

Humility in the "Magnificat"

- Mary herself, in the "Magnificat," tells us why she was chosen for the Mother of God: *Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.*

- Thus Mary proclaimed her holy joy when Elizabeth saluted her as the Mother of the incarnate Word of God. But it was not only this disposition of her heart, this humility, which prepared her for the dignity of becoming the Mother of God; it was also because she reached, in each of her works, the highest perfection of merit.

- In this most perfect humility we can certainly find the reason that she never in any way followed her own will, that no single action of hers was ever marred by any shadow of self-will, but that her whole endeavor was to know and fulfil the Will of God.

- Even when the angel saluted her, she called herself "the handmaid of the Lord."

- And how beautifully was this disposition of her heart verified at her elevation to the Maternity of Christ; for when she was informed by the angel that she was the chosen Mother of the Saviour of the world, and therefore to be exalted above all creatures in Heaven and on earth, she did not intone the "Te Deum;" no evidence of excessive or exuberant joy appeared in her heavenly countenance; but she uttered only the words of entire submission to the most holy will of God: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word.*



Humility, says St. Bernard, is the foundation and guardian of virtues; and with reason, for without it no other virtue can exist in a soul. Should she possess all virtues, all will depart when humility is gone.

O Mary,
most humble of all creatures,
give me the grace of
true humility of heart!



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The Humility of the Blessed Virgin Mary



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• Most justly has St. Bernard said: *If Christ had found a virgin more humble than Mary, He surely would have chosen her, and not Mary, for His Mother.*

• Mary attained the highest degree of glory in Heaven, because she humbled herself most deeply on earth, and, by the humility of her heart, modelled her life on that of her divine Son.

• *My will in her* — that is the praise which the Holy Ghost confers upon her. Oh, how majestic, how holy, how great, is Mary in the humility of her heart, which, excepting the Sacred Heart of Christ, was in no other creature, not even in the angels of heaven, manifested in so perfect a degree. And in this perfect humility can be found the reason why the merits of her actions surpassed, in an immeasurable degree, those of all others, both men and angels.

• All the good works of the angels and saints may be compared to precious stones; but what determines their value? Conformity of intention with the most holy will of God unmingled with any alloy of self-will, or obstinacy, or self-interest. Therefore, if I were so happy as to have the merit of only one good work of Mary, I would not change it for the united merits of all the angels and saints.

The first virtue in which the Blessed Mother particularly exercised herself, from her very childhood, was that of humility.



Blessed Virgin Mary — Example of humility



• The Son of God Himself came on earth to teach it by His Own example, and willed that in this virtue in particular we should endeavour to imitate Him: learn from Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.

• Mary, being the first and most perfect disciple of Jesus Christ in the practice of all virtues, was the first also in that of humility, and by it merited to be exalted above all creatures.

• The first effect of humility of the heart is a lowly opinion of ourselves: *Mary had always so humble an opinion of herself, that, as it was revealed to the same St. Matilda, although she saw herself enriched with greater graces than all other creatures, she never preferred herself to anyone.*

• Moreover, it is an act of humility to conceal heavenly gifts. Mary wished to conceal from St. Joseph the great favour whereby she had become the Mother of God, although it seemed necessary to make it known to him, if only to remove from the mind of her poor spouse any suspicions as to her virtue.

• A soul that is truly humble refuses her own praise; and should praises be bestowed on her, she refers them all to God. Behold, Mary is disturbed at hearing herself praised by St. Gabriel; and when St. Elizabeth said, *Blessed art thou among women ... and whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? ... blessed art thou that hast believed*, Mary referred all to God, and answered in that humble Canticle, *My soul doth magnify the Lord.*

• What, indeed, too often diminishes the merits of our good actions?

• It is a want of humility, the dust of self-love, self-conceit, and a lack of purity of intention, which causes man, with all the good works which he performs for the honour of God, to keep before his eyes himself — his own interest — which urges him to long for honour and distinction.

• Therefore, if we wish to increase the glory of that throne which awaits us in heaven, and to be nearer still to Mary, then it becomes necessary to humble ourselves, and to open, in all the good we do, the contest with self-love, and to desire nothing else than the greater honour and glory of God, for He has promised: *Those who glorify Me, those will I also one day glorify.*



• What will increase our glory in Heaven is especially our union with the most holy will of God in all sufferings and afflictions.

• Glance at the most holy Virgin, in her earthly life, and you will realize the truth of this remark:

- On earth, nearest the Cross;
in Heaven, next to the throne of her divine Son.
- On earth, Queen of martyrs;
in Heaven, Queen of the glorious and resplendent host of saints and angels.
- On earth, suffering the pangs of a heart pierced with the sword of grief;
in Heaven, happy in the possession of a heart filled with the purest celestial bliss.