

## THREE KINDS OF HUMILITY

Humility lies in the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the fullness of what it means to be human. To be humble is to live as close to the truth as possible: that I am created to the likeness of Christ, that I am meant to live according to the pattern of His paschal mystery, and that my whole fulfillment is found in being as near to Christ as He draws me to Himself. The following descriptions try to sum up three different general areas on the spectrum of humility as it is actually lived by men and women.

1. The First Kind of Humility. This is living out the truth which is necessary for salvation, and so it describes one extreme of the spectrum. I would want to do nothing that would cut me off from God - not even were I made head of all creation or even just to save my own life here on earth. I know that grave sin in this sense is to miss the whole meaning of being a person - one who is created and redeemed and is destined to live forever in love with God my Creator and Lord.
2. The Second Kind of Humility. This kind is more perfect than the first and so we find ourselves somewhere along the middle of the spectrum. My life is firmly grounded in the fact that the reality of being a person is seen fully in Jesus Christ. Just as "I have come to do Your will, O God" is the motivating force of his life, so the only real principle of choice in my life is to seek out and do the will of my Father. With this habitual attitude, I find that I can maintain a certain balance in my inclinations to have riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, or to desire a long life rather than a short life. I would not want to turn away from God even in small ways, because my whole desire is to respond ever more faithfully to His call.
3. The Third Kind of Humility. This is close to the other end of the spectrum, since it demands the understanding and action of a greater grace-gift. It consists in this. I so much want the truth of Christ's life to be fully the truth of my own that I find myself, moved by grace, with a love and a desire for poverty in order to be with the poor Christ; a love and a desire for insults in order to be closer to Christ in His own rejection by people; a love and a desire to be considered worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent according to the standards of the world. By grace, I find myself so moved to follow Jesus Christ in the most intimate union possible, that His experiences are reflected in my own. In that, I find my delight.

Note: If after some time for consideration I as a retreatant want to move more in the direction of this third kind of humility, it will help much to make use of the threefold colloquy, as it has been explained above. I should beg our Lord to choose me for the gift of this third kind of humility in order that I may find my own life more patterned according to Jesus, my God and Lord - always, of course, if this is to be for the greater praise and service of God.

## THREE TYPES OF PERSONS

This is a meditation to aid me in my freedom of choice according to God's call to me.

**PREPARATION:** I take the time for the usual preparatory reverence and dedication of my day.

**GRACE:** I ask that I may be free enough to choose whatever the lead of God's grace may indicate as His particular call to me.

**THE SETTING:** This prayer period is devoted to a consideration of three types of persons. Each one of them has taken in quite a few possessions - not always the best of motives, and in fact sometimes quite selfishly. In general, each one is a good person, and he would like to serve God, even to the extent that if these possessions were to come in the way of his salvation he would like to be free of them.

1. The First Type - "a lot of talk, but no action"

This person keeps saying that he would like to stop being so dependent on all the things which he possesses and which seem to get in the way of this giving his life unreservedly to God. He talks about the importance of saving his soul, but when death comes, he is too busy about his possessions to have taken any steps toward serving God.

2. The Second Type - "to do everything but the one thing necessary"

This person would like to be free of all attachments which get in the way of his relationship with God. But he would rather work harder or fast or pray more - really just do about anything but face the problem which he feels holds him back in his relationship with God. He acts as if he is negotiating with God, trying to buy God off. So though he may do many good things, he keeps running from the better and more honest way to face the issue.

3. The Third Type - "to do Your will is my desire"

This person would like to be rid of any attachment which gets in the way of God's call to further life. His whole effort is to be in balance, ready to move in any direction that the call from God may take him. Whatever seems better for the service and praise of God our Lord is his whole desire and choice. Meanwhile, he strives to act in such a way that he seemingly is free of any attachments. He makes efforts neither to want to retain his possessions nor to want to give them away, unless the service and praise of God our Lord is the God-given motivation for his action. As a result, the graced desire to be better able to serve God our Lord is the cause of his accepting or letting go of anything.

**COLLOQUY:** I make use of the same three colloquies described in the preceding meditation on the Two Leaders, Two Strategies.

Note: We may find it helpful at this time of the retreat when we might discover some attachment opposed to actual poverty or a repugnance to it, or when we are not indifferent to poverty and riches, to come to Jesus our Lord in prayer and beg Him to choose us to serve Him in actual poverty. We should beg with a certain insistence, and we should plead for it - but always wanting what God wants for us.