

The Humble Mary

My dear confreres in Jesus Christ. All these days, we were specially honouring and venerating our blessed mother. We heard a lot of things and probably we must have read a lot of things. Today I would like to share with you some of my reflection on the humility of the blessed virgin based on the annunciation incident.

In the gospel of St. Luke(1:26-28) we read: “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And when the angel appeared to her, he said, ‘Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women.’” At the angel's salutation, Mary was filled with grace. Eve's curse was changed into Mary's blessing. A virgin became the mother of God, in order to reconcile man with God, to give peace to the world, triumph to heaven, salutation and life to the dead. Mary was troubled by the angel's words and wondered what this salutation could mean. But the angel added, do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.” In this context St. Bernard comments like this “Ah, do not fear Mary, be not astonished if an angel comes, because He who is far greater than an angel will descend to you, how is it that you are surprised at the coming of an angel, when you have with you the lord of the Angels? Are you not perhaps worthy of seeing an angel, when virginity is an angelic life? As proof of this the angel said, “Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus.”

At this point God's messenger paused, respectfully awaiting Mary's reply. The very Lord and King of the universe desire her consent because through this consent He wants to save the world. She answered, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.” At that moment Mary becomes the spouse and the mother of God.

St. Peter Damian writes on this incident: “The word was made flesh. This is what nature admires, the angel reveres and man desires: this is what astonishes the Heaven, consoles the earth, and troubles the hell.”

An archangel greeted her and told her that she was full of grace and announced that the Holy Spirit would descend upon her. She saw herself raised to the honored position of God's mother. She saw herself placed above all creatures, made the queen of heaven and earth, yet Mary was not proud. On the contrary, all that glory was for her nothing but a greater reason to become even more admirably humble. She declared “behold the handmaid of the Lord.” (Lk 1:38).

Mary was exalted in proportion to the extent to which she humbled herself. Humanity is the secret of sanctity. If Mary had not been humble, the Holy Spirit would not have descended upon her, she would not have descended upon her, she would not have become the mother of God.

Once there lived a poor girl child in a poor country. She had no schooling. And she went for daily wages. Once she happened to see a chess training institution. She was caught for standing near the gate without any reason. She was asked by the head coach that whether she was interested to learn chess. She said, yes. But the other students did not accept her because she was stinking. She started coming there whenever ever she was free. The head coach studying her economic situation sponsored her training. She picked the game very fast.

She was able to foresee several moves of her opponent. There reached a stage she even defeated her master. So her master decided to take her to the championship. She never witnessed a failure. A poor girl who was good for nothing was now a hero. She became very proud. She stopped helping her mother in her work, because she considered herself as Master in chess. She even rejected her master's advice. She was not practicing chess. At last as a young girl she was selected to lead the team for her country for the international chess tournament. It was there in during the tournament she was saw her first failure. This led her to feel sorry for all the things that she did after becoming a local hero. She found herself useless. She was shattered and depressed. She thought that no one would accept her. When she was backing home, she started to help her mother and do all the work she was supposed to do. But her coach motivated her again to win the chess tournament.

Why did I share this story? It is to show the value of being humble even at the highest degree of your glory. Our blessed mother was always humble. She is the masterpiece of sanctity. Mary attained the highest degree of sanctity in the exercise of common virtue in the performance of humble duties and in the fulfillment of her mission. Now my dear friends let us follow the footsteps of Mary by practicing the common virtues especially that of humility, that we may serve the master as a humble servant by fulfilling his plan in our life so that as Mary was humble enough to respond to God's call, may we also accept God's call with humility and respond to it more joyfully.