

## Humility: the Characteristic Virtue of an Adorer<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament  
Nemours, Friday, November 9, 1866

Let us place ourselves in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.

**My Sisters, as adorers, what must be your special virtue?** It is the humility of love of our Lord. It is only by that virtue that you will please the Good Master. It is only in this way that you will be true adorers; and that alone will make you happy. Of course! It is only the virtue of humility that will make you true disciples of our Lord, and that will make you enter into the love of our Lord. Our Lord reveals himself only to those who are humble and simple. In order for our Lord to be happy, he must find a heart that loves what he loves – that's why he says: *Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart* (cf. Mt 11:29).

My good Daughters, you can please our Lord only through humility. Without humility, you will not remain pure very long, because pride proliferates in the mud. Pride tarnishes the soul. Even if you were charitable along with pride; even if you have all the virtues of purity, mortification, etc.; but if all this is not supported by humility, all will be lost and wasted through pride. Besides, your virtue would be inconsistent. You can please our Lord only through your purity; this virtue is the dowry of love. Nothing else is needed to approach our Lord. And you will be happy only through this humility. You cannot be happy through any other virtue because you will personify yourself in yourself, while through humility you will personify yourself in our Lord. [...] Our Lord communicates himself to us only through the way of humility – that's why he does not communicate himself to those who are proud.

[...] People say: our Lord is always pleased to communicate himself to us, to give us his gifts of tenderness, of contemplation, even ecstasy, and if he does not give us these signs of love, it's because we don't deserve them. We could not bear them without humility, of course. Notice what St. Paul says concerning the divine Master: *He has been lifted up because he humbled himself: he emptied himself and now he is raised in glory, and is seated at the right hand of his Father* (cf. Phil 2:8-11). That is what happened at the incarnation. Likewise, do you want our Lord to love you, and communicate himself to you with gentleness? Become truly humble and you will not lose his gifts. Then you will really be aiming to be a saint. You will have true holiness, only if you are truly humble. The more you are humble, the holier you will become, because humility is the queen and mother of all virtues; once you have the mother you will have her children. Humility teaches God's power. It is the guardian of God's treasures, of all his graces.

**Therefore, become very humble. What kind of humility? Complete humility: humility of mind. And what is that?** O my God! Humility of mind is to think of yourself as the last of creatures, the most sinful of all, deserving hell a thousand times over. See yourself as the least of your sisters, lucky to be in their midst. You are unworthy of God's graces, of his signs of affection, and of making the least move in his presence. Say: I don't deserve your grace; I'm not worthy of even the slightest sign of recognition from you – leave me with the signs of repentance: that's all I deserve. Leave me, like the publican in the back of the Temple striking his breast (cf. Lk 18:13) – that's my place. By saying this, you will be putting pressure on the heart of God: the result is that you will always be happy when some humiliation comes your way, because you will say: I deserve much more. When the Good Lord leaves you in trials and

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dryness, you can say: My God, this is nothing. And you will always be happy, and you will say: That's not even enough. The humble person says: That is not enough. God pretends not to love her, and she says: I deserve even more. Then, if God would speak, he would say: She is stronger than I (cf. Gn 32:29); she disarms me, in spite of what I have done to her. In this way, you will be all-powerful over the heart of God.

Consider the holy man Job. God places him on a disgusting and infected dung heap – his friends stay near him more than seven days without daring to speak to him; even his wife dares not to touch him. He is there; they throw him a piece of bread, but he doesn't care – he is singing the mercies of God. And when everyone humiliates him, including his wife who says: *What's the use of your piety and your sacrifices. Curse God who is abandoning you*, he answers: *What are you saying – We accept good things from God; and should we not accept evil? Oh no! **Blessed be the name of the Lord!*** (cf. Jb 2:9-10) In this way he triumphed over all his trials, and continued to say the same to all: Blessed be the name of the Lord! And he was greater on his dunghill than on a throne. Why? Because he was victorious over himself, and over God. And God said with astonishment: Notice my servant Job (cf. Jb 42:8-9). [...] What did the Good Lord recognize in him? He did not complain, he was not impatient, he accepted humiliation, and he blessed God.

It's the same for you. If God places you on the dunghill of your sins and faults, and if everyone abandons you, you should say: I deserve it, and I deserve even more – I am making reparation for my sins. That's what you must do, my poor Daughters, and then you'll always be happy, and you'll never be disturbed. And what else? As for your graces, you'll always be contented: Clearly, I don't deserve them. Strive then to acquire humility of the mind.

**Next is humility of the heart.** A patient soul is at peace in the midst of trials; true, the heart suffers, but she wants whatever God wants, and she can sing in spite of sufferings: she loves the holy will of God. The Good Lord does not ask us to love trials, abandonment, and dryness: no, he does not ask that. But, if we love the holy will of God who is testing us, and if we accept the cross with patience, that's wonderful. The Good Lord wants us to persevere with tears if we want, but also with patience – then the heart develops love for the will of God. That soul becomes warmhearted towards God who is testing her; she is gentle with everyone and says: My soul, don't be sad: be friendly with others, have a smiling face, welcome those who seem to be hurting you [...]. Be humble of heart and will. Request to become humble; don't seek humiliation, but accept it when it comes.

**Be humble in your body.** The Good Lord allows his saints to be calumniated, laughed at, and persecuted. That happened to the Master; it is an honor for you to experience the same. Rejoice, because the honor and glory of God rests on you. I repeat: Rejoice, because this is a great opportunity.

My poor Daughters, this is your virtue: humility. How will you acquire it? You will never be perfectly humble, and so you must never relax your efforts – you must always be pursuing it. The Good Lord always provides opportunities for you, but he always gives you the grace – your duty is to humble yourself constantly, and always practice humility. You cannot always practice charity or penance, but you can always have the attitude and exercise of humility. The more you are humble, the greater you will be – the more you are humble, the greater will be your love for the Good Lord. **Therefore, make this your dominant virtue, since it must be the characteristic virtue of every Servant of the Blessed Sacrament.**

Take note, also, that adoration without humility is worthless – without the humility of love, as the rule says. What good is piety without humility, since humility is its norm? If we required you to practice some extraordinary virtue, I would understand when you might say: I cannot do it, because one must go higher. But in this case you must descend – it consists of virtue in weakness, poverty, and incapacity – you cannot say that you cannot descend, since it is within you. You must then have humility constantly

before your eyes. **Do you want to be humble? Then love our Lord; if you love him you will live in him. Everything about our Lord can be summarized in a few words: *Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart*** (cf. Mt 11:29). There you are: if you love our Lord you will love what he loves – and he loves humility and humiliation. Above all, love humility because he loves it.

We must honor our Lord in the way that he wants us to honor him. If you want to honor him, here is his love. Don't you see that in the Blessed Sacrament our Lord practices only one virtue: humility and annihilation – it is greater here than at his birth, in his life, and in his death. Our Lord is humbler here than in his mortal life. In his mortal life, people could see his divine actions, his delightful words: they could see in him something sublime and divine, although he veiled his divinity. Here, however, he veils even his glory and his sacred humanity – behold his annihilation. If you wish to honor him, then, you must honor him as he is – you must imitate him as he is. **St. Paul says: *he humiliated himself; he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave!*** (cf. Phil 2:7) Here, there is even more: our Lord annihilates himself to the point of taking on the form of bread, the form of a substance, food; bread is so ordinary – there is nothing beautiful about it; it has nothing, since it is the most common thing in the world. He could not go any lower than descending to the most commonplace of things. Would you not be willing to lower yourself to meet him?

**Love our Lord. You want to embrace him?** Look for him where he is – that's clear. You don't love him if you cannot recognize him from a distance. Imagine yourself glorifying and exalting him by becoming his throne: you must place yourselves under his feet. In the Orient, when a king is conquered, he becomes the slave of the conquering king. With the Persians, for example, the conqueror uses the conquered as a footstool to climb on his horse (cf. Ps 109:1) – he does this to humiliate him all the more. But, try as you will, you can never become lower than our Lord. To honor and love him, then, become humble. Why did our Lord humble himself so much? In order to show us that he loves us. What then should we do? We must glorify his Father through humility and annihilation, for so many people who don't want to humble themselves. We must help him bear his mantle of humiliation. If you do this, the heavenly Father will be pleased to see Jesus Christ so loved and glorified. Then the heavenly Father will tell us: I gave you my Son in the Eucharist in order to show you his love, and how he humbled himself for you – return to him what he has done for you and humble yourself. Espouse humility, as he espoused it in his state of glory.

Now, my good Daughters, listen well: ask our Lord for the spirit of Eucharistic humility – it is always before your eyes; you have its grace, develop its love. My God, make me humble, help me to love humiliations. Our Lord will give you the grace – he will give you this divine virtue. St. Bernard said: The Word so loved humility that, since he could not practice it in heaven, he returned here on earth to continue practicing it through the least of his chosen ones. Put this virtue in practice constantly.

Every day, when you don't know what resolution to take in the examination of foresight, you can continue returning to humility of the heart, of the mind, and of the body.

**When you began this retreat, I asked you: Do you really want to please our Lord? Give him your personality – that's good. Now, I'm coming to tell you: To persevere in this gift, you will succeed only through a constant humility. Humility must be the food of this gift – if you are always humble, you will always continue to give yourself.**

Look at your past, my poor Sisters – what are your sins? Pride and self-love have been your rulers. If you become humble, you will sin no longer, because the principle of sin will no longer be in you – on the contrary, there will be humility, the seed and principle of all virtues in your heart. You must always have humility in your life – that's the grace that I wish you.



**Points for reflection:**

Here, the Founder situates humility in its life-giving context: as a link with God, with our vocation, and with the other virtues: adoration, love, joy in doing the will of God, our Lord, and the gift of self. These are the positive aspects of humility.