

Sunday, November 4, 2012

## Spiritual Remedies (3)

We will stay on the topic of spiritual diseases and the appropriate remedies to treat them:

+ **Pride is the most serious spiritual disease which leads man to destruction.**

Pride is indeed very serious, when the archangel of the rank of the Cherubim fell in pride, he fell down to the lowest level of darkness and lawlessness.

Pride is a fatal disease. When it enters one's heart, it gradually empties it from the grace of God replacing it with selfishness. Man then becomes void of grace and turns into a vessel for all kinds of evil. On the other hand, **when the spirit of humility fills the heart, it makes it a dwelling place for God and a virtue bearing soil.**

The children of God, who keep his commandments, are generally successful and distinguished in everything they do. Therefore, they are subjected to the disease of pride and vain glory more than others. Pride can sneak to their lives through words of praise, appearance or fame, then it can turn into seeking glory and honor from people. In that case, man thinks that he is better than others and that he deserves much honor.

In some cases, this dreaded disease can be more lethal leading man to more destruction, such cases are: When man is gifted with noticeable talents, when someone's success is visible in his community, or when someone is in a leadership position that has power and authority. In general, **God doesn't leave man to be a victim to pride but rather constantly tries to give him the appropriate remedies to protect him and heal him from this deadly disease.** These healing remedies that God offers us can be all named under one name, **The Cross.**

**The cross in all of its forms, whether illness, insult, slander, humiliation, or sorrow of any kind, is the remedy that heals and immunizes man from the disease of pride.** The cross provides the inner balance to the successful man, thus he doesn't boast or become condescending towards others, but truly understands his own nature and its weakness.

It is true that the **cross is a bitter tasting medicine**, but it is useful and healing. A wise man doesn't refuse to take it, but accepts it with thanksgiving knowing that it is of a great benefit to his soul.

Another important point we need to understand is that **God always gives a cross with each grace he gives** to protect man from pride. Thus, **He keeps outpouring His grace upon man without letting him lose his inner balance** and become arrogant. **This Divine plan stems from His great love towards us and His longing to save our souls.** God treats everyone in this manner. He who accepts the cross with thanksgiving, grace continues to overflow upon him so he grows from strength to strength and from glory to glory. On the other hand, **if one rejects the cross, God stops his grace from outpouring upon him.** This protects us from falling into pride if these gifts are not accompanied with a cross.

**If we contemplate on the stories of the saints, we see that the cross was evident in their lives as much as they were filled with grace.** For instance, **St. Mary** carried her cross throughout her life to the extent that *"a sword pierced through her own soul"* and she did so also without complaint. The Bible calls her the one who is full of grace and that she has become higher than the heavenly and the earthly. Similarly, **St. Paul the Apostle** was given a thorn in the flesh by God lest he is exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations given to him. And God told him: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12:9). Also, **St. Athanasius the Apostolic** was exiled and expelled five times, through which God outpoured his grace upon him so he wrote many epistles and books. These writings, which defended the divinity of Christ and His existence before all ages, have been supporting the Church throughout all generations. Likewise, all the saints accepted the cross and considered it as the most important remedy given to them by God to protect them from the deadly disease of pride.

**Perhaps these words alert us to the importance of accepting the cross, because in it there is a great benefit for us. It keeps us humble and guarantees us the outpouring grace of God, His comfort and blessings in our lives.**

Our saintly Fathers recognized the importance of carrying the cross in their lives and accepting suffering in patience. They recognized how the cross is important to their spiritual growth and in protecting them from the serious disease of pride. Therefore, they bore suffering with thanksgiving and used it for their edification.

In the next article, we will present some of the Fathers' quotes and spiritual experiences to help us following their path, carrying our cross, and thanking God for caring for us.

Peace of Christ be with you.

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