

CONCERNING HUMILITY

Humility is the Cloak of the Godhead

—by Elder Ephraim of Arizona—

We have arrived at Holy Week and the Passion of our Lord. His life-giving Passion began at Bethany, from the village of Martha and Mary. This is where He set out with the little donkey and His disciples in order to make His entrance into Jerusalem. We witness Him Who sits upon a throne of glory simultaneously sitting upon a throne of humility. This is what our Lord wanted to teach us by mounting this humble animal: humility.

With His humility our Christ prompted everyone down here on the earth—even the small children—to sing praises: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mt. 21:9). With His humble entrance before the multitudes of people, He moved and shook up all of Jerusalem. “Who is this person?” exclaimed everyone who was unaware [of what was taking place]. All the people raced to cut branches from palm and bay trees in order to lay them down before His path.

Yet, take a look at how the things of this world change so quickly. On Sunday the crowds were crying out, “Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is He who comes,” as well as many other things; four-five days later, however, they shouted, “Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!” (Jn. 19:15). This is how things are on the earth. Nothing is stable. One moment the world exalts a person and the next moment it degrades him. Man is unstable; his works are unstable; his thoughts are unstable; everything in his life is unstable.

The humility of our Christ is truly remarkable! It is awesome! We witness the God-man humbly and unpretentiously seated upon a young donkey. His holy example is such a beautiful lesson for us. As we proceed through the most-sacred week of His Passion, His supreme humility becomes even more pronounced. We see Him enduring tortures, ridicule, and slaps. We watch Him suffering the hardship of imprisonment, lifting the Cross, and eventually falling to His knees from the weight of the Cross. Who can fathom that God on earth was slapped by a human hand made of clay, by the hand of the creature whom He fashioned with such beauty, perfection, and wisdom! This person whom He [initially] created as “a god by grace” upon the earth afterward raised his hand and hit God! If our child

were to hit us, we would rise up and protest, “How you dare hit me? Your mother, your father...?” But what is a mother or a father when compared to God on the earth? They are just fellow human beings made of clay.

This is where the beauty of Christ lies: His humility! If He were not humble, He would not be God. He is not a dictator; He is not a ruler; He is not haughty. His glory is His humility.

We Must Maintain a Humble Mindset

—by Elder Ephraim of Arizona—

Above all, we should maintain a humble mindset. We must believe that everything we accomplish is due to God’s help. **“What do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7).** Whatever we have, we have received it all from God.

Did you assist someone with your own hands? Very well. Didn’t God give you your hands? Did you say a good word with your mouth? Did you save someone with your good advice? Do not boast! God gave you both your mouth and the ability to speak. Did you use your feet to run and serve others? Well, they also belong to God. Did you praise God with your heart, with your inner voice, and with your inherent logic? Did you have good thoughts about God and your neighbor? Again, the heart and mind are also God’s. Did you perhaps even desire to be born? No! It was God Who brought you into existence. Since everything is a gift from God and all things must serve Him, then what can you possibly offer to God?

This is why Christ said to His disciples, **“When you have done all that you were ordered to do, you must know that you are simple and worthless slaves” (cf. Lk. 17:10).** “I give to you [says Christ], and then you give to others. If I had not given to you, you would have nothing to give. You did not conceal the gift, but you transmitted it and multiplied it.” Hence, what is rewarded is the desire to perform virtue, as in the parable of the talents (vid. Mt. 25:15-28).

Humility Is a Great Force —From the book *Limonarion*—

There were two bishops from neighboring jurisdictions, whom the malicious devil had succeeded in wedging apart with enmity. One of the bishops was rich and socially influential; the other lived with only the basic necessities and was less prominent. Before long, the affluent hierarch began to issue threats to his counterpart. When the lower-ranking bishop heard of this, he called all his clergy and announced to them: “Reverend fathers, with the grace of our Christ, we will defeat him.” “Your Grace,” the priests objected, “it is not easy for anyone to defeat him.” The bishop, however, assured them: “Be patient, and you will see that we will get the better of him.”

What did he devise? He waited until the day when the wealthy bishop’s eparchy was celebrating the memory of certain holy martyrs, at which time he notified his clergymen: “Follow me because the day has come for us to crush him.” On their way to the neighboring diocese, the priests were asking each other: “What does he have in mind? How is he so confident that we will defeat him?” Nevertheless, they followed their shepherd until they reached the cathedral.

When they arrived, the other bishop was leading a procession around the church during the vespers service, followed by a multitude of faithful. In the presence of the large crowds, the visiting bishop approached, fell to the feet of his brother (as did all his clergymen), and declared: “Please forgive us holy master. We are your servants.”

When the celebrant bishop saw that his colleague had fallen down prostrate before him asking for forgiveness, he marveled at his extreme humility and was overcome with compunction. He then also kneeled down and exclaimed: “You are my master, my lord, and my father.” Thus they reconciled with each other, and from then on they had great love and affection amongst themselves.

Subsequently, the bishop would take pleasure in advising his members of the clergy: “Didn’t I tell you that we would defeat him with the grace of God? Whenever you are at odds with anyone, do the same and you will be victorious.”