

CONCERNING PRIDE (PART 4)

—from the book *The Salvation of Sinners*—

Christ, Who is meek and humble in heart, exceedingly despises and loathes pride, and He brings her down from her high throne and, instead, elevates them who are humble. He humbled the Apostle Peter through a young girl. He humbled Goliath through David, who at the time was a young lad but nonetheless surprisingly killed this giant warrior. He humbled Holofernes when a frail maiden proceeded to cut his head off. He exiled Adam from Paradise. He deprived Saul and Rehoboam of their kingdoms. He put to death one hundred and twenty five thousand of Sennacherib people. He submerged the Pharaoh and all his soldiers in the depths of the Red Sea. The all-good and compassionate Lord similarly disciplined countless other prideful people with bitter death. As a matter of fact, He not only disciplines humans but even exiled from Heaven itself all the Angels who gave in to arrogance, and He condemned them to eternal Hell.

Pride turned the Angels into demons; humility renders man a god. Guard yourself and be careful never to think highly of yourself, because you do not have even one single reason to boast. We were conceived in transgression; we were born in sin: **“For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me” (Ps. 50:5)**. Our entire lives are filled with sorrows and difficulties, and death is inevitable. “For we are earth, and to the earth we shall return.” If you ponder that your body is dirt and ashes, if you bring to mind the decomposing grave that will bring your earthly glory and honor to an end, and if you consider how much pride actually harms you, you will feel an absolute repulsion for it.

If you consider the putrid smell of the soil and the maggots that your body will succumb to in the grave, and if you take into account that the people who you presently look down upon and scorn will one day be stepping on your burial plot, you would not feel prideful. Just as it is not possible for someone who has been sentenced to death to feel prideful, similarly it is strange for us to be prideful and boast since we also are subjected to the verdict of Adam’s transgression: **“The day you eat from this, you will die with death” (Gen. 2:17)**.

If you are inclined to feel prideful on account of your virtue, intelligence, or any other special gifts you believe you possess, remember that they are all free handouts that the Lord has given to you, for which you will have to give an account on Judgment Day. For as it is written, **“they who are mighty will be mightily examined” (Wisdom 6:6)**. All the various virtues are gifts from our infinitely-good God. The more you surpass others, whether it be in physical attributes such as social status, wisdom, valor, physical strength, and wealth, or in spiritual qualities such as chastity, abstinence, and righteousness, the more you must humble yourself—because all these are bestowals that come from above from the Father of lights. The only things that belong to us are our sins and crimes; and if we choose to pride ourselves on account of these, then we are indeed foolish and senseless.