

The Chivalric Virtue of Largesse

By Odette d'Amboise

In the Midrealm, the Chivalry's Oath of Fealty specifically includes generosity. A Midrealm Knight swears to be generous. Numerous Codes of Chivalry from the High Middle Ages also include variations on "Thou shalt be generous, and give largesse to everyone."

The Chivalric Virtue of Largesse is also known as Generosity and Charity. A Knight was expected to be as generous as his resources would allow him to be. Every virtue has a vice that it counters, largesse counters gluttony. If you are generous as far as your resources allow, there is no excess to tempt you into gluttony. Largesse also helps the virtuous to be merciful in matters of justice.

In an SCA context, Largesse adds grace and beauty to all aspects of the Society and is an essential part of "the Dream." Generosity extends beyond being generous with material goods and with praise. The more difficult manifestation of largesse is being generous in giving the benefit of the doubt. Our combat is on the "Honour System" and fighters are used to giving the benefit of the doubt about an opponent's calibration. In arenas outside of combat, it is sometimes more difficult to give another gentle the benefit of the doubt with regard to his intent or his motives; however, it is no less important off the listfield.

Be generous, and give largesse to everyone.