

## **DILIGENCE:**

### **THE VIRTUE THAT OVERCOMES THE SIN OF SLOTH**

**DILIGENCE:** OED – Latin *diligent-em* attentive, assiduous, careful, in origin...of *diligere* to value or esteem highly, love, choose, affect, take delight in (doing)

1. Of persons: ‘Constant in application, persevering in endeavour, assiduous’, industrious; ‘not idle, not negligent, not lazy.’
2. Of actions, etc.: Constantly or steadily applied; prosecuted with activity and perseverance; assiduous.
3. Attentive, observant, heedful, careful.

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**Diligence** – Overcomes the sin of sloth. Diligence is the virtue that tells us to fulfill our duties in life, even if they get to be tiresome. These duties include our work, our home, our country, our church, and our families. Too many times people just want to move on when trials come to bear, like a sudden death, or when a hard-to-get-along-with spouse becomes unbearable, or when the boss demands too much. Prayer is the key here. Never forget that when you die, all of the diligence you showed in your lifetime toward your loved ones, and those you didn’t love so much, will be rewarded a hundred fold.

<http://www.catholicbible101.com/thevirtues.htm>

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**Diligence** – Diligence, or persistence, is the virtue which acts as a counter to the sin of sloth. Sloth, as a capital sin, refers to laziness in matters of Faith. Diligence in matters of the spiritual combat laziness and this virtue is manifest in appropriately zealous attitudes toward living and sharing the Faith.

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**Diligence** is the earnest, conscientious application of our energy to accomplish what we’ve undertaken. When we are diligent, we pay careful attention to detail and are dedicated to achieving quality results.

Diligence means that we are continually working toward our goals, making use of what resources and opportunities are available. We are vigilant to avoid errors and to stay focused on the task at hand. Our diligence provides a basis for people trusting us with jobs that are tricky or complicated and also important to them. Diligence does not rely on talent, but employs commitment, industry, and perseverance to transform vision into reality. (Scroll down for quotes)

<http://www.wisdomcommons.org/virtues/37-diligence>

**Diligence:**  
Bible Themes

Manser, M. H. (1999). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.

Conscientious hard work and perseverance, particularly with regard to a relationship with God. In Scripture diligence is highly commended. It may, however, be misguided.

Diligence and its results are commended

Pr 21:5 See also 1Ki 11:28; 2Ch 24:13; Ezr 5:8; 6:12; 7:23; Pr 12:14; 14:23; 31:17 characteristic of the wife of noble character; Ecc 3:13; Jer 31:16; 2Co 8:11 regarding the collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem; 1Ti 5:17; 1Pe 5:2

Diligence contrasted with laziness

Pr 10:4 See also Pr 12:24,27; 13:4; 2Th 3:10

Diligence is important in the outworking of one's relationship with God

1Co 15:58; 1Ti 4:15-16

Examples of diligence See also 2Ch 15:15; 29:34 the Levites; Isa 62:6-7; Zec 6:15; Lk 8:15; Ac 17:11 the Bereans

The apostle Paul: Ro 1:15; 1Co 4:12; 9:24-26; 2Co 6:5; 11:27; 1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:8; 2Ti 4:7

Ro 12:8; 16:12; 1Co 12:31; 14:1; 2Co 8:5 the Macedonian churches; Php 2:12-13; 1Th 5:12; Heb 6:11-12; 2Pe 1:10; Rev 2:2-3,19

Diligence was a characteristic of Jesus Christ's mission

Lk 9:51 See also Heb 12:1-2

Misguided diligence

Jn 5:39-40 See also Ps 127:2; Pr 28:20; Ecc 1:3; 2:11,19; 4:8; Mt 21:15,23-24; 1Ti 6:10

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**INDUSTRY**

Pope John Paul II defines "industry" by contrasting industry with agriculture. Both activities constitute work in the objective sense whereby human beings carry out the task of subduing the earth (Gen 1:28). "Thus agriculture constitutes through human work a primary field of economic activity and an indispensable factor of production. Industry in its turn will always consist in linking the earth's riches – whether nature's living resources, or products of agriculture, or the mineral or chemical resources – with man's work, whether

physical or intellectual” (*Laborem exercens* [1981] 5). By linking the world’s riches with human work, industry becomes “the firms that supply goods and services to a particular market” (R. Thomas, with W. Weber, *Microeconomics: Principles and Applications*, Dryden, 1990, p. G3).

“Industry” also means diligence, assiduity, and the like. For this second, quite distinct meaning, Pope John Paul II uses the term “industriousness”:

“Work is a good thing for man – a good thing for humanity – because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes ‘more a human being.’ Without this consideration it is impossible to understand the meaning of the virtue of industriousness, and more particularly it is impossible to understand why industriousness should be a virtue: for virtue, as a moral habit, is something whereby man becomes good as a man.” In this second sense, industry overcomes that aspect of the capital sin of sloth that issues in laziness, particularly with respect to performing good works.

Richard R. Roach, S.J.

Dwyer, J. A. (2000). *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (electronic ed.) (485). Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

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...By “industry” neither Pesch nor Smith meant merely the world of factories or power-driven machinery – the mechanical way of production – but industry in the Latin sense of *industria* or in the sense that one might speak of an industrious student, of diligence in the employment and pursuit of productive, value-creating activity. The Germans speak of *Gewerbefleiß*. Not just the work of the farmer, of the artisan, the merchant, the writer, the worker, the inventor, the manager, the entrepreneur, but everybody’s diligence lifts the income of the nation. What saved the nations that lost World War II and faced the ruins that resulted? It is certainly not by chance that Pesch called his economic system an “industrial” one, that is, one of diligence. Oil wells will eventually dry up, but where there are human persons, there is hope, there is a chance. Labor, both physical and mental, is a function, the function of personhood, not punishment for sin. The burden is not the action, which is life-creative and at least potentially a latent power in the society if allowed to be dispersed, to seed, to fructify, to prime the pump.

There is not and never will be one economic system for all times and places. Unfortunately there is one way for humans to destroy all opportunities, namely, by promising everyone effortless security, by replacing contributive justice with a merely distributive one. One cannot distribute what has not been produced in the first place!

There can be no enduring economic welfare unless no one is permitted to enrich himself or herself without effort at the expense of his or her fellow human beings. That could be done by a negative, selfish solidarity such as consumer-hostile abuse of “united” market power: there is “solidarity” even in the drug cartels! As Messner rightly states, the expression “solidarism” emphasizes the coordination of person and society demanded by natural-law principles. The old saying “one for all and all for one” expresses well the underlying metaphysical principle of being, which precedes all doing, and is the basis of all moral and political application.

Franz H. Mueller

Dwyer, J. A. (2000). *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (electronic ed.) (907-908). Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.