

# THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES

The **cardinal virtues** are a set of four virtues recognized in the Christian religion. They consist of:

1. **Prudence:** also called "wisdom," the ability to judge between actions with regard to appropriate actions at a given time.
2. **Justice:** also called "fairness," the perpetual and constant will of rendering to each one his right.
3. **Temperance:** also called "restraint," the practice of self-control, abstention, and moderation; tempering the appetite.
4. **Courage:** also called "fortitude," forbearance, strength, endurance, and the ability to confront fear, uncertainty, and intimidation.

## DEPICTIONS OF THE VIRTUES

In many churches and artwork the Cardinal Virtues are depicted with symbolic items:



**Justice** – sword, balance and scales, crown and the sword



**Temperance** – wheel, bridle and reins, vegetables and fish, cup, water and wine in two jugs



**Fortitude** – armor, club, with a lion, palm, tower, yoke, broken column



**Prudence** – book, scroll, mirror (occasionally attacked by a serpent)