

The Cardinal Value of Courage Draude

Thank you, and just so you know, I'm in coat and tie again, so you just have to imagine that.

I never feel right giving a presentation not wearing a coat and tie. But first of all, thank you for this chance to share.

To contribute some thoughts for your fine organization, I've been most impressed with just the brief introduction I've had thus far.

But truth be told, there was no hesitation in my helping Cal Dunlap. I've known him since June of 1958.

We were in the same class, the same company, for four years. He and my two roommates, Herb Sprague and John LeVou, God rest his soul, were the best Christians I knew and were true role models for me.

I'm reminded of the line from the hymn, you'll know there are Christians by their love. And I certainly knew them as Christians, not only by their love, but for their example.

or me. Cal asked me to consider speaking about one of the Christian or cardinal virtues, cardinal because they are the hinges are the pivotal qualities of our lives. And I chose fortitude or courage, and I will share a story with you later about that.

I was also asked to choose a scripture verse. Now, as a Catholic, I'm not as well versed in the scripture as my Protestant comrades.

but I chose not just one, but two. The first is the 23rd Psalm, and familiar to all of us.

Even when I walk through the dark valley, I fear no harm, for you are at my side.

Your rod and staff give me courage. And how do we receive that courage? By the opening lines, the Lord is my shepherd.

The verse explains why we'll have courage, but also how.

The second is Psalm 91, which I learned and used in Operation Desert Storm. Our chaplains had it printed and laminated for us to use.

In powerful words, you shall not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day.

nor the pestilence that roams in darkness, nor the plague that ravages at noon.

I have to share with you that these were really comforting words as we face the world's fourth largest land army entrenched with minefields, flame trenches, and possibly chemical weapons.

And later on, if there's time and an opportunity I'll share with you a true miracle of Desert Storm. So I chose courage or fortitude.

It's not because it's better than prudence, justice, and temperance. All are virtues, after all, and make us better Christians.

But courage also makes us effective Christians, putting these virtues into action. It said, courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently, according to Maya Angelou. It's the ability to face difficulty, danger, or pain, or ridicule, or Facebook attack, or even being unfriended. All of these without fear. Now my story.

It contains examples of courage, both fiscal and moral, failure, guilt, despair, and redemption.

The scene was Vietnam in 1966. I was commanding company M, my company of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines.

and we were in operation in Quang Ngai Province. And in my zone of action was at Hamlet, that turned out to be extremely well defended. And so I...

Pulled my forces back and tried to apply all the supporting arms that I possibly could.

orders, artillery, close air support and so forth. It just was not going to budge. And now the sun is going down.

I still have this objective, and so there's no recourse for me but to give the order, fix bayonets.

I later learned that this is one of the few times that a bayonet assault was used in Vietnam, but I have to share with you that when I gave that order, rather than fear or uncertainty in the company, a calm came over us.

And the calm was a combination of realizing that this was as serious as combat can be. We were not going to shoot somebody at a few hundred yards.

a drop of bomb or mortar on them or close air support or anything. We were going...

to go face to face with an entrenched enemy and smash and slash and beat to death another human being knowing that within a few minutes someone at either end of that rifle was going to die. And I attribute the calmness to...

the belief that I've had for so long that a feeling that is greater than fear, because there's certainly fear we're going against an entrenched enemy, the stronger feeling is love, the four-letter word that we sometimes don't hear often enough. And love is what causes a man to face combat, to face the fears, to do what has to be done even in the face of danger. And I give a talk on combat leadership, and I mentioned fatigue, fear, failure, and feelings. And I asked the

question, you know, what will cause someone to do these things, a mother to run out and rescue a child or a Marine to jump on a hand grenade. It's love. It's love.

So in combat, we don't fight for really our country, our service. Apple pie motherhood, Sally Lou, our lost over shoe Iowa.

We fight for our buddies. We fight for our buddies, and we did so that day. We took to Hamlet.

And as we're sitting in, I was informed that one of my squad leaders, Corporal Frederick W. Miller from Berlin, Ohio, had been killed and was outside the lines.

So I told my executive officer, said, and the rest of the company, I'm going to go get Corbin Miller. Now, he would challenge that decision, but My troops were exhausted, but I knew that I was able to accomplish this, and I didn't want to.

put anyone else further at risk. So, with a couple of Marines to help me find Copeland Miller, found him, put him on my shoulder, and brought him back into the lines. The rest of the evening went without incident. The next day, the battalion commander arrived on the scene and, um, I was telling him what had happened the night before and he, um, He looked at the blood on my flak jacket, and he became very concerned. He says, were you wounded? Nobody told me about that. I said, no, sir, this is not my blood. This is the blood of Corporal Miller and I.

told him what had done, what had taken place. And he was very, very upset and said, That was a dumb thing to do. Don't ever do anything like that again. And now I experienced one of those life changing moments.

because it was my choice to either remain silent, which would mean I would comply with his order, But if I did so, I'd have to live with that for the rest of my life. And now the guilt comes in because I'm an expert on guilt. I'm Catholic. But the guilt that I would have the rest of my life knowing that I...

had not spoken up and said what had to be said. And I learned that God gives us some golden opportunities to keep our mouths shut.

And success is oftentimes a matter of taking advantage of it. I did not. So taking a deep breath, I said, Colonel, I know what you're saying, but you've got to know that if that happened again, I'd do the same thing because I'll never leave behind a dead or wounded Marine.

The colonel now goes ballistic, and he's in the process of relieving me of my command.

Now, just to put this in context, if you're an officer in the Marine Corps in combat and relieved of your command, you are finished.

in the Marine Corps. So he was basically reading my death sentence as a Marine. And as I'm listening to this, going through my mind is, You know, all my boyhood dreams of growing up in Kankakee, Illinois, coming to the Naval Academy to become a Marine, to lead Marines in combat, it's all over. It's done.

My dreams are crushed and I really had a feeling, God, you know, why are you punishing me? How often do we sometimes say that, not knowing the rest of the story, so to speak? So this is taking place. A helicopter arrives.

And out of the helicopter jumps the assistant division commander of the 1st Marine Division. Ironically, the same role that I would have in Desert Storm.

And he starts walking over to, and he's asking, you know, where's the commanding officer of my company, who's me, and the Marines who are watching all of this are backing up because they know there's going to be another explosion taking place with the Brigadier General coming in to confront a Marine Captain.

And as he's walking over, I remember saying, God, you know, I get the message, my marine life is over, but You know, if this isn't enough, enough is enough that I'm being relieved and now the assistant division commander is going to grab what's left of my fanny here um or words that affect And instead, the general came over and grabbed my hand and started beating me on the back and saying, Captain, Captain, what a great job. That was fantastic. That's exactly what we needed. Then turn to the battalion commander.

who was in the process of relieving me and said, Colonel, with company commanders like this, how can you go wrong? And with that, turned and got back in the helicopter and left. So with that story, I talk about courage both physical and moral, and I have to tell you that the physical courage of leading a bayonet assault is certainly present, but the moral courage was tougher. And I guess that's the reason we get a chance to exhibit our exercise of moral courage more often.

Thank God. But in the eyes of my senior, I had failed.

And in that moment of truth, I could either be silent or say what I felt had to be said. And followed that, the despair of of a failing or being seen as a failure, and my dreams crushed, and then losing all my dreams, and then asking God why. And...

God answered through that redemption. I thought of that probably every day since then.

It was the defining moment in my life. And I'm reminded of the third verse of Amazing Grace.

And I can never get through it without choking up. Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come.

was grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home. And God's grace has in fact led me home. So that is my story of courage.

But along with it, the other aspects they go with, and I hope the part about love being so much a part of courage is not lost in anyone.

I'm not sure how you can love without courage or have courage without love. I think in so many ways they go hand in hand.

With that, I will just tell you that I, once again, am just honored to be able to share this story with you and hope that it provides to all the listeners, you know, that reinforcement that God's ways are not always our ways, as my dear mother used to tell me. And you just have to accept what is taking place do your best but accept God's will and then somehow or another it all seems to work out at least it has for me and uh With that, I consider myself the luckiest man in the world with all the blessings God has bestowed upon me.

So I thank God for that every day and I thank God for the opportunity to have served over 30 years in the Marine Corps and now a chance as a teacher to to impart some of those lessons that I learned the hard way to my students as well as to my children. Thank you for listening.

Thanks so much, Tom. And General Dowdy, it's just a pleasure to have observed your career and to just have you on today. And I'm going to ask you, after we have our discussion, I'm going to ask you to share that miracle from from Desert Storm, I guess it was. So King...

Kate Toms, would you pick up on it from a perspective that you're bringing to our discussion? Sure. Thanks so much, General Droughty. That was a great presentation. I love the Real-world stories and your application of courage. I have two questions for you and sir you're certainly welcome to answer all some or none of them and um you spoke of how love and courage go hand in hand and you had the Maya Angelou quote uh where she mentioned that you need courage in order to act forth in other virtues. So we see there's a sort of unity to the virtues and at the beginning of your presentation you mentioned the cardinal virtues which of course are wisdom, justice, temperance and courage. So my question for you, sir, is this.

We want courage, but it's possible to have too much or too little of a good thing.

So how might a person be able to guard against too much courage, which becomes rashness, And to a little courage, which becomes cowardice, how might we be able to recognize what right looks like? And then I have a second question. Did you want to answer the first or should I say the second one? Sure, I have a short attention span. I would say first, for going to too much courage. I think with this pride comes in sometimes and Courage should be a reaction and certainly a virtue. Can you have too much of it? Does it become foolhardy? And oftentimes when that takes place, then we're putting at risk not only ourselves, but also those that are

privileged to lead. And I know some leaders who were very much involved in kind of burnishing their credentials, but sometimes it's at the cost of life and limb of those that they're privileged to lead.

I'm not sure I'd call that courage. I guess that is more of reckless ambition that could be seen as courage. So I think you know, courage is, can you ever have too much of, too much prudence or justice or temperance. I'm not sure. I think the key is to have a balance there and to use all of them as required and at the appropriate time. Too little courage, I think that can be helped by just watching the examples and of course in combat you have a number of opportunities but in daily life think of the courage of a single mother. They are my heroes. I can't imagine what it must be like to raise children with just a single parent. I'm dumb, and then when I was at USAA, so many of them, women were workers and getting degrees and single mothers.

What courage. I mean, they made me look like a piker as far as courage is concerned. So I think too little, you look for examples, and we have examples all around us. We've had great examples with this pandemic, the first responders, the doctors, nurses, all of those who put themselves at risk, all of the people we've got out of the way that are looking out and really believe that we are our brother's keepers. So I think...

to help in the too little courage. Look at the examples that you have in front of or that we have in front of us constantly and take uh take notice of that and see you know how we can take that same example and use it in our own particular way. And I hope that answers you at first, which is a very, very good question. Thank you.

It does. Do you have time for a second question, sir? Sure, you bet. Okay, great.

I was wondering, and you mentioned that a good way to find what right looks like is to look to an example, which is of course the exemplar approach that we see in virtue ethics. So thank you for underscoring that. And we know that we have Jesus as our ultimate exemplar. So I'm wondering if you can.

give us some insight on instances of Jesus in courage and how Jesus might inform our understanding of courage.

Again, what a great question. I think there's so many examples that Jesus gives us courage. You know, the courage of, you know, choosing as his disciples, you know, 12, basically, unlearned individuals, knowing that that was going to be the pillars of his message to the rest of us.

The courage that he had of going into the temple and overturning the tables of the money changers. The righteous anger that he had, but to take them head on.

and say, you know, you've turned the house of my father into a house of trade here. One that always touched me was the courage to to say to a centurion um and i and i used this gospel in

my retirement mess uh But when the centurion came to him and said, you know, my son is ill and so forth, and, you know, please help me. And so Christ said, I will, you know, lead me. Now, here's basically a captain in charge of 100 Roman soldiers.

of an occupying army, and here is Jesus helping him because he's another human being who needs help. But then the tremendous...

faith on the part of the centurion, you know, unlike anything that Christ had seen. You know, I'm a man of authority. When I tell somebody to do something, he does it.

When I tell him to come here, he comes. I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my son will be healed. And the courage that Christ had to not only do that, but to show to the rest that despite this man being a man of war, he was still a human being in need and asking Christ for his help in saving his son. So I think, and of course the Christ knew what he was going to be enduring in the crucifixion. And I recently read, you know, the horrible pain that the crucifixion said we're just designed to inflict the maximum torture on an individual and Christ knowing all of that and still willing to suffer and die for us.

true courage, but again, linked with love.

Thank you, Jim. Okay. Thanks. I'm going to pass on now to Dean Mills for the next question or so.

How you doing, sir? Hope you're doing well out there. Enjoyed our discussion on Tuesday. I want to go ahead and follow up.

and for most of the folks who have maybe some who have not been on some of these previous training sessions, I tend to come in with the, uh perspective of looking how do we prepare uh young or old leaders for the challenges they face to their ethical behavior to not sin. How do we train them ahead of time to keep them from doing that? So that raises the very basic question. You brought up both the physical and the moral courage.

How do we train them to have that ahead of time? What are the steps that we can take to do that sort of thing? I think there's a couple of things, Dean, and thank you for that question. For the physical courage, again, I think it's a matter of the examples that we portray, but also history is a great teacher.

And as a Marine, I read a lot of history, the battles, the actions of various individuals.

learn and to be reinforced of what we're capable of doing when things really get to end. I was, after in combat, was amazed to see the things that would would happen there as well. So I think that example of picking up from the lore, if you will, the history that we have and the

examples, And the realization that the physical courage is mandatory in the profession of arms in this horrible thing we call war.

because without that physical courage, the mission is not going to be accomplished, which means putting oneself and those those individuals that were privileged to lead, to put them at risk as well.

So that's kind of the preparation for the moral courage, and I think once again it's the examples that we have.

What we learned having faith was a tremendous help to me. Being a Catholic, it was for both the moral and physical courage, better that I was in what is called the state of grace, meaning that there was no serious sin on my soul.

and therefore that I could do the things that had to be done in combat without fearing of death, which would then mean condemnation and not having salvation. So I think that the moral...

uh background is important there also and that's a matter of not much in the way of training but also education education i believe is is um so often I say the training is a preparation for certainty. Education is preparation for uncertainty. And so many of the moral questions that we have are going to be solving an uncertain situation. I talked a little bit the other day about in ethics a great book that i would offer to you is called how good people make tough decisions by rushworth kidder and he talks about four ethical dilemmas. But first of all, he starts off by saying the difference between morality and ethics. And morality, he sees it as the choice between right and wrong, good and bad, fairly easy to discern, sometimes difficult to carry out. But what makes ethics so tough is it's a choice between right and right and therefore whatever right the leader has chosen he's rejected another right and there's always that feeling of Did I get the correct one done here? He said we have basically in life four ethical decisions, justice versus mercy, Those of us who are parents can understand that one very well. Honesty versus loyalty. In the military, we see that often enough.

short-term benefit versus long-term benefit, and the good of the individual versus the good of the group.

And in each one of those cases, the leader has to make that ethical choice. It's a tough one because whatever right is chosen, another right is rejected.

And I think we develop moral and ethical leaders by again reading by by having classes that discuss these situations and what are the consequences. And I guess for so many of us and for me also was that that looked on the road of, will I be able to live with myself later with this decision? And if the answer is no, then it's time to make a different decision.

Again, being an expert on guilt, being a Catholic, that's fairly easy for me, but those are all kind of imperatives of developing the physical and moral courage that at least was helpful for me.

Thanks, General. I appreciate that. And I meant to throw in one of the leading things to a quote that's been used.

by great leaders from General Patton and Vince Lombardi and so on that basically fatigue makes cowards of us all and of course how do you overcome fatigue? You prepare and you get yourself in shape for the physical demands that are going to be placed on you.

And I think the same is certainly true of the moral demands. If you haven't prepared yourself and have that faith that you called out, and so on, then you're going into battle woefully ill-equipped. So I appreciate very much the points that you made.

I'm working on a book called The Four F's of Leadership, which are fatigue, fear, failure, and feelings.

a chance to explore each one of those. But thank you for that unintentional plug, Dean. Very good.

Very good. I think I'm going to ask is Bob Collins, are you on? Yes, yes. Turn it over to you to hit your side of the discussion. OK, I can see you. I hope you can see me. I don't know.

Anyway, sir, I was really pleased with your presentation and your truthful stories about things that really people deal with and we need to hear about it. One of the things that I do in my questioning is is how does a person become reconciled after they have sinned? And all leaders of course are sinners, so we are susceptible to any temptations.

But from your illustration and your story, I don't see a sin involved.

So that puts us in a different category really, but it's something that we need to think about. And that is when you make a decision as a commander, or to do something for your soul children.

but your senior commander disagrees with you and he finds out what you've done and then he completely disagrees with you.

and tells you never to do that again, and yet you say to him, because you feel like you need to, sir, I'd do that again.

because I'm not going to leave anybody behind. Um, that could have ended your career. You, you knew that, um, And yet somehow, somehow, God intervened with that situation.

And you were rescued by God himself, it seems like. Yes. That doesn't always happen, okay? So the question would be, When a person does make a decision that they know in their heart is

right, and those over them feel that it's wrong, and they are punished, persecuted or whatever for that. And I know stories of people who have been How do we react in that situation? when there's really no sin involved, as far as you know, and your soul is clean, and yet you feel like you're not supported. It didn't happen to you that way, and we're happy that that didn't.

But what if, and you may know of people who have been, what if something like that happens? How do you react as a believer and as a leader to that situation.

Yeah, that's really a tough one. But I think primarily that you have to, again, say to yourself, Years from now or next week, whatever the case may be, How am I going to resolve this? Will I be able to live with myself by choosing something that's going to please my My boss, you know, but it's something that I think is wrong. And I think we have to understand that that's...

uh, situation that will come up from time to time with, uh, but then it was, uh, uh, and just, I'm trying to get the, like my hearing aids back into place here.

But it gets back to what can you live with? What stories will you tell your spouse, your children, whatever, when they die? ask about decision you made and so forth. Again, I've always been intrigued by the comment, and unfortunately true in many cases, that some officers are willing to risk their lives but not their careers. And I thought about that, gee, how could your career be so important that You would do anything, but you're willing to risk your life. I think it's a matter of just setting, you know, what are your priorities? What's really important? What do you stand for? What do you not stand for? And no one wants to be perceived as a hypocrite. And so I think.

we kind of prepare ourselves, in all honesty, by being or trying to be good Christians. So when the time comes for those terrible choices where you know it's on the line and it could go very much against you, but you know the thing to say or do is what you're about to say or do.

You know, there's a consolation with that, and I feel sorry for those who bend on that.

and who give in and say, well, okay, this is good for my promotion opportunities or whatever the case may be. Life is more important than that.

I think the ability to later on, and again, being 81 years old, have lots of time to reflect, but to look back and say, gee, what I have done you know, many things differently, even though there were consequences and consequences that I paid for, it was worth it.

And I don't regret. I don't feel that I should have done the right thing instead of the...

acceptable thing, the politically correct thing. Again, it's a way that we prepare ourselves the lives that we lead and the examples that we set, and then from time to time we have an

opportunity to prove it, to show up as a Christian and and to do the Christian thing, which may go against the grain of our seniors, but those things happen and life goes on.

And again, I think we have to be comfortable in our own skin, having made the decisions that we felt were right at that time, based upon the way that we've prepared ourselves through things like the physical and moral courage and the lives that we've led and trying to to hold to the virtues. I think they all come into play at those critical times. And sometimes we're lucky and we Are we able to convince our seniors that we're really right? And sometimes we're not, and there are consequences to that. But, you know, so what? God didn't say it was going to be an easy life, and if you're not willing to take up the cross, then you've chosen the wrong faith there.

All right. Thank you very much. I think we're going to close out this part.