

# HUMILITY AND HOLY WEEK

1 April A.D. 2015

Dear clients and friends,

While contemplating on the mysteries of Holy Week over the last couple of days, my attention has been focused on the words of our Lord when he said, “greater love has no man than this, to lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15.13) The selfless act of laying down one’s life assumes the virtue of humility. St. Paul tells us that, “even though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but humbled Himself, even to death on a cross.” (Philippians 2.6f) This links the virtue of humility, the person of Jesus, and the several days before His crucifixion with humility in a way that they cannot be separated. Given the totality of Jesus words throughout the Gospels, it is fair to say that, to be a Christian means to be humble.

Humility and self-deprecation are not the same thing. Self-deprecation is undervaluing, or disparaging oneself and/or denying the goodness of God that is within us. The person with humility, on the other hand, sees others as equals to himself, not superior to them, not entitled to special treatment by them. To be humble means to treat others the way you wish to be treated. To be humble means to forgive others the offenses they have committed against you, even before they asked. To be humble means being willing to take the back seat, not require special attention. To be humble includes the ability to suffer wrongs patiently (one of the seven Spiritual Works of Mercy), and to realize that being loving is more important than being right!

The humble person realizes that he is entitled to the same rights as everyone else, but has the willingness to not always insist on them. The humble person is more interested in loving that being loved, in forgiving than being forgiven, in serving than being served. For Jesus, perfect God and perfect man, this came quite naturally. But for us, members in and victims of a fallen, sinful society, it takes effort. And part of this effort should involve prayer.

Jesus told us that taking up our crosses – even embracing them – is inseparable from being one of His disciples. In order to do this, consider contemplating on and praying the following litany between now and Easter Sunday morning. Take your time; examine your conscience as you pray. God willing, the prayers that follow may form us into better images of Him whom we worship: He who humbled Himself for us, even to death on a cross.

## A Litany of Humility

Oh, Jesus! Meek and humble of heart, hear me.  
From the desire of being esteemed, deliver me.  
From the desire of being loved, deliver me.  
From the desire of being extolled, deliver me.  
From the desire of being honored, deliver me.  
From the desire of being praised, deliver me.  
From the desire of being preferred, deliver me.  
From the desire of being consulted, deliver me.  
From the desire of being approved, deliver me.  
From the fear of being humiliated, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear of being despised, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear of suffering rebukes, deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being disrespected, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear of being taken for granted, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear of being forgotten, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear of being ridiculed, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear of being wrong, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear of being suspected, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear that others may be more loved than I, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear that others may be more respected than I, deliver me, Jesus.  
From the fear that I won't get all the good things I deserve on earth, deliver me, O Lord.  
For the fear that others may be more esteemed than I, deliver me, Jesus.  
That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease, hear me, O Lord.  
That others may be chosen and I set aside, hear me, O Lord.  
That others may be praised and I unnoticed, hear me, O Lord.  
That others may be preferred to me in everything, hear me, O Lord.  
That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I can, hear me, O Lord.  
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire true humility. Amen.

May God grant us all real, honest humility!