

LIFE IN CHRIST

A PREACHED RETREAT BY FR. RANIERO CANTALAMESSA

SESSION 6: HUMILITY AND LOWLINESS

A. The Exhortation in Romans

- Paul begins Romans by telling us what God has done for us in Christ. He now shares with us the result of receiving the Holy Spirit, growth of the fruits of the Spirit in us.
- Both halves of the letter to the Romans show us the complete teaching about salvation.
- Good works have a place, although our good works are not the cause of grace, they are the result.
- In the second half of Romans, St. Paul writes about almost all the Christian virtues (love, humility, obedience, purity, service) - the full ideal of Christian perfection.

B. Romans 12 - Humility

“For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited.” -Romans 12:3, 16

- Paul likens humility to soberness, to have an objective, true view of yourself.
- Paul presents humility as wisdom and truth.
- God casts down the powerful because pride is untruth.

“One day, I was wondering why God so loves the humble when it suddenly and unexpectedly struck me that this must be because he is the supreme truth, and humility is truth.” -St. Teresa of Ávila

- We should not boast because everything we have that is good is a gift from God.

C. Mary is the perfect human example of humility

- In Mary's Magnificat, she expresses that she is God's humble servant.
- She calls herself humble because of her lowliness compared to God and her poverty.
- In the Gospels, Mary is always humble, never boasting of herself as Jesus' mother.
- She brought to the world the Word, in person, Jesus.

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D. Becoming Humble

- We need practice - sometimes accepting harsh words, small injustices against us, and acknowledging our failures.
“...complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus...” -Philippians 2:2-5
- Philippians 2:2-5 teaches us about the virtue of humility, humility in mind.
- We should not only be humble because it is truth, but because Jesus was humble himself and we must imitate Jesus.
- The foundation of Christian virtues is Jesus, the kerygma. Jesus saved us through obedience; therefore we must be obedient.
- Jesus shows us that humility isn't about thinking of yourself as less than, it's more about making yourself little, abasing yourself to serve others.
- Jesus doesn't teach us that we shouldn't be great, but shows us that true greatness is in elevating others.
- Humility is important in community life.
- We need humility to channel God's grace and gifts.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What stood out to you from the talk?
2. How would you define humility? What did you think about Father's definition?
3. In what areas do you struggle with being humble? What does that look like for you?
4. What are some ways that you can grow in humility?