



M.V. Mendes

How to be Somebody

Cultivating the Interior Garden
FULL CONTACT

*Esteem • Wealth • Success • Status • Power • Pleasure •
Fame • Praise • Respect • Admiration*

How to “Be Somebody”

Cultivating the Interior Garden

FULL CONTACT

Third Edition

Written and Compiled by Mark Mendes

*This booklet both in audio and written form is in no way ever to be sold. It was specifically put together **to give out free of charge** to all who wish to learn more about the important virtue of humility. A list of resources used to put this booklet together can be found in the back of this booklet.*

The biblical quotations in the following pages are taken from the Douay-Rheims, RSVCE, and NAB editions of the Old and New Testaments.

IMPRIMATUR:

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The Imprimatur and Nihil Obstat are official declarations that a book is free of doctrinal or moral error.

How to use this booklet:

- It is recommended that you read one or two paragraphs per day of chapters 1-11. Start with the prayer “*Prayer before personal Meditation*” located on page 116 in chapter 12.
- One Personal Meditation per day. (See chapter 13)
- One quote from Chapter 14 per day
- One question from the Pride-ometer per day (See chapter 15)
- And if you really want to irrigate the soil add the *Litany of Humility* to your daily gardening (See chapter 12)
- **WARNING -- Too much gardening in one day will lead to spiritual calluses.**

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Prayer Before Reading This Book On Humility

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands: strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later, Tomorrow". Right now, lest there be no tomorrow for me! O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it, where you want it. Amen.

Chapter 1.

The Call to Greatness

We all want to be "somebody" in today's world. There was once a story of a man, in his life before his conversion, when he was a millionaire in Southern California, he would drive around in his red Porsche, wearing his shades and three piece suit. As he drove by people would turn their heads and look as if to say, "There goes

SOMEBODY". Most of you can imagine the rest of his story. That man and his red Porsche figuratively got carjacked by our Blessed Mother!

We all want to be somebody. We want to excel, we want to stand out from the crowd. We want the respect and admiration of others. Do you remember the Country song by Travis Tritt; *I'm gonna be somebody someday*? That's the American way: You pull yourself up by your bootstraps and go for success. There is nothing wrong with that, in its right place. God calls us to do the best we can with the gifts He has given to us. Just like the old Army recruiting ad, "Be all that you can be". There is nothing wrong with that, as long as we know Who is in charge; where the power is; Whose service we are in; Who's got to get all the glory and the praise; Whose way it has to be; and Whose will must be done each step of the way. You see, in God's plan there is only one way you can "Be all that you can be". You have to be a saint! There is no other way.

In a certain sense we are all called to greatness in life. You may be surprised to hear that. We are all truly called to greatness. Humble, yet great in the sight of Heaven. One of the main messages that came out of the Second Vatican Council was the universal call to holiness. **Bl. John Paul II** explained: *Today we have a tremendous need of saints. The world needs more than social reformers. It needs saints. Holiness is not a privilege of a few; it is a gift offered to all.* **St. Josemaría Escrivá** taught us: *Each day be conscious of your duty to be a saint. A saint! And that doesn't mean doing strange things. It means a daily struggle in the interior life and heroically fulfilling your duty right through to the end.*

True greatness is not greatness in the sight of the world. The world holds in high esteem wealth, success, status, power, pleasure, fame, and all those things that have no value in God's sight for eternity. What you are, what you *truly* are, is what you are in the sight of Almighty God, nothing more, nothing less. That is what you really are.

We are all called to be great in the sight of Heaven. What does this mean? Greatness is the perfect fulfillment of God's will in your life. This means striving for perfect obedience to God's wisdom and will, no matter how simple it is, no matter how difficult it is, even in the most ordinary circumstances of your daily lives. This applies no matter who you are, or where you are, or what you are. **Greatness, in other words, is HOLINESS.** Holiness is what makes you a saint. Recall **St. Therese the Little Flower**. She did simple things, ordinary things, all the little things that we do every day, but she did them in a spirit of perfect love, humility, and simplicity. And that is how you can touch the heart of the Father, by being a little child. Jesus told us in Scripture, *Unless you become like a little child, you can not enter the kingdom of God*". **Blessed Teresa of Calcutta** pointed out, *God does not call us to be successful; He calls us to be faithful*. **Thomas `a Kempis** warns us in the *Imitation of Christ*, *You have become puffed up with good success, imagining yourself to be what you are not*.

So what is the "secret" to attaining greatness? The secret to becoming a saint, being holy, enjoying earthly and eternal happiness, the secret to becoming "somebody" is humility. Yes, developing the virtue of humility will bring us success and joy. **St. John Vianney** cautioned that

without humility, everything else is like a huge heap of straw, which we have piled up, but with the first gust of wind, it's blown over and scattered far and wide. The devil has little respect for those devotions which are not founded on humility, because he knows very well that he can get rid of them whenever he pleases.

There are in heaven many saints who never gave alms while on earth: Their poverty was enough. There are many saints who never mortified their bodies by fasting, or harsh bodily penance: their bodily infirmities excused them. There are many saints too who were not virgins: Their vocation called them to other duties. **But in heaven there is no saint or angel who was not humble.**

Likewise God has not called everyone to be doctors, preachers or priests, nor has he given to all the gift of restoring sight to the blind, healing the sick, raising the dead, or casting out demons, but to all He has given the call to, *learn of Me to be humble of heart*. There were many things worthy of imitation in the Son of God, but He only specifically asks us to imitate His humility. We can condense all the treasures of Divine Wisdom which were in Christ into the virtue of humility. Let's think about it for a minute. He could have said learn of me to be wise, learn of me to be prudent, just, or chaste. He could have said anything. In humility alone He includes all things to learn from him. That's why it is said that whoever poses the virtue of humility possesses in some way all the virtues, and he who lacks it, lacks all of them.¹

¹ Fr. Cajetan Mary da Bergamo, **Humility Of Heart**

Chapter 2.

What is Humility?

Sadly humility is a much misunderstood virtue today. St. Lawrence Justinian says: *No one can well understand what humility is unless God gives him the gift of being humble, for there is nothing in which men are more often mistaken than in their notions of what constitutes humility.* First, let us define the virtue of humility and what the virtue is not; then we will discuss the importance of the virtue of humility and the reason why the vice of pride is so dangerous.

To practice any virtues we must exercise the virtue of humility. It is the foundation virtue of our spiritual life. Why? The virtue of humility serves two functions. First of all, it speeds us along the path of holiness. A person without humility cannot grow in holiness because he is too full of himself so there is no room for God. Humility gives us the self-knowledge to know that we are nothing and can do nothing without God. Secondly the virtue of humility is **required** for one to grow in the Catholic faith so as to prevent us from becoming “pick and choose” or “cafeteria Catholics”.

St. Alphonsus insists: *Faith requires a humble and submissive understanding...and not only for the reception of the faith, but also for the preservation of it. It is the common doctrine of doctors and saints that pride is the beginning of all heresies. A man gets so proud of his own*

opinion and judgment that he prefers it over what the saints and the Church has to say about it, and then plunges into heresy.

St. Theresa of Avila explains: Humility is truth. *Humility gives us a correct view of ourselves and gives us a correct view of how God sees us.* Humility is the virtue that restrains us in our unruly desire for personal glory. It helps us to realize that there is an infinite distance between the creature and the Creator. With Christ as our model, we can say that humility is a self-emptying that allows God to work in us with His grace.

The word humility comes from the Latin word *humus*. Humus means earth, dirt, dust, or soil. It reminds us of God's words in the book of **Genesis**, *Remember man that you are dust and dust you shall return.* In the spiritual life we are called to **cultivate the interior garden**, the garden of the soul, so that we can bring forth good fruits, good works, and an increase of virtue. Any gardener or farmer knows that you can't grow anything without the right kind of soil. Likewise, if you're going to cultivate holiness in the garden of your soul, you need the fertile soil of humility, which is the foundation of all the other virtues. The virtue of humility reminds us that every good thing we have; every gift we enjoy; every grace and blessing; and, every talent we possess comes from God and not from ourselves.

Humility also plays a role in the development of the virtue of hope. When we live the virtue of humility we know that everything depends upon God, not ourselves. When we neglect to live the virtue of humility, we depend upon ourselves.

When we cannot handle the problems, contradictions or sufferings in life, we despair, sometimes to the point of suicide.

If we seek true happiness we have to imitate Jesus' example of humility. **Jesus** tells us: *Learn from Me; I am meek and humble of heart.* The virtue of humility is the outstanding virtue of Jesus Christ. God has preordained that we should be *made conformable to the image of His Son.* Therefore, in all Christians there must necessarily be a Christlikeness. Because Christ was humble, we should be humble. **Christ** also tells us: *Whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.* Our Lord gave a visual of this teaching at the Last Supper when He washed the feet of each of His apostles. But Christ's example of humility did not begin at the end of His life. Jesus teaches us humility beginning with His Incarnation; then His humble birth; His materially poor existence throughout His life, His 30 years of hidden life; His acceptance of the abuse of His detractors; and, finally, His horrific passion and death. But it did not end there. Today, He continues to live the virtue of humility in the Blessed Sacrament. He allows imperfect, sinful men to bring Him from heaven to earth at the moment of the consecration of the Mass. Then He permits sinful people to consume Him in the Holy Eucharist.

Humility is a difficult virtue to develop since it's corresponding vice, pride, is considered the greatest vice. Pride is also considered a capital sin or one of the seven deadly sins because it kills the soul. This vice caused Satan's fall as well as original sin. Why? If our ego is too big there is no

room for God. In fact, the vice of pride is so strong that **St. Josemaría** believed our pride dies several hours after we do!

Chapter 3.

What is the Vice of Pride?

The Latin term for the vice of pride is *hubris*. **The vice of pride is exaggerated self-love** that inclines us to see ourselves better than others. Pride is a desire for self-exultation that leads us to seek our own honor and glory apart from the glory of God. Pride sees the self as the center of the universe, the center of existence, the measure of all truth, the measure of all reality, the standard of all morality. The vice of pride sets itself in opposition to God's wisdom and will. Pride sets up the self as the judge over God's word and God's Law. Pride seeks to be the center of attention. Pride always has to have its own way. Pride seeks to control, dominate, and manipulate. When we look back in life and see that some of our worst moments, worst humiliations, bad behavior, biggest blunders, embarrassing falls, broken relationships, professional failures, in other words, life's most bitter memories can usually be traced back to our own foolish, foolish pride, which were failures in the virtue of humility

The vice of pride is the great destroyer of marriages. Pride is the stumbling block to growing in holiness. It is the greatest obstacle to grace and repentance. It forms the mental block to forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation. The vice of pride is the source of endless self-deception, vanity, and madness. Through it comes the **lust for power**. It is the door that leads to anger, violence, and war. It is an affront to God and an open door to the devil, and **the gateway to hell**. If you give the vice of pride free reign; if you let it rule your life; you will be just one step from another disaster. Pride always causes problems for us in the end. There is only one antidote for it, **humility**. Pride is only overcome by the virtue of humility, the root of all virtues as was mentioned before. A simple rule in the spiritual life: No humility...no sanctity. No humility, very little merit in your good works in the sight of almighty God.

Likewise, the greatest obstacle to Christian discipleship is the vice of pride. Most of us struggle every day with moments of pride. Pride is subtle and subconscious. If we are not constantly on our guard, if we are not vigilant, the devil can use it to trip us up.

The punishment for pride is built into the order of creation. **Jesus** said *"Whoever will humble himself will be exalted, who ever exalts himself will be humbled"*. To emphasize this point, Jesus stated that the first will be last and the last will be first in God's Kingdom.

Is it becoming clearer why pride is so dangerous to the life of the soul? Why it is the root of the capital sins? The sin of pride cast Lucifer and his

followers out of heaven when he told God, *"I will not serve"*. Pride was the sin of Adam and Eve who wanted to be like God. They wanted to decide for themselves what was good or what was evil, what was true and what was false without reference to God. They wanted to be "free" of any restrictions. They wanted to be "independent". The sin of pride led them to commit the sin of disobedience. These two sins introduced pain, suffering, misery, and death into our world and is passed down to all future generations.

Pride is the sin of the theological dissenters of our time who think they know better than the Holy Father and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Recall the words of **Jesus**: *Blessed are you Father Lord of Heaven and earth, you have hidden these things from the learned and the clever and revealed them to the merest of children.* **St. Paul** described the proud as: *professing themselves wise they became fools.* This is why **St. Augustine** called pride the reservoir of all sin. Then he went on to say, *Pride is the great sin, the head and cause of all sins, and its beginning lies in turning away from God. Beloved do not make light of this vice, for the proud man who dislikes the burden of Christ is contained by a harsher burden of sin: he may not wish to serve, but he has to, because if he will not be Love's servant, he will inevitably be sin's slave... Because of this great sin of pride, God humbled Himself, taking the nature of a servant, bearing insults and hanging on a cross. To heal us, He became humble; shall we not be ashamed to be proud?* In the book of **Proverbs** it says: *when pride comes, disgrace comes. But with the humble there is wisdom.* Proverbs also says: *pride*

goes before the fall. God will repay to the full those who act with pride.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta reflected, *If I have received everything, what is it that I have that is mine?* If we are convinced of this, we will never lift up our heads in arrogance. If we are humble, nothing will touch us-neither praise nor hatred-for we know what we are.

St. Josemaría tells us to *Reject from our hearts any pride, any lust, any desire to dominate and peace and joy will reign around us and within us, as a consequence of our sacrifice.*

Fr. Joseph Malaise, S.J., explains the various vices connected to pride such as presumption, ambition, vainglory, vanity, boasting, bragging, and ostentation. *Presumption is an inclination and wish to undertake what is above one's capacity. Presumptuous persons never seek anyone's opinion or advice.* Presumption leads to ambition, which courts honors, dignities, authority and power over others. Vainglory or vanity seeks the praises of men. A vain person is not satisfied with himself and his qualities, but he wants others to admire him. He adores himself and he wants others to adore him. He is vain about his external appearance, about his clothes, his jewelry, or anything that makes him stand out in a crowd. Vain persons cherish the attention of popular people, but they avoid the lowly and poor. The vain person is deeply troubled when he doesn't receive praise from his should-be admirers. Vanity leads to boasting, which is bragging about one's good qualities or accomplishments with the intention of soliciting the praise and esteem of others. Vanity also leads to ostentation, which consists in posing, in

putting oneself on display in order to draw attention and admiration by showing off.

Chapter 4.

The Four Types of Pride

St. Bonaventure names **two types of pride**: spiritual pride and worldly or temporal pride. Spiritual pride is the more serious of the two. In spiritual pride we credit ourselves for growing in holiness and in our success in evangelization which is the touching of souls. In effect we are robbing God of the credit due to Him. To avoid falling into spiritual pride we must refer all success to the Holy Spirit. Throughout salvation history God has chosen the weak to confront the proud. If God chooses us for a specific task, it is because we are weak. This permits His glory to be visible in the work that we do.

St. Alphonsus reminds us, *if you possessed great abilities, maybe God would not have chosen you for the work, because you would take pride in it, and attribute the doing of it to yourself. It is God's way to choose humble people, people who don't take any credit for themselves, and by them He wishes to do great things.*

While there are only two types of spiritual pride, there are **four types of worldly pride**. The first

is pride of authority or arrogance. Symptoms of this type of pride include the repeated use of the words I, me, mine. A person in the grip of this type of pride refuses to seek advice. He takes pleasure in putting people down, or criticizing people, places, or things. Although sharp in finding faults in others, he must have the last word. He pushes ahead to be first in line and finds ways to call attention to himself. This person will argue in defense of an issue even when he knows that he is wrong. He becomes irritable when his ideas are opposed. **St. Peter** urges us: *And all of you practice humility towards one another; for, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble". Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hands of God that He may exalt you in the time of visitation.*

The second type of pride is pride of timidity. This is fake humility. A person with this pride hides his weaknesses by being shy. He is easily embarrassed, exaggerates weaknesses, and blushes easily. He is also shy about doing things in public. It is important to understand that true humility should not be confused with timidity, mediocrity, lack of initiative, self-loathing, self-hatred, defeatism, and all the like. True humility does not deny one's gifts, talents and the abilities that God has given to us. It means we do not claim those gifts as our own, but as talents given by God for a divine purpose. We all know people who have a false notion of humility. These people claim humility as an excuse to sit back and do nothing. They insist, *oh, I'm so weak; I'm so sinful; I'm so little; what can I do?* At other times they will lament, *I will never amount to anything. I'm just good for nothing.* Then there is the excuse, *I'd like to do more but I'm so unworthy, I just can't.* **Fr. Bill Casey** says: *that is*

a bubble brained wrong-headed notion of what it means to serve God in humility.

Key point: The virtue of **humility and trust in God go hand in hand**. Let me illustrate the point for you. There was a deeply devout monsignor, who was a great pastor of souls, a holy man, a man faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church, intellectually gifted, a capable administrator, and a man respected by all who knew him. Because of his spirituality and abilities he was offered the office of bishop. Rome wanted him to head a diocese. The monsignor refused saying, *I'm unworthy of the office of Bishop*. When he refused the call of the Holy Spirit, Rome offered the office to another priest who truly was unworthy. This priest eagerly accepted the post. Fifteen years later his diocese is in shambles and he was forced to resign due to scandal.

Humility and trust go hand in hand. The devout monsignor forgot the words of **Jesus**: *My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness*. He also should have recalled the words of many saints such as **St. Paul** who writes: *I willingly boast of my weakness that the power of Christ may rest on me*. Or, *God plus one is an army*, **St. Teresa of Avila** would have told him. **St. Louis De Montfort** would have counseled him, *never be afraid to accomplish great things for Christ*.

Yes, we are weak, sinful souls. We are all little in the sight of almighty God. Without Him, we can do nothing. Remember, He is the Creator who makes something out of nothing so He can make something out of our nothingness. That is why **St.**

Augustine prayed, “*Yes Lord without you nothing, with you everything*”.

Let us be clear on this point. To be a humble soul, to be little in the sight of almighty God, does not mean that as Christians we are called to be a doormat, a pushover, a wimp. When things count, especially in defending our faith, morals, and our family, imitate the lives of the Saints. They were courageous defenders of truth and opponents of evil. For example, **Blessed Teresa of Calcutta** was invited to Russia to receive a Humanitarian Award. She reluctantly accepted, not because she was looking for human praise or worldly honors, but because she had tried for years to open a house for her Missionaries of Charity in Russia and could never obtain permission from the Communist government. She thought God was opening a door with the invitation so she went to Moscow where the Soviets held a lavish ceremony for her. With world news organizations present, Mother Teresa gave her acceptance speech. She noticed during her lecture that the communist interpreter was deliberately mistranslating her words. He was turning her words into an attack on the United States, western capitalism, imperialism, and war mongering. Mother Teresa stopped her speech, walked across the stage, shaking her finger at the interpreter. She told him, *Stop! Stop! That is not what I said! Either you translate my words correctly or I'll walk out of here, I'll leave here now and this will be over.* He got the message. She went back to the podium to finish her speech. When it was over one of her sisters asked, *Mother, Mother how did you know, you don't speak Russian?* Mother replied, *No I don't speak Russian but the Holy Spirit does.*

Let's consider these questions for the pride of timidity: *Do I compare myself to others? Does human respect guide my daily actions? Do I worry about what people are thinking about me?* If you answered, "yes", to these questions then pride of timidity is one of your areas of struggle.

The third type of pride is pride of sensibility, which is wounded self-love. A person with this type of pride is suspicious of everything that is said. A harmless joke is taken as a personal attack. Feelings are easily hurt. People have to tiptoe around this person because a look, a word, or an action can become offensive due to the person's hypersensitivity. The imagination runs wild making one think that others are willfully hurting them. This type of pride broods.

The fourth type of pride is pride of vanity. We long to be praised, to be honored, to be thought well of. We can even be vain about the way we practice our faith criticizing others for how they practice virtue or their lack of virtue. This pride likes to show off or brag whether it is in appearance, possessions, or talents. The best way to nip this type of pride is to recall that everything we are, everything that we have, comes from God. We had nothing to do with the color of our eyes, our talents, our knowledge, or possessions. Each is a gift from God which can be taken away in a moment. An example of this type of pride can be seen in many talk show hosts. Many times they refuse to allow their guest to complete a sentence or thought. They rudely break in to bring attention back to themselves and to their "intellectual brilliance". If the guest continues speaking they simply shout over the guest. A writer for the *Wall Street Journal* criticized a couple of "Catholic" commentators

when he wrote: *He loves the sound of his own voice... they shout down someone with whom they disagree....And vanity with vanity.*

Another example of this type of pride was a mother who rigged the test results of her six-year-old son so he would be classified a genius. She not only had him memorize the answers to tests but she altered test scores. The mother finally confessed what she did only after her son, now eight, attempted suicide. If you haven't done so yet, now is the time to take off the bragging bumper sticker about your honor student!

This type of pride can lead to suicide. Prideful people commit suicide because of losing a cooking competition, a coveted "star", or an A on an exam or in course work. Others commit suicide because they lost prestige in singing, painting, or losing a race by a few points or seconds; or, due to receiving a critical analysis of what they have accomplished or how they performed. These people exist on human praise and honors and without this they no longer want to live. **G. K. Chesterton** would say: *Angels fly because they take themselves lightly.*

Prideful people can become manipulators, treating people like puppets. They are experts at blaming others for their problems. They decide that their best defense is a good offense---attacking others! They try to rid themselves of their guilty feelings by getting angry and directing the anger, judgment, insults, and jabs at others. They go so far as to slander, sabotage, and lie about people. Let me share a clipping with you from **Mary Ann Budnik's** book *Raise Happy Children...Teach Them Joy* that drives

home the various types of pride we just discussed:

What It Means

He who when speaking shouts loudly, means that his arguments are weak.

He who has to speak much, means that his words are of little value.

He who exalts himself, speaks ill of others, means that he is of little value.

He who imagines that he is able to easily solve all the problems of a country, means that he has never tried to solve his own problems.

He who sees all the defects of others, means that his eyes have not grown to see his own defects.

He who uses coarse words, means that he did not live a humble life when young or was drunk with his high status.²

During our lifetime the various types of pride mix and mingle alerting us that we have to be on our guard at all times. When we do not fight the defects of our temperament and pride, these sins become a spiritual virus eating away at our union with God. It can be compared to cancer, which grows slowly unnoticed until it erupts into a deadly, often times terminal illness. Remember how St. Theresa of Avila was shown the place reserved for her in hell if she didn't conquer her

² Mary Ann Budnik, **Raise Happy Children Teach Them Joy**. I am very grateful to Mary Ann who allowed me to use her chapter on Humility in her book *Teach Them Joy* as an outline for this booklet. Much of that chapter will be found in this booklet on Humility. I also am extremely grateful to Mary Ann for all the editing work she did on this booklet for me while she was miserably sick.

defects? Carelessness in committing venial sins eventually leads us to commit mortal sins.

Once we have identified our prideful defects, we need to call in the big guns of **penance, mortification, prayer, almsgiving** and **frequent confession** to help us fight them. To avoid becoming overwhelmed, just pick three areas that you plan to work on. Write these down. Next to them write the penance or mortification you plan to utilize to conquer them. Scripture tells us in the ***Book of Sirach***: *The beginning of pride is man's stubbornness in withdrawing his heart from his Maker; for pride is the reservoir of sin, a source which runs over with vice. The roots of the proud God plucks up, to plant the humble in their place: He breaks down their stem to the level of the ground, then digs their roots from the earth.*

The apostle **St. James** has some pretty strong words about pride: *God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail...Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

We can counter the four types of pride with these acts of humility:

Prayer is the humility of the man who acknowledges his profound wretchedness and the greatness of God. He addresses and adores God as One who expects everything from Him and nothing from himself.

Faith is the humility of the mind, which renounces its own judgment and surrenders to the verdict and authority of the Church.

Obedience is the humility of the will, which subjects itself to the will of another, for God's sake.

Chastity is the humility of the flesh, which subjects itself to the spirit.

Exterior mortification is the humility of the senses.

Penance is the humility of all the passions, sacrificed to the Lord.

Chapter 5.

What the Saints have to say about Humility.

Let's begin with **St. Peter**: *In your relations with one another, clothe yourselves with humility, because God "is stern with the arrogant but to the humble He shows kindness." Bow humbly under God's mighty hand, so that in due time He may lift you high. (1 Peter: 5:5-7)*

St. Paul adds: *Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others. Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus, Who...did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil. 2:1-11)*

St. Augustine points out: *If you ask me what is the essential thing in the religion and discipline of Jesus Christ, I shall reply: first humility, second humility, and third humility...Pride changed angels into devils; humility makes men into angles. He adds: When pride has crept into a servant of God, straightaway envy is to be found*

there too. The proud person cannot help being envious.

St. Jerome has much to say about the vice of pride: *The proud...are God's enemies. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. The devil is the prince of the proud. Lest he be puffed up with pride, says the Holy Scriptures, and incur the condemnation passed on the devil, for everyone who glorified himself in his heart is partner to the devil.*

St. Gregory explains: *He, who seeks to gain virtues without humility, is like one carrying a little dust or ashes in the teeth of the wind; it is all scattered, all blown away by the storm.*

St. Leo the Great counsels: *Let humility be loved. Let every excess praise be avoided by the faithful. Let all prefer others to themselves...that way, when an inclination to do good abounds in us all, the poison of hate might not be found in any one.*

St. Thomas More agrees: *Christ the commander teaches by His own example that His soldier should take humility as his starting point.*

St. Jane Frances de Chantal explains: *We must serve our Lord according to His liking and not according to our own.*

God told **St. Catherine of Siena**: *I am who Am; you are she who is not.*

St. Peter Julian Eymard confides: *Virtues, even the most lovable such as meekness and humility, are very difficult naturally for us to practice. It is not easy to be meek under insult; and I*

understand very well why a world without faith finds Christian virtues disheartening.

St. Teresa of Avila reflected: *I was wondering once why our Lord so dearly loved this virtue of humility; and all of a sudden...the following reason came to mind: that it is because God is Sovereign Truth and to be humble is to walk in truth, for it is absolutely true to say that we have no good thing in ourselves, but only misery and nothingness; and anyone who fails to understand this is walking in falsehood. He who best understands it is most pleasing to Sovereign truth because he is walking in truth. May it please God, sisters, to grant us grace never to fail to have this knowledge of ourselves. Amen.*

Christ told the Servant of God **Concepcion Cabrera de Armida**: *All your ills come from pride and the lack of recollection. In general, your soul is troubled when you are deprived of praise, affection, and consideration. These ills also proceed from the fact that you seek the creature, not in order to be led to me, but to satisfy your self-love. And should you succeed, you are disturbed and uneasy, searching for empty pleasures which can only leave a void in your heart...Make up your mind that in order to be happy it is only necessary for you to disappear...to come down, to detach yourself from yourself and to leave me full scope, for I alone can give you happiness in humiliation and suffering...Humility: that is the remedy if you desire to be healed. Lose sight of yourself. Be convinced of your own nothingness. Endeavor to be the least before men, and the greatest only before God.*

Jesus spoke to **Ven. Charles De Foucauld**, a mystic who lived in Algeria, about His thirty-three years of humility. He then advised Charles: *Be taken as what I was taken for, my child, unlearned, poor, of lowly birth, also for what you really are: unintelligent, untalented, and ungifted. Always look for the meanest tasks, but cultivate your mind. But do it secretly. Do not let the world know. I was infinitely wise, but no one knew it. Do not be afraid to study; it is good for your soul. Study zealously to become better, to know Me and love Me better, to know My will and do it more perfectly, and also to become more like Me, who am perfect knowledge. Be very unlearned in the eyes of men, and very learned in the knowledge of God at the foot of my tabernacle. I was lowly and despised beyond all measure. Seek out, ask for, and love those occupations that will humiliate you: piling dung, digging, whatever is lowest and most uncouth. The less important you are in this way, the more like Me you will be. If you are thought a fool, so much the better. Give infinite thanks for it to Me. They treated me as a madman-it is one of the ways I offer you of being like Me. If they throw stones at you, mock you, curse you in the streets, so much the better. Thank Me for it: I am giving you an infinite grace-for did they not do as much for Me? How fortunate you should think yourself when I give you such close resemblance to Me.*

The Servant of God, **Fr. Walter J. Ciszek, S.J.** notes: *Learning the full truth of our dependence upon God and our relations to His will is what the virtue of humility is all about. For humility is truth, the full truth that encompasses our relation to God the Creator and through Him to the world He has created and to our fellow men. And what we call humiliations are the trials by which our*

more complete grasp of this truth is tested. It is self that is humiliated: there would be no "humiliation" if we had learned to put self in its place, to see ourselves in proper perspective before God and other men. And the stronger the ingredient of self develops in our lives, the more severe must our humiliations be in order to purify us...I doubt very much that Peter ever again boasted that he would never desert the Lord even if all others deserted him. I find it perfectly understandable that Peter, in his letter to the early churches, should have reminded his Christians to work out their salvation in fear and trembling. For just as surely as man begins to trust in his own abilities, so surely has he taken the first step on the road to ultimate failure. And the greatest grace God can give such a man is to send him a trial he cannot bear with his own powers-and then sustain him with His grace so he may endure to the end and be saved.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga warns: *The devil continually attacks you by vanity and self-esteem, and as this is the weak side of your soul, you must the more strenuously and constantly endeavor to resist him by humility, and self-contempt, both interior and exterior. For this end you will propose to yourself some rules to attend especially to the study of this virtue, which have been taught by our Lord and confirmed by experience.*

Ven. Luis de Granada teaches: *If you cannot imitate the virginity of the humble, then imitate the humility of the virgin. Virginity is praiseworthy, but humility is more necessary. Virginity is recommended to us, humility is an obligation for us; to virginity we are invited, to humility we are obliged...And so we see that*

virginity is celebrated as a voluntary sacrifice, but humility is required as an obligatory sacrifice. Lastly, you can be saved without virginity, but not without humility.

St. Francis of Assisi had a specific barometer for measuring virtues: *When those who should cooperate with you do the exact opposite, then we can tell. A man has as much patience and humility as he has then, and no more.*

Chapter 6.

What other's say about Humility.

Blessed John Paul II reminds us: *God lets Himself be conquered by the humble, He rejects the arrogance of the proud...God brings down to the dust of the earth those who defy heaven with their pride.* In a Wednesday audience he said: *Superficiality and social climbing do not constitute the real good of man and society.* Quoting St. Paul the Holy Father said that *the Kingdom of God is effectively prepared by people who carry out their work seriously and honestly, not aspiring to things that are too high, but turning, in daily faithfulness, to those that are lowly. The mentality of the world pushes one to stand out, to get ahead, with shrewdness and without scruples, asserting oneself and one's own*

interests. The consequences can be seen by all: rivalries, abuses, frustrations. The Kingdom of God on the contrary, rewards "meekness and humility"...The proof of this is Jesus Himself...Herein lies the secret, so that every activity, professional or in the home, may be done in an atmosphere of genuine humanity, thanks to the humble and active contribution of everyone.

Pope Benedict points out: *Egoism and a genuine love of self are not only not identical, but are also mutually exclusive. It is possible to be a confirmed egoist and, at the same time, to be at odds with oneself. In fact egoism is often due to one's own inner strife, to the attempt to created for oneself a different I, whereas the proper attitude to one's I grows spontaneously in an atmosphere of freedom from self...To the degree that we seek only for ourselves, to realize our own potential, and are concerned solely with the success and fulfillment of our I, to that same degree this I becomes disagreeable, irritable, and repugnant. It disintegrates into a thousand forms and in the end there remain only a dissatisfaction with self that leads to flight from oneself and a turning to drugs or one of the many other forms of a self-destructive egoism...Only when we have accepted ourselves can we address a genuine yes to anyone else. To accept, to "love", oneself presumes the existence of truth and requires that we never relinquish our quest for that truth.*

Monsignor James Turro insists: *Humility says much about a person's refinement of character. "The boughs that bear most hang lowest."* (English Proverb)

Dominican Fr. Sertillanges observes: *Pride aspires to the least height, disdaining to surpass*

itself; humility is quite ready for the sublimest prospects. Some men would be capable of great things if they did not think themselves great.

John Adams exhorted his grandson John, the son of **President John Quincy Adams**: *The Lord deliver us from all family pride. No pride, John, no pride.* To his granddaughter Caroline he wrote: *You are not the only one who thinks they know very little. The longer I live, the more I read, the more patiently I think, and the more anxiously I inquire, the less I seem to know...Do justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly. That is enough.*

G. K. Chesterton maintained that: *humility is the key to happiness. As for pride, pride doesn't go before the fall. Pride is the fall.*

Demosthenes observed: *Nothing is so easy as to deceive one's self; for what we wish, we readily believe.*

Marie Curie confessed: *I never see what has been done; I only see what remains to be done.*

The famous **Michelangelo** when complimented on his masterpieces would say, *I am still learning.*

The Servant of God, **Archbishop Fulton Sheen** teaches us: *Though faith is a gift of God, and though God will give it to those who ask for it, there is one very human obstacle why more minds do not receive it, and that is Pride. Pride is the most common sin of the modern mind, and yet the one of which the modern mind is never conscious. You have heard people say: "I like drink too much," or "I am quick-tempered," but did you ever hear anyone say: "I am conceited?"*

Pride is the exaltation of self as an absolute standard of truth, goodness and morality. It judges everything by itself, and for that reason everyone else is a rival, particularly God. Pride makes it impossible to know God. If I know everything, then not even God can teach me anything. If I am filled with myself, then there is no place for God. Like the inns of Bethlehem, we say to the Divine Visitor: "There is no room."

He continues: *Pride is of two kinds: one tries to convince your neighbor you know everything; the other tries to convince your neighbor that he knows nothing. This last one is a technique used by the "highly educated", who pride themselves on the fact that man can know nothing. Hence, they doubt everything, and of this they are very sure. They seem to forget that the doubting of everything is impossible, for doubt is a shadow, and there can be no shadow without light.*

If pride is the great human obstacle to faith, it follows that, from the human side, the essential condition of receiving faith is humility. Humility is not an underestimation of what we are, but the plain, unadulterated truth. A man who is 6 feet tall is not humble if he says: "No, really, I am only 5 feet tall." If there ever came a moment in your life when you admitted you did not know it all, or said: "Oh! What a fool am I", you created a vacuum and a void, which God's grace could fill. Before you accept the gift of faith, there may be a moment when you will think that you are giving up your reason; but that is not reality. Your eye does not constantly look out at the light. Every few seconds it blinks, that is, it goes into temporary darkness; the blink apparently destroys vision. Really, the blink is the condition

*of better vision. So with your reason in relation to faith. There comes a time in conversion when you blink on your reason, that is, you doubt about its capacity to know everything, and you affirm the possibility that God could enlighten you. Then comes the gift of faith. Once that is received, you find out that instead of destroying your reason, you have perfected it. Faith now becomes to your reason what a telescope is to your eye; it opens up new fields of vision and new worlds which before were hidden and unknown.*³

Learn From the Desert Fathers:

+ *A brother asked an old man, saying, "What is humility?" He replied, "It is when your brother sins against you and you forgive him before he comes to ask for forgiveness."*

+ *The old men used to say, "When we do not experience warfare, we ought so much the more to humiliate ourselves. For God, seeing our weakness, protects us; when we glorify ourselves, He withdraws His protection and we are lost."*

+ *The devil appeared to a brother disguised as an angel of light and said to him, "'I am Gabriel and I have been sent to you.'" The brother said to him, "See if it is not for someone else to whom you have been sent; as for me, I am not worthy for it" - and immediately the devil vanished.*

+ *An old man said, "If you have acquired the virtue of silence, do not consider yourself as having gained a virtue," but say, "I am unworthy to speak".*

³ Fr. John A. Hardon S.J., **The Treasury of Catholic Wisdom**

+ An old man said, “You must not say in your heart against your brother that you are more vigilant or more ascetic than he is, but by the grace of Christ submit yourself in a spirit of poverty and sincere charity so that you may not lose your labor through the spirit of vain glory. Indeed, it is written, “Let him who is standing take heed lest he fall” (I Corinthians 10:12).⁴

Benjamin Franklin observed: *In reality, there is no one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as pride. Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself; you will see it, perhaps, often in this history; for even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility.*

Chapter 7.

Living Humility.

The virtue of humility is founded not only on grace but also self-knowledge. **St. Josemaría Escrivá** notes: *Humility means looking at ourselves as we really are, honestly and without excuses. And when we realize that we are worth*

⁴ <http://www.coptic.net/lessons/Humility.txt>

hardly anything, we can then open ourselves to God's greatness: it is there our greatness lies. In other words, we not only understand our strong points but also our defects. Humility allows us to be at ease with our abilities without thrusting them down another's throat. We graciously accept compliments rather than denying our ability in some area. To deny abilities is another form of pride.

To grow in self-knowledge we need to cooperate with one special gift of the Holy Spirit-the gift of knowledge. The knowledge that the Holy Spirit gives us is not book knowledge or prophetic knowledge but knowledge about ourselves and our failings. **Fr. Gary Devery, OFM, Cap.** from Sidney, Australia explains that...*the first work of the Holy Spirit is to convince us of our sin...It is a convincing that is not accusative but diagnostic...the Holy Spirit draws us into a journey of conversion...an emptying of ourselves of our egoism...The Word of God begins us on the journey of knowing ourselves profoundly. When we are salvifically convinced of our sin we arrive at humility. Living in humility by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the Christian journey of permanent conversion can be lived in simplicity. With this self-knowledge revealed by the Holy Spirit, the Christian has discernment on his life. Discernment is a principle aspect of the gift of knowledge given by the Holy Spirit.*

Remember, each time we receive any of the sacraments we receive an infusion of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord). To grow in humility, we need the frequent reception of the sacraments to receive the **gift of self-knowledge**. The sacraments fertilize and

nourish the good soil (humility) in the garden of the soul enabling good, strong spiritual fruit to grow. Without the soil of humility these gifts and graces cannot take root and will die. Recall Jesus' parable in Scripture when He talks about the seeds falling on infertile ground. If we lack humility, God's graces cannot penetrate the solid clay (hardness) of our souls. We know that when pride enters our soul it sends a deadly storm right through the crop destroying everything.

The frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is vital in the development of humility. One indication that we are growing in humility is the frequent reception the Sacrament of Confession. Proud people avoid confession. That is not to say that people who go to weekly confession have achieved high humility. They could be guilty of spiritual pride. See how careful we have to be with this virtue and its companion vices?

Let us stress, to acquire humility self-knowledge is absolutely vital. No man can be humble if he does not know himself thoroughly. We should constantly be asking in prayer for the gift of self-knowledge. If we do not know ourselves, we also will not know our Creator, because the two knowledge's are closely connected. One will lead to the other. It is not possible to come to a good understanding of God except by a true knowledge of self. And nobody really knows himself if he does not keep in mind his own nothingness. **St. Bonaventure** says: *All our sins are due to negligence, passion, or malice. When we realize that our offenses originate in one or another of these causes, we begin to understand ourselves. And unless, in our recollection of our past sins, we put our finger on the precise cause of each*

sin, we shall never reach the goal of perfect self-knowledge.

When we know ourselves as we really are in God's sight, the vain and inaccurate opinion we have of self immediately vanishes. Our eyes are open when we see only nothingness and sin within ourselves. This humble-mindedness is very important and is the foundation for being humble. But it is not humility; it is only knowledge. And no virtue exists in knowledge alone. Not in the intellect is virtue found; rather it is always in the will. Knowledge of the fact that we are nothing does not make us humble. This is mere theoretical knowledge which is easily learned, but by itself is useless.

There is a difference between knowing and knowing. We know, for example, that one day we will die. We will know it in a different way when the doctor says we only have a week to live. Only then shall we **realize** the knowledge. We also have the knowledge that God is everywhere, but really how few people **realize** it. In a similar way, we may know of our nothingness. But only by the grace of God do we fully realize it and become deeply aware of it. It is not something that is simply in our heads anymore. It becomes practical.

Humble-mindedness has to lead us on to humble-heartedness; meaning, it gives rise by a natural consequence to humility in the heart or will. When we have attained this true knowledge with the help of God, we come to a contempt for self.

True self-knowledge means that we do not think ourselves to be above what we are. This makes our will act. Our wills hold in check our urge to

want to do great things all the time, to exalt our selves above the rest. From this gift of light we receive on self we come to depreciate self. And out of this self-abasement there follows a due subjection to God. In this subjection we have the essence of the virtue. Humility principally consists in the subjection of man to God. This subordination must exist in us at least to the extent of avoiding grave sin.⁵

How does a humble person react? Dr. David Isaacs, of the University of Navarre, points out: *A humble person recognizes his own inadequacy, qualities and abilities, and presses them into service, doing good without attracting or expecting the applause of others.*

Don't forget, humility is the virtue that refrains from purposely causing jealousy or envy.

St. Peter Eymard taught that: *there are two motives and two ways to practice humility: one comes from the realization of our sinfulness, and the other from our love of Jesus Christ humiliated. The first type is a negative humility; the second is positive. Both types are found in the humility of the mind and the humility of the heart.*

To live the virtue of humility, learn to imitate Jesus Christ. Jesus, being God, knew all things, yet He never boasted, bragged, or even indicated that He knew all. He never sought to shine, to pass for a genius, or to seem better informed than others. Even when he stood in the midst of the teachers in the temple, He listened and asked them questions to improve His knowledge...If asked for a miracle, He prayed to His Father

⁵ Fr. Canice Bourke, **the power of Humility**

before working it, as if to beg for the needed power. Even in His teachings, He attests that He merely repeats the words of His Father. Following Christ's example, we should not make of God's gifts a subject of personal pride, nor look upon them as our own, as if they came from us, but confess that they come from God. Teens especially, who think they know everything, need to imitate the humble example of Christ.

Chapter 8.

The Three Stages of Humility.

St. Bernard broke down the virtue of humility into three stages **sufficient humility**, **abundant humility**, **superabundant humility**.

- *Sufficient humility consists in submitting to him who is one's superior and not imposing oneself on him who is one's equal;*
- *Abundant humility consists in submitting oneself to him who is one's equal and not imposing oneself on him who is lower than oneself;*
- *Superabundant humility consists in submitting oneself to him who is lower than oneself. Superabundant humility is the humility of Bl. John Paul II and the saints.*

Here are some points that we and our children can use to practicing **sufficient humility**:

1. Realize that I am a son or daughter of God. This is the measure of our true worth.
2. Use all gifts, abilities, talents, and beauty that come from the goodness of God for His honor and glory.
3. Accept the things you and your children do well in but also, with affection, point out the areas in which everyone in the family can improve.
4. Avoid instilling pride in anyone by bragging about his/her abilities or making him/her self-conscious through excessive compliments about attractiveness or talents.
5. Enforce rules and your authority in your home.
6. Insist that blame be correctly placed. Everyone makes mistakes. To accept one's mistakes is a sign of maturity/humility.
7. Apologize when something wrong is done and insist that children say *I'm sorry*. This is humility in word and action.
8. Avoid praising a child for doing what the child should do. Encourage him but do not praise him.
9. Serve others and encourage your children to serve others without seeking praise.
10. Teach your children that integrity of character is more important than success.

Here are some points that our children and we can use to develop **abundant humility**:

1. God is present in each person. As such we are all equals. We are never superior to another.
2. Everyone has talents and abilities. While our talents may be more noticeable, the talents of others may be more important.
3. Appreciate the talents of others by exposing yourself to music, art, culture, etc. We can always learn something from everyone we and our family deal with if we focus on their qualities rather than their defects.
4. Take an interest in other people.
5. Be aware in ourselves and point out in our children examples of prideful attitudes that we exhibit.
6. Avoid self-sufficiency that results in a person being unable to talk about anything but himself, a refusal to seek advice, help or guidance. This is a false sense of freedom/independence.
7. Continually remind ourselves and our family of the standards and values we are to live. Without a living faith in God we cannot practice humility.
8. Emphasize the importance of self-control. By showing our children generous affection they learn that they do not have to be boastful about their achievements. Accept other people's ingratitude and offer that up to God. We should avoid thinking about ourselves too much but rather give ourselves generously to the service of others for the love of God.
9. Avoid being loud for the sake of attention; or acting or dressing in an odd

manner. All forms of seeking attention should be avoided.

10. See, and teach the value of accepting correction. (Fraternal correction is Scripture-based.)
11. Always ask yourself before each action, will this serve or be pleasing to God?

The highest level of humility, the humility of the saints, is called **superabundant humility**. The Holy Father lived this level of humility. A story is told of a priest from the U.S. who was visiting Rome. During his visit he received an invitation to have lunch with Pope John Paul II. Before the luncheon he stopped at a church to make a visit. Going into the church he was shocked to find a priest from his seminary class begging for food. His classmate, who had left the priesthood, was now nothing more than a common beggar in Rome. Upset by the encounter, the priest blurted out his sad experience over lunch with the Holy Father. The pope told him to bring that priest for dinner the next day. The next day the priest spent the morning searching for the beggar who at first, refused to have dinner with the Pope but finally agreed. The priest cleaned him up, lent him clothing, and then the two kept their dinner date with the Pope. After dinner John Paul II motioned for the U.S. priest to excuse the two of them. Turning to the beggar, the Pope asked him to hear his confession. Dumbfounded the beggar refused saying, *Holy Father, I'm no longer a priest. I cannot hear your confession.* The Pope kindly reassured him, *You are a priest forever. I tell you, you can hear my confession.* So he did. Then the beggar sank to his knees asking the Holy Father to hear his confession. The former priest was restored to good standing and appointed an assistant at the Roman parish where

he formerly begged for food. Now he begs God for souls.

It takes deep, interior growth to achieve this level. When a person reaches this level he understands that he is a great sinner, that without God he is a nothing, without the grace of God he would be guilty of the worst of sins. **This cannot be taught.** It must be learned. From whom do we learn it? Fr. Jay Alvarez, a priest of the Prelature Opus Dei recommends that we go to Mary, who is the mother of Humility. Christ humbled Himself to take on our human nature while Mary humbled herself to accept her mission from God. Mary's response to God was: ***Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word. Luke (1:38)*** Note Our Lady's word "handmaid" which is another word for servant. She does not call herself "first lady," "first mother," "queen of heaven," but servant. What humility!

St. Ignatius of Loyola in his Exercises explains the three types of humility in more depth.

1. *The First Kind of Humility (Sufficient humility): This is necessary for salvation. It consists in this, as far as possible I so subject and humble myself as to obey the law of God in all things, so not even if I were made king of all creation, or to save my life here on earth, would I consent to violate a commandment, whether divine or human, that binds me under pain of mortal sin.*
2. *The Second Kind of Humility (Abundant humility): This is more perfect than the*

first. I possess it if my attitude of mind is such that I neither desire nor am I inclined to have riches rather than poverty, seek honor rather than dishonor, to desire a long life rather than a short life, provided only in either alternative I would promote equally the service of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul. Besides this indifference, this second kind of humility supposes that not for all creation, nor to save my life, would I consent to commit a venial sin.

3. *The Third Kind of Humility (Superabundant humility): This is the most perfect kind of humility. It consists in this. If we suppose the first and second kind attained, then whenever the praise and glory of the Divine Majesty would be equally served, in order to imitate and be in reality more like Christ our Lord, I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor, rather than riches; insults with Christ loaded with them, rather than honors; I desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent in this world. So Christ was treated before me.*⁶

St. Francis De Sales elaborates with a four-part explanation.

1. *Outward Humility: "Borrow some empty vessels and pour oil into them." To receive God's grace into our hearts they*

⁶ Fr. Louis J. Puhl, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*.

*must be emptied of our own vainglory. The Kestrel (which is a small falcon) cries out and stares at other birds that want to eat him for dinner and thus frightens them away by some secret power and property it has and because of this fact doves love the Kestrel better than any other bird and will actually live near it in safety. In the same way **humility drives away Satan and keeps the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit** safe within us. For this reason all the saints, and particularly the King of Saints and His Mother, have always honored and cherished this precious virtue more than any other among all the moral virtues.*

We apply the term vainglory to whatever we assign to ourselves, whether something that is not actually in us or something in us but not of us, or something in us and of us but not such that we can glory in it. Noble ancestry, patronage of great men, and popular honor are things that are not in us but either in our ancestors or in the esteem of other men. Some men become proud and overbearing because they ride mighty fine, wear a feather in their hat, or are dressed in a splendid suit of clothes. Is anyone blind to the folly of all this? If there is any glory in such things it belongs to the horse, the bird, and the tailor. It is a mean heart that borrows honor from a horse, a bird, feather, or some passing fashion. Others value and pride themselves because of a fine moustache, well trimmed beard, carefully curled hair, soft hands, ability to dance, play cards

*well, or sing. Such light-minded men seek to increase their reputation by frivolous and foolish things. Others would like to be honored and respected by men because of a little learning, as if everyone should go to school to them and take them as their teachers. They are called pedants for this reason. Other men have handsome bodies and therefore strut about and think that everybody is extremely fond of them. All this is extremely vain, objectionable, and foolish and the glory based on such weak foundations is called **vain, foolish, and frivolous.***

We recognize genuine goodness as we do genuine balm. If balm sinks down and stays at the bottom when dropped into water, it is rated the best and most valuable. So also in order to know whether a man is truly wise, learned, generous, and noble, we must observe whether his abilities tend to humility, modesty, and obedience for in that case they will be truly good. If they float on the surface and seek to show themselves, they are so much less genuine in so far as they are showier. Pearls conceived and nourished by wind or thunderclaps are mere crusts, devoid of substance. So also men's virtues and fine qualities conceived and nurtured by pride, show, and vanity have the mere appearance of good, without juice, marrow, and solidity.

*Honors, dignities, and rank are like saffron, which thrives best and grows most plentifully when trodden under foot. **It is no honor to be handsome if a man***

prizes himself for it; if beauty is to have good grace, it should be unstudied. Learning dishonors us when it inflates our minds and degenerates into mere pedantry. If we are demanding about rank, place, and title, then we not only expose our qualities to examination, judgment, and condemnation but make all of them base and contemptible. Just as honor is an excellent thing, when given to us freely, so also it becomes base when demanded, sought after, and asked for. A peacock spreads his tail in self-admiration and by the very act of raising up his beautiful feathers he ruffles all the others and displays his own ugliness. Flowers that are beautiful as they grow in the earth wither and fade when plucked. Like men who smell the pretty flower from afar and while passing it sense its great fragrance, whereas those who smell it closely for a long time become ill and stupefied, so honors afford pleasure and satisfaction to those who view them from a distance and lightly without being deceived by them or becoming serious over them. Those who feed on them deserve great blame and reproof.

*For us the pursuit and love of virtue provide a start in virtue but the pursuit and love of honor make us contemptible and deserving of blame. **Generous minds do not amuse themselves with the petty toys of rank, honor, and titles.** They have other things to do. Such things belong only to idle minds. A man who can own pearls does not bother about shells, and those who aspire to virtue do not trouble*

*themselves over honors. It is true that everyone can take and keep his proper rank without damage to humility if this is done unaffectedly and without quarreling. Travelers returning from Peru bring back gold and silver, but they also bring back apes and parrots because they cost little and don't burden the ships. So also men who aspire to virtue need not reject rank and honor due to them if this does not cost them too much care and attention or involve them in trouble, anxiety, disputes, and quarrels. I do not refer to men whose dignity concerns the public or to certain particular occasions attended with great consequences. **In these matters everyone ought to keep what belongs to him with prudence and discretion accompanied by charity and courtesy.***

2. Deeper Interior Humility: You wish me to lead you still further in humility? Since to do what I have already said pertains to wisdom rather than humility, and I will now do so. Many men neither wish nor dare to think over and reflect on the particular graces God has shown them because they are afraid that this might arouse vainglory and self-complacency. **They deceive themselves in this.** Since the true means to attain to love God is consideration of his benefits, as the great Angelic Doctor states, the more we know about them the more we shall love Him. As the particular benefits He has conferred on us affect us more powerfully than those we share with others, they must be considered more attentively.

Certainly nothing can so effectively humble us before God's mercy as the multitude of His benefits and nothing can so deeply humble us before His justice as our countless offenses against Him. Let us consider what He has done for us and what we have done against Him, and as we reflect on our sins one by one let us also consider His graces one by one. There is no need to fear that knowledge of His gifts will make us proud if only we remember this truth, that none of the good in us comes from ourselves. Do mules stop being dull, disgusting beasts simply because they are laden with a prince's precious, perfumed goods? What good do we possess that we have not received? And if we have received it, why do we glory in it? On the contrary, a lively consideration of graces received makes us humble because knowledge of them begets gratitude for them. But if we are deceived by vanity on seeing the grace of God conferred on us, it will be an infallible remedy to consider our own ingratitude, imperfection, and misery. If we reflect on what we did when God was not with us, we will easily perceive that what we do when He is with us is not the result of our own efforts. We will of course enjoy it and rejoice in it because we possess it, but we will glorify God because He alone is its author. Thus the Blessed Virgin proclaims that God has done great things for her, but she does so only to humble herself and to glorify God. **"My soul magnifies the Lord, because He has done great things for me."**

*We often say that we are nothing, that we are misery itself and the refuse of the world, but we would be very sorry if anyone took us at our word or told others that we are such as we say. On the contrary, we make a show of flying away and hiding ourselves so that people will run after us and seek us out. We pretend to want to be last in the company and to be seated at the foot of the table, but it is with a view to moving more easily to the upper end. **True humility does not make a show of itself** and hardly speaks in a humble way. It not only wants to conceal all other virtue but most of all it wants to conceal itself. If it were lawful to lie, dissemble, or scandalize our neighbor, humility would perform arrogant, haughty actions so that it might be concealed beneath them and live completely hidden and unknown.*

*My advice then is for us not to speak words expressing humility or else to speak them with a sincere interior feeling in keeping with what we utter outwardly. Let's not lower our eyes except when we humble our hearts. **Let's not make a show of wanting to be the lowest unless we desire with all our hearts to be such.** I maintain that this rule so general that I don't admit any exception to it. I add only that sometimes good manners require us to offer precedence to those who will surely refuse it, and this is neither duplicity nor false humility. In such cases, the offer of precedence is only the beginning of honor and since we cannot give it to them entirely, it is not wrong to*

*give them its beginning. I say the same about certain words of honor or respect which do not seem to be strictly true but are sufficiently so, provided the speaker's heart contains a sincere intention to honor and respect the man addressed. Although it is with some exaggeration that the words mean what we say, we do not act wrongly in using them when common usage requires it. However, I would truly like our words always to be suited **as closely as possible to what we feel**, so that in all things and through all things we may maintain heartfelt sincerity and candor. A truly humble man prefers that another tell him that he is worth nothing, **than to say it himself**. At least if he knows that someone says this about him, he does not contradict it but heartily agrees with it. Since he firmly believes it he is satisfied if others adopt his opinion.*

*Many people say that they leave mental prayer to the perfect and that they themselves are unworthy to use it. Others protest that they do not dare to receive Holy Communion frequently because they do not feel themselves to be sufficiently pure. By reason of their great misery and weakness, others fear that they will bring disgrace on devotion if they take part in it. Others refuse to use their talents in the service of God and their neighbors because, they say, they know their weakness and fear they'll become proud if they are instruments of any good and that by giving light to others they would be consumed. All this is **merely artifice and a form of humility that is not only false***

but even malicious. By it they silently and subtly try to find fault with the things of God, or at least conceal love for their own opinions, moods, and sloth under the pretext of humility. "Ask for a sign from the Lord your God either unto the height of heaven above or unto the depths of the sea below," said the prophet to the unfortunate Achaz, and he answered, "I will not ask, and will not tempt the Lord." Oh, wicked man! He pretends to show great reverence for God and under the color of humility excuses himself from aspiring to the grace to which God's mercy calls him. Does he not see that when God desires to give us His graces, it is pride to refuse them, that God's gift obligates us to accept them, and that it is humility to obey and comply as nearly as we can with His desires? It is God's will that we become perfect by uniting ourselves to Him and imitating Him as closely as possible. **The proud man who trusts in himself has good reason not to attempt anything.** The humble man is all the more courageous because he places his whole trust in God who rejoices to display His power in our weakness and raise up His mercy on our misery. We may therefore humbly and devoutly presume to undertake all that is judged proper for our advancement by those who direct our souls.

To think that we know what we do not know **is complete folly.** To desire to pass as knowing what we are well aware we don't know is inexcusable vanity. For my part, just as I would not parade

knowledge even of what I actually know, so on the contrary I would not pretend to be ignorant of it. When charity requires it, we must candidly and gladly share with our neighbor not only what is necessary for his instruction but also what is useful for his consolation. Humility conceals and covers over virtues in order to preserve them, but it reveals them when charity so requires in order that we may enlarge, increase, and perfect them. In this respect humility imitates a certain tree found on the island of Tylos. At night it contracts and closes up its beautiful carnation blossoms and only opens them again in the morning sun. Hence the natives of the country say that they sleep at night. In like manner humility covers over and hides all our purely human virtues and perfections and never displays them **except for the sake of charity**. Since charity is not a natural virtue but a supernatural virtue and not a moral but theological virtue, it is the true sum of all the virtues and should have dominion over them. Hence we may conclude that acts of humility that are offensive to charity are certainly false.

I don't want to play either the fool or the wise man, for if humility forbids me to play the genius, candor and sincerity forbid me to act the fool. Just as vanity is opposed to humility, so **deception, exaggeration, and deceit** are contrary to honesty and sincerity. If certain great servants of God have pretended to be fools in order to render themselves more wretched in the eyes of the world, we must

admire but not imitate them. They had their motives to act in this unusual fashion and those motives were so special and extraordinary that no one should draw conclusions from them for himself. When David danced and leaped before the **Ark of the Covenant** with a vigor that ordinary decorum does not require, this was not because he wished to act foolishly. With all simplicity and without any exaggeration he made use of such outward movements to express the extraordinary and excessive joy he felt within his heart. It is true that when Michol, his wife, reproached him for it as a foolish act, he was not sorry to see himself criticized. Continuing in a natural and genuine manifestation of joy, he testified that he was glad to be criticized for the sake of God. In consequence, I tell you that if people think you are wretched or foolish because of acts of true, genuine devotion, humility will cause you to rejoice at such fortunate criticism for its cause is not in you but in those who make it.

3. Humility Causes Us to Love Our Own Abjection: I now move on to tell you that in all things and through all things you should love your own abjection or wretchedness. In Latin abjection signifies humility and humility means abjection. Thus our Lady says in her sacred canticle that because our Lord “has regarded the humility of his handmaid all generations shall call her blessed,” she means that our Lord has graciously looked down on her abjection, nothingness, and lowliness

in order to heap graces and favors upon her. However, **there is a difference between the virtue of humility and abjection**, for abjection is lowliness or baseness in us although we are not aware of that fact, whereas humility is true knowledge and voluntary acknowledgement of our abjection. The chief point of such humility consists not only in willingly admitting our abject state but in loving it and delighting in it. This must not be because of lack of courage and generosity but in order to exalt God's Majesty all the more and to hold our neighbor in higher esteem than ourselves. I urge you to do this, and that you may understand me more clearly I point out that among the evils we suffer some are abject and others are honorable. Many men can easily adapt themselves to evils that bring honor with them but hardly anyone can do so to those which are abject or lowly. You see a devout old hermit covered with rags and shivering with cold. Everyone honors his torn habit that he wears and sympathizes with his sufferings. If a poor tradesman, a poor gentleman is in the same condition people laugh and scoff at them. Thus you see that their poverty is abject poverty. A monk meekly receives a sharp rebuke from his superior or a child from his father, and everyone calls it an instance of mortification, obedience, and wisdom. If a man or lady suffers the same thing from someone, then even though it is accepted out of love for God it is called cowardice and lack of spirit. Hence you see here another abject evil. One man has

*a cancer in his arm and another on his face; the first has only the disease, while the other suffers contempt, disgrace, and abjection along with the disease. Hence I hold **that we must not only love the disease**, which is the duty of patience, but we must also embrace the abjection, and this is done by the virtue of humility.*

Moreover, there are virtues that are abject and virtues that are honorable. Patience, meekness, simplicity, and even humility itself are virtues that worldly people consider mean, abject or horrible. On the other hand, they hold prudence, courage, and liberality in the highest esteem. There are also acts of one and the same virtue, some of which are despised and others held in honor. To give alms and to forgive injuries are both charitable acts, yet the first is held in honor by everyone while the second is despised by the eyes of the world. A young gentleman who refuses to take part in the bad conduct of a bad group or to talk, play, dance, drink or dress like the rest will be scorned and criticized by the others and his modesty will be called fanaticism or extremism. To love this is to love our own abjection. Take abjection of another kind. We visit the sick, and if I am sent to the most miserable among them it will be abjection for me in the eyes of the world, and for that reason I will love it. If I am sent to persons of quality, it is spiritual abjection for there is not so much virtue or merit in it, and hence I will love this abjection. One man falls down in the public street and in addition to the fall

*incurs shame. **We must love such abjection.***

There are even faults that involve no other ill except abjection. Humility does not require that we should deliberately commit such faults but it does require that we should not disturb ourselves when we have committed them. Among them are certain kinds of folly, incivility, and accidents that we should avoid out of regard for good manners and discretion. But if they have been committed, we should endure the abjection we incur and willingly accept it so as to practice humility. I add further that if in passion or anger I have spoken any inappropriate words by which God or my neighbor may have been offended, I will sincerely repent and be sorry for the offense and make the best reparation I can. At the same time I will accept the abjection and contempt it has brought upon me. If the one could be separated from the other, I would gladly cast away the sin and humbly keep the abjection.

***Although we love the abjection** that follows an evil, we must not forget to correct by justice and lawful means the evil that caused it, especially when it is serious. If I should have some disagreeable infection in my face, I will try to have it cured, although not with an intention to forget the abjection I received from it. If I have done something that has not offended anyone, I will not apologize for it since although it was an offense yet it was not lasting. That being the case, I*

*could not excuse it except with a view of ridding myself of the abjection and humility does not permit this. However, if through an accident or folly I have offended or scandalized anyone, I will correct the offense by some true explanation, for evil is lasting and charity obliges me to remove it. Moreover, it sometimes happens that charity requires us to remove the abjection for the good of a neighbor before whom our good name must be preserved. In such cases, although we remove the abjection from our neighbor's sight in order to prevent scandal, yet we must carefully enclose it in our heart **for our own edification.***

If you wish to know which are the best kinds of abjection, I tell you plainly that the ones most profitable to our souls and most acceptable to God are those that come to us accidentally or because of our state in life. The reason is that we have not chosen them ourselves but have accepted them as sent by God and his choice is always better than our own. If we were to choose any form of humiliation, we should prefer the greatest, and those most contrary to our inclinations are such, provided that they are in keeping with our vocations. To say it once and for all, our own choice and selection spoil or lessen almost all our virtues. Who will say with the great king, "I have chosen to be abject in the house of God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners?" No one can say this, except him who to exalt us lived and died in such manner as to become "the

reproach of men and the outcast of the people.”

Many of the things I have told you may seem hard when you reflect on them, but believe me, they will be sweeter than sugar or honey when you put them to practice.

4. *How We Are to Preserve Our Good Name While Practicing Humility:* Praise, honor, and glory are not given to men as rewards for a mere virtue but for some outstanding virtue. By praise we try to persuade others to esteem the excellence of a certain man. By honor we testify that we ourselves esteem him. Glory, in my opinion, is only a kind of luster pertaining to a man's reputation and springing from the concurrence of many acts of praise and honor. Hence honor and praise are like precious stones and out of a collection of them glory proceeds like an enamel. Humility does not permit us to have any opinion of our own excellence or right to be preferred before others, and therefore it cannot allow us to seek after praise, honor, and glory, which are things due only to excellence. Yet humility agrees with the counsel of the Wise Man who warns us to **“take care of our good name,”** because to esteem our good name is not to esteem an excellence but only ordinary honesty and integrity of life. Humility does not forbid us to acknowledge this within ourselves or to desire a reputation for it. It is true that humility would despise a good name if charity had no need for it, but because

*good name is one of the bases of human society and without it we are not only useless but harmful to the public by reason of the scandal it would provoke, charity requires and humility agrees that we should **desire to have a good name and carefully preserve it.***

Moreover, just as leaves growing on a tree are not themselves of much value but serve important purposes, not only to beautify the tree but also to preserve its tender young fruit, so with a good reputation. Of itself it is not very desirable but it is very useful not only for the enhancement of our life but also for preservation of virtue, especially of virtues which are as yet only weak and tender. The duty of preserving our reputation and of being actually such as we are thought to be urges a generous spirit to go forward with a strong and agreeable impulse. Let us preserve our virtues, because they are acceptable to God, the great and sovereign object of all our actions. But just as those who want to preserve fruit are not satisfied merely with covering them over with sugar, but put them into vessels that can keep them, so too although love of God is the principal preservative of our virtues, we can also employ our good name as very proper and useful for that purpose.

*We must not be too **ardent, precise, and demanding** in regard to preserving our good name. Men who are overly tender and sensitive on this point are like persons who take medicine for slight*

discomforts. Although they think they are preserving their health, they actually destroy it. In like manner those who try too carefully to maintain their reputation lose it entirely. By such sensitivity they become captious, quarrelsome, and unbearable and thus provoke the malice of detractors. Generally speaking, to ignore and despise an injury or calumny is a far more effectual remedy than resentment, fighting and revenge. Contempt for injuries causes them to vanish, whereas if we become angry, we seem to admit them. Crocodiles harm only those who are afraid of them and detraction hurts only those who are angry by it. Excessive fear of losing our good name reveals great distrust in its foundation, which is really a good life. Towns that have wooden bridges over great rivers are afraid that they will be swept away by every little rise of water, but those with stone bridges fear only extraordinary floods. In like manner those with souls solidly grounded on Christian virtue usually despise the floods let loose by harmful tongues, while those who know that they are weak are upset by every report. In a word, a man who is too anxious to keep his reputation loses it. The person who tries to win reputation with those whose vices have made them truly infamous and dishonorable deserves to lose honor.

Reputation is like a sign pointing to where virtue dwells and therefore this virtue must be preferred in all things and through all things. Hence if anyone calls

you a hypocrite because you are devout or a coward because you have pardoned some injury, laugh at him. Although such judgments are passed on us by foolish and stupid people, we must not forsake the path of virtue even if we suffer loss of reputation. We must prefer the fruit before the leaves, that is, interior spiritual graces above all external goods. It is legitimate to be jealous of our reputation but not to be idolatrous of it. Also, just as we must not offend the eyes of good men, so also we must not try to please the eyes of the wicked. A beard is an ornament on a man's face and hair is such on a woman's head. If a man's beard is plucked from his face or a woman's hair from her head it will hardly grow on again, but if it is only cut off or even shaved close, it will soon come back and grow stronger and thicker than ever. So also if our reputation is cut off or even shaved away clean by the tongues of detractors-David says that they are like sharp razor-we must not disturb ourselves. It will grow out again, not only as beautiful as before but even much stronger. If our vices, base deeds, and evil life ruin our reputation, it will hardly return again since it has been pulled out by the roots. The root of a good name is virtue and goodness. As long as they remain in us it can always regain the honor due to it.

If some vain way of life, idle habit, foolish love, or custom of keeping improper company should injure our reputation, we must give them up. Our good name is of

more value than any such empty pleasures. But if because of an exercise of piety, advancement in devotion, or progress toward heaven men grumble, murmur, and speak ill of us, let us leave them to bay at the moon. If at times they can cast aspersions on our good name and thus cut and shave of the hair and beard of our reputation, it will quickly grow out again. The razor of detraction will be as useful toward our honor as the pruning knife is to the vine, which makes it abound and multiply in fruit.

*Let us always **keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ crucified** and go forward in His service with confidence and sincerity but with prudence and discretion. He will protect our reputation. If He permits it to be taken away from us, it will either be to give us a better one or to make us profit by holy humility, of which a single ounce is preferable to a thousand pounds of honor. If we are condemned unjustly, let us calmly oppose truth to calumny. If calumny continues, let us continue to humble ourselves. By surrendering our reputation together with our soul into God's hands, we safeguard it in the best way possible. Let us serve God "by evil report and good report," after the example of St. Paul, so that we may say with David, "Because for Your sake, O Lord, I have borne reproach, shame has covered my face." Nevertheless, I except from this certain crimes so horrid and infamous that no man should put up with being falsely charged with them if he can justly acquit himself of it. I also accept*

*certain persons on whose reputation the edification of many others depends. According to the opinion of theologians, in such cases we must quietly seek reparation of the wrong received.*⁷

Chapter 9.

Saints Advise these Practices for Growing in Humility.

The saints advise these practices for us and our children.

1. Think little of yourself.
2. Do not desire nor seek honors or esteem.
3. Accept with patience the insults, lack of esteem, etc. of others.
4. Do not exult in the praise of others.
5. Remember your sinfulness.
6. Keep your eyes on your faults, not those of others.
7. Refrain from speaking about oneself.
8. Avoid stubbornness unless the matter deals with truth.

⁷ St. Francis De Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

9. Avoid all envy. It is part of pride.
10. Seek and accept advice.
11. Seek and accept corrections.
12. Make use of the sacrament of confession regularly.

The first and final points are key to living this virtue. Dr. Isaacs insists: *It is very important for everyone to be an achiever and to know he is an achiever. But it is also important for a person to learn to lose, to recognize that he does not do everything right, that he is not indispensable. With young people especially we have to find ways by which they do experience small failures-and, of course, one has to make demands of them. A person can only reach the highest level of humility when he realizes his objective personal inadequacy.*

Many of the virtues help to instill the virtue of humility such as **flexibility, obedience, patience, moderation, modesty, gentleness, and studiousness.**

On the topic of vain-glory, **Fr. Dom Lorenzo Scupoli** writing in the 16th century states:

Concerning temptation to vainglory and presumption. Dread nothing so much as yielding in the least way to an exalted opinion of your person or your good works. Take no glory but in the Lord, and acknowledge that all that you are or ever hope to be is to be attributed to the merits of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Until the very evensong of life, hear nothing within your heart but the refrain of your nothingness. Let your humility deepen as self-love fades, and unceasingly thank God, the Author of all your greatness. Stand ever in a holy and prudent fear, and acknowledge simply that all your endeavors

are vain, unless God, in Whom is all your hope, crowns them with success.

*If you will follow this advice, never shall your enemy prevail against you; your road will be open before you, and you may pass on joyfully to the heavenly Jerusalem.*⁸

Venerable Louis of Granada gives us some remedies against pride:

General Remedies. We have already called the deadly or capital sins the sources of all evil. They are the roots of the mighty tree of vice, and if we can destroy them the trunk and branches must soon decay. With them, therefore we shall begin, following the example of Cassian and other spiritual writers, who were so firmly convinced that if they could only rout these enemies the defeat of the others would be an easy task.

St. Thomas gives us a profound reason for this. **All sin, he says, proceeds from self-love**, for we never commit sin without coveting some gratification for self. From self-love spring those three branches of sin mentioned by St. John: **“the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life”**, which are love of pleasure, love of riches, and love of honors. Three of the deadly sins, lust, gluttony, and sloth, spring from **love of pleasure**, pride springs from **love of honors**, and covetousness from **love of riches**. The remaining two, anger and envy, serve all these unlawful loves. Anger is aroused by any obstacle which prevents us from attaining what we desire, and envy is excited when we behold anyone possessing what our self-love claims.

⁸ Fr. Dom Lorenzo Scupoli, *The Spiritual Combat*.

*These are the three roots of the seven deadly sins, and consequently of all the others. **Let these chiefs be destroyed and the whole army will soon be routed.** Hence we must vigorously attack these mighty giants who dispute our entrance to the promise land.*

*The first and most formidable of these enemies is pride, that inordinate desire of our own excellence, which spiritual writers universally regard as the father and king of all the other vices. Hence Tobias, among the numerous good counsels which he gave his son, particularly warns him against pride: "Never suffer pride to reign in your mind or in your words, for from it all perdition took its beginning." Whenever, therefore, you are attacked by this vice, which may justly be called a deadly disease, defend yourself with the following considerations: First reflect on the terrible punishment which the angels brought upon themselves **by one sin of pride.** They were instantly cast from Heaven into the lowest depths of Hell. Consider how this fall transformed Lucifer, the prince of the angelic hosts, and the bright and beautiful star surpassing in splendor the sun itself. In one moment he lost all his glory, and became not only a demon but the chief of demons. **If pure spirits received such punishment,** what can you expect, who are but dust and ashes? God is ever the same, and there is no distinction of persons before His Justice.*

*Pride is as horrible to Him in a man as in an angel, while humility is equally pleasing to Him in both. Hence **St. Augustine** says, "Humility makes men angels, and pride makes angels devils." And **St. Bernard** tells us, "Pride precipitates man from the highest elevation to the*

*lowest abyss, but humility raises him from the lowest abyss to the highest elevation. Through pride the angels fell from Heaven to Hell, and **through humility man is raised from earth to Heaven.***”

After this, reflect on that astonishing example of humility given us by the Son of God, who for love of us took upon Himself a nature so infinitely beneath His own, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Let the example of your God teach you, O man, to be obedient. Learn, O dust, to humble yourself. Learn, O clay, to appreciate your baseness. Learn from your God, O Christian, to be “meek and humble of heart.” If you disdain to walk in the footsteps of men, will you refuse to follow your God, who died not only to redeem us but to teach us humility? Look upon yourself and you will find sufficient motives for humility.

*Consider what you were before your birth, what you are since your birth, and what you will be after death. Before your birth you were, for a time an unformed mass; now a fair but false exterior covers what is doomed to corruption; **and in a little while you will be the food of worms.** Upon what do you pride yourself, O man, whose birth is disgrace, whose life is misery, whose end is corruption? If you are proud of your riches and worldly position, remember that a few years more and death will make us all equal. We are all equal at birth with regard to our natural condition; and as to the necessity of dying; we shall all be we equal at death, with this important exception: that those who possessed most during life will have most to account for in the day of reckoning. “Examine,” says **St. Chrysostom**, “the graves of the rich and powerful*

*of this world, and find, if you can, some trace of the luxury in which they lived, of the pleasures they so eagerly sought and so abundantly enjoyed. What remains of their magnificent spending and costly adornments? What remains of those ingenious devices destined to gratify their senses and banish the weariness of life? What has become of that brilliant society by which they were surrounded? Where are the numerous attendants who awaited their commands? Nothing remains of their sumptuous banquets. The sounds of laughter and mirth are no longer heard; a somber silence reigns in these homes of the dead. But draw nearer and see what remains of their earthly appearances, their bodies which they loved too much. **Naught but dust and ashes, worms and corruption.**"*

*This is the inevitable fate of the human body, however tenderly and delicately nurtured. Ah! Would to God that the evil ended here. **But more terrible still is all that follows death:** the dread tribunal of God's justice; the sentence passed upon the guilty; the weeping and gnashing of teeth; the tortures of the worm that never dies; and the fire which will never be extinguished.*

*Consider also the danger of vainglory, the daughter of pride, which as **St. Bernard** says, "enters lightly but wounds deeply". Therefore, when men praise you, think whether you really possess the qualities for which they commend you. If you do not, you have no reason to be proud. But if you have justly merited their praise, remember the gifts of God, and say with the Apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Humble yourself, then, when you hear the song of praise, and refer all to the glory of God. Thus you will render yourself not unworthy of what He*

bestows upon you. For it is incontestable that the respect men pay you, and the good for which they honor you, are due to God. You rob Him, therefore, of all the merit which you appropriate to yourself. **Can any servant be more unfaithful than one who steals his master's glory?** Consider, moreover, how unreasonable it is to rate your merit by the inconstant opinion of men, who today are for you, and tomorrow against you; who today honor you, and tomorrow revile you. If your merit rests upon so slight a foundation, at one time you will be great, at another base, and again nothing at all, according to the unreliable variations of the minds of men.

Oh, no; do not rely upon the vain commendations of others, but upon what you really know of yourself. Though men extol you to the skies, listen to the warnings of your conscience and accept the testimony of this intimate friend rather than the blind opinion of those who can judge you only from a distance and by what they hear. Make no account of the judgments of men, but commit your glory to the care of God, whose wisdom will preserve it for you and whose fidelity will restore it to you in the sight of the angels and men.

Be mindful also, O ambitious man, of the dangers to which you expose yourself by seeking to command others. How can you command when you have not yet learned to obey? How can you take upon yourself the care of others when you can hardly account for yourself? Consider what a risk you incur by adding to your own sins those of persons subject to your authority. Holy Scripture tells us that **they who govern will be severely judged**, and that the mighty shall be mightily tormented. Who can express the cares and troubles of one who is placed over many? We

read of a certain king who, on the day of his coronation, took the crown in his hands, and, gazing upon it, exclaimed, "O crown richer in thorns than in happiness, did one truly know thee he would not stoop to pick thee up even if he found thee lying at his feet."

*Again, O proud man, I would ask you to remember that your pride is displeasing to all-to God, who resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble; to the humble, who hold in horror all that savors of arrogance; and to the proud themselves, who naturally hate all who claim to be greater than they. Nor will you be pleasing to yourself. For if it ever be given to you in this world to enter into yourself and recognize the vanity and folly of your life, you will certainly be ashamed of your littleness, **and if you do not correct it here, still less satisfaction will it afford you in the next world, where it will bring upon you eternal torments.***

*St. Bernard tells us that if we truly knew our hearts we would be displeasing to ourselves, which alone would make us pleasing to God; but because we do not know ourselves we are inflated with pride and therefore hateful in His sight. The time will come when we shall be odious to God and to ourselves-to God because of our crimes, and to ourselves because of the punishment they will bring upon us. **Our pride pleases the devil only;** for as it was pride, which changed him from a pure and beautiful angel into a spirit of malice and deformity, he rejoices to find this evil reducing others to his unhappy state.*

Another consideration which will help you acquire humility is the thought of the little you have done purely for God. How many vices

assume the mask of virtue! How frequently vainglory spoils our best works! How many times actions which shine with dazzling splendor before men have no beauty before God! The judgments of God are different from those of men. A humble sinner is less displeasing in his sight than a proud just man, if one who is proud can be called just.

*Nevertheless, though you have performed good works, do not forget your evil deeds, which probably far exceed your works of virtue, and which may be so full of faults and so negligently performed that you have more reason to ask to be forgiven for them than to hope for reward. Hence St. Gregory says: "Alas for the most virtuous life, if God judge it without mercy, for those things upon which we rely most may be the cause of the greatest confusion to us. Our bad actions are purely evil, but our good actions are seldom entirely good, but are frequently mixed with much that is imperfect. Your works, therefore, ought to be a subject of fear rather than confidence, after the example of holy Job, who says, **'I feared all my works, knowing that you did not spare the offender.'**" (Job 9:28)*

Particular Remedies. Since humility comes from a knowledge of ourselves, pride necessarily springs from ignorance of ourselves. Whoever, therefore,, seriously desires to acquire humility must earnestly labor to know himself. How, in fact, can he be otherwise than humbled who, looking into his heart with the light of truth, finds himself filled with sins; defiled with the stains of sinful pleasures; the sport of a thousand errors, and fears; the victim of innumerable anxieties and petty cares; oppressed by the weight of a mortal body; so forward in evil and so backward

*in good? **Study yourself, then, with serious attention,** and you will find in yourself nothing of which to be proud.*

But there are some who, though humbled at the sight of their failings, are nevertheless excited to pride when they examine the lives of others whom they consider less virtuous than themselves. Those who yield to this illusion ought to reflect, though they may excel their neighbors in some virtues, that in others they are inferior to them. Beware, then, lest you esteem yourself and despise your neighbor because you are more self-disciplined and industrious, when he is probably much more humble, more patient, and more charitable than you. Let your principal labor therefore, be to discover what you lack, and not what you possess.

Study the virtues, which adorn the soul of your neighbor rather than those with which you think yourself endowed. You will thus keep yourself in an attitude of humility, and increase in your soul a desire for perfection. But if you keep your eyes fixed on the virtues, real or imaginary, which you possess, and regard in others only their failings, you will naturally prefer yourself to them, and thus you will become satisfied with your condition and cease to make any efforts to advance.

*If you find yourself inclined to take pride in a good action, carefully watch the feelings of your heart, bearing in mind that this satisfaction and vainglory will destroy all the merit of your labor. Attribute no good to yourself, but refer everything to God. Repress all suggestions of pride with the beautiful words of the great Apostle: **“What do you have that you have not received, why do you***

glory as if you hadn't received it?" When your good works are practices of perfection, unless your position requires you to give an example, do not let your right hand know what your left hand does, for vainglory is more easily excited by good works done in public.

When you feel sentiments of vanity or pride rising in your heart, hasten to apply a remedy **immediately**. One that is most efficacious consists in recalling to mind all your sins, particularly the most shameful. Like a wise physician, you will thus counteract the effects of one poison by another. Imitate the peacock, and when you feel yourself inflated with pride turn your eyes upon your greatest deformity, and your vanity will soon fall to the ground. The greater your position the greater should be your humility, for there is not much merit in being humble in poverty and obscurity. If you know how to preserve humility in the midst of honors and dignities you will acquire real merit and virtue, for humility in the midst of greatness is the grandest accompaniment of honors, the dignity of dignities, without which there is no true excellence. If you sincerely desire to acquire humility you must courageously enter the path of humiliation, for **if you will not endure humiliations you will never become humble**. Though many are humbled without diminishing their pride, humiliation, as St. Bernard tells us, is nevertheless the path to humility, as patience is the path to peace, and study to learning. Be not satisfied, therefore, with humbly obeying God, but be subject to all creatures for love of Him.

In another place St. Bernard speaks of three kinds of fear with which he would have us guard our hearts. "Fear," he says **"when you are in**

possession of grace, lest you may do something unworthy of it; fear **when you have lost grace**, because you are deprived of a strong protection; and fear **when you have recovered grace**, lest you should again lose it.” Thus you will never trust to your own strength; the fear of God, which will fill your heart, will save you from presumption.

Be patient in bearing persecution, for the patient endurance of affronts is the hallmark of true humility. Never despise the poor and lowly, for their misery should move us to compassion rather than contempt. Be not too eager for rich apparel, for humility is incompatible with a love of display. One who is too concerned about his dress is a slave to the opinions of men, for he certainly would not spend so much labor upon it if he thought he would not be observed. Beware, however, of going to the other extreme and dressing in a manner unsuited to your position. While claiming to despise the praise or notice of the world, many secretly strive for it by their singularity and exaggerated simplicity. Finally, do not look down on humble and obscure employments. Only the proud seek to avoid these, for the man of true humility deems nothing in the world beneath him.⁹

St. Benedict taught that there are 12 degrees of humility:

Holy Scripture cries out to us, saying, “Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.” In saying this it shows us that all exaltation is a kind of pride, against which the Prophet proves himself to be on guard when he says, “Lord, my heart is not

⁹ Ven. Louis of Granada, *The Sinners’ Guide*.

exalted, nor are my eyes lifted up; neither have I walked in great matters, nor in wonders above me." But how has he acted? "Rather have I been of humble mind than exalting myself; as a weaned child on its mother's breast, so You comfort my soul."

Hence if we wish to reach the very highest point of humility and arrive speedily at that heavenly exaltation to which the journey is made through humility of this present life, we must by our ascending actions (actions that lead us towards heaven) erect the ladder Jacob saw in his dream, on which Angels appeared to him descending and ascending. By that descent and ascent we must surely understand nothing else than this, that we descend by self-exaltation and ascend by humility. And the ladder thus set up is our life in the world, which the Lord raises up to heaven if our hearts are humble. For we call our body and soul the sides of the ladder, and into these sides our divine vocation has inserted the different steps of humility and discipline we must climb.

The first degree of humility then is that a person keep the fear of God before his eyes and beware of ever forgetting it. Let him be ever mindful of all that God has commanded; let his thoughts constantly recur to the hellfire which will burn for their sins those who despise God, and to the life everlasting which is prepared for those who fear Him. Let him keep himself at every moment from sins and vices, whether of the mind, the tongue, the hands, the feet, or the self-will, and check also the desires of the flesh.

Let a man consider that God is always looking at him from heaven, that his actions are everywhere visible to the divine eyes and are constantly being

reported to God by the angels. This is what the Prophet shows us when he represents God as ever present within our thoughts, in the words "Searcher of minds and hearts is God" and again in the words "The Lord knows the thoughts of men." Again he says, "You have read my thoughts from afar."

In order that he may be careful about his wrongful thoughts, therefore, let the faithful person say constantly in his heart, "Then shall I be spotless before Him, if I have kept myself from my iniquity."

*As for self-will, **we are forbidden to do our own will by the Scripture**, which says to us, "Turn away from your own will," and likewise by the prayer in which we ask God that His will be done in us. And rightly are we taught not to do our own will when we take heed to the warning of scripture: "There are ways which to men seem right, but the ends of them plunge into the depths of hell"; and also when we tremble at what is said of the careless: "They are corrupt and have become abominable in their wills."*

And as for the desires of the flesh, let us believe with the Prophet that God is ever present to us, when he says to the Lord, "Every desire of mine is before You."

We must be on our guard, therefore against evil desires, for death lies close by the gate of pleasure. Hence the Scripture gives this command: "Go not after your concupiscence."

So therefore, since the eyes of the Lord observe the good and the evil and the Lord is always looking down from heaven on the children of men "to see if there be anyone who understands and

seeks God,” and since our deeds are daily, day and night, reported to the Lord by the angels assigned to us, we must constantly beware as the Prophet says in the Psalm, lest at any time God see us falling into evil ways and becoming unprofitable; and lest, having spared us for the present because in His kindness He awaits our reformation, He says to us in the future, “These things you did, and I held My peace.”

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the first degree: *The **first degree** of humility is “fear of God”: to this is opposed “the habit of sinning,” which implies contempt of God.*)

The second degree of humility is that a person love not his own will nor take pleasure in satisfying his desires, but model his actions on the saying of the Lord, “I have come not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” It is written also, “Self-will has its punishment, but constraint wins a crown.”

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the second degree: *The **second degree** of humility is “not to delight in fulfilling one's own desires”; to this is opposed “license,” whereby a man delights in doing freely whatever he will.*)

The third degree of humility is that a person for love of God submits himself to the Church in all obedience, imitating the Lord, of whom the Apostles says, “He became obedient even unto death.”

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the third degree: *The **third degree** of humility is “obedience,” to which is opposed “rebelliousness.”*)

The fourth degree of humility is that we hold fast to patience with a silent mind when in this obedience he meets with difficulties and contradictions and even any kind of injustice, enduring all without growing weary or running away. For the Scripture says, "He who preserves to the end, he it is who shall be saved"; and again, "Let your heart take courage, and wait for the Lord!"

And to show how those who are faithful ought to endure all things, however contrary, for the Lord, the Scripture says in the person of the suffering, "For Your sake we are put to death all the day long; we are considered sheep marked for slaughter." Then, secure in their hope for divine recompense, they go on with joy and declare, "But in all these trials we conquer, through Him who has granted us His love." Again, in another place the Scripture says, "You have tested us, O God; You have tried us as silver is tried, by fire; You have brought us into a snare; You have laid afflictions on our back." And to show that we ought to be under someone's guidance, it goes on to say; "You have set men over our heads."

Moreover, by their patience those faithful ones fulfill the Lord's command in adversities and injuries: when struck on one cheek, they offer the other; when deprived of their tunic, they surrender also their cloak; when forced to go a mile, they go two; with the Apostle Paul they bear with false brethren and bless those who curse them.

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the fourth degree: *The **fourth degree** is "to embrace patience by obeying under difficult and contrary*

circumstances,” to which is opposed “deceitful confession,” whereby a man being unwilling to be punished for his sins confesses them deceitfully.)

The fifth degree of humility is that we hide from our confessor none of the evil thoughts that enter our hearts or the sins committed in secret, but that we humbly confess them. The Scriptures urges us to this when it says, “Reveal your way to the Lord and hope in Him,” and again, “Confess to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever.” And the Prophet likewise says, “My offense I have made known to You, and my iniquities I have not covered up. I said: ‘I will declare against myself my iniquities to the Lord; and ‘You forgave the wickedness of my heart.’”

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the fifth degree: *The **fifth degree** of humility* is “to confess one's sins,” to which is opposed “defense of one's sins.)

The sixth degree of humility is that we be content with the poorest and worst of everything, and that in every occupation assigned him he consider himself a bad and worthless workman, saying with the Prophet, “I am brought to nothing and I am without understanding; I have become as a beast of burden before You, and I am always with You.”

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the sixth degree: *The **sixth degree** of humility* is “to think oneself worthless and unprofitable for all purposes,” to which is opposed “presumption,” whereby a man thinks himself capable of things that are above him.)

The seventh degree of humility is that we consider ourselves lower and of less account than anyone else, and this not only in verbal protestation but also with the most heartfelt inner conviction, humbling himself and saying with the Prophet, "But I am a worm and no man, the scorn of men and the outcast of the people. After being exalted, I have been humbled and covered with confusion." And again, "It is good for me that You have humbled me, that I may learn Your commandments."

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the seventh degree: The **seventh degree** of humility is "to believe and acknowledge oneself viler than all," to which is opposed "arrogance," whereby a man sets himself above others.)

The eighth degree of humility is that a person should do nothing in his vocation except what is commended by Jesus and His Church and the example of the saints.

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the eighth degree: The **eighth degree** of humility is "to do nothing but to what one is exhorted by the duties of their vocation," to which is opposed "singularity," whereby a man wishes to seem more holy than others.)

The ninth degree of humility is that we restrain our tongue and keep silence, not speaking until you are questioned. For the Scripture shows that "in much speaking there is no escape from sin" and that "the talkative man is not stable on the earth."

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the ninth degree: The **ninth degree** of humility is "to

maintain silence until one is asked,” to which is opposed “boasting”).)

The tenth degree of humility is that we be not ready and quick to laugh, for it is written, “The fool lifts up his voice in laughter.” [St. Benedict is not opposed to laughter as such but is opposed to wasting time with silliness.]

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the tenth degree: *The **tenth degree** of humility* is “not to be easily moved and disposed to laughter,” to which is opposed “senseless mirth.”)

The eleventh degree of humility is that when a person speaks he does so gently and without laughter [silliness], humbly and seriously, in few and sensible words, and that we be not noisy in our speech. It is written, “A wise man is known by the fewness of his words.” [We should avoid monopolizing conversations and being too talkative.]

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the eleventh degree: *The **eleventh degree** of humility* is “to speak few and sensible words, and not to be loud of voice”: to this is opposed “frivolity of mind,” by which a man is proud of speech.)

The twelfth degree of humility is that a person not only have humility in his heart but also by his very appearance make it always manifest to those who see you. That is to say that whether he is at the Work of God, in the Church, at the store, in the garden, on the road, in the fields or anywhere else, and whether sitting, walking, kneeling, or standing, he should always have his head bowed and his eyes toward the ground. [What St. Benedict is teaching us here is that we should

have custody of our eyes. We should avoid looking/staring at things or people that could be occasions of sin, especially today with immodesty at every corner.] *Feeling the guilt of his sins at every moment, he should consider himself already present at the dread Judgment and constantly say in his heart what the publican in the Gospel said with his eyes fixed on the earth: "Lord, I am a sinner and not worthy to lift up my eyes to heaven"; and again with the Prophet: "I am bowed down and humbled everywhere."*

Having climbed all these steps of humility, therefore, a person will presently come to that perfect love of God, which casts out fear. And all those precepts which formerly we had observed without fear, he will now begin to keep by reason of that love, with any effort, as though naturally and by habit. No longer will your motives be the fear of hell, but rather the love of Christ, good habit, and delight in the virtues which the Lord will deign to show forth by the Holy Spirit in His servant now cleansed from vice and sin.¹⁰

(St. Thomas Aquinas summarizes the twelfth degree: *For the **twelfth degree** of humility is to "be humble in heart, and to show it in one's very person, one's eyes fixed on the ground": and to this is opposed "curiosity," which consists in looking around in all directions curiously and inordinately.*)

According to **St. John of the Cross**, a person must be free from all attachments, naked in spirit

¹⁰ Fr. John A. Hardon S.J., **The Treasury of Catholic Wisdom.**

(cf. Mt. 5:3), before he or she can reach intimate union with God. St. John captures this radical teaching in his poem often called the "nada" doctrine:

*To reach satisfaction in all,
desire its possession in nothing.
To come to the knowledge of all,
desire the knowledge of nothing.
To come to possess all,
desire the possession of nothing.
To arrive at being all,
desire to be nothing.
To come to the pleasure you have not,
you must go by a way in which you enjoy not.
To come to the knowledge you have not,
you must go by a way in which you know not.
To come to the possession you have not,
you must go by a way in which you possess not.
To come to be what you are not,
you must go by a way in which you are not.
When you turn toward something,
you cease to cast yourself upon the all.
For to go from the all to the all,
you must leave yourself in the all.
And when you come to the possession of all,
you must possess it without wanting anything.
In this nakedness, the spirit finds its rest,
for when it covets nothing, nothing raises it up,
and nothing weighs it down,
because it is in the center of its humility.*

St. Anselm has a little shorter list of the degrees of humility:

Seven Degrees of Humility:

- 1) To acknowledge oneself contemptible;*
- 2) To grieve on account of this;*
- 3) To confess or admit we are so;*

- 4) *To convince our neighbor of this, that is to wish them to believe it;*
- 5) *To bear patiently that this be said of us;*
- 6) *To suffer oneself to be treated with contempt*
- 7) *To love being thus treated*

Chapter 10

Examples of Humility.

All of the saints had a great degree of humility. **St. Bernadette Soubirous**, the visionary of Lourdes, remarked: *The Blessed Virgin used me as a broom to remove dust. When the work is finished, the broom is placed behind the door and left there.* Bernadette was referring to her hidden life in a convent after Our Lady's apparitions to her. It was not the life Bernadette sought, but she embraced it out of obedience to Church authorities.

When **Bl. Francisco**, one of the three visionary children of Fatima, was preparing to make his First Holy Communion, he asked his sister, Bl. Jacinta, and his cousin, Lucia, to tell him his faults. He did not want to leave anything out of his first confession. When they reminded him of some of his defects, he gratefully accepted their corrections. Do we willingly ask for or accept

corrections or **do we instead angrily give excuses for our failing?**

St. Francis Xavier became acquainted with **St. Ignatius Loyola**, the founder of the Jesuits, while he was teaching at the University of Paris. Since Francis was a brilliant young doctor of philosophy, St. Ignatius sent him students to tutor. **St. Peter Faber**, one of the first Jesuits, protested saying: *With Francis spoiled already by his little success, do you think it is wise to add to it? When a man is full of pride and vanity already, why not leave bad enough alone? Ignatius smiled. I admit I am playing a hazardous game. But the stake is worth it. Unless I am entirely wrong, he is too genuine...to be fooled long by a little success. Or even by a big one. The sooner he succeeds, the sooner he will see the futility of succeeding.*

When Francis dreamed dreams of greatness, Ignatius was there to point reality: *Suppose you did discover a new system of philosophy as you call it. What would it mean beyond the praises of a few empty heads? Suppose the greatest success you can imagine. What would it do for you except to expose you to the one great danger, which is pride? “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and suffers the loss of his own soul?”*

It wasn't long before Francis ran out of money to finance his active social life. Ignatius stepped in with loans to help him out. Again St. Peter Faber protested: *Have it your way, of course. But I am not at all sure that was wise. On top of everything else you lend him money to continue his foolish running around. More vanity, that's all. What possible good can that do? “It can help to show*

him the vanity of vanities, perhaps,” responded Ignatius. “I know that gratitude is the rarest of virtues, but you must also remember that we are dealing with the rarest of men. Let him once wake up to realities, and you will see a return to my investment.” Ignatius was richly rewarded for his investment. When Xavier finally learned the folly of pride and vanity he threw in his lot with the Jesuits, eventually becoming a saint!

But before he did, at the end of each school year, the University of Paris held an interclass race. The undisputed champion, St. Martin de Tours, a Frenchman, found himself facing off with Francis Xavier, a young Spaniard. A close race, Xavier won it in the last seconds becoming the new champion of the school. Although Francis never bragged about his racing ability nor referred to his win over Martin de Tours, interiorly he struggled violently against prideful thoughts. **(We don't have to boast to be prideful. Thoughts also count!)** To kill his pride, without telling anyone, he began to wear tight cords of rope around his ankles since they were the source of his pride. (They had won his race.) In time the tightly tied ropes caused his skin to actually grow over them causing him extreme pain in walking. After seeing the sorry state of Xavier's ankles, St. Peter Faber confessed: *Why, he never said a word about his running, even when he was champion. How could a man be more modest? Of course, he might have had his own thoughts about it. Anyhow, God will surely accept his foolish little sacrifice.* The following day, Xavier admitted his reason for the ill-advised mortification: *Forgive me, Peter. It was on account of winning the races...at school, you know. It was foolish of me, but I had to do something.*

St. Osmund, a Norman, was named bishop of Salisbury, England, in 1078. His humility can be seen in the way he ended a dispute with...**St. Anselm**. As Anselm was journeying to Windsor, Osmund came to kneel before him, begging his forgiveness.

Many Catholic kings and emperors showed humility by offering their countries to God or to Our Lady. The first king of Portugal, Alonso I, offered Portugal to Our Lady of Clairvaux in 1147. In 1646, following the lead of the first monarch, King John IV of Portugal swore fidelity to Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception (this was prior to the dogma of Immaculate Conception). Since Mary was considered Queen and Patroness of Portugal, the Portuguese monarchs never wore the crowns. The crown was reserved exclusively for the Immaculate Virgin.

St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, born in 1779 in France, became the foundress of the Madames' of the Sacred Heart. As a child and adolescent, her older brother Louis became her teacher. When he was ordained and then sent to Paris, he asked his parents to allow Madeleine to accompany him so that he could continue her instruction, particularly in the way of sanctity. Something occurred one day that led him to scold her saying: ***You will never be a saint, Sophie!*** After the scolding, Sophie reflected on her actions: *I must set myself to be very humble.* This was her personal struggle throughout her life. Upon her deathbed she counseled her sisters: *Be very humble; for, you see, if this step of the ladder is wanting, you will never get to heaven. Please pray for me...the saints have done so much for*

souls because they made no more account of themselves than of the dust under their feet.

St. Martin de Porres exercised heroic humility. As a doctor, he cared for all the sick brothers and priests in the monastery infirmary. One of the priests resented being cared for by a mulatto. Yelling at Martin he asked: *What are you doing here, Half- Breed? You don't belong in a convent. You belong in a jail! What idiot let you into my room? I'd sooner be touched by a snake than have you put a finger on me.* Can you imagine how you would react in a situation like this? Martin reacted by falling on his knees at the bedside of the sick priest, telling him: *O Father, what keen eyes God has given you! You have seen my sinfulness at a glance! I marvel at your patience with a person such as me. You speak truly, Father. If it wasn't for the mercy of God I should indeed be in a penitentiary now.* When other brothers came to Martin's aid he told them: *It is all right. **My patient has discovered I am not worthy to kiss his hands.** I therefore kiss his feet to show that I agree with him.* Wow! That's why Martin is a saint and we are still struggling.

The patients that treated Martin with contempt and scorn, he treated with the greatest patience, attention, and love. Martin also developed the habit of bringing in the sick to the convent and caring for them in his room. The other priests and brothers complained fearing that he would bring in people with diseases that would spread throughout the monastery. His superior placed him under obedience not to bring in any more outsiders. Shortly afterwards, Martin found a bleeding Inca on the street and brought him back secretly to his room where he cured the man through a miracle. His superior was not amused

with Martin's disobedience so Martin received a stiff punishment. He humbly received the punishment in silence then faithfully carried it out. Much later the matter must have come up again. At that time Martin explained that he had to make the choice between a man-made rule and the life of a man. *Maybe I was wrong but I knew the Indian would die before I could get him to my sister's home, whereas he might live if I could take him to my cell, which was so much closer. I thought that, in this case, obedience should yield to mercy, to charity. Was I wrong, Father?* The superior replied: *You acted in good faith, my son. And perhaps you did well. At any rate, in the future, be guided by your own common sense—and your charity.*

Humility was a virtue instilled in the Martin girls. **St. Therese** recounts that one-day her mother said to her: *Therese if you will kiss the ground I will give you a halfpenny.* Therese replied, *"No thank you, Mamma, I would rather go without the halfpenny.* **Therese was too proud to kiss the ground** then, but her mother kept trying to teach her humility through different means. Years later in the convent the humility her mother worked so hard to develop bore fruit. Therese's cheerful acceptance of unfair blame along with the criticism of Mother Marie de Gonzague, her Mother Superior, found Therese kissing the ground each time she ran in to her! She writes: *I see myself subject to many frailties, but they never surprise me...it is so sweet to feel myself weak and little.* When she was dying, one of the sisters asked her for a favor. She showed impatience toward the request. Immediately she composed herself then to another sister: *How glad I am that you have seen my imperfection,* she confided to another Sister, ***I am strengthened***

by the thought that this Sister has seen my lack of virtue; I am glad to see myself as I really am. Then shortly before her death she revealed her superabundant humility: *As for me, the only light I have is to see my utter nothingness...The greatest thing that the Almighty has worked in me, is to have made me see my littleness and my powerlessness for all good."*

During the **Black Hawk War**, a large percentage of the soldiers fighting came from state militias. Farmers and craftsmen would sign up for tours of twenty days. When their time was up, they simply went home even though the war was still raging. The commanders of each unit would urge their men to reenlist but only a fourth would agree. **Abraham Lincoln**, unable to secure enough men to reenlist under him, immediately he reenlisted as a private. That was an act of humility for Lincoln to do. **Few men who hold important positions will volunteer for lesser ones.** Only men who are truly great take lesser positions. Lincoln was not the only truly great man in Elijah Iles company. In fact, his company was made up of privates who were former generals, colonels, captains, and other distinguished men.

Charles Dickens was a very humble man. Several times he was invited to perform his works before Queen Victoria. Each time he declined. **He was not interested in such an honor.** Dickens was an actor more than a writer. In fact, an audition had been arranged for him with a famous theatre company but, due to illness, he missed the tryout. By missing out on the role, he had no choice but to turn to writing. His misfortune gave the world cherished literature. After writing **A Christmas Carol**

Dickens decided to act out the book as a one man play. He wanted each character done properly so he decided to do the play himself. After his first performance, a newspaperman complained that one of the characters was not performed as he contemplated the part, so Dickens changed his adaptation to suit the newspaperman's concept saying, ***whenever I am wrong, I am indebted to the one who tells me.*** Once he wrote a hurtful criticism of Americans. Later while touring the United States he gave a speech retracting his criticism of America. He furthermore asked that this speech be included in each edition of his book entitled American Notes for prosperity.

Another very humble man was saying his rosary as he traveled by train decades ago. A college student occupied the same coach and thought the man a well-to-do peasant but out of touch with reality since he was praying the rosary. The student interrupted the man saying, *Sir, do you still believe in such outdated things? Yes, I do. Do you not?* asked the man. Laughing, the student replied, ***I do not believe in such silly things. Take my advice. Throw the rosary out through this window, and learn what science has to say about it. Science? I do not understand this science? Perhaps you can explain it to me,*** the man said humbly with some tears in his eyes. The student saw that the man was deeply moved. So to avoid further hurting the feelings of this man, he said: *Please give me your address and I will send you some literature to help you on this matter.* The man fumbled in the inside pocket of his coat and gave the boy his visiting card. On glancing at the card, the student bowed his head in shame and became silent. On the card he read: ***Louis Pasteur. Director of the Institute of Scientific Research, Paris.***

In Vietnam, it was the custom for the father to reprove his young and adult children yearly in a family session. Part of the purpose of this was to correct while the other part was to instill humility in family members. Upon the death of the father, this responsibility fell to the eldest son. But in **Cardinal Thuan's** family, as his maternal grandfather was dying, he called his family together and assigned Thuan's mother with the task of correcting her brothers on the anniversary of her father's death. It did not matter that her brothers were bishops and political figures. It was her duty to tell each of them where they had done right and where wrong. He said, *It is only natural that Hiep, who listened to me so well in my life, should speak in my name when I am gone.* Each year when Hiep addressed the family, they listened with bowed heads and invariably thanked her for her strong and reproofing words. The annual ritual...continued until, through a series of tragic events, all of Kha's sons were killed and forced into exile.

Humility was so engrained in his family that Cardinal Thuan wanted to join a contemplative order to avoid an ecclesiastic career filled with honors. His Cardinal had other plans. Later he would write: ***True leadership is founded in a spirit of humility and charity as shown in the Gospel.*** When Fr. Thuan was appointed bishop of the city of Nha Trang he was disappointed. Since the death of his uncles, he wanted to lead a life hidden from the public eye. He had seen the price one paid for honors and power, and he wanted none of it. His mother, rather than proud of her son's new honor counseled him: *A priest is a priest. The Church has honored you and given you a greater mission; but as a person, you have*

not changed. You are still a priest, and that is the most important thing to remember. In his book, **The Road of Hope**, Cardinal Thuan offers this advice for those seeking to grow in the virtue of humility: *When you assume the responsibilities of leadership, remember that even after you have achieved success in the task at hand, you should still regard yourself as a useless servant and recognize that you still have many faults and failings. And do not be surprised or annoyed when the response to your efforts is only misunderstanding and ingratitude.*

Cardinal Thuan's uncle Diem was offered the office of prime minister by the Vietnamese emperor. Diem did not immediately accept the position. Instead he wanted to be a contemplative Benedictine. In fact, he had taken preliminary vows at the Abbey of St. Andrew in Bruges, Belgium. He was still a patriot, and he had not forgotten his father's wish, but Diem had begun to think that living the life of a monk could also be a great contribution to his country. In time, like his grandfather, he left his personal wishes behind to help his country in a role he did not seek. **A proud man would have snapped up the title and position in an instant.**

Peggy Noonan, in her book on **President Ronald Reagan**, confesses: *I think his character is the least criticized of any great political leader of the century.* She explains how she searched for stories that would give a completely balanced picture of him but found it difficult to find anything negative. She said the stories are almost invariably about his graciousness, generosity, and good humor. The only negative story she did find ended in an act of humility. It appears that Reagan made a reservation at a popular restaurant

for himself but when he arrived there was no record of his reservation. Reagan lost his temper...got upset at the man, was rude and impatient and left. But the next morning, he went back to apologize to the man. Peggy, in her research, found that he was not given to conceit, didn't play with people when he had the chance, didn't show up places late because he's the most important and interesting man invited, so the fun will have to start when he gets there. When he was sworn in as President of the United States, he had his mother's Bible opened to **2 Chron. 7:14:** ***If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*** Next to this verse his mother had earlier written: *A most wonderful verse for the healing of the nations.* When Reagan entered the Oval Office for the first time, he stopped to pray first. He had the humility to know Who was the power in control of the world and it wasn't him. When he left the office eight years later he summed up that timeframe...*I never thought it was my style or the words I used that made a difference: It was the content. I wasn't a great communicator, but I communicated great things, and they didn't spring full bloom from my brow, they came from the heart of a great nation—from our experience, our wisdom and our belief in the principles that have guided us for two centuries. They called it the Reagan revolution. Well, I'll accept that, but for me it always seemed like the great Rediscovery—a rediscovery of our values and our common sense.*

Henry Ward Beecher, a famous author and minister, lived in Brooklyn, New York. It became

a proverb in the area that if you want a favor from Beecher, **kick him!** The nastier people were to Beecher, the kinder he was toward them. That's humility!

Even teens are capable of practicing humility. At a party, a girl was receiving a great deal of attention because of her newly discovered acting and singing talents. Her older brother was standing in the group listening with interest to all his sister's fans. I finally turned to him asking how school was going. We chatted for about fifteen minutes with me digging for information, until I finally pulled out of him that he had recently won two first place medals in cross country. Someone, overhearing our conversation, added that these were in addition to the collection of medals he already had. **Instead of him just soaking in our praise**, he instead turned our attention to his sister, telling us that she also had a collection of first place medals. These teens have been trained by their parents to do the best they can in everything they do, but never to brag about their successes.

St. Gemma understood this. Her sanctity is demonstrated not by the extraordinary gifts and graces that God generously bestowed on her, but **by her heroic practice of virtues-** and above all, the virtue of humility.

God chose Gemma as His spouse, uniting her to Him in a mystical and spiritual union and as the bonds between Him and Gemma grew stronger, He granted to her some of the greatest gifts that are rarely bestowed on an earthly creature. All these marvels were a wonder to those who saw them, but how many times Gemma begged God

to withdraw them and to give them to some other soul who would know better how to repay them!

The fragrance of humility was ever radiating from her. *Oh Jesus – she would say – do not let me do things that are above me. I am good for nothing. I do not know how to return all these great graces you have given me. Seek someone else who will know how to do better than I.* And to her God replied: ***You do what you can: I want to make use of you, because you are the poorest, and the weakest of all creatures.***

Sometimes God, to whose presence not even Angels are pure, showed Himself to her in the brightness of His infinite light to humble her. *How is it that You show me Yourself? What a shame for me, Oh Jesus! And you want my soul? Take it, but hide it, so that nobody may see it!*

To her spiritual director she confided: ***If you only saw how horrible my soul is! Jesus has made me see it... Oh, how much I ought to marvel at the infinite mercy of God! Yes, Jesus is indeed my Jesus! He is full of goodness to me, a miserable and most ungrateful sinner. He has wrought again the miracle of my conversion. Through the light that He has deigned to grant me, I have come to know of my baseness.***

Gemma's dearest friend, Euphemia Giannini, who later became a Passionist sister with the name of Mother Gemma says: *Fully gifted as she was, only a tiny bit of pride would have overthrown her great spiritual building. Yet, as if she had known nothing of all this, she always remained at her place, the last one, serene and tranquil. She did not perceive if people either loved her or bore her ill will; if they cared for her*

or not. Praise and blame left her indifferent. She had known the truth about herself, and she lived according to that truth, and was always very **happy of her nothingness**. She had learned to know the importance of this virtue and to love it, through a vision she had which she herself told me. Jesus showed her an immense plain covered with trees, in the midst there was a square where a stately tree stood higher than the others, and He said: These trees are virtues; the highest and stateliest one is humility.

It was this feeling of humility that once prompted her to tell my Aunt Cecilia: "...You must think that you are doing for a poor man in the street what you are doing for me, otherwise you merit nothing." The progress the holy girl made in such a fine virtue was wonderful. The greater and dearer she became to the eyes of God, the humbler she tried to be with everybody, while endeavoring always to conceal herself. I who have known her in the familiar life, can say that she thought herself as a nothing, that she would always be employed in the humblest duties, and I remember that in the last days of her illness, to the nursing Sisters of St. Camillus who had asked her which was her preferred prayer, she answered with great feeling: "My Jesus, mercy!" One could see the virtue of humility in her by her shy countenance, her collected bearing, low voice, and by her every act or word, so that **she was a model, an example and a school of humility for all of us at home**.

This feeling of her spiritual poverty made her ask the prayers of all her acquaintances. She would say: "Pray Jesus for me, and tell this also to the others: it is a great charity to pray for me", and in another letter: "If you only knew the ways that

Jesus seeks to mortify my pride. Oh how bad I am! If you only knew! Pray and make people pray to Jesus for me, so that in a short time He may help me to make amends for my many faults, and enlighten me that I may know the horrible darkness of my soul”.

How distressed she was when others asked her prayers! *Oh Jesus* she, exclaimed in an ecstasy, *if people knew me, they would not come and ask for my prayers.* To her "adoptive" mother and friend, Cecilia Giannini, she wrote: *I was so astonished that you asked me to pray for that lady. **If you did not know me you might be excused;** but you know me well enough! I say no more...what can you expect to obtain through a sinful soul that is full of defects and that is so little, if at all concerned about Jesus? And yet I obey, but do not trust me, for I am good for nothing.*

Even when Jesus was concealed to her and she keenly suffered for His absence, she never complained, so steadily convinced she was not to be worthy of the heavenly comforts, thinking to have deserved God's forsaking. With trembling hand she wrote to her director: *My Jesus at last has got tired of my coldness. Poor Jesus! He is quite right!* And when she was harassed by the devil, she humbled herself deeply, thinking she had excited the divine justice to punish her because of some hidden faults of hers. In short, everything was a reason to humble her. Gemma saw herself as a “nothing” before God, and with this humble thought always present before her she would often sign her letters *La Povera Gemma [I am poor Gemma]*¹¹

¹¹ www.stgemmaamagalani.com, *Humility of St. Gemma*

In his book *"The Life of St Gemma Galgani"* Venerable Father Germanus writes-

*"On one occasion I reprov'd and mortified her, and at the same time admonished her to be on her guard, lest she be taken unawares by pride. I also let her imagine that I had noticed some secret germ of this vice in her heart. Observe the terms in which she answered me: 'I have read your letter. Oh my God, have mercy on me! It is true, too true, that pride is in me. Listen, Father. I no sooner read that word pride than the devil seized on it in order to drive me almost to despair. I had already passed a very bad hour, and at last, driven to extremes, I ran to the crucifix and, prostrate on my face, asked pardon many times and implored of Him to let me die there and then at His feet. But this was not granted me. A few moment's later tranquility and peace suddenly returned. **Poor Jesus! Oh, how often do I not cause Thee pain!** Where am I going to end if I continue in this way? But no! I won't be so any more, and I ask your pardon, Father. Don't be angry with me: You shall see; I won't do the same thing again. Your letter said what was true, and I thank you for it on my knees. But why let me trouble you so? Don't you know that I have a thick head and little intelligence? Then forgive me, and I will never again displease you. What pain I must have given Jesus by these proud thoughts!'*

Not even she could tell what those thoughts were, but simply she believed what her director had said. Then she continued: 'Father, ask Jesus to forgive me in pity for my poor soul. Instead of being always good, I have managed to get filled with malice and iniquity and pride. Yet Jesus has given me the grace to acknowledge this wicked sin, and now He enables me to correct it. [Then she further adds,] I tremble; I fear that Jesus will

punish me because I have offended Him and displeased you. Do you know the punishment I fear; -and I shall deserve it- to be condemned not to love my Jesus any more. No, no! Let Jesus punish me in any other way that He chooses, but not this. Father, if you still find pride in me, don't delay; put an end to me; do all that is possible, but take the pride quickly from me.'

In one of her letters she wrote- "Gemma alone can do nothing. But together Gemma and Jesus can do all things!"

Another example is **General Omar Bradly**. General Bradly was a five star general, one of the highest ranking men in the American military and a legend of World War II. He was a very humble man who was always a gentleman. On one occasion during World War II, General Bradly was leading American combat troops in Sicily. He was at the front where the fiercest fighting was taking place. As the Germans heavily shelled the U.S. troops, General Bradly ran to take cover in a ditch by the side of the road. Minutes later a G.I private jumped into the ditch beside him and asked, *who is the idiot in charge of this operation?* Without a pause General Bradly replied, *whoever he is, they ought to hang him!*

Abraham Lincoln was a very humble man. One day during the Civil War, President Lincoln was visiting the wounded in a hospital in Washington D.C. He was walking through one of those hospital doors that swing both ways when a big burly young man rushed through the same door at the same time, going in the opposite direction. As he knocked President Lincoln down he didn't recognize him since newspapers

then rarely printed pictures. The young man standing over the President insulted him by saying, *Why don't you look at where you're going you big long lengthy string bean?* President Lincoln stood up, brushed himself off then inquired, *Young man what is troubling you on the inside?*

Another great example for our time is **Bl. Pope John Paul II**. Did you know that he went to confession every day or at least every other day? Each time he visited a foreign country when he deplaned he would get down on his knees and kiss the ground. On Holy Thursday, at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, in addition to washing the feet of twelve individuals he would also kiss their feet. This is great humility.

Chapter 11.

Examples of Pride.

Scripture is filled with examples of pride. We have the pride of Satan, Adam and Eve, the builders of the tower of Babel, the Israelites, King Saul, even the apostles who argued over who was the greatest. St. John the Baptist was killed by the pride of Herod. Herod was glowing over his generous offer to his niece until she demanded the head of John on a platter. Suddenly

Herod found himself **trapped in the vice of human respect**. While he did not want to kill John he likewise did not want to look foolish in the eyes of his banquet guests. He must have thought that it was better to be a murderer than a fool!

Another example of pride is found in **Franciscan Roger Bacon**. Bacon was a brilliant man capable of great sanctity but his pride got in the way. Born in 1214, he hungered for truth throughout his life. When he was thirty-seven he became a Franciscan in the hopes of satisfying his intellectual hunger, but the meekness of St. Francis of Assisi did not sink very deep into his heart: for Bacon lashed out at all whom he suspected of upholding wrong opinions. St. Albert the Great came under fire, as did St. Bonaventure, the master general of his Order. Roger caused trouble everywhere, even among his own brethren. Then, he went so far as to cast **the horoscope of Christ**, maintaining that God could not have saved the world except by the virtue of certain heavenly conjunctions! It took the intervention of two popes to save him from himself. Yet he was a brilliant man. There is scarcely a science which Bacon left untouched: mathematics, optics, and medicine were but three...His book, ***The Secrets of Art and Nature***, is filled with visions of the future—steamboats, railways, balloons, cranes, submarines, microscopes, telescopes, and the terrible effects of gunpowder. In optics, long before Galileo and Newton, he formulated the laws of the reflection and refraction of light. It was he who suggested to Pope Clement IV a reform of the Julian calendar, though this was not done until three centuries later...this great scholar...helped to found the rational method...Though a Christian

genius, Roger Bacon carried within himself forces that were hostile to his faith. If he made it into heaven it was in spite of his brilliance because we know **his brilliance would not make him a saint!**

One of the most puzzling events in life is to see people with little wisdom, few virtues, little common sense, no humility, and in many cases little intelligence achieve high positions in business, politics, and other positions of authority. Could God plan this to teach those under these people patience and long suffering? Whatever the reason, history is filled with such examples.

Brigadier General William Hull, during the War of 1812, was one such example. Prior to the declaration of war, Hull commissioned a schooner to take excess baggage and nonessential personnel up north toward Detroit. His son, not known for sobriety or intelligence, packed up his father's papers, orders, notes, correspondence, accounts, and field reports. Since it was the end of the month, his son also "thoughtfully" included the up-to-date muster rolls for the whole army, company by company. A delegation of officers asked Hull to reconsider doing this since war may have been declared already and the schooner could be captured by the British who also prowled the lake. **Hull was too proud to listen to advice or reconsider.** The officers were correct. War had been declared and the British captured all of Hull's orders and information on the strength of the U.S. army. It was also from his correspondence that the British learned of his morbid fear of the Indians. Hull, when he learned that war was declared, neglected to inform Fort Mackinac, Fort Dearborn and Fort Wayne. He

was too upset over the loss of his private papers to the British due to his pride, to focus on his responsibilities. This left the three forts vulnerable to attacks. When Hull finally wrote to the forts ordering them to prepare to defend themselves, he neglected to send the orders. If the commander of Fort Dearborn had received that order there would not have been an evacuation of the fort that resulted in a massacre.

At the Massacre of Fort Dearborn in Chicago the commander of the fort refused to heed the advice and information given to him by the Indians, Indian agents and the traders. The fort had enough food, provisions, and arms to out last any Indian attack. In fact, before they vacated the fort, the soldiers spent the whole night disposing of the arms so they wouldn't fall into Indian hands. The commander refused to believe the Indians would attack after the whites left the fort. It was pride alone that was responsible for the massacre. Then once the attack began, the commander again refused to heed the advice of friendly Indians and Indian fighters on how to repulse the attack. He insisted on doing things his way. **His pride cost most of the lives under his protection although he personally escaped death.** While the prideful cause suffering and death to others, they seem to have a knack for surviving.

Meanwhile, up in Detroit, where Hull was snugly in control, a small force of British demanded that he surrender Detroit. Initially flabbergasted at the absolute nerve of the inferior force demanding the surrender of a superior force safe within its fortifications, the American troops burst into laughter...But then, when Hull remained closeted with the two British officers...the laughter

dwindled away and was replaced by a faint but growing apprehension. Surely the general couldn't possibly even consider such a demand! Not only did he consider it, he surrendered against the strong advice of his officers. **Look at the high cost of pride!**

Prior to the start of the Black Hawk War, **Illinois Governor Reynolds** decided to make a national name for himself. He had been ordered to raise a state militia then join his militia to the regular U.S. army under General Atkinson who would command both. Reynolds and his men were eager for action so Reynolds disobeyed orders, drew up orders as though they came from the U.S. army, then had a brigadier major sign them. He lacked the virtues of obedience, sincerity, and humility. It was his militia that triggered the Black Hawk War when the drunken soldiers opened fire on the surrendering Indians.

In May of 1863, the Civil War was at its peak. One of the top Union military leaders, **General Joseph Hooker (Fighting Joe Hooker)**, gained a reputation for being proud, profane, and arrogant. He was a heavy drinker, a notorious womanizer, and a blasphemer with a violent temper. He allowed every kind of immorality to go on inside and outside his camp. He permitted a small army of prostitutes and gamblers to follow the Union Army. Hooker was a godless man. The night before the battle of Chancellorsville, General Hooker gathered his generals together for a war council at which he bragged how he was going to defeat General Lee and the South. He claimed he would show them no mercy saying, *let God have mercy on them because I will have none*. Then he shocked his generals by raising his hand, he pointed his finger towards heaven and said,

Almighty God, almighty God could not stop me from winning the victory tomorrow.

Later that evening General Winfield Scott Hancock went back to his tent and wrote a letter to his wife asking, *how can we ever hope to win under a commander who would dare to utter such blasphemy?*

General Hooker planned to attack the Confederates the next day, but when morning came he was the one surprised. General Lee attacked him first. Fighting Joe Hooker was taken by surprise. The officers on his staff said he just froze. He was paralyzed with fear and indecision. For most of the day he didn't even leave his headquarters to lead the battle. By the time he did come out it was too late. The Southerners had pulled off one of the most spectacular flanking movements in military history. They gave the federal army a bloody beating and a humiliating defeat. President Abraham Lincoln immediately fired General Hooker in disgrace. Hooker had to live with the shame of that blasphemy and defeat for the rest of his life. This is a lesson for the proud and the arrogant.

The history of the Church shows instances where the virtue of humility was lacking. In the 16th century there was a religious order in Italy called **The Brothers of Humility**, who called themselves the Humilioty. At one time they were a great order. But by the 16th century they were in decline because they had grown lax and corrupt. Their order was dying. They were down to their last 6 members. These six brothers were left with vast land holdings, houses, and money, making them very wealthy. They began to live extravagant life styles which became a scandal

and an embarrassment to the Church. **St. Charles Borromeo**, Bishop of Milan, wanted to reform these brothers. He told them that they would have to dispose of their great wealth and vast holdings. Unwilling to obey St. Charles, the Humilioty hired an assassin to murder St. Charles. With a pistol, hit man took a shot at St. Charles while he was standing at the altar offering Mass. The bullet missed passing under the arm of St. Charles and going through his chasuble. That was the end of the Brothers of Humility. Not very humble were they?

In our own time the virtue of humility is lacking greatly, especially among our leadership. During the terrible scandals of 2002 an Archbishop had to resign when it was discovered that he had paid out a half a million dollars of Church money to silence his scandal. When confronted by reporters about his misuse of Church funds the Archbishop said, *well in all my years of fund raising I brought in a whole lot more money than that.* **No humility there, huh?**

Remember the example that Jesus used in scripture of **the tax collector and the Pharisee**? The tax collector was justified because his eyes fell to the floor and he would not even raise his head in prayer. He pounded his breast and said, *God have mercy on me a sinner.* His sins were forgiven. The Pharisee raised his head and said, thank you God that you didn't make me like the rest of these bums. He was not justified.

Probably one of the most famous symbols of the vice of pride is the ring in the book, ***Lord of the Rings***, by J.R.R. Tolkien. Joseph Pearce, writing on the book, explains that *the character of Gollum is debased by his attachment to the Ring,*

the symbol of the sin of pride. The possessor of the Ring is possessed by his possession and, in consequence is dispossessed of his soul. The wearer of the Ring always becomes invisible to those that are good but at the same time become more visible to the eyes of evil.

Chapter 12.

Prayers and Litany's for Humility.

A New Year's Resolution Prayer

Lord you know better than I know myself that I am growing older and will some day be old.

Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to try to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Make me thoughtful but not moody, helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it at all—but You know, Lord that I want friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details—give me wings to get to the point.

*Seal my lips on my aches and pains.
I dare not ask for improved memory but a
growing humility and a lessening of my arrogant
confidence when my memory seems to clash with
the memories of others.*

*Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I
may be mistaken.*

*Keep me reasonably sweet. I do want to be a
saint—but a sour old person is one of the
crowning works of the devil.*

*Give me the ability to see good things in
unexpected places and talents in unexpected
people. Give me the grace to tell them so. Amen.*

LITANY OF HUMILITY

O Jesus, meek and humble of heart ... hear me.

*From the desire of being esteemed ...
 deliver me, O Jesus.*

From the desire of being loved ...

From the desire of being extolled ...

From the desire of being honored ...

From the desire of being praised ...

From the desire of being preferred to others ...

From the desire of being consulted ...

From the desire of being approved ...

From the fear of being humiliated ...

From the fear of being despised ...

From the fear of suffering rebukes ...

From the fear of being calumniated ...

From the fear of being forgotten ...

From the fear of being ridiculed ...

*From the fear of being wronged ...
From the fear of being suspected ...*

*That others may be loved more than I ...
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be esteemed more than I ...
That, in the opinion of the world, others may
increase and I may decrease ...
That others may be chosen and I set aside ...
That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...
That others may be preferred to me in everything ...
That others may become holier than I, provided
that I may become as holy as I should ...*

***O Jesus, grant me:**
knowledge and love of my nothingness,
the continuous memory of my sins,
awareness of my selfishness,
the abhorrence of all vanity,
the pure intention of serving God,
perfect submission to the Will of the Father,
a true spirit of sorrow for sin,
blind obedience to my superiors,
holy hatred of all envy and jealousy,
promptness in forgiving offenses,
prudence in keeping silent about others' matters,
peace and charity toward everyone,
ardent desire for contempt and humiliations,
the yearning to be treated like you,
and the grace of knowing how to accept it in a
holy way.*

*Holy Mary, Queen, Mother, and Teacher of the
humble ... **pray for us.**
Saint Joseph, protector and model of the
humble ...
Saint Michael, the Archangel, who was the first
to bring down the arrogant ...
All Saints, sanctified by the spirit of humility ...*

V. Let us pray,

Lord Jesus Christ, though being God, you did humble yourself even unto death—and death on the Cross—in order to be a constant example for us to confound our pride and self-love. Grant us the grace to imitate Your example, so that by humbling ourselves as befits our wretchedness here on earth, we may be exalted and enjoy You in heaven forever. R. Amen.

Morning Prayer for Humility

I have been humiliated to the dust, dear Lord, and I ask for courage to benefit from what You sent me. Teach me to know that great graces cannot be obtained without humility, so those who are to have them must be humiliated, to be made worthy by humility to receive the blessings that you withhold from the proud. Having experienced the present humiliation may I trust it as a sure sign that You have some special grace in store for me. Amen.

Humble Trust Prayer for Evenings

*In every need let me come to You with humble trust saying ... **Jesus, help me.**
In all my doubts, perplexities, and temptations ...
In hours of loneliness, weariness, and trials ...
In the failure of my plans and hopes ...
In disappointments, troubles, and sorrows ...*

*When others fail me and Your grace alone can assist me ...
When I throw myself on Your tender love as a father and savior ...*

*When my heart is cast down by failure at seeing
no good come from my efforts ...*

*When I feel impatient and my cross irritates
me ...*

*When I am ill and my head and hands cannot
work and I am lonely ...*

*Always, always, in spite of weakness, falls, and
shortcomings of every kind,*

Jesus, help me and never forsake me. Amen

Prayer for Humility

*Sacred Heart of Jesus, I ask for the grace of
deep humility, in the spirit of the third degree:*

*To avoid speaking of self and trying to attract
attention;*

*To bear criticism without being discouraged or
sulking;*

*To accept advice when given, to ask and follow
the same when needed;*

*To put myself last, and be content that others are
preferred to me;*

*To acknowledge my faults and shortcomings
frankly, both interiorly and exteriorly.*

*Help me, dear Lord, to live out the ideal set
before me by St. Ignatius, of doing in all things
the opposite to what worldly people do, rejecting
with horror what they seek after, and eagerly
seeking what they reject, in order to become
more like You, who are meek and humble of
heart. Amen.*

Prayer for the Grace to be Humble

O God, who resists the proud and gives grace to the humble, grant us the grace of true humility, of which Your only begotten Son showed forth in Himself an example to the faithful, that we may never, puffed up by pride, incur Your anger, but that, submissive to Your will, we may receive the gifts of Your grace. Amen

Prayer Before reading this Book on Humility

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order that I may know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard your voice, and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later...tomorrow." Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what you want, because you want it, as you want it, when you want it, where you want it. Amen

Prayer for Help to Keep Fighting

Preserve me, I beg You, O most merciful God, from the cares of this life, that I may not get too entangled by them; from the many necessities of the body, that I may not get trapped by pleasures, and all the things that will weigh down my soul, lest being overcome by troubles I be cast down. O my God, who is unspeakable sweetness, turn into bitterness for me all the comforts of the flesh which withdraws me from the love of things that are eternal, and wickedly pulls me into itself, by

putting before me a certain present delightful good, that will only last a little while. Oh Lord, do not let flesh and blood have its victory with me, let it not overcome me; let not the world and its temporary glory deceive me. Give me fortitude that I may stand my ground; patience that I may endure, and a lot of endurance that I may preserve. Amen

Prayer Before Personal Meditation

My Lord and my God, I believe that Thou art everywhere, that Thou art within me, that Thou seest me, that Thou hearest me. I adore Thee with profound humility and reverence. I ask Thy pardon for my sins. And, though I am unworthy to come before Thee, trusting in Thy infinite mercy, I ask for Thy help to make fruitful this time of prayer, which I offer to Thy greater Glory. Amen.

Prayer After Personal Meditation

My Lord and my God, I thank Thee for all the good thoughts, affections, and resolutions that Thou hast inspired in me during this time of prayer. I offer them to Thy Greater Glory and I ask for Thy grace to put them into practice. Help me fulfill Thy will. Amen

Chapter 13.

Personal Meditations on Humility

For daily meditations follow this guide:

I. Preparation.

1. If possible kneel where you do your meditation.
2. If possible do your meditation before the Blessed Sacrament.
3. Begin the meditation by saying the prayer- "*Prayer before personal Meditation*" located on page 116 in Chapter 12.
4. Be aware that God is watching you and listening to you.
5. With your imagination, do a mental representation of the place where that meditation would happen or where you see yourself in that meditation. For example you could, on the first meditation, imagine yourself standing before the throne of God; or, if the meditation is on the Incarnation of Jesus, you could do a mental representation of the Nativity. This will help your imagination from wondering off while you meditate.
6. Ask God for the special graces you want to obtain from this meditation.

II. Body of the meditation

1. Reading – Read the text attentively, pausing to listen to God's voice in each word. Read only one meditation per day.
2. Intellect – You have to reason and think slowly about the truth or mystery upon which you are meditating. For example:
 - . What should I consider about this subject?
 - . How should I behave from now on?
 - . What conclusions should I draw for my life?
 - . What difficulties will I have to endure?
 - . What reasons do I find to conclude this?
 - . What means will I use to overcome these obstacles?
 - . How have I behaved on this point?
3. Will – This is the most important part of the meditation. Exercise your will through pious affections, petitions, and resolutions:
 - a) Affections of: thanksgiving; praise; humility; love of God; compassion; adoration; offering; repentance; unlimited trust.
 - b) Petitions: implore God for the necessary graces for our perseverance, our salvation, and our sanctification.
 - c) Resolutions: We should judge our prayer has been good if it leads us to live a better Christian life; otherwise, it is a failure. Because of this, we must make some resolutions, which must be practical, concrete, that we can put into practice on the same day, having confidence in God's help.

III. Dialogue

Simple and familial conversation with God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, St. Joseph, Our Lady or any saint. This dialogue should be done with total confidence, as when a friend talks to another, letting the heart expound itself, speak at length, and pour itself out.

IV. Conclusion: say the prayer- “Prayer After *Personal Meditation*” found in Chapter 12.

Meditations:

- A person of prayer shows his humility as one who acknowledges his own profound wretchedness and the greatness of God. He addresses and adores God as one who expects everything from Him and nothing from himself.
- Consider the humility of the Son of God, God Himself, who came down from heaven into the chaste womb of a humble Virgin. Pray for true humility of heart. Make every effort to root out, as far as possible, all pride, as well as, vainglory and self-satisfaction. Keep ever before your mind your countless faults and your little progress in virtue, and holiness.
- Through vanity, many people run a “black market” to acquire their own artificial personal worth.

- Jesus said, *He that follows me, walks not in darkness*. We must imitate the life of Christ, and His virtues, if we would be truly enlightened, and delivered from all blindness of heart. This should be the primary study in our lives, to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ. We frequently hear the Gospel and are little affected by it because we do not have the spirit of Christ within us. The man, who completely understands the words of Christ, must work to make his whole life conformable to that of Christ.
- Chastity is the humility of the flesh, which subjects itself to the spirit. Exterior mortification is the humility of the senses. God grants holy purity when it is asked for with humility.
- Consider how humble Christ was to be baptized by John the Baptist, as though He were a sinner in need of cleansing—He, the one who is perfect and free from every stain, gives mankind all the graces necessary for salvation. Humble yourself and be submissive to all mortals, even your inferiors who wish to instruct or correct you.
- Do you feel lonely? Does everything annoy you? Must you always complain? This is because you are isolated by your selfishness. Come closer to God.
- There is among us no place for the lukewarm. If you humble yourself, Christ will enkindle in you again the fire of His love. You are not one to give in!

You're not just the ordinary Joe! You—a sheep-like follower? You have to realize that you were born to be a leader, a saint!

- Humility, we must never forget, is founded on the truth. It really is a matter of truth. It observes the rule of right reason according to which a person has a true opinion of himself. This true opinion is the knowledge of our inherent nothingness. When the humble man looks upon himself in relation to God, he can in all truthfulness choose the lowest place, as our Lord told those who were invited to the feast to do.
- What good would it do you if you could give a magnificent sermon on the Trinity if you lack the virtue of humility and therefore are displeasing to the Blessed Trinity! Magnificent words do not make a person holy and just. Only a virtuous life makes us pleasing and dear to God. It is better to have contrition than know its definition. If you know the Bible by heart, memorized the encyclopedia, can quote all the great minds of the Church, what would this profit you without the love of God, His grace, and forgiveness?
- If a friend of yours points out to you traits which make you hard to live with, and you are convinced that he is mistaken, or you think he *just does not understand me*, this is a manifestation of pride on your part. If you remain in this prideful state you will never change. You lack the decision to seek holiness above all else.

- Have you ever thought of how humbly Jesus makes known the sadness of His heart to the apostles? He permits them to feel and see His human weakness. Do not be bold or arrogant in the face of temptations. Instead, humble yourself by seeking and following the sound advice and wisdom of others.
- When we have faith, our minds become humble. We renounce our own judgment and submit to the final decision and authority of the Church. When we are obedient, we humble our will, which is given up to the will of another, for the sake of Truth.
- Thank God for the very special favor, for giving you the feeling that you are nothing.
- Never assume that everything people say has some hidden meaning. By being so touchy you are limiting the action of the grace of God.
- Do not be concerned about who is on your side and who is not. Your only concern should be that God is with you in everything you do. If you have a good, clear conscience, God will sufficiently defend you. For he that God helps, no man's wickedness can hurt. Maintain your peace by quietly suffering, and you will, without doubt, see that the Lord will help you. He already knows the time and the way of delivering you. Therefore, you have to leave it to His

care. Many times it is very good for keeping us humble that others know and rebuke our faults. When we are humiliated because of our defects, we then more easily satisfy others, and quickly settle those who are angry with us. To the humble God reveals His secrets, and sweetly draws and invites them to Himself. When a humble person receives a scolding, he can maintain interior peace because his eyes are fixed on God, and not on the world. Don't think you have made any progress until you see yourself an inferior to all.

- Why is your **manly spirit** so crushed when you find yourself caught in gossip, and scandalous talk, which you really don't understand, and which you never wished to be a part of? Suffer the humiliation that this type of situation causes you and let this experience compel you to think a little more.
- Have you given much thought to the humility of Christ when He was prostrate on the ground, praying to His Father with tears? He burned with such great love for us that He sweated blood to make satisfaction for us, although He Himself is the all-powerful and all-Holy God. In every challenging situation in life turn to Him in humble prayer. Out of love for Him spare yourself in nothing.
- We have a natural desire to know things, to learn, but if we do not have the fear of God in us, what does all this knowledge profit us? An average man that serves

God is better than a proud philosopher, who neglecting himself, considers the great plan of heaven in his studies. The man that knows himself well is mean in his own eyes and is not entertained with being praised by men. Get rid of the excessive desire of knowing: you will find too much distraction and deceit there. Those who learn many things have great desires to look smart, and to be called a genius or very intellectual. This is the vice of vanity. We can learn many things, most of which will benefit our soul very little or not at all. People who give all their attention and time to things that will not serve his salvation are very unwise. Using many words does not satisfy the soul; but a good life gives ease to the mind; and a pure conscience will have a great confidence in God. The more and better you know the more heavy will be your judgment unless your life is also more holy.

- If you are depressed when you see your faults and vices or are embarrassed when others notice them too, you have no foundation. You lack humility! Ask for real humility!!
- Consider how humbly Christ surrenders His will to the will of His Father, with the words: *Not My will, but Your will be done*; and how humbly again Jesus is willing to be strengthened by the consolation of an angel. Bow down, therefore before the lovable will of God, and when things seem to fall down upon you, interiorly or exteriorly, look for

grace and peace from on high with a humble and submissive heart.

- If you have convinced yourself that you know many things and understand them well enough, you better also convince yourself that there are many more things of which you are very ignorant and have no understanding. Don't be arrogant and high-minded but instead recognize your ignorance. Love to be unknown and esteemed as nothing. This is the greatest science and most profitable lesson, to really know and despise ourselves. Never have any opinion of yourself, but always think well of and praise others. This is wisdom.
- Are you worried about the false or critical things people might say about you? It would be a lot worse for you if God left you. Keep on doing good. Don't look back.
- After the Son of God, no creature in the world is as exalted as Mary, His mother. This is because no creature in the world ever humbled himself as much as she did. The more Mary saw herself enriched with God's gifts and graces, the more humble she became. She never forgets that everything she has is a gift from God. Recall how Mary referred all to God in the Cantic *The Magnificat*: *My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid...*(**Luke** 1:47-55) Part of humility is serving others. Mary's first

action after the annunciation was to go to help her cousin Elizabeth in her confinement. We do not read of Mary being present on Palm Sunday when her Son was received by the people with honor and acclaim. We do read that she was present at the way of the cross and when her Son was shedding His blood on the cross. She did not shrink from the mocking of the people and the soldiers. She did not flinch at being looked upon as the Mother of Him who was condemned to die as a criminal.

- If you see someone openly sin or commit some serious crime, you should not think of yourself as better. Think instead, *There but for the grace of God go I*. We are all weak and capable of committing the most heinous crimes. See that you think that there is no one weaker than yourself. To think otherwise is to be proud.
- How many pains, dishonor, and disgraces are we willing to suffer for worldly loves? Can you really say and believe that you love Christ when you are not willing—for Him—to suffer the same kind of humiliations? Flee from this false humility, which is comfort seeking.
- St. Alphonsus Liguori insists, *Nothing is difficult to the humble. No, for the humble, trusting in God, act with the strength of the divine arm, and therefore they effect whatever they wish.*

- Why are you so proud? What are you so proud of? Every good thing you do or anything that moves you comes from God and God alone, so act like it!
- Don't trust in your own knowledge, nor in the cleverness of any man alive, but rather trust in the grace of God, who helps the humble and humbles the ones who trust in themselves. Do not exalt in riches, if you have them, neither in friends, because they are powerful and influential, but only in God, who gives all things, and desires to give Himself above all things.
- Doing bodily mortifications is difficult and repulsive to our comfort-seeking. Yet the physical feeling of mortifications is nothing compared with the wickedness of your soul. The truth is that God is asking more of you and you can't bring yourself to give in to Him. Humble yourself. Do you think that repulsiveness would still remain in your flesh and in your soul if you did all that you could? Mediocrity is not an option in our love for God. Our walk in this life as Christians is an uphill battle towards heaven. If you stop moving forward you don't just stand still, you start moving backwards.
- All our works must be guarded and accompanied by humility in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end; because if we are a little bit careless and allow vanity or arrogance to come in, all

will be carried away by the wind of pride.

- Without reverence for God, humility cannot exist. Reverence for God is the very source and origin of humility. *Humility is caused by divine reverence.* When a mortal is confronted by the Lord or when he kneels before the tabernacle and dwells prayerfully on the divine perfections—the holiness, the power, the immensity of God—he sees the overwhelming contrast between God and himself. He recognizes his absolute inferiority. He acknowledges his entire dependence on God.
- Do not boast of your physique or beauty which is swiftly spoiled and disfigured by a little sickness or accident.
- One saint said: *It is a detestable disorder for a man to see God become a little child, and yet still want to appear great in this world.*
- When you do penance, you bury your negligence, offenses, and sins in the deep hole dug by your humility, just like the farmers who bury rotten fruits, twigs, and leaves at the foot of the tree that they came from. Then what was unfruitful, what was even harmful, becomes a fertilizer nourishing new growth. Learn from your mistakes and from the times you fall. Begin a new movement from death to life.

- Do not be proud of your own works for the judgment of God is different from the judgment of men. Many times that which displeases God is pleasing to men. If you do anything good, think better of what others have done and in that way preserve humility.

- Acknowledge the full extent of your past miseries, your present unworthiness, and the possibility of future infidelity: **What you were:** A few years ago, you were non-existent, and of yourself you would remain so. Your utter nothingness of yourself should make you truly deem yourself as of no account. The remembrance of your sins, imputable to you alone, should give you a most abject notion of what you were; the manner in which you treated God should make you despise yourself. If others slight you, the thought of your sins will enable you to bear it; it is very little for your sins. **What you are:** You cannot take one step toward God without Him; you are incapable of a good thought without His grace. You offend God by your present daily infidelities and your ingratitude. Your best actions are very faulty. **What you may become:** The source of your past sins still exists in you. It gave rise to them before, and it can do so again. The same cause produces the same effects. Unless God gives you grace, you are fully capable of relapsing and of becoming even worse than you were. How can you be proud?

- Find a good and holy spiritual director and go often with great humility, as a sincere little child. God will speak to you there teaching you how to possess happiness and joy on earth and in eternity.
- The Christ that you see is not the real Jesus. It is, however, only the pitiful image that your foggy and blurry eyes are able to form. Purify yourself. Make your sight 20/20 with humility and penance. Then the pure light of Love will not fail you. And only then will you have a perfect vision. What you will see then will be really Him!
- It will not do you any harm to think of yourself as the worst of all; but it will damage you very much to prefer yourself before anyone.
- Only the ignorant are stubborn: the very ignorant are very stubborn.
- Try to make this a firm and determined resolution: to remember that sometimes you may receive honors and praise or sometimes there will be things that bring you shame and embarrassment. The key is to know that the shame and embarrassment are yours, the praise and the glory are God's.
- What is the secret of being effective and happy? Uproot your self-love and plant in its place love for Jesus Christ.

- It will be more profitable and safe for you to hide the grace of devotion and not to exalt yourself. Exalting in the gift of devotion would be considered spiritual pride. Don't speak much of it, don't consider it much, but instead to despise yourself even more and be afraid of it, as given to one so unworthy.
- I hear you saying that you follow Him, but in one way or another you always make sure that it is *you* who do things, according to *your* plans, relying on *your* strength alone. Did our Lord say, without *Me you can't do very much? Without Me you might not be as effective.* No! He insisted, *without Me you can do **nothing**.*
- Pride kills the virtue of charity. You must pray for humility daily, because as you get older, pride will grow like wildfire if it's not contained and extinguished in time. The secret is to love with great generosity.
- Jesus' humility is great: in Bethlehem, in Nazareth, on Calvary. But greater still is His humiliation in the Sacred Host: even more than in the stable, more than in Nazareth, more than on the Cross.
- Humility demands moderation in self-esteem and in desire of esteem. In human nature, there is a tendency toward self-esteem. It is a lawful and useful tendency: a man must esteem himself if he desires to live properly. But it is a tendency that has to be watched, because if carried too far, it develops into pride.

There must be self-esteem, but there must also be self-contempt.

- It is better to have little knowledge with humility and a weak understanding, than greater treasures of learning with self-conceit. The best thing for you is to have less rather than much, which may fill you up with pride. Sadly, those who enjoy privilege thanks to intelligence abuse it by humiliating those who are less fortunate. They only show their own foolishness and pride.
- When you hear the applause for some triumph of yours, listen also for the sound of laughter in your ears provoked by one of your failures. Meditate on how it will be when this present light shall leave you.
- All the time we hear me, me, me. You will never be effective unless it changes to Him, Him, Him. You cannot pretend to follow Christ, if the only thing you revolve around is yourself.
- Man when he is full of pride drives away his guardian angel, who is near him and who begs him to be holy. When the guardian angel is offended by man and withdraws from him, a spirit of darkness, a stranger, comes in and from that time on the man does not care anymore about holiness.
- Self-love is the most dangerous thing to you in this life. St. Matthew tells us if our love is pure, simple and well

ordered, we will not be captive to anything. Don't desire for the things that you cannot have. Don't seek things that may curb or rob you of your inward freedom.

- Why do you make yourself suffer and be overwhelmed with useless cares? Be resigned only to His good pleasure and you will suffer no loss. If you seek this or that, or would be here or there for the sake of your own interest or your own will you shall never be at rest, nor free from worry, for in everything you will find some defect, and in every place there will be someone that will make you mad or get on your nerves.
- A humble man is never hurried, thoughtless or disturbed. He remains calm at all times. Nothing can ever surprise, disturb or shock him. He suffers neither fear nor change in times of suffering and persecution. All his joy and gladness are in what is pleasing to the Lord.
- If we are to be understood by simple souls, we must humble our intellect. If we are to understand the poor or sick we have to humble our hearts. In this way, on our knees in both body and mind, it is easy to reach Jesus. It will lead us to make 'a nothing' of ourselves in order to let God build on our nothingness.
- You can say that you have given yourself to God in complete obedience, but your obedience is not worthy of the name

unless you are ready to leave your most successful, personal work whenever someone in authority asks you. St. Ignatius of Loyola was asked how long it would take him to get over losing his most prized possession here on earth (for him it was his beloved order of Jesuits that he founded). He said, *just give me five minutes in prayer and I'll be fine*. How long would it take you?

- When you are impatient with a disordered anxiousness to climb up the professional ladder, don't try to cover up your self-love under the appearance of "serving souls". It is a lie when we insist that we can't miss opportunities that can be very profitable. When tempted in such a manner, turn your eyes back to Jesus. He is *the Way, the truth and the light*. Jesus gives us the perfect example of someone who had opportunities to get ahead in His public life but instead He fulfilled the will of His Father according to His Father's timetable. He was obedient. At times your work may seem obscure and lacking in excitement but remain faithful to your duties. God has a plan for your life written in the ***Book of Life***. Be patient, obedient and faithful as it unfolds.
- You must learn how to have a real self-esteem, saying daily: *Lord I know I am not worthy of Your comfort or any spiritual favors; therefore I know that You deal justly with me when You leave me poor and deserted. For if I could fill the ocean with my tears I would still be*

unworthy of Your comfort. I have deserved nothing but stripes and punishment, because I have grievously and often offended You. In many things and in many ways I sinned against You. But You are good and merciful. O, God, what have I done that You should rain Your heavenly comfort on me? I can remember nothing of good that I have ever done. What I do remember is that I was always prone to vice and very slow and lazy to make corrections, to improve. What have I deserved for my sins but hell and everlasting fire? I cannot say anything else but I have sinned. O, Jesus, I have sinned. Have mercy on me, and forgive my offenses.

- Humility is the only virtue no devil can imitate. If pride made demons out of angels, there is no doubt that humility could make angels out of demons.
- God told St. Catherine. *I am He Who Is, you are she who is not.* St. Catherine later said: *The one sole thing in me in which I glory is that I see in myself nothing in which I can glory.*
- When you really live charity and generosity, there is no time left for self-seeking. There is no room left for pride. The only thing we will find is opportunities to serve.
- To acquire humility, self-knowledge is absolutely essential. No man can be humble if he does not know himself thoroughly. We should beg Our Lord

frequently for this precious gift of knowing ourselves. If we fail in knowing ourselves, we will fail in our knowledge of Him. These two are closely connected. You can't really come to a firm grasp of who God is if you don't know yourself. And you can't really know yourself if you have not grasped your own nothingness.

- You are full of concern because you do not love, as you should. Haven't you noticed that you get annoyed with everything and everyone for something? And the evil one does all in his power to get you to lose your temper. Afterwards, of course, you feel very humiliated in front of others because however much of "a man" you are, you were just acting like a vain and brainless puppet, moved by Satan's strings. This is why you must take extreme measures to attack quickly this beast that is within.
- Never give your opinion if you're not asked for it, not even if you think it is the best. Remember the gate of Heaven is very, very low; only the humble can enter it.
- When we lack interior consolations we must continue on with our humble work. In this journey of faith, more than likely you will not always have a strong desire for virtue or experience high degrees of meditation and prayer. You will at times descend to the lower things by reason of your fallen nature. Bear the burdens of this life, even against your will, and daily

annoyances with cheerfulness. Consolations were sweet but now you have to make a decision. Were you in love with the consolations of God, or are you in love with the God of consolations?

- God will lift up those who carry out His Will in the very same manner in which He humbled them.
- All you do is talk and criticize. You think: *Without me, nothing gets done properly*. Don't get angry if you get told that you're acting like an arrogant peacock.
- You must have a holy hatred for showing off. Reject vanity. Fight against pride every day, at every moment. The proud suffer many little embarrassments, which their self-love magnifies ten times, while to everyone else it remains unnoticed. The humble accept these "humiliations" as part of life. You will always be the last one to notice your pride, while others have long endured it.
- If a man is proud and is observed to be haughty and arrogant they will say of him: *He wears the same skin as the devil – pride*. You should have a great desire to wrap yourself in the virtue taught by Jesus Christ when He said, *I am meek and humble of heart*.
- Isn't it a great thing to know you are nothing before God, because that is how things really are. The higher you exalt

yourself, the harder and more dangerous the impact when you fall.

- Since pride has hurled Lucifer into the abyss, and the self-abasement of the Son of God has led to His exaltation above the heavens, humility, whatever men may now say, has lost nothing of its inestimable value. It is still the indispensable foundation of every durable edifice whether spiritual or social. Humility is the foundation, without which the other virtues, and even charity, the queen of them all, could not subsist a single day.
- Humility, a deep-rooted conviction of our own misery and worthlessness, cannot please God unless it is joined by esteem for all others whom we treat with respect. We should willingly yield in all matters which do not involve faith or morals. The surest test of our humility before God is that practical charity for our neighbor, which, in the circumstances of everyday life, induces us without affectation, to give him precedence over ourselves, our time, and our wishes.
- Anxiety or fear is not one of the fruits of humility.
- An author wrote that *Christian morality is the morality of slaves*. In fact, we are servants of the Lord, servants who have been raised to the level of children of God, who do not wish to behave as if enslaved by their passions.

- Are you really convinced of your poor worth? If so, joy and peace will take a firm grasp in your soul in the face of humiliations or when despised by others. When attacked think: *Is that all? He obviously does not know me otherwise he wouldn't have left it at that.* Be convinced that you deserve worse treatment. You will feel grateful to that person while rejoicing at what might have made somebody else suffer.
- You must realize that one never stops learning. This happens in every area of life; even the wisest will always have something to learn until the end of their lives. If they don't they cease to be wise.
- Instead of committing a sin against charity give in, and offer no resistance. Show the humility of the grass, which submits to lying down without needing to know whose foot is stepping on it.
- We sometimes have to force ourselves in the morning to be humble and say repeatedly to the Lord in earnest – *I will serve.*
- It is enough for a virgin to have fallen once for her to lose her virginity; and for a wife to have been but once unfaithful for her to be perpetually dishonored; even though she may afterwards perform many noble work, still her dishonor can never go away, and the sting and painful memory of her shame and guilt must remain for ever in

her conscience. And therefore even if in my whole life I have only committed one sin, the fact will always remain that I have sinned and committed the worst disgraceful action. Even if I should live a life of continual penance, and be certain of God's forgiveness, and the sin no longer exists in my conscience, still I should have cause for shame and humiliation in the fact that I have sinned: *My sin is always before me, I have sinned and done evil in your sight.*

- Let us picture to ourselves the ass on which Jesus Christ sat when He was met by the multitude with their branches of palms, acclaiming Him with cries of: *Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna!* Who would be so foolish as to imagine that these people were giving honor to the beast? These praises were not given to the ass, but to Christ who was seated on the ass. Was that ass to be praised? That ass was carrying someone, but He who was being carried was the one who was being praised. Let us apply this to ourselves, saying with David: *I have become as a beast before You.*
- We must never consider that this idea of the nothingness of man as an unjustifiable term or as an exaggeration. The expression is absolutely true. It is God's word.

Chapter 14.

Other Quotes and Scripture Verses on Humility

You can also use these quotes and scripture readings for your daily meditations on humility.

OLD TESTAMENT:

"You will be lost among the Gentiles, swallowed up in your enemies' country. Those of you who survive in the lands of their enemies will waste away for their own and their fathers' guilt. Thus they will have to confess that they and their fathers were guilty of having rebelled against Me and of having defied Me, so that I, too, had to defy them and bring them into their enemies' land. Then, when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they make amends for their guilt, I will remember My covenant with Jacob, My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham; and of the land, too, I will be mindful. But the land must first be rid of them, that in its desolation it may make up its lost Sabbaths, and that they, too, may make good the debt of their guilt for having spurned My precepts and abhorred My statutes. Yet even so, even while they are in their enemies' land, I will not reject or

spurn them, lest, by wiping them out, I make void My covenant with them; for I, the LORD, am their God. I will remember them because of the covenant I made with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt under the very eyes of the Gentiles, that I, the LORD, might be their God." (LEV 26:38-45)

Thus on that day God humbled the Canaanite king, Jabin, before the Israelites; their power weighed ever heavier upon him, till at length they destroyed the Canaanite king, Jabin. (JUDG 4:23-24)

The LORD makes poor and makes rich, He humbles, He also exalts. (1 SAM 2:7)

Then the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Have you seen that Ahab has humbled himself before me? Since he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his time. I will bring the evil upon his house during the reign of his son." (1 KGS 21:28-29)

"Thus says the LORD: I will bring upon this place and upon its inhabitants all the evil that is threatened in the book which the king of Judah has read. Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods, provoking Me by everything to which they turn their hands, My anger is ablaze against this place and it cannot be extinguished.' But to the king of Judah who sent you to consult the LORD, give this response: 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: As for the threats you have heard, because you were heartsick and have humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard My threats that this place and its inhabitants would become a desolation and a curse; because you tore your garments and

wept before Me; I in turn have listened, says the LORD. I will therefore gather you to your ancestors; you shall go to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the evil I will bring upon this place.'" This they reported to the king. (2 KGS 22:16-20)

The LORD appeared to Solomon during the night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and I have chosen this place for My house of sacrifice. If I close heaven so that there is no rain, if I command the locust to devour the land, if I send pestilence among My people, and if My people, upon whom My name has been pronounced, humble themselves and pray, and seek My presence and turn from their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and revive their land. Now my eyes shall be open and My ears attentive to the prayer of this place. And now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever; My eyes and My heart also shall be there always. As for you, if you live in My presence as your father David did, doing all that I have commanded you and keeping My statutes and ordinances, I will establish your royal throne as I covenanted with your father David when I said, 'There shall never be lacking someone of yours as ruler in Israel.' But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and commands which I placed before you, if you proceed to venerate and worship strange gods, then I will uproot the people from the land I gave them; I will cast from My sight this house which I have consecrated to My honor, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. This temple which is so exalted - everyone passing by it will be amazed and ask: 'Why has the LORD done this to this land and to this house?' And men will answer: 'They forsook the LORD, the

God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they adopted strange gods and worshiped them and served them. That is why He has brought down upon them all this evil." (2 **CHRON 7:12-22**)

After Rehoboam had consolidated his rule and had become powerful, he abandoned the law of the LORD, he and all Israel with him. Thus it happened that in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem, for they had been unfaithful to the LORD. He came up with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, and there was no counting the army that came with him from Egypt - Libyans, Sukkites and Ethiopians. They captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem. Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the commanders of Judah who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them: "Thus says the LORD: 'You have abandoned Me, and therefore I have abandoned you to the power of Shishak.'" However, the commanders of Israel and the king humbled themselves saying, "The LORD is just." When the LORD saw that they had humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah: "Because they have humbled themselves, I will not destroy them; I will give them some deliverance, and My wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem through Shishak. But they shall be his servants, that they may know what it is to serve Me and what it is to serve earthly kingdoms." Therefore Shishak, king of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem and carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and of the king's palace. He took everything, including the gold bucklers that Solomon had made. (To replace them, King Rehoboam made bronze

bucklers, which he entrusted to the officers of the guard on duty at the entrance of the royal palace. Whenever the king visited the temple of the LORD, the troops would come bearing them, and then they would return them to the guardroom.) Because he had humbled himself, the anger of the LORD turned from him so that it did not destroy him completely; and in Judah, moreover, good deeds were found. (2 CHRON 12:1-12)

When this proposal had been approved by the king and the entire assembly, they issued a decree to be proclaimed throughout all Israel from Beer-Sheba to Dan, that everyone should come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover in honor of the LORD, the God of Israel; for not many had kept it in the manner prescribed. Accordingly the couriers, with the letters written by the king and his princes, traversed all Israel and Judah, and at the king's command they said: "Israelites, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that He may return to you, the remnant left from the hands of the Assyrian kings. Be not like your fathers and your brethren who proved faithless to the LORD, the God of their fathers, so that He delivered them over to desolation, as you yourselves now see. Be not obstinate, as your fathers were; extend your hands to the LORD and come to His sanctuary that He has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD, your God, that He may turn away His burning anger from you. For when you return to the LORD, your brethren and your children will find mercy with their captors and return to this land; for merciful and compassionate is the LORD, your God, and He will not turn away His face from you if you return to Him." So the couriers passed from city to city in the land of Ephraim and Manasseh and as far as Zebulun,

but they were derided and scoffed at. Nevertheless, some from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. In Judah, however, the power of God brought it about that the people were of one mind to carry out the command of the king and the princes in accordance with the word of the LORD. Thus many people gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month; it was a very great assembly. (2 CHRON 30:4-13)

In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him by giving him a sign. Hezekiah, however, did not then discharge his debt of gratitude, for he had become proud. Therefore anger descended upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem. But then Hezekiah humbled himself for his pride - both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and therefore the LORD did not vent His anger on them during the time of Hezekiah. (2 CHRON 32:24-26)

Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem into doing even greater evil than the nations which the LORD had destroyed at the coming of the Israelites. The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. Therefore the LORD brought against them the army commanders of the Assyrian king; they took Manasseh with hooks, shackled him with chains, and transported him to Babylon. In this distress, he began to appease the LORD, his God. He humbled himself abjectly before the God of his fathers and prayed to Him. The LORD let Himself be won over: He heard his prayer and restored him to his kingdom in Jerusalem. Then Manasseh understood that the LORD is indeed God. (2 CHRON 33:9-13)

The rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, can be found written in the chronicles of the kings of Israel. His prayer and how his supplication was heard, all his sins and his infidelity, the sites where he built high places and erected sacred poles and carved images before he humbled himself, all can be found written down in the history of his seers. Manasseh rested with his ancestors and was buried in his own palace. His son Amon succeeded him as king. (2 CHRON 33:18-20)

[Anon] did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done; on the contrary, Amon only increased his guilt. His servants conspired against him and put him to death in his own house. (2 CHRON 33:23-24)

Then Hilkiah and the other men from the king went to the prophetess Huldah, the wife of Shallum, son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah, the guardian of the wardrobe; she dwelt in Jerusalem, in the new quarter. They spoke to her as they had been instructed, and she said to them: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Tell the one who sent you to me, The LORD says: I am prepared to bring evil upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses written in the book that has been read before the king of Judah. Because they have abandoned Me and have offered incense to other gods, provoking Me by every deed that they have performed, My anger is ablaze against this place and cannot be extinguished.' But to the king of Judah who sent you to consult the LORD, give this response: 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the threats you have heard: Because

you were heartsick and have humbled yourself before God on hearing His words spoken against this place and its inhabitants; because you have humbled yourself before Me, have torn your garments, and have wept before Me, I in turn have listened - so declares the LORD. I will gather you to your ancestors and you shall be taken to your grave in peace. Your eyes shall not see all the evil I will bring upon this place and upon its inhabitants." They brought back this message to the king. **(2 CHRON 34:22-28)**

*Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the LORD, his God, and he did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah, who spoke the word of the LORD. He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart rather than return to the LORD, the God of Israel. Likewise all the princes of Judah, the priests and the people added infidelity to infidelity, practicing all the abominations of the nations and polluting the LORD'S temple which he had consecrated in Jerusalem. Early and often did the LORD, the God of their fathers, send His messengers to them, for He had compassion on His people and His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His warnings, and scoffed at His prophets, until the anger of the LORD against His people was so inflamed that there was no remedy. **(2 CHRON 36:11-16)***

Then I proclaimed a fast, there by the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to petition from Him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our possessions.

For I would have been ashamed to ask the king for troops and horsemen to protect us against enemies along the way, since we had said to the king, "The favoring hand of our God is upon all who seek Him, but His mighty wrath is against all who forsake Him." So we fasted, and prayed to our God for this, and our petition was granted. (EZRA 8:21-23)

"Forty years in the desert You sustained them: they did not want; their garments did not become worn, and their feet did not become swollen. You gave them kingdoms and peoples, which You divided up among them as border lands. They possessed the land of Sihon, king of Heshbon, and the land of Og, king of Bashan. You made their children as numerous as the stars of the heavens, and You brought them into the land which you had commanded their fathers to enter and possess. The sons went in to take possession of the land, and You humbled before them the Canaanite inhabitants of the land and delivered them over into their power, their kings as well as the peoples of the land, to do with them as they would. They captured fortified cities and fertile land; they took possession of houses filled with all good things, cisterns already dug, vineyards, olive groves, and fruit trees in abundance. They could eat and have their fill, fatten and feast themselves on Your immense good gifts. But they were contemptuous and rebellious: they cast Your law behind their backs, they slew Your prophets who bore witness against them in order to bring them back to You, and they were guilty of great effronteries. Therefore You delivered them into the power of their enemies, who oppressed them. But in the time of their oppression they would cry out to You, and You would hear them from heaven, and according to

Your great mercy give them saviors to deliver them from the power of their enemies. As soon as they had relief, they would go back to doing evil in Your sight. Then again You abandoned them to the power of their enemies, who crushed them. Then they cried out to You, and You heard them from heaven and delivered them according to Your mercy, many times over." (NEH 9:21-28)

With the help of Heaven for our support, we have been saved from our enemies, and they have been humbled. (1 MACC 12:15)

The accursed Nicanor, who had brought the thousand slave dealers to buy the Jews, after being humbled through the Lord's help by those whom he had thought of no account, laid aside his fine clothes and fled alone across country like a runaway slave, until he reached Antioch. He was eminently successful in destroying his own army. So he who had promised to provide tribute for the Romans by the capture of the people of Jerusalem testified that the Jews had a champion, and that they were invulnerable for the very reason that they followed the laws laid down by Him. (2 MACC 8:34-36)

For He brings down the pride of the haughty, but the man of humble mien he saves. (JOB 22:29)

Humble people you save; haughty eyes you bring low. (PS 18:28)

Good and upright is the LORD, who shows sinners the way, guides the humble rightly, and teaches the humble the way. All the paths of the LORD are faithful love toward those who honor the covenant demands. (PS 25:8-10)

My sacrifice, God, is a broken spirit; God, do not spurn a broken, humbled heart. (PS 51:19)

But I will call upon God, and the LORD will save me. At dusk, dawn, and noon I will grieve and complain, and my prayer will be heard. God will give me freedom and peace from those who war against me, though there are many who oppose me. God, who sits enthroned forever, will hear me and humble them. For they will not mend their ways; they have no fear of God. (PS 55:17-20)

Who comprehends Your terrible anger? Your wrath matches the fear it inspires. Teach us to count our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart. Relent, O LORD! How long? Have pity on Your servants! Fill us at daybreak with Your love, that all our days we may sing for joy. Make us glad as many days as You humbled us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. (PS 90:11-15)

Some lived in darkness and gloom, in prison, bound with chains, Because they rebelled against God's word, scorned the counsel of the Most High, Who humbled their hearts through hardship; they stumbled with no one to help. In their distress they cried to the LORD, who saved them in their peril, Led them forth from darkness and gloom and broke their chains asunder. Let them thank the LORD for such kindness, such wondrous deeds for mere mortals. For He broke down the gates of bronze and snapped the bars of iron. (PS 107:10-16)

The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, but the dwelling of the just He blesses; When He is dealing with the arrogant, He is

*stern, but to the humble He shows kindness.
(PROV 3:33-34)*

I hate arrogance and pride and every wicked way. (PROV 8:13)

When pride comes, disgrace comes; but with the humble is wisdom. (PROV 11:2)

*Among the proud there are always contentions.
(PROV 13:10)*

The fear of the LORD is training for wisdom, and humility goes before honors. (PROV 15:33)

It is better to be humble with the meek than to share plunder with the proud. (PROV 16:19)

Before his downfall a man's heart is haughty, but humility goes before honors. (PROV 18:12)

The reward of humility and fear of the LORD is riches, honor and life. (PROV 22:4)

Claim no honor in the king's presence, nor occupy the place of great men; for it is better that you be told, "Come up closer!" than that you be humbled before the prince. (PROV 25:6-7)

Man's pride causes his humiliation, but he who is humble of spirit obtains honor. (PROV 29:23)

If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the LORD will bestow her upon you; For fear of the LORD is wisdom and culture; loyal humility is His delight. (SIRACH 1:23-24)

Those who fear the LORD prepare their hearts and humble themselves before Him. (SIRACH 2:17)

My son, conduct your affairs with humility and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts. Humble yourself the more, the greater you are and you will find favor with God. For great is the power of God; by the humble He is glorified. What is too sublime for you, seek not, into things beyond your strength, search not. What is committed to you, attend to; for what is hidden is not your concern. With what is too much for you, meddle not, when shown things beyond human understanding. Their own opinion has misled many, and false reasoning unbalanced their judgment. Where the pupil of the eye is missing, there is no light, and where there is no knowledge, there is no wisdom. A stubborn man will fare badly in the end, and he who loves danger will perish in it. A stubborn man will be burdened with sorrow; a sinner will heap sin upon sin. For the affliction of the proud man there is no cure; he is the offshoot of an evil plant. (SIRACH 3:17-27)

Laugh not at an embittered man; be mindful of Him who exalts and humbles. (SIRACH 7:11)

More and more, humble your pride; what awaits man is worms. (SIRACH 7:17)

Why are dust and ashes proud? Even during life man's body decays; A slight illness - the doctor jests; a king today - tomorrow he is dead. When a man dies, he inherits corruption; worms and gnats and maggots. The beginning of pride is man's stubbornness in withdrawing his heart from his Maker; For pride is the reservoir of sin, a source which runs over with vice; because of it God sends unheard-of afflictions and brings men to utter ruin. The throne of the arrogant God overturns and establishes the lowly in their stead.

The roots of the proud God pluck up, to plant the humble in their place. He breaks down their stem to the level of the ground, then digs their roots from the earth. The trace of the proud God sweeps away and effaces the memory of them from the earth. Insolence is not allotted to a man or stubborn anger to one born of woman. (SIRACH 10:9-18)

My son, with humility have self-esteem; prize yourself as you deserve. Who will acquit him who condemns himself? Who will honor him who discredits himself? (SIRACH 10:27-28)

The wisdom of the humble shall exalt his head and shall make him sit in the midst of great men. (SIRACH 11:1)

Never trust your enemy, for his wickedness is like corrosion in bronze. Even though he acts humbly and peaceably toward you, take care to be on your guard against him. Rub him as one polishes a brazen mirror, and you will find that there is still corrosion. Let him not stand near you, lest he oust you and take your place. Let him not sit at your right hand, lest he then demand your seat, And in the end you appreciate my advice, when you groan with regret, as I warned you. Who pities a snake charmer when he is bitten, or anyone who goes near a wild beast? (SIRACH 12:10-13)

Before you are judged, seek merit for yourself, and at the time of visitation you will have a ransom. Before you have fallen, humble yourself; when you have sinned, show repentance. Delay not to forsake sins, neglect it not till you are in distress. (SIRACH 18:19-21)

Come to our aid, O God of the universe, and put all the nations in dread of You! Raise Your hand against the heathen, that they may realize Your power. As You have used us to show them Your holiness, so now use them to show us Your glory. Thus they will know, as we know, that there is no God but You. Give new signs and work new wonders; show forth the splendor of Your right hand and arm; Rouse Your anger, pour out wrath, humble the enemy, scatter the foe. (SIRACH 36:1-6)

The lofty eyes of men are humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be made to stoop: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. (ISA 2:11)

Man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be brought low. (ISA 5:15)

Lo, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and burning anger; to lay waste the land and destroy the sinners within it! The stars and constellations of the heavens send forth no light; the sun is dark when it rises, and the light of the moon does not shine. Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their guilt. I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant, the insolence of tyrants I will humble. I will make mortals rarer than pure gold, men, than gold of Ophir. For this I will make the heavens tremble and the earth shall be shaken from its place, at the wrath of the LORD of hosts on the day of His burning anger. (ISA 13:9-13)

Trust in the LORD forever! For the LORD is an eternal Rock. He humbles those in high places, and the lofty city He brings down; He tumbles it to the ground, levels it with the dust. It is

trampled underfoot by the needy, by the footsteps of the poor. The way of the just is smooth; the path of the just you make level. Yes, for your way and your judgments, O LORD, we look to You; Your name and Your title are the desire of our souls. My soul yearns for You in the night, yes, my spirit within me keeps vigil for You; When Your judgment dawns upon the earth, the world's inhabitants learn justice. The wicked man, spared, does not learn justice; in an upright land he acts perversely, and sees not the majesty of the LORD. (ISA 26:4-10)

Give ear; listen humbly, for the LORD speaks. Give glory to the LORD, your God, before it grows dark; before your feet stumble on darkening mountains; before the light you look for turns to darkness, changes into black clouds. If you do not listen to this in your pride, I will weep in secret many tears; my eyes will run with tears for the LORD'S flock, led away to exile. (JER 13:15-17)

The horror you inspire has deceived you and the pride of your heart. (JER 49:16)

With contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received. (DAN 3:39)

Holy men of humble heart bless the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all forever. (DAN 3:87)

Therefore, I, Nebuchadnezzar, now praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because all His works are right and His ways just; and those who walk in pride He is able to humble. (DAN 4:34)

Daniel answered the king: "You may keep your gifts, or give your presents to someone else; but

the writing I will read for you, O king, and tell you what it means. The Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar a great kingdom and glorious majesty. Because he made him so great, the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him. Whomever he wished, he killed or let live; whomever he wished, he exalted or humbled. But when his heart became proud and his spirit hardened by insolence, he was put down from his royal throne and deprived of his glory; he was cast out from among men and was made insensate as a beast; he lived with wild asses, and ate grass like an ox; his body was bathed with the dew of heaven, until he learned that the Most High God rules over the kingdom of men and appoints over it whom He will. You, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this; you have rebelled against the Lord of heaven. You had the vessels of His temple brought before you, so that you and your nobles, your wives and your entertainers, might drink wine from them; and you praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, that neither see nor hear nor have intelligence. But the God in whose hand is your life breath and the whole course of your life, you did not glorify." (DAN 5:17-23)

So I was left alone, seeing this great vision. No strength remained in me; I turned the color of death and was powerless. When I heard the sound of His voice, I fell face forward in a faint. But then a hand touched me, raising me to my hands and knees. "Daniel, beloved," He said to me, "understand the words which I am speaking to you; stand up, for my mission now is to you." When He said this to me, I stood up trembling. "Fear not, Daniel," He continued; "from the first day you made up your mind to acquire

understanding and humble yourself before God, your prayer was heard. Because of it I started out, but the prince of the kingdom of Persia stood in my way for twenty-one days, until finally Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help Me. I left him there with the prince of the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what shall happen to your people in the days to come; for there is yet a vision concerning those days."
(DAN 10:8-14)

Ephraim! What more has he to do with idols? I have humbled him, but I will prosper him. "I am like a verdant cypress tree"- Because of Me you bear fruit! **(HOSEA 14:9)**

You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God. **(MICAH 6:8)**

The LORD is good, a refuge on the day of distress; He takes care of those who have recourse to Him, when the flood rages; He makes an end of His opponents, and His enemies He pursues with darkness. What are you imputing to the LORD? It is He who will make an end! The enemy shall not rise a second time; as when a tangle of thorn bushes is set aflame, like dry stubble, they shall be utterly consumed. For, says the LORD, be they ever so many and so vigorous, still they shall be mown down and disappear. Though I have humbled you, I will humble you no more. Now will I break his yoke from off you, and burst asunder your bonds. **(NAHUM 1:7-13)**

Gather, gather yourselves together, O nation without shame! Before you are driven away, like chaff that passes on; Before there comes upon

you the blazing anger of the LORD: Before there comes upon you the day of the LORD'S anger. Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth, who have observed His law; Seek justice, seek humility; perhaps you may be sheltered on the day of the LORD'S anger. For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon shall be a waste, Ashdod they shall drive out at midday, and Ekron shall be uprooted. Woe to you who dwell by the seacoast, to the Cretan folk! The word of the LORD is against you; I will humble you, land of the Philistines, and leave you to perish without an inhabitant! (ZEPH 2:1-5)

I have destroyed nations, their battlements are laid waste; I have made their streets deserted, with no one passing through; their cities are devastated, with no man dwelling in them. I said, "Surely now you will fear Me, you will accept correction"; she should not fail to see all I have visited upon her. Yet all the more eagerly have they done all their corrupt deeds. Therefore, wait for Me, says the LORD, against the day when I arise as accuser; for it is My decision to gather together the nations, to assemble the kingdoms, in order to pour out upon them My wrath, all my blazing anger; for in the fire of My jealousy shall all the earth be consumed. For then I will change and purify the lips of the peoples, that they all may call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord; from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia and as far as the recesses of the North, they shall bring Me offerings. On that day you need not be ashamed of all your deeds, your rebellious actions against Me; for then will I remove from your midst the proud braggarts, and you shall no longer exalt yourself on My holy mountain. But I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly, who shall take

refuge in the name of the LORD; the remnant of Israel. They shall do no wrong and speak no lies; nor shall there be found in their mouths a deceitful tongue; they shall pasture and couch their flocks with none to disturb them. Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has removed the judgment against you, He has turned away your enemies; the King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst, you have no further misfortune to fear. On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged! (ZEPH 3:6-16)

NEW TESTAMENT:

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For My yoke is easy, and My burden light." (MT 11:28-30)

At that time the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in My name receives Me." (MT 18:1-5)

[Jesus said,] "The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (MT 23:11-12)

He told a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor. A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him, and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say, 'Give your place to this man,' and then you would proceed with embarrassment to take the lowest place. Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, 'My friend, move up to a higher position.' Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." (LK 14:7-11)

He then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. "Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity - greedy, dishonest, adulterous - or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.' But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." (LK 18:9-14)

"I served the Lord with all humility and with the tears and trials that came to me because of the plots of the Jews, and I did not at all shrink from

telling you what was for your benefit, or from teaching you in public or in your homes. I earnestly bore witness for both Jews and Greeks to repentance before God and to faith in our Lord Jesus. But now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem. What will happen to me there I do not know, except that in one city after another the Holy Spirit has been warning me that imprisonment and hardships await me. Yet I consider life of no importance to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to bear witness to the gospel of God's grace." (ACTS 20:19-24)

Now I myself, Paul, urge you through the gentleness and clemency of Christ, I who am humble when face to face with you, but brave toward you when absent, I beg you that, when present, I may not have to be brave with that confidence with which I intend to act boldly against some who consider us as acting according to the flesh. For, although we are in the flesh, we do not battle according to the flesh, for the weapons of our battle are not of flesh but are enormously powerful, capable of destroying fortresses. We destroy arguments and every pretension raising itself against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive in obedience to Christ, and we are ready to punish every disobedience, once your obedience is complete. (2 COR 10:1-6)

Did I make a mistake when I humbled myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? I plundered other churches by accepting from them in order to minister to you. And when I was with you and in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my needs. So

I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. (2 COR 11:7-9)

I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (EPH 4:1-6)

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (PHIL 2:1-11)

I have learned, in whatever situation I find

myself, to be self-sufficient. I know indeed how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need. I have the strength for everything through Him who empowers me. (PHIL 4:11-13)

Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Because of these the wrath of God is coming (upon the disobedient). By these you too once conducted yourselves, when you lived in that way. But now you must put them all away: anger, fury, malice, slander, and obscene language out of your mouths. Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman; but Christ is all and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving

thanks to God the Father through Him. (COL 3:5-17)

He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with pride and fall into the condemnation of the devil. (1 Tim 3:6)

He is proud, knowing nothing. (1 Tim 6:4)

In a large household there are vessels not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for lofty use and others for humble use. If anyone cleanses himself of these things, he will be a vessel for lofty use, dedicated, beneficial to the Master of the house, ready for every good work. So turn from youthful desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord with purity of heart. Avoid foolish and ignorant debates, for you know that they breed quarrels. A slave of the Lord should not quarrel, but should be gentle with everyone, able to teach, tolerant, correcting opponents with kindness. It may be that God will grant them repentance that leads to knowledge of the truth, and that they may return to their senses out of the devil's snare, where they are entrapped by him, for his will. (2 TM 2:20-26)

Know this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of a man does not accomplish the righteousness of God. Therefore, put away all filth and evil excess and humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you and is able to save your souls. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets

what he looked like. But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, his religion is vain. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (James 1:19-27)

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show his works by a good life in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. Wisdom of this kind does not come down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace. (James 3:13-18)

Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from? Is it not from your passions that make war within your members? You covet but do not possess. You kill and envy but you cannot obtain; you fight and wage war. You do not possess because you do not ask. You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. Adulterers! Do you not know that to be a lover of the world means enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wants to be a lover of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose that the scripture speaks without meaning when it says, "The spirit that he

*has made to dwell in us tends toward jealousy"? But He bestows a greater grace; therefore, it says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." So submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you of two minds. Begin to lament, to mourn, to weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will exalt you. Do not speak evil of one another, brothers. Whoever speaks evil of a brother or judges his brother speaks evil of the law and judges the law. If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save or to destroy. Who then are you to judge your neighbor? **(James 4:1-12)***

*Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. For: "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit, must turn from evil and do good, seek peace and follow after it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears turned to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against evildoers." **(1 PT 3:8-12)***

So I exhort the presbyters among you, as a fellow presbyter and witness to the sufferings of Christ and one who has a share in the glory to be revealed. Tend the flock of God in your midst, (overseeing) not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to

you, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you younger members, be subject to the presbyters. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for: "God opposes the proud but bestows favor on the humble." So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your worries upon Him because He cares for you. Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for (someone) to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings. The God of all grace who called you to His eternal glory through Christ (Jesus) will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little. To Him be dominion forever. Amen. (1PT 5:1-11)

For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:16)

QUOTES FROM THE SAINTS AND OTHERS:

"The safe and true way to heaven is made by humility." (St. Augustine)

"For if with men humility is so lovely, much more with God." (St. John Chrysostom)

*"That humility and quietness are to be maintained in all things."
(St. Cyprian of Carthage)*

"Let us not deceive ourselves. If we have not got humility, we have nothing."
(St. Vincent de Paul)

"As a ship cannot be built without nails, so a person cannot be saved without humility."
(St. Syncletice)

"To be taken with love for a soul, God does not look on its greatness, but the greatness of its humility." **(St. John of the Cross)**

"He who is truly humble would be thought of as despicable and hopeless, not humble."
(St. Bernard Clairvaux)

"Quench your anger, wipe out family feuds, cherish unity, and compete with one another in the offices of true humility."
(Pope St. Leo the Great)

"If you fast without humility, it is worth nothing and cannot be pleasing to the Lord."
(St. Francis de Sales)

"Some are even proud of their humility."
(St. Thomas Aquinas)

"If we possessed every virtue, but lacked humility, those virtues would be without root and would not last." **(St. Vincent de Paul)**

"A really humble man would rather let another say that he is despicable and worth nothing, than to say so himself."
(St. Francis de Sales)

"He who wants to learn true humility should

reflect upon the Passion of Jesus.” (St. Faustina)

“The soul's true greatness is in loving God and in humbling oneself in His presence, completely forgetting oneself and believing oneself to be nothing; because the Lord is great, but He is well-pleased only with the humble; He always opposes the proud.” (St. Faustina)

"Humility, like other virtues, resides chiefly inwardly in the soul. (St. Thomas Aquinas)

"Never be overjoyed at your humility! Perhaps you laugh at the expression, as if humility could puff up and be proud. But do not be surprised at it, it puffs up, when it is not genuine.” (St. John Chrysostom)

"For whosoever will proudly dispute or contradict, will always stand without the door. Christ, the master of humility, manifests His truth only to the humble, and hides Himself from the proud.” (St. Vincent Ferrer)

"Humility is to the various virtues what the chain is in a rosary. Take away the chain and the beads are scattered; removed humility, and all virtues vanish.” (St. John Vianney)

"We must never glance at what is good in ourselves, much less ponder over it, but we should search out what is wrong and what is lacking. This is an excellent way of remaining humble.” (St. Vincent de Paul)

"A humble person, if his opinion is asked, gives it in all simplicity and then leaves others to give theirs. Whether they are right or wrong, he says

no more.” (St. John Vianney)

"With a humble person, whether he is laughed at or esteemed, praised or blamed, honored or despised, whether people pay attention to him or pass him by, it is all the same to him.”
(St. John Vianney)

"We should also remember that humility is the route to heaven. A loving acceptance of it when we are humiliated usually rises up, guiding us, as it were, step by step from one virtue to the next until we reach heaven.”
(St. Vincent de Paul)

"Let the humble be told, then, that when they bring themselves to be the lowest, they ascend to the likeness of God; let the haughty be told that, when they exalt themselves, they fall into the imitation of the angel who fell and became a devil.” **(Pope St. Gregory the Great)**

If a man raises his head on entering through a door, he is injured; but if he stoops, he escapes injury. Therefore, Blessed Anthony was assured that only the humble man can avoid the snares of the Devil. **(St. Bonaventure)**

"You aspire to great things? Begin with little ones. You desire to erect a very high building? Think first of the foundation of humility. The higher one intends it, the deeper must the foundations be laid.” **(St. Augustine)**

"Humility is not much to be praised in one who is poor of necessity. But in one who, like Christ, is poor willingly, poverty itself is a sign of very great humility.” **(St. Thomas Aquinas)**

"For as Gregory says 'there is nothing great in being humble towards those who treat us well with respect, for even worldly people do this: but we should especially be humble towards those who make us suffer.'"
(St. Thomas Aquinas)

"All heavenly visions, revelations and feelings - or whatever else one may desire to think on - are not worth as much as the least act of humility. Humility has the effect of charity: It neither esteems nor seeks its own, it thinks no evil save of self, it thinks no good of self but of others." **(St. John of the Cross)**

"Man arrives at humility in two ways. First and chiefly by a gift of grace, and in this way the inner man precedes the outward man. The other way is by human effort, whereby he first of all restrains the outward man, and afterwards succeeds in plucking out the inward root."
(St. Thomas Aquinas)

"Humility and charity are the master chords that all other virtues depend upon. The one is the lowest, the other the highest. The preservation of the entire edifice depends on the foundation and the roof. If the heart keeps itself directed in the exercise of these, no difficulty will be encountered in the others. These are the mothers of virtue, the others follow them as the chicks do their mother." **(St. Padre Pio)**

"An image of the virtue of humility is a violet. The size, the position, the perfume, and the color of this flower all show that it is an emblem of humility. Its size is very small—what flower indeed is less? The humble are small in their own eyes. The apostle who had labored

more than the rest says 'I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle.' The position of this flower is quite close to the earth, and you have St. Paul's exhortation not to mind high things, but to consent to the humble. Those who think themselves better than others or who wish to appear better than others do not share this quality of the flower...They who are small in their own estimation have the size of the violet; but if they wish to be raised above others exteriorly, they have not the position of the violet...The perfume is pleasant and healthy. Even the proud praise humility: by the praiseworthiness is understood the pleasure of the perfume. It is healthy-giving also, for it sometimes happens that those who hear the praises of the virtue become better themselves. The color is subdued, but to one who knows the flower, this but makes it commendable and delightful." (St. Bonaventure)

"We must indeed keep ourselves humble because of our imperfections, but this humility must be the foundation of a great generosity, for one without the other degenerates into imperfection. Humility without generosity is only a deception and cowardice of heart which makes us think that we are good for nothing and that others should never think of using us in anything great. On the other hand, generosity without humility is only presumption." (St. Francis de Sales)

"Beware of that excessive reserve, which certain persons have, and which they take for humility. If the king deigned to grant you a favor, would it be humility to meet him with a refusal? And when the sovereign Lord of

heaven and earth deigns to honor my soul with His visit, and comes to load me with graces, and to rejoice with me; should I prove myself humble if I would not answer Him, nor keep Him company, nor accept His gifts, but fled from His presence and left Him all alone? A strange sort of humility is that!"
(St. Teresa of Avila)

"The reason why Christ chiefly proposed humility to us, was because it especially removes the obstacle to man's spiritual welfare consisting in man's aiming at heavenly and spiritual things, in which he is hindered by striving to become great in earthly things. Hence our Lord, in order to remove an obstacle to our spiritual welfare, showed by giving an example of humility, that outward exaltation is to be despised. Thus humility is, as it were, a disposition to man's untrammelled access to spiritual and divine goods."
(St. Thomas Aquinas)

"And, that He might bring us back to the way of life through humility, He deigned to exhibit in Himself what He teaches us, saying, 'Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart'. For to this end the only begotten Son of God took upon Himself the form of our weakness; to this end the Invisible appeared not only as visible but even as despised; to this end He endured the mocks of contumely, the reproaches of derision, the torments of suffering; that God in His humility might teach man not to be proud. How great, then, is the virtue of humility for the sake of teaching which alone He who is great beyond compare became little even unto the suffering of death! For, since the pride of the devil was the origin of our perdition, the humility of God has

been found the means of our redemption. That is to say, our enemy, having been created among all things, desired to appear exalted above all things; but our Redeemer remaining great above all things, deigned to become little among all things. (Pope St. Gregory the Great)

"In that way the first part is humility; the second, humility; the third, humility: and this I would continue to repeat as often as you might ask direction, not that there are no other instructions which may be given, but because, unless humility precede, accompany, and follow every good action which we perform, being at once the object which we keep before our eyes, the support to which we cling, and the monitor by which we are restrained, pride wrests wholly from our hand any good work on which we are congratulating ourselves. All other vices are to be apprehended when we are doing wrong; but pride is to be feared even when we do right actions, lest those things which are done in a praiseworthy manner be spoiled by the desire for praise itself. Wherefore, as that most famous presenter, on being asked what seemed to him the first thing to be observed in the art of eloquence, is said to have replied, 'Delivery'; and when he was asked what was the second thing, replied again, 'Delivery'; and when asked what was the third thing, still gave no other reply than this, 'Deliver'y; so if you were to ask me, however often you might repeat the question, what are the instructions of the Christian religion, I would be disposed to answer always and only, 'Humility', although, perchance, necessity might constrain me to speak also of other things." (St. Augustine)

"You,...proud? About what?"

“For all your learning, all your fame, all your eloquence and power, if you’re not humble, you’re worth nothing. Cut out that ego that dominates you so completely—root it out. God will help you. And then you’ll be able to begin to work for Christ in the lowest place in His army of apostles.” **(St. Josemaría Escrivá)**

“By reason of his being deiform, man must be honored because there shines in him a divine image and likeness; by reason of his being defectible, he can be esteemed of little value; and by reason of his deformity [that is, through sin] he can be judged of no account—not to insult him, but for the honor of God, who has been outraged by sin” **(St. Bonaventure)**

“Two things may be considered in man: what the man is of himself and what there is of God in him. Whatever points to fault is of the man himself; whatever makes for salvation or perfection is of God.” **(St. Thomas Aquinas)**

“We should let God be the One to praise us and not praise ourselves. For God detests those who commend themselves. Let others applaud our good deeds.” **(Pope St. Clement I)**

“If humble souls are contradicted, they remain calm; if they are calumniated, they suffer with patience; if they are little esteemed, neglected, or forgotten, they consider that their due; if they are weighed down with occupations, they perform them cheerfully.” **(St. Vincent de Paul)**

“The most powerful weapon to conquer the devil is humility. For, as he does not know at all how to employ it, neither does he know how to defend himself from it.” **(Saint Vincent de Paul)**

“Humility is the foundation of all the other virtues hence, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance.” (Saint Augustine)

“There is more value in a little study of humility and in a single act of it than in all the knowledge in the world.” (Saint Teresa of Avila)

“It is no great thing to be humble when you are brought low; but to be humble when you are praised is a great and rare attainment.” (St. Bernard)

“Humility is the mother of many virtues because from it obedience, fear, reverence, patience, modesty, meekness and peace are born. He who is humble easily obeys everyone, fears to offend anyone, is at peace with everyone, is kind with all.” (St Thomas of Villanova)

“Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending. You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds? Lay first the foundation of humility.” (St. Augustine)

“Indeed a humble rustic who serves God is better than a proud intellectual who neglects his soul to study the course of the stars.” (Imitation of Christ)

“A proud and avaricious man never rests, whereas he who is poor and humble of heart lives in a world of peace. The humble live in continuous peace, while in the hearts of the proud are envy and frequent anger.” (Imitation of Christ)

“Humility does not disturb or disquiet or agitate, however great it may be; it comes with peace, delight, and calm. . . .The pain of genuine humility doesn’t agitate or afflict the soul; rather, this humility expands it and enables it to serve God more.” (St Teresa of Avila)

“As patience leads to peace, and study to science, so are humiliations the path that leads to humility.” (St. Bernard of Clairvaux)

"No one reaches the kingdom of Heaven except by humility" (St. Augustine)

" There never can have been, and never can be, and there never shall be any sin without pride." (St Augustine)

"I make bold to say that it is profitable for the proud to fall, in order that they may be humbled in that for which they have exalted themselves. (St. Augustine)

“The highest point of humility consists in not merely acknowledging one's abjection, but in taking pleasure therein, not from any want of breadth or courage, but to give the more glory to God's Divine Majesty, and to esteem one's neighbor more highly than one's self.” (St Francis De Sales)

“There is no doubt that God will never be wanting to us, provided that He finds in us that humility which makes us worthy of His gifts, the desire of possessing them, and the promptitude to co-operate industriously with the graces He gives us.” (St. Ignatius of Loyola)

*"Humility makes our lives acceptable to God,
meekness makes us acceptable to men."
(St Francis De Sales)*

*"A proud faith is as much a contradiction as a
humble devil." (Stephen Charnock)*

Chapter 15.

The Pride- ometer: Test yourself

How can you detect the movements of pride within your self? Let's do a little diagnostic test:

1. In your heart of hearts do you see yourself as being better than others because of who you are? Some examples might be: who your family is; your position or title at work; where you were born; what side of the street you live in; what race, color or gender you are, etc.
2. Do you think you're somewhat superior because of what you have? For example: the car you drive; the money you make; a new home; the latest gadgets or phones; the friendship of someone important, etc.

3. Do you view yourself as intellectually superior to others? For example: your leadership skills; the degrees you earned or the letters behind your name; the languages you speak; the technological savvy you acquired; having a catechist certificate; being mechanically inclined, etc.
4. When with others do you always seem to talk about yourself; always calling the subject matter back to yourself; mentioning yourself as an example; always talking about your own interests; your own experiences; monopolize the conversation?
5. Are you overly concerned about what others think of you?
6. Are you always trying to make a name for yourself by making yourself look good; or do you build yourself up in the sight of others, trying to convince them of how good you are?
7. Are you ready to stretch the truth, to lie if that's what it takes to come out on top?
8. Are you one of those people that always have to be right? Can't stand to be contradicted?
9. Do you stick to your own opinions even when they are shown to be wrong?
10. Do you give your opinion to others even though they have not asked for it; when charity does not demand you to do so?

11. If asked for your opinion, do you get angry and hurt if your advice is not taken or the opposite is done?
12. Do you despise the point of view of others?
13. Do you easily dissent from Catholic Church teachings that involve faith and morals? Do you think you know better than the Holy Spirit, the Holy Scriptures, the Catholic Church, or the whole company of the saints?
14. Do you find yourself saying often: *God will understand. He loves me no matter what I do. God is greater than the Ten Commandments. God doesn't need churches or religion.*
15. What do you do when you know that you have sinned and offended God? Do you go to confession or do you pretend it never happened? Do you say that it's not really your fault? Do you blame someone else? Do you tell yourself that you are too good to really sin, so there must be some other explanation? When we do not believe that we really sinned, we repress our guilt. Since we repress our guilt, we do not ask for forgiveness. Since we do not ask for forgiveness, we are not forgiven, so we continue to sink deeper and deeper into the quicksand of sin, all the while saying, *Quicksand? What quicksand? I don't see any quicksand!*

16. Are you someone who is very sensitive to criticism and can't even accept a mild fraternal correction in charity?
17. Do you find it easy to gossip?
18. Do you take pleasure in tearing down others?
19. Do you take satisfaction in hearing someone's good name torn apart?
20. Do you jump on every chance to point out the faults and mistakes of others?
21. Are you one of those people who can dish it out but you can't take it yourself? You can poke fun at other people; but when others tease you, do you get irritated, hurt or angry?
22. Do you find it hard to forgive, even the slightest offense, telling yourself that people have no excuse for hurting you, that they did it on purpose, and that they deserve your wrath? Do you get angry as if you are some little god who should never be inconvenienced?
23. Do you feel the need to get even, always ready to hold a grudge and seek revenge?
24. Is it true to say that a lot of what you do is done for the sake of appearances?
25. Do you always feel the need to be noticed?

26. Do you always seem to be motivated by the desire to win the praise of others like the Pharisees of old, who preferred the praise of men instead of the glory of God?
27. Do you think that what you do or say is better than what others do or say?
28. In speaking to other people do you speak badly about yourself, so that they may form a good opinion of you, or contradict you (also known as fishing for compliments)?
29. Are you one who always makes excuses when someone rebukes you?
30. Are you thrilled to hear the praise of others and are you glad that others speak well of you?
31. Do you hide some humiliating faults from your spiritual director or confessor, so that he may not lose the good opinion he has of you?
32. Do you always have to have things your way?
33. Do you think that all your talents, gifts, and qualities are all yours and are not on loan by the Merciful Savior?
34. Do you acknowledge that you are unworthy of all praise or esteem? Do you acknowledge that you are unworthy of even the things you possess and the very ground you walk on?

35. Do you feel hurt when others are looked at in greater admiration than you, or when others are complimented for qualities that you don't have or struggle with?
36. Are you one that in conversation with others, you drop words here and there just to show off, hoping your listeners will think you are an honest person or that you are very smart or witty, or that you are very successful?
37. Do you get offended when someone asks you to do things that you think are beneath you such as simple or menial tasks, especially in front of other people?
38. Are you embarrassed by not having a certain possession? Do you refuse to be happy until you possess it?
39. How often do you ask God for favors in prayer? Rarely? Do you subscribe to the gospel that says; the greatest people are the self-made billionaires, and that since we are great too, we must in some way be self-made and self-reliant, needing nobody else, never needing to ask anybody for any favors, including God.
40. Do you only watch the TV shows and movies that you want to watch, not submitting your will to the will of others? Do you only eat what you want to eat not caring what the family wants? Will you only vacation where you want rather than considering the wishes of your spouse?

41. Do you complain when your children, parents, wife, or boss ask you to do something above and beyond the call of duty? Then after you finally do the task, do you complain about it the next day to all your friends and co-workers as if you were being exploited or martyred?
42. When you experience success or good fortune, do you boast about it? Do you convince yourself that success is always due to your own hard work, superior intelligence, brilliant imagination, keen sense of timing, and the simple and obvious fact that you're just destined to be successful? Do you think to yourself that good fortune is the universe paying off its debt of gratitude for your magnificence; that it's evidence that God Himself is a member of your fan club? Does that make you feel justified in bragging?
43. Are there mostly pictures of yourself in your home or office? In your wallet?
44. If you walked in front of a mirror or window would you really have to make an effort not to look at yourself in it?
45. How often do you tell others how very good you are at what you do?
46. Do you frequently interrupt people while they're speaking?
47. Do you have a really hard time asking for directions?

Notes:

This is a list of resources used to put together this booklet:

- **Against Evil: Humility, Confidence and Vigilance** audio CD by Fr. Bill Casey
www.saintjoe.com.
- **Catholic Prayer Book** by Fr. John A. Hardon S.J.
- **Humility of Heart** by Fr. Cajetan Mary da Bergamo.
- **Humility of St. Gemma** by
www.stgemmagalgani.com
- **Introduction to the Devout Life** by St. Francis De Sales.
- **My Imitation of Christ** by Thomas a' Kempis.
- **Prayers** by Miles Christi.
- **Raise Happy Children Teach them Joy** by Mary Ann Budnik
www.rbmediainc.com
- **The Forge** by St. Josemaría Escrivá.
- **The Furrow** by St. Josemaría Escrivá.
- **The power of Humility** by Fr. Canice Bourke.
- **The Sinners Guide** by Venerable Louis of Granada
- **The Spiritual Combat** by Fr. Dom Lorenzo Scupoli.
- **The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius** by Fr. Louis J. Puhl S.J.
- **The Steps of Humility & Pride** by St. Bernard of Clairvaux.
- **The Treasury of Catholic Wisdom** by Fr. John A. Hardon S.J.
- **The Way** by St. Josemaría Escrivá.
- **You Can Become A Saint!** By Mary Ann Budnik.
- **Book cover and graphic design done by** Jean Coelho MorningStar Creative Studios
www.jeanmcoelho.com
- **Audio book by Anthony Gettig**
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