. The emotion is a sign that I’ve given my heart to God.

Two, if it’s not too bombastic, I love our national anthem and singing it at an All-American occasion fills my heart with gratitude to be American.

Three, at college reunions, I love singing my alma-mater, I give my heart to a school that profoundly formed me.

So, songs for God, for country and for school. And I love other kinds of songs too. For example, on a lighter note, I get easily choked up at goofy, vulnerable and energetic High School Musicals. The experience for me is both one of nostalgia and of hope for the future

In conclusion, what are the songs that make your heart swell with “just sentiments”? Do these songs indicate something larger and more noble than yourself, worth giving your heart to? Might those songs be an invitation to grow, just a little bit, in the keystone virtue of magnanimity?

Remember, magnanimity is the middle way in two ways. It is a strong, right-sized heart that is neither tight nor puffed up. And because it is a virtue of the heart, it is the middle way between the life of the mind and the life of the guts. Living more from our hearts connects our head and guts and makes of us a whole, integrated strong, good self.

Gentlemen, I believe our body politic needs great hearted people now more than ever. We're certainly very smart. No one comes close to the intellectual achievements of Americans, with the leap forward in AI being the most recent example. Our intellects are massive, at least in a STEM-y kind of way. Our guts animate our common life which strikes me as currently animated by unhealthy levels of fear and anger. And yet I fear we as a nation we are in danger of becoming people without chests.

We're all invited to be the change that we want to see. Might there be an invitation to each of us to become great hearted men? Certainly, if my experience is any guide, we fall down and we get up again, we fall down and we get up again. Nonetheless, I invite you to join me in the noble quest of becoming a Magnanimous Gentleman.