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Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

Image by Christine Sponchia

IN ALL HUMILITY

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

"The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

MATTHEW 23:12

Reflection

When I was a novice, we were to reflect on, study, write a reflection paper and make a presentation on one of the virtues assigned to us. While none of these virtues were easy, I was given "Humility!" I always wondered if being given humility was by chance, or if it was a message that I was to take to heart. The answer to both is "YES!"

Over the years, learning to live into humility has been a valuable grace. The truth of humility is that all gifts come from God. In all humility, I must learn to let God be God; while I am able and gifted, I must rely on God for everything. I

am invited to intimacy with God and pray to see myself as God sees me. And yet, God is transcendent, all-powerful, well beyond my understanding.

Humility is a virtue within the spiritual life that requires honing throughout one's life. For spirituality to be transformative, humility is a great gift that allows me to see myself and others as greatly loved, chosen, sent. I am blessed to serve others without expectation of return, to love as God loves. Arrogance and false pride have no place in relationship to God and to authentic maturity of body, mind, and spirit. A little humility goes a long way and it is learned over a lifetime. The third Maxim from Father Medaille, SJ, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph, reads:

*“Empty yourself continually in honor of the Incarnate Word who emptied himself
with so much love for you.*

*Make your commitment to live in the practice of the most sincere,
true, and profound humility possible to you.*

*Do so on all occasions, to everyone, but especially to God
from whom must come all the blessings of your institute.”*

I suppose one could say that in all humility, “God so loved the world that God sent his only Son into the world.” (John 3:16) He gave us Jesus who, in all humility, set aside his Godliness to become human. Jesus invites us to come to him when we are burdened, for he is “meek and humble of heart.” (Matthew 11:29) Coming to Jesus also takes humility, for I must acknowledge my need and my desire.

Humility stirs our humanity into relationship with God, who first loved us. I am reminded of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's realization that “We are not human beings have a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” Thus, the power, splendor, and great love of God draws us into intimacy with God who loves each one in our beauty, strength, and great frailty.

It is humbling to know that I am loved by God first and always just as I am. And so is the other person. I then am invited to give away what I have received and what another needs. Service is best given and received in humility. All I have and who I am is pure gift of God's love, mercy, and compassion. You and I are to humbly allow the Spirit of God to unsettle and inspire us to serve the needs of our dear neighbor without distinction. It takes humility to do so well and not count the cost. The witness of humility is the greatest witness among us.



Resting rabbit in the garden
Photo by Alicia Rodriguez

For Pondering

- What is my experience of humility?
 - How has it shaped my soul and drawn me into relationships that are life-giving?
 - What does humility look like and feel like within me?
-

For Prayer

"Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like your own."

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