

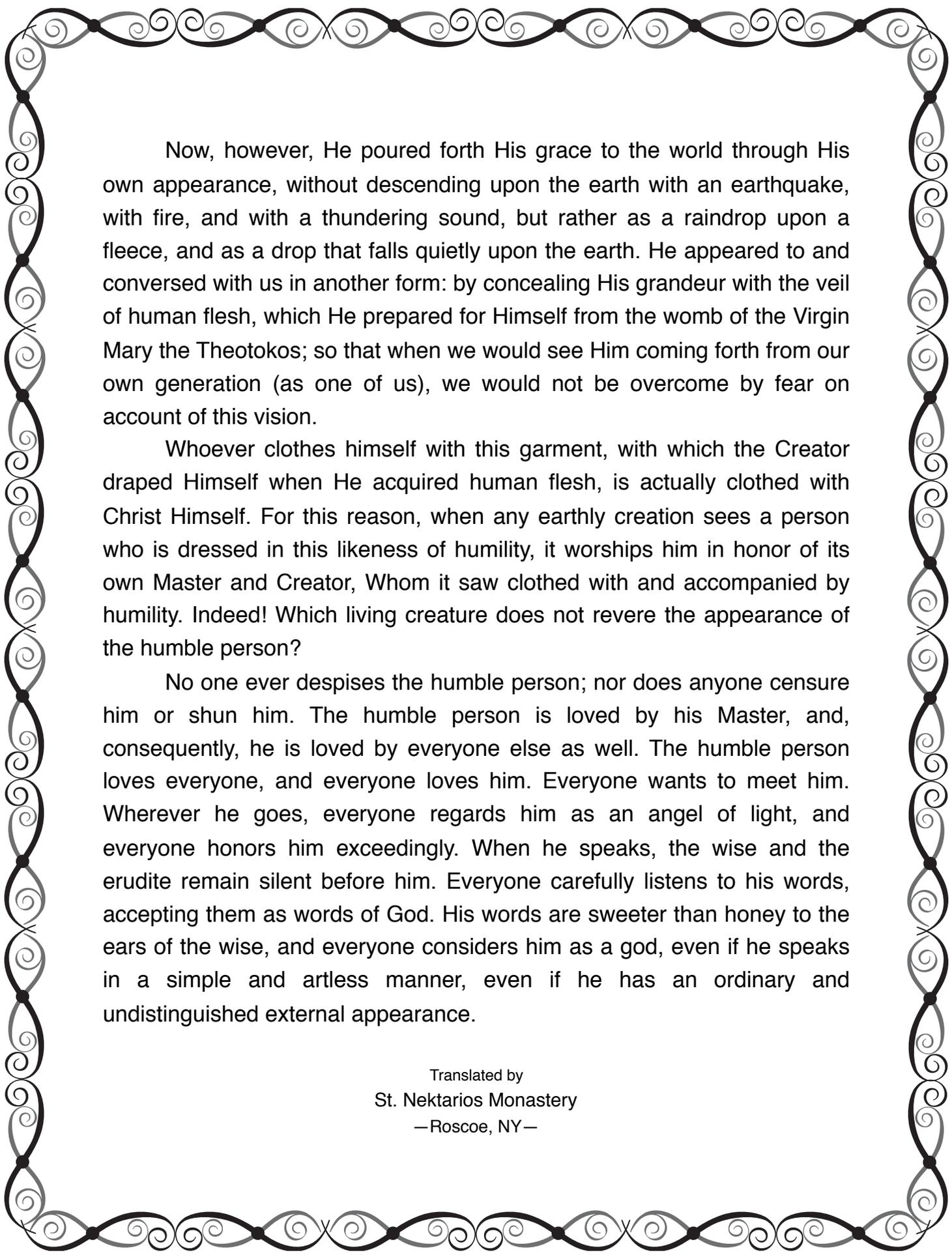
## **NO ONE IS GREATER THAN THE HUMBLE MAN**

**—St. Isaac the Syrian—**

I want to speak about the exalted virtue of humility—even though I am somewhat reluctant, just as a person is when attempting to speak about God through the use of human reasoning. For humility is the cloak of the Godhead. Because, when the Son and Word of God the Father became man and appeared on the earth, this is what He clothed Himself with in order to converse with us. Hence, whoever clothes himself with humility, in essence, resembles Him Who descended from His heavenly loftiness and Who concealed His inherent glory and grandeur with humility, so that the creation would not be consumed by fire when it witnessed His divine nature. Indeed! The creation would not have been able to see Him if He had not first taken on a part of it. It would not even have been able to hear Him speak face to face, just as the sons of Israel were unable to listen to His voice when He spoke to them from the cloud. Thus, they told Moses, “Let God speak to you, and you can tell us what He says. Let him not speak to us lest we die” (Ex. 20:19).

It would not have been possible for creation to see the divine nature of God; for, the vision of God was so awesome that the great prophet Moses stated, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling” (Hb. 12:21). When the glory of God appeared atop Mount Sinai, the entire mountain was enveloped in smoke and fearfully quaked; consequently, even the animals that happened to approach the base of the mountain would die (Ex. 19:12). In preparation, the Jewish people had purified themselves for three days prior, according to the commandment they received from Moses, so that they could become worthy of hearing God’s voice and seeing His glory. When, however, the moment arrived, they were unable to endure the vision of His light and the powerful sounds of thunder (Ex. 20:18-19).

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Now, however, He poured forth His grace to the world through His own appearance, without descending upon the earth with an earthquake, with fire, and with a thundering sound, but rather as a raindrop upon a fleece, and as a drop that falls quietly upon the earth. He appeared to and conversed with us in another form: by concealing His grandeur with the veil of human flesh, which He prepared for Himself from the womb of the Virgin Mary the Theotokos; so that when we would see Him coming forth from our own generation (as one of us), we would not be overcome by fear on account of this vision.

Whoever clothes himself with this garment, with which the Creator draped Himself when He acquired human flesh, is actually clothed with Christ Himself. For this reason, when any earthly creation sees a person who is dressed in this likeness of humility, it worships him in honor of its own Master and Creator, Whom it saw clothed with and accompanied by humility. Indeed! Which living creature does not revere the appearance of the humble person?

No one ever despises the humble person; nor does anyone censure him or shun him. The humble person is loved by his Master, and, consequently, he is loved by everyone else as well. The humble person loves everyone, and everyone loves him. Everyone wants to meet him. Wherever he goes, everyone regards him as an angel of light, and everyone honors him exceedingly. When he speaks, the wise and the erudite remain silent before him. Everyone carefully listens to his words, accepting them as words of God. His words are sweeter than honey to the ears of the wise, and everyone considers him as a god, even if he speaks in a simple and artless manner, even if he has an ordinary and undistinguished external appearance.

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