



Apostles for Today

Reflection and Prayer - December 2007

Fundamental Rule 25

***Jesus Christ subjected himself to death on the Cross
with infinite love.***

Our Lord Jesus Christ, having done so much for us, as Saint John states (Jn. 21,25) “if all were written down, the world itself, I suppose, would not hold all the books that would have to be written”, **subjected himself with infinite love to death on the Cross in order to give eternal life to us sinners. We are not worthy to receive the grace of dying for love of Our Lord Jesus Christ; nevertheless, love for him prompts us** to be ready to die, even the most ignominious death, for his glory and for the salvation of souls. With this end in view we should always practice the perfect mortification of all our passions; and therefore we are obliged to lovingly profit from the use of the practice of accusing ourselves of our faults, and of having our attention drawn to our defects (as prescribed in our holy Constitutions) in order to **keep in check our pride and self-love**, and so as to make amends for our faults and imperfections. (OOC III, p. 55.)

Contemplation

Saint Vincent teaches us to contemplate, in every moment of our lives, the infinite love of Jesus.

He invites us to look at and imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, who “became as men are, and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.” **With infinite love he subjected himself and was condemned in order to give eternal life to us sinners.**

From both Saint Paul and Saint Vincent we learn to contemplate and to sing of God’s infinite love for us sinners:

I give thanks to him who has given me the strength, our Lord Jesus Christ, I who before was a blasphemer, ‘how merciless I was in persecuting the Church, how much damage I did to it.’

Come Angels, Saints and all creatures of the universe, come to adore infinite love, the one who is crazed with love, come, worship, bless, praise, give thanks: Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo (I will eternally sing your mercies o Lord.)

Mercy was shown to me because I acted in ignorance, far from the faith; thus the grace of the Lord was poured out abundantly together with the faith and the charity that are in Jesus Christ.

Come Angels, Saints and all creatures of the universe, come to adore infinite love, the one who is crazed with love, come, worship, bless, praise, give thanks: Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo

These words are true and are to be listened to: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, amongst whom I am the first.

Come Angels, Saints and all creatures of the universe, come to adore infinite love, the one who is crazed with love, come, worship, bless, praise, give thanks: Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo

This is the reason that mercy was shown to me, Jesus Christ wished to show in me, firstly, all of his magnanimity as an example to all those who would believe in him so as to have eternal life.

Come Angels, Saints and all creatures of the universe, come to adore infinite love, the one who is crazed with love, come, worship, bless, praise, give thanks: Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo

To the King of all the ages, the one, unseen God, be honour and glory forever and ever.

Come Angels, Saints and all creatures of the universe, come to adore infinite love, the one who is crazed with love, come, worship, bless, praise, give thanks: Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo

Reflection

So that we would have life and have it in abundance, the Lord chose the way of the Incarnation which is the emblematic sign of the humility of God who took on human flesh, he become small in and through the humility of Mary who welcomed him into her womb. The Son of God, the Son of Man, was born of this union of the humility of the Creator with the humility of the creature....

The coming of Jesus, which we contemplate in this season of Advent and Christmas, **is the first sign of the infinite love** with which he

subjected himself to being condemned to death on a Cross, so as to give eternal life to us sinners, this is the first sign of his kenosis (self-emptying) out of love for us.

Let us listen again to the calls and pleas of Pope Benedict: *there is much pride, much self-sufficiency in the world!*

The humble person is perceived in today's world as one who has given up, as one who is defeated, one who has nothing to say to the world. While humility remains the best way, not only because it is one of the great human virtues, but primarily because it reflects God's own manner of acting, it was the way chosen by Christ.

My dear brothers and sisters, if we want to *follow Christ, we are called not to follow the path of pride, but that of humility.* We do not think that because we are followers of St. Vincent Pallotti that we are exempt from the temptations of the *role models that are marked by arrogance and violence, by a domineering attitude and by seeking success at any cost, by showing off and a desire for possessions, all to the detriment of being.*

For us too it is hard to *go against the tide, not to listen to the messages which come to us above all through the mass media.*

In this season of waiting for Christ we are invited to *be vigilant, critical and not to run after the trends that are the product of the persuasive force of the mass media.* My dear brothers and sisters, *we should not be afraid of having a preference for the "alternative ways" that are shown to us by true love; among these are an honest commitment to work; a profound concern for the common good. We must not be afraid of appearing different and of being criticized for what appears to be out of date and the way of the 'loser'.*

The persons who appear to be far from the mentality and the values of the Gospel, have a deep need to see someone who dares to live according to the fullness of humanity as manifested in Jesus Christ. Humility is not therefore the way of renunciation, but rather the path of courage. It is not the result of a defeat but rather the result of a victory of love over selfishness, of grace over sin. Following Christ and imitating Mary we must have the courage of humility; we entrust ourselves humbly to the Lord because it is only in doing so that we can become docile instruments in his hands, and we will thus allow him to do great things in us. The Lord has done great things in Mary and in the Saints! The humility which the Lord has taught us, and which St. Vincent bore witness to, is very different to a defeatist manner of living. Let us look above all at Mary: as students in her school, we too, like her, can experience God's 'yes' to humanity from which all other 'yesses' in our life originate.

Prayer

We respond to the invitation of St. Vincent: *in love for him we are obliged to keep in check our pride and self-love.*

Let us pray: **May the humility of Jesus Christ destroy my pride.**

My God, my mercy, infinite, immense, eternal, incomprehensible mercy, even though I am a prodigy of ingratitude, the cause of all evil and an obstacle to every good, you who are infinite love, infinite mercy, pardon me if I dare to say that you are crazed with love and mercy towards me.

May the humility of Jesus Christ destroy my pride.

At every moment, and always, and from all eternity, you think of me, and you shower me infinitely with graces, favours, gifts and expressions of mercy.

May the humility of Jesus Christ destroy my pride.

Jesus, even when I do not think of you, you are always waiting for me, and you burn with an ardent desire to give me your entire self and always with infinite fullness.

May the humility of Jesus Christ destroy my pride.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you feed me, you nourish me with all of your very self, your essence, your divine activities, and with all of your infinite attributes, and you are increasingly destroying all that is evil in me.

May the humility of Jesus Christ destroy my pride.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are ever more transforming me into your very self. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are carrying out all these activities of your love and of your mercy, by day and by night, when I am awake and when I sleep, when I eat and when I drink, when I am in movement, when I think of you and when I do not think of you.

May the humility of Jesus Christ destroy my pride.