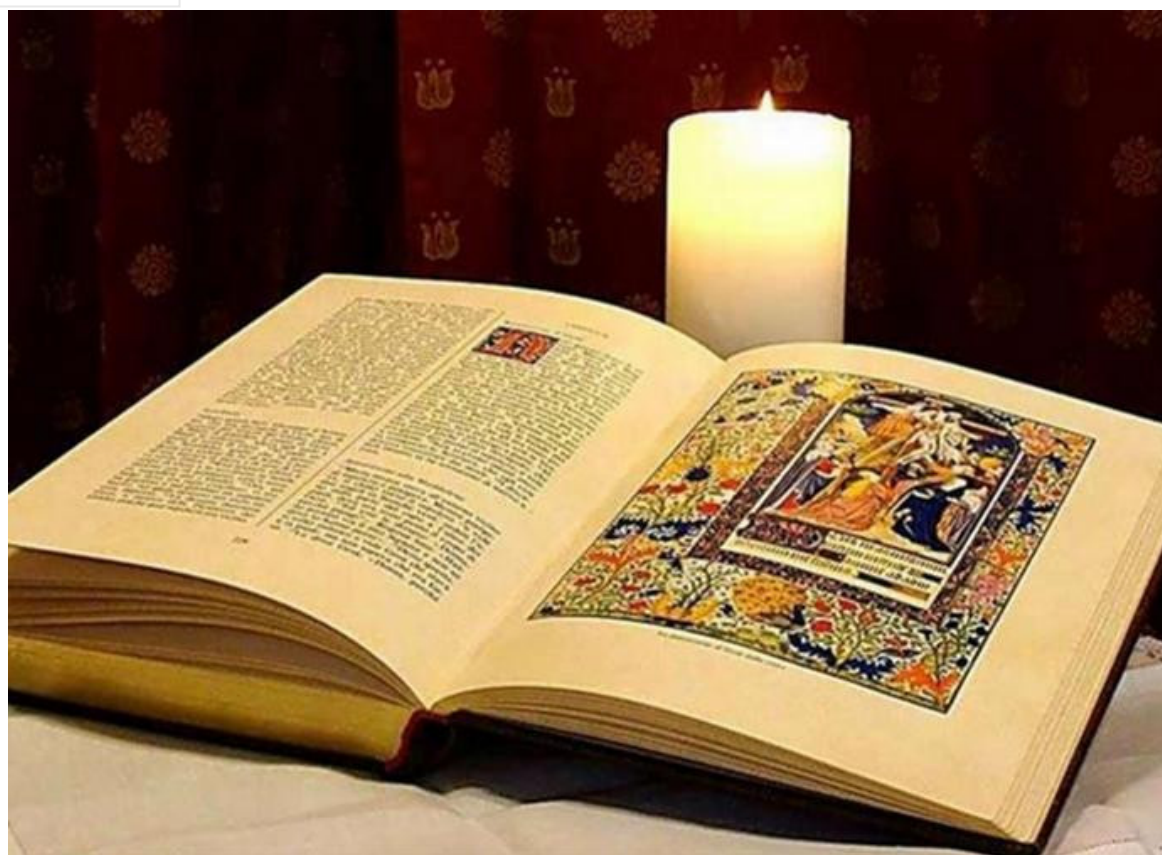


GOSPEL PEARLS

The virtue of fortitude

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Calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to

them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” (Luke 7: 19-23)

Jesus invites the disciples of St. John the Baptist to bear witness to the wondrous deeds he had done and to the good news he had announced to the poor in spirit. There are times in human history, therefore, that are reserved more for being witnesses and martyrs than for being teachers. To be true witnesses of Christ, let us strive to grow in the virtue of fortitude. If practiced, fortitude instills in us the vigor to do good in spite of hardship. Only in this way will we be able to overcome our inconsistencies and not become discouraged by our faults. With fortitude we will be able to carry out our duties to the end, thus following the example of the martyrs. We will be able to say "yes" or "no" even when it means suffering. Finally, fortitude increases our patience in bearing evils in good spirit, with perseverance and fidelity.