



THE YEAR OF
DISCIPLESHIP

The Virtue of Humility

“Humility is the foundation of all the other virtues hence, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist, there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance.”

—St. Augustine

1. Pray for it

If you truly desire to be humble, pray every day for this grace, asking God to help you overcome your self-love. St. John Vianney taught, “We should ask God daily for the grace to know that we are nothing of ourselves, and that our corporal as well as our spiritual welfare proceeds from him alone.” To this end, I highly recommend the beautiful prayer known as the [Litany of Humility](#).

2. Accept humiliations

Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalene explains: Many ask God to make them humble and fervently pray for this, but very few want to be humiliated. Yet it is impossible to gain humility without humiliations; for just as studying is the way to acquire knowledge, so it is by the way of humiliation that we attain to humility.

3. Obey legitimate superiors

One of the clearest manifestations of pride is disobedience (ironically, disobedience and rebellion are hailed as virtues in modern Western society). Humility is always manifested by obedience to legitimate authority, whether it be your boss or the government. As St. Benedict says, “The first degree of humility is prompt obedience.”

4. Distrust yourself

The saints tell us that every sin we commit is due to our pride and self-reliance. If we completely distrusted ourselves and relied only upon God, they say, we would never sin.

5. Acknowledge your nothingness

Another highly effective way of cultivating humility is to meditate on the grandeur and greatness of God, while simultaneously acknowledging your own nothingness in relation to him.

6. Think better of others than of yourself

When we are proud, we inevitably think we are better than others. We pray like the Pharisee, “Lord, I thank you that I am not like other men.” This self-righteousness is incredibly harmful to our souls, and it is detestable to God. “Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves,” says St. Paul (Phil. 2:3).

Conclusion

There is no doubt about it: humility is the foundation of the entire spiritual life. Without this virtue, we will never advance in holiness. Yet, humility is not simply an abstraction to be admired—it is a virtue to be learned and practiced through the often painful circumstances of daily life. Let us always strive to be humble, then, in imitation of Jesus Christ, who “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”