

In Aristotle's famous *Nicomachean Ethics*, the "magnanimous man" (or "great-souled man") embodies the apex of human virtue. The magnanimous man does not base his actions on what the general public thinks, but on the opinions of the most virtuous individuals. The magnanimous man prefers to give rather than to receive. He is truthful in his speech and actions and despises vice. The magnanimous man is not easily offended and overlooks minor wrongs. Even his physical demeanor reflects his inner state: a measured gait, a deep voice, and unhurried speech.

Catholics are called to be "great-souled" by cultivating the virtue of magnanimity – a largeness of heart that involves striving for great spiritual and moral things, embracing one's dignity as a child of God, and living with purpose and conviction. Being great-souled in the Catholic tradition means living with inner fortitude to overcome challenges, using one's talents for the good of others, and possessing a spirit of generosity with regard to one's time and treasure.

Catholics are also called to be magnanimous when it comes to the liturgy. During Mass, our thoughts, words, and actions should be intentional, reverent, and unhurried. Do we think about the words we pray? Do we say them consciously? Do we take time between our phrases or responses?

For example, when the priest turns towards the people and shows them the Host, saying: "Behold, the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb", do we respond: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed"; or: "Lord, / I am not worthy / that you should enter under my roof, / but only say the word / and my soul / shall be healed"?

Though a bit awkward at the start, the second response – intentional, reverent, and unhurried – soon brings a tangible magnanimity to the sacred liturgy, as if transporting all those who are assisting at Mass to a faraway monastery of the distant past.

*Be still and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme on the earth (Psalm 46).*

Father Frei