

Week 2: Humility

Pray

Pray one decade of the Rosary each day, focusing on the mystery of the Annunciation. Reenter the scene of the Annunciation, this time focusing on the virtue of humility. At the end of the decade, ask to receive this spiritual fruit. Ask your Lord if there is a specific area in your life where the virtue of humility is particularly needed. Imagine how this piece of yourself or this particular situation would look and feel differently if you possessed true humility.

Read

- James 4:6: God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.
- John 3:30: “He must increase; I must decrease.”
- CCC 2559: “Humility is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that ‘we do not know how to pray as we ought,’ are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer.
- Dairy of St. Faustina 1436: O humility, the most precious of virtues, how few souls possess you! I see only a semblance of this virtue everywhere, but not the virtue itself. Lord, reduce me to nothingness in my own eyes that I might find grace in Yours.

Enter into the Scene

Choose just one of the passages listed above (or perhaps an alternate passage about humility with which you are familiar). If you are inclined to do so, look-up the passage and read it in context. Or if not, sit quietly with your passage and see if new meaning or inspiration comes from it. Reenter the scene of the Annunciation. You can use *The Annunciation of Jesus to Mary* (attached) if needed, or enter into your own reflection. Look for and experience humility in this scene. Does the passage you chose give new light to the experience?

Reflect

1. Why do you think the fruit of humility is associated with the mystery of the Annunciation?
2. Describe what you think Mary’s humility looks like, feels like. How would you feel in the presence of her humility? In this story, Mary says “yes” to a very big call. Do you think that saying yes to great callings detracts from humility? How does Mary remain small despite her greatness?
3. Beyond Mary, do you see other instances of humility in this scene? Who displays humility and how?

Question

1. What is humility? What isn’t humility? What is easily mistaken for humility (i.e. false humility)?
2. How would a more profound reception of the gift of humility change you, change those around you, or change your perspective towards others or your circumstances?
3. How does one acquire the gift the gift of humility? Can you think of a story from the life of a saint who displayed radical humility? Do you think that the process of receiving the virtue of humility is ever painful?
4. In what specific area of your life or self to you most need humility? How is your Lord trying to communicate this gift to you?



Reflection: *The Annunciation of Jesus to Mary*

I open my interior eyes and imagine Your Mother waiting in prayer. She does not know for what or whom She is waiting. She does not know when the event or person is coming, but She waits. She is perfectly still, internally and externally. This is the first thing that I notice about Her – not Her beauty, nor Her faith, nor Her exuding sense of peace, but Her stillness. I am reminded immediately of all the unknowns and questions I face in my own life, how I scramble after answers and steep myself in worry. She is so different from me.

Mary's waiting is like hymns of quiet trust. She has so entirely devoted Herself to Her Heavenly Father, that His will alone is Her joy and song. It is from this disposition of humility that She is able to see and ready to hear Your angelic messenger. "Hail, Full of Grace!" Gabriel greets Her. "The Lord is with You."

For a few moments Mary is confused. She knows that She is the recipient of this hailing, but She does not know why She has been chosen or to what propose She is being called. She presumes no awareness of Her own grandeur, but remains limited within Her personhood, which is unassuming and small. Mary's hope for You, Her Lord, is infinite, but She does not suppose Her own role in Your coming. She has spent Her whole life waiting for You, although She does not fully understand Her own longing until now.

"You will conceive" ... "birth to a Son" ... "Son of the Most High" ... "Forever." The words of Gabriel flood into Mary's heart like little breaths of both wonder and fulfillment, question and answer. She is dizzied by the beauty and magnitude of the request. "How can this be?" She wonders with trusting confusion. "Since I know not man," She continues, graciously beholding Her own limitation. Gabriel smiles broadly and continues his explanation, trying to put the ultimate divine mystery into terms of human understanding.

Your Mother's knowledge of this bidding, of Her own role in bringing You – Emanuel, God with us – into the world is great, but not complete. She knows that Her "yes" will bring great sorrow and joy, but She cannot yet grasp the extent. She gives Her fiat in this manner, not in naivety or ignorance, but also not with full comprehension or illusion of control. Her "yes" is a willing surrender; it is an openhanded reception; it is a melody of quiet trust. She repeats the same unwavering consent that She has spoken to Her Father continually throughout Her early life, and will continue to speak until Her own death. Mary gives Her fiat with head bowed in humility, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word."

Gabriel departs as the Holy Spirit falls over Mary. The entire room fills with warmth as She exudes deep spiritual consolation. The Holy Spirit infuses Her heart; He espouses Her. You, the Word made Flesh, enter into humanity by Your Mother's consent and the power of the Holy Spirit. You are no longer separate from Your people, but fully incarnate among us. You are not as a god, cloaked in human flesh; rather, You are fully God and fully man.

In these earliest moments of Your human life, Your body is comprised of just a few hidden cells, carried and sustained in the Eden of Your Mother's womb. This is how you come to us; this is how You come to me – by making Yourself least among Your people, by making Yourself so tiny that You cannot be seen. You, infinite God of infinite universe, have made Yourself so finite, so limited in nature, that for months You will be essentially unnoticed.

Jesus, as I enter into the advent of Your life, I want to behold my own smallness with You. How many times have I, distended with pride, fashioned myself beyond my calling? Let me make myself as small as You. Let me hide within Your Mother's womb with You. Let me learn Her fiat, that I might say "yes" to You in all things.