

# *Viri Christi*



“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence,  
and men of violence take it by force.”

Matthew 11:12

**Objective:** This month, we will discuss why a man must become strong in body to free his mind and spirit to pursue higher and more noble goods.

## **Monthly Meeting: Strong in Body**

### **I. Episode #1 – Strong in Body**

1. *Viri Christi* Mission: To help young men Attain the Full Stature of Christ by becoming strong in mind, body, and spirit. We are committed to a life of asceticism.
2. Asceticism is defined as “Spiritual effort or exercise in the pursuit of virtue. The purpose is to grow in Christian perfection” (*Catholic Dictionary*).

### **II. Episode #2 – What is man? - Four Aspects of the Human Person (and the virtues which perfect them)**

1. Intellect – The human faculty of understanding, judging, and reasoning (Prudence)
2. Will – The rational appetite for what one rationally apprehends as good. (Justice)
3. Irascible Appetite – A sense appetite for arduous goods. (Fortitude)
4. Concupiscible Appetite – A sense appetite for pleasurable goods. (Temperance)

### III. Episode #3 – Physical Training as Religious Devotion

#### 1. Adolphe Tanquerey - *The Spiritual Life*

- a. Mortification is “The struggle against our evil inclinations in order to subject them to the will, and the will of God” (754).
- b. “Mortification must include the whole man, body and soul; for each of our faculties unless well-disciplined may be the cause of sin” (767).
- c. “Mortification is the enemy of pleasure. True, pleasure of itself is not an evil; rather, it is good when subordinated to its God-given end” (768).
- d. “Mortification must be practiced with prudence and discretion. It must be properly fitted to the physical and moral strength of each and must be in keeping with the accomplishment of one’s duties of state” (769).

2. Adolphe Tanquerey - “To jeer at the austerities of former Christian days is a baneful error of modern times. As a matter of fact, the Saints of all ages, those that have been beatified in these latter days as well as those of old, have severely chastised their bodies” (770).

### IV. Episode #4 – Fasting & Abstinence

#### 1. The Bare Minimum – The Precepts of the Church

- a. CCC 2043 – “The fourth precept (“You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church”) ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts and help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.”
- b. USCCB – Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence. For members of the Latin Catholic Church, the norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Latin Catholic Church from age 14 onwards. Canon No. 919 – One who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain from any food or drink, with the exception only of water and medicine, for at least the period of one hour before Holy Communion.

2. Be Generous – “Friday should be in each week something of what Lent is in the entire year . . . freely making of every Friday a day of self-denial and mortification in prayerful remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ . . . even though we hereby terminate the traditional law of abstinence binding under pain of sin, as the sole prescribed means of observing Friday, we give first place to abstinence from flesh meat” (*Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence*, 23-24).