

Meditation 5

HUMILITY, Part I

Instructions: There are 3 parts to today's retreat day.

Part I is a reflection on the *Litany of Humility*, with the aim of identifying what specific tendencies we seem to gravitate toward in the area of pride. In other words, identifying our own particular kind of pride that we are prone to, kind of like discovering our favorite flavor of pride. Then we'll take a brief look at what pride does to us personally contrasted to what humility does to us.

Part II is a reflection based on the *Fundamental Attitude of Humility*. There are some useful insights on pride and what it means practically to live out humility attitudinally. A detailed examination of conscience in the area of pride will be given to you so that confessing sins of pride can be more accurately identified. The more self-aware we are and of our sinful tendencies the more peace-filled, happy and holy we can become. Whatever we discover about ourselves today would be something of substance to share with our spiritual director.

Part III would be to take your list of pride into the confessional for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Setting the Stage for a Talk on Humility:

- A. The World & our Country** – a “Bridge Over Troubled Waters”
 - A world that lives without reference to God is a world that is prideful in the worst way and, by its pride, is rebellious to God.
- B. The Best Preparedness** – “*stay in a state of grace*”
 - Prayer, sacraments, and virtues like humility keep us in right relationship and at peace with ourselves, God and others.
- C. What to do as Spiritual Mentors and Evangelizers under the auspices of the SOF** – “*Trust in God, Courageously Take One Step Forward in Hope, and help Others as a Spiritual Mentor,*” once you have completed your final week.

Mentor's Role for a Mentee in the area of Virtue:

- A. Mentor's General Responsibilities:** Guided by the Holy Spirit in strictly following the teachings of the Church, the spiritual mentor is responsible for teaching, correcting and supporting the mentee, with respect to spiritual/religious matters.

B. Mentor’s Objective for directing mentees with regard to the Virtues:

Provides fundamental knowledge relative to the virtues and the goodness of these virtues

- 1. Teach the virtues**
- 2. Hold mentee accountable to virtuous life**
- 3. Point out to mentee the goodness he/she experiences as a result of practicing virtue**

Scripture: Luke 18:9-14 (The Pharisee and the Tax Collector).

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.”

The Virtue of Humility:

A. (Glossary of the CCC) Humility is the virtue by which a Christian

acknowledges that God is the author of all good. Humility avoids inordinate ambition or pride and provides the foundation for turning to God to prayer (2559). Voluntary humility can be described as “poverty of spirit” as we learn from the Beatitudes (**CCC 2546**). St. Teresa of Avila says there are three essential virtues that are the foundation of the Prayer of the Heart: humility, love of one another and detachment (see *Way of Perfection* chapters 4-7 and *Interior Castle* V,3).

B. Humility is a virtue under the Cardinal virtue of Temperance.

Troy gave a Rosary Podcast on temperance May 26, 2022. Temperance is the virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasure and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the mastery of the will over instincts and keeps natural desires within proper limits.

Sin of Pride:

A. (Glossary of the CCC). Pride is one of the 7 capital sins. It is undue self-esteem or self-love, which seeks attention and honor and sets oneself in

competition with God. Capital sins like pride are called capital because they engender other sins other vices (**CCC 1866**).

B. A further understanding of pride and an example of how rooted pride is in us was explained a Rosary podcast on May 27, 2022. All of creation is good, but when we choose a good not appropriate to our state or condition in life because of some pleasure or ambition, we become in conflict with God. In essence, we choose the good that we like rather than the good offered by God or what is ultimately best for us in our relationship with Him. That is pride, an undue self-love which seeks some kind of reward that puts us in competition with God. Why do we say competition? Because we are reaching over the will of God, imposing ours will over Him Who loves us. Whether we recognize it or not, in pride we are looking to win something we are obsessed with through our willful choices, without reference to God. Our sinful pride is an obstacle to God (which we'll explain later). God does not force us; He just lets us get what we want to our own undoing.

Jesus and Humility:

- Shows the perfection and power of humility by becoming human
- Descends to become the Son of Man
- Chooses to be human with humble parents
- Embraces humble circumstances, like being born in a manger
- Submits to baptism even though He had no sin
- Allows Satan to tempt Him
- Avoids human respect (praise)
- Embraces the suffering of the Passion
- Condemns the sin of pride
- Tells us to be humble as He gives us an example in His person
- Shows how humble dependence on God can defeat temptation
- Says humility is mandatory for Salvation (Sacrament of Reconciliation & Confession).

The Problem with Pride:

God has given us each talents, successes, blessings as well as weaknesses, defects and frailties. This fact is fundamental to who we are, just as our tendency toward pride is a fact of our fallen nature, because of Original Sin. Troy and Mike have mentioned that we're so use to ourselves that detecting what kind of specific pride we are prone to may be impossible to know.

History of the Litany of Humility:

The **Litany of Humility** is attributed to Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val (1865-1930), Cardinal Secretary of State of the Holy See under Pope Pius X.

The addition to the Litany with the phrase, "Lord, I want to rejoice," was added by Cardinal Sarah and can be found in his book, *The Power of Silence* (pp. 17-19).

Refer to Handout on the Litany of Humility.

Conclusions on Pride and Humility:

Scripture of the Pharisee and Tax Collector Parable

- A. The **Pharisee** or the prideful person's tendencies
 - a. Full of anxiety
 - b. Full of fear
 - c. Self-centered
 - d. Jealous and envious
 - e. Angry when suffering, (unaccepting attitude)
 - f. Attached to the world
 - g. Grasping desperately for one's own desired earthly treasures
 - h. Closed to blessings God wants to give
 - i. Causes unrest or disinterest in prayer and holiness

- B. The **Tax Collector** or the humble person's tendencies
 - a. Free from anxiety
 - b. Free from fear
 - c. Free from self-centeredness
 - d. Happy for others
 - e. Peaceful despite suffering, (accepting attitude)
 - f. At peace with oneself, God, others and the world
 - g. No longer an obstacle to oneself to receiving God's unique blessing, planned from eternity (treasures from heaven)
 - h. Allows for recollected prayer and attraction to holiness

Resolution:

Reflect on the Litany of Humility and identify what particular lines in the litany you find yourself wanting and are, therefore, guilty of pride. What are your favorite tendencies of pride that you desire or seem to have trouble with?

Your list of pride can be used to help you understand yourself better and be confessed when it is time for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Bring your list to the next meditation on the Fundamental Attitude of Humility.

Prayer for Humility:

Lord, help me to conquer my pride. May I love you above myself. Remind me to keep in mind my love for You when other desires, fears, envy, jealousy and small-heartedness tempt me away from You, pushing me alone into myself. I want the happiness You have planned to give me, rather than what I obsessively grasp at to make myself happy. I prefer Your heavenly blessings in the present moment as well as the future rather than my manipulating for happiness that gains for me only earthly treasures.

Help me to be honest in my relationship with You. You made me worthwhile, as your son or daughter, gifted humanly and spiritually, while also limited with weaknesses, defects, and frailties. Help me to accept that I am both worthwhile and limited. When confronted with my limitations, weaknesses, defects, and frailties, remind me to turn to You as my heavenly Father for the help You so want to give me, for peace, health, and satisfaction in fulfilling Your plan for my life. It is Your plan that I want, not the short-sighted ambitious plan I imagine for myself. Your plan is sureness in fulfilling me beyond my imagination, while my plan is sadly self-centered and small minded.

In moments of doubt, let me vulnerably turn to you. Let your Spirit be heard in me with an act of faith trusting in Jesus' care amidst self-doubt.

When seemingly invincible flashes of pride rise in me, may they be melted easily and tenderly away with Hail Mary's, opening me to learn the way of humility, in the School of the Holy Family, the way Jesus, Mary and Joseph lived on earth and now continue to live in heaven. Amen.

Notes
