

31. August 2025

Humility: the mother of virtues

Sir 3:17-18,20,28-29

My child, be gentle in carrying out your business, and you will be better loved than a lavish giver. The greater you are, the more humbly you should behave, and then you will find favour with the Lord; for great though the power of the Lord is, he accepts the homage of the humble. For the disease of the proud there is no cure, since an evil growth has taken root there. The heart of the sensible will reflect on parables, an attentive ear is the sage's dream.

Humility is the basis of all true virtue. It is enormously valuable because through it God's greatness can work in us; whereas pride undermines it and centres on one's own supposed greatness and uniqueness.

An excellent way to achieve humility - which, by the way, has nothing to do with false servility - is modesty. It is about doing what we have been entrusted without attracting attention and without highlighting it...

There can be a false introspection, when one attributes to oneself all that one does and constantly contemplates oneself. This introspection leads us away from modesty. The same happens when, in our behaviour, we look at people and seek their approval. Then we forget that we are merely labourers in the Lord's harvest, servants who are only doing the work entrusted to them.

Think, for example, of a mother's way of serving. She does it simply out of love for her family. It would be strange if she were to constantly emphasise all the good things she does.

There is a wonderful saying of the Lord, which can help us a lot to grow in true humility: *"when you have done all you have been told to do, say, 'We are useless servants: we have done no more than our duty'"* (Lk 17:10).

This is what the Lord says to His disciples, and if we internalise these words of His, they will help us to remain modest and simple even when we perform great deeds, which might get a lot of recognition from people.

Whatever we do, even to the point of giving our lives, is nothing more than the right response to God's love. To seek the Lord's Will in everything and to fulfil it is what we are called to do as His creatures and children. If we were to meet an angel - one of those who remained faithful to God and did not join Lucifer's rebellion - he would certainly not in any way emphasise his own faithfulness to God. Rather, he would respond in all humility and love that he simply did what was in keeping with God's glory and truth. This is how our response and our inner attitude must become. Let us leave it to God to honour us, if He has been pleased with us; and for our part, let us simply do day by day what has been entrusted to us. Let us see to it that God is given the glory, and never usurp it to ourselves.

Pride diminishes a person, even if he wants to appear great before others. In this regard, the wise Saint Augustine says that humility makes us great, inasmuch as God's greatness can work in us; while pride makes us small, because we consider ourselves great.

There are various forms of pride. Satanic pride is when a person wants to conquer his greatness even at the expense of other people, often by rejecting God or even in conscious rebellion against Him.

But there are also other forms of pride that are less aggressive. Sometimes they can even represent a kind of self-protection.

However, pride is always a great obstacle, no matter what kind it is, because an evil root is planted in the heart, and it wants to spread and poison everything. Pride is capable of contaminating almost every action, and that is why it must be constantly fought and overcome.

We should sincerely ask the Lord to show us our pride, for, as an Arabic proverb says, *"It is easier to detect a black beetle on a black stone on a black night than to discover pride in one's own heart"*.

Holy Scripture also tells us, *"Who knows his own errors? Cleanse me from hidden faults"* (Ps 19:13).

God can make us see the pride in our heart. And once we perceive it, we must consciously take it to God and ask for humility. If we experience situations that humiliate us, they will be a great help to us not to withdraw into ourselves. For example, if we are inclined to think we are superior to others and know everything better, and then we have to recognise that we too are wrong.

We should not let these opportunities pass us by without taking spiritual advantage of them, because growing in humility is a great grace...