

Deign then, O Lord, to unite to Your Passion all the sufferings, little or great, of my life, that they may purify me and prepare me to rise from light to light, until I am completely transformed in You.

The light and glory of Thabor encourage me. Thank You, O Lord, for having allowed me, if only for a few moments, to contemplate Your splendor and to enjoy Your divine consolations. Fortified and encouraged by this, I come down from the mountain to follow You, *You alone*, to Calvary.

HUMILITY

PRESENCE OF GOD – O Jesus, You who were so humiliated for us, teach me how to practice true humility.

MEDITATION

I. Charity is the essence of Christian perfection, for charity alone has the power to unite man to God, his last end. But for us poor, miserable creatures, whom God wishes to raise to union with Himself, is charity the ultimate basis of the spiritual life? No. There is something deeper still which is, so to speak, the *basis* of charity, and that is humility. Humility is to charity what the foundation is to a building. Digging the foundation is not building the house, yet it is the preliminary, indispensable work, the condition *sine qua non*. The deeper, and firmer it is, the better the house will be and the greater assurance of stability it will have. Only the fool "built his house upon the sand," with the inevitable consequence of seeing it crumble away very soon. The wise man, on the contrary, "built ... upon a rock" (Mt 7,24-26); storms and winds might threaten, but his house was unshakable because its foundation was solid.

Humility is the firm bedrock upon which every Christian should build the edifice of his spiritual life. "If you wish to lay good foundations," says St. Teresa of Jesus to her daughters, "each of you must try to be the least of all" that is, you must practice humility. "If you do that ... your foundation will be so firmly laid that your Castle

will not fall" (cf. *Int C VII*, 4) Humility forms the foundation of charity by emptying the soul of pride, arrogance, disordered love of self and of one's own excellence, and by replacing them with the love of God and our neighbor.

The more humility empties the soul of the vain, proud pretenses of self, the more room there will be for God. "When at last [the spiritual man] comes to be reduced to nothing, which will be the greatest extreme of humility, spiritual union will be wrought between the soul and God" (J.C. *AS II*, 7,11).

2. The soul who desires to reach the sublime heights of union with God must walk in the path of profound humility, for as the divine Master taught, only "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (*Lk* 18,14).

The higher the ideal of sanctity to which we aspire, the more sublime the end toward which we tend, the more we will have to descend and excavate in ourselves the fertile abyss of humility. "*Abyssus abyssum invocat*" (*Ps* 41,8); the abyss of humility calls to the abyss of infinite mercy, of grace and of the divine gifts, for "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He giveth grace" (*1 Pt* 5,5). We must humble ourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, sincerely recognize our nothingness, take account of our poverty; and if we wish to glorify ourselves, we must glory, like St. Paul, solely in our infirmities. It is only in our weakness, humbly acknowledged, that grace and divine virtue work and triumph (cf. *2 Cor* 12,9). Even if we are of the number of those good souls who sincerely desire to advance on the road to perfection, but who are relying too much on their own powers and personal initiative, we can apply to ourselves to great advantage the valuable warning that St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus gave a novice: "I see clearly that you are taking the wrong road; you will never reach the end of your journey. You want to scale a mountain, and the good God wills to make you descend.... It is Jesus who takes upon Himself to fill your soul according as you rid it of imperfections" (C).

The sublime ideal of union with God totally exceeds our capacities, which are those of weak creatures. If we aspire to it, it is not because we expect to reach it by our own efforts and initiative, but because we trust that God Himself, according to His promise, will

come and lead us by the hand. But God will not act thus with a proud soul. He stoops only to the humble; the more lowly He finds a soul, the closer He draws it to Himself. Humility deepens the soul's capacity to receive the fullness of divine gifts.

COLLOQUY

"O my God, You make me realize how far I must *descend* in order that my heart may serve as a dwelling-place for You: I must become so poor that I have no place whereon to lay my head. My heart is not wholly emptied of self, and that is why You order me to descend. Oh! I want to descend much lower, so that You will be able to rest Your divine head in my heart and know that there You are loved and understood. O sweet, divine Guest, You know my misery; that is why You come to me in the hope of finding an *empty tabernacle*, a heart wholly emptied of self. This is all You ask" (cf. T.C.J. L).

O Lord, help me to excavate in my poor soul that abyss of humility which will attract the abyss of Your infinite mercies. Help me to descend, although my pride seeks to rise. Help me to recognize and humbly confess my nothingness and my weakness, although my pride desires so much to have me esteemed as something great. Help me to glory in my infirmities, although my pride always tends to glory in what is not mine, but Your free gift. How true it is, O God, that grace follows an entirely different road from that of nature! Give me the strength to travel on this way with courage, to swim against the current, the muddy, treacherous current of my pride. How can I succeed if You; do not come to help me? But I trust in You, Lord, because I know that You are always ready to uphold the weak who have recourse to You with trust; because I know that, if my pride is great, Your mercy is infinite and Your omnipotence is invincible; because I know that if "anyone is an inactive man that wants help, is very weak in ability and full of poverty, Your eye looks upon him for good, and lifts him up from his low estate and exalts his head" (cf. *Sir* 11,12.13).

O Lord, who is more "full of poverty" than I, who have not yet conquered my pride? Who then is in greater need of Your help?