

Sunday, December 26, 2010

Two Great Examples of Humility

Saint Mary and Saint Elizabeth both are great examples of humility and this was revealed when they met each other. Thus, we discovered the secret of their greatness, and the reason for one to deserve being the mother of the incarnate God, while the other being the mother of the greatest one born of women.

Perfection is an ocean of humility as St. Isaac the Syrian stated. A heart filled with the spirit of humility allows grace of God to freely work within it, and elevate it to higher degrees of perfection. This is what happened in the life of our Mother, Saint Mary, and also in the life of Saint Elizabeth.

Let's pause for a while and think about some of the signs of humility that appeared in the lives of these two saints. And let's internally reflect and ask ourselves whether these signs of humility are present in our lives.

1- **The humble person thanks, praises, and magnifies the Lord.** He constantly feels that God gives him more than he deserves. Therefore, he is always thankful as we saw Saint Mary thanking and praising, *"My soul magnifies the Lord... For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation..."* And also Elizabeth, the humble, says: *"But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"* She feels undeserving to receive this great blessing that the Mother of God visits her at home.

2- **The humble person is filled with the Holy Spirit,** because the Holy Spirit rests in the humble hearts and flows easily and abundantly within them, unlike arrogant hearts which makes it difficult for Him to work in them. This is how Saint Mary was full of grace, and the angel said to her: *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you."* Also when Elizabeth met with Saint Mary, the Mother of Light, she became filled with the Holy Spirit, for the humble heart is always prepared to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

3- **The humble person rejoices and be exceedingly glad.** This is a natural outcome for the work of the Holy Spirit in one's heart, for He is the spirit of true joy. Therefore, Saint Mary was glad as she praised: *"And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."* And Elizabeth was also filled with joy and the baby leaped in her womb for joy. This is the fruit of humility, but the arrogant searches for joy and doesn't find it.

4- **The humble person draws the Lord's attention, so He looks upon him and pours His grace on him.** This is what Elizabeth said when she conceived: *"Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people"* (Luke 1:25), because as we say in the Divine Liturgy, God looks upon the lowly. This was also confirmed by the Saint Mary in her praise: *"For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant"* (Luke 1:48).

5- **The humble person hides and stays away from the spotlights and fame.** He who truly tasted the grace of God, yet genuinely feels undeserving, doesn't talk with many words. But rather he prefers to keep his secrets with God to calmly delight in them and not to seek glory and praise from people because the grace of God satisfies him. This is what we see in Elizabeth who hid for five months after she conceived. We clearly see this in Saint Mary, the pride of our race, the great in her humility, who concealed the great news of the annunciation even from Joseph her fiancé, although this would put her in a predicament with him. But God intervened and told him about the mystery of divine conception by an angel in a dream.

6- **The humble person gives, serves, and seeks to bring happiness to others.** We see this clearly in our mother Saint Mary who rushed to a journey more than 80 miles long to serve Elizabeth who was pregnant in her old age. She went to serve but she was surprised that honor was waiting for her. By this, the words of Saint Isaac the Syrian are confirmed: *"He who seeks honor, it runs away from him. And he who knowingly runs away from it, it finds him and leads people to him."*

7- **The humble person glorifies God's work in the saints and honors them,** unlike the arrogant who doesn't see anything but himself, his achievements, his capabilities, and whatever matters to him. For instance, we don't see Elizabeth, the humble, talking about her miraculous conception, but rather glorifying Saint Mary, saying: *"Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord"* (Luke 1:45). We also see Saint Mary, the Mother of God, glorifying the work of God in His saints, saying: *"He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever."* (Luke 1: 54-55). Thus, the humble always see God's work in His saints, so they glorify God, honor his saints, and strive to follow their faith.



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