

## Day Six: *The Pride of Life*

*“For everything in the world—the lust (concupiscentia) of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.” (1 John 2:16)*

We have already meditated on how concupiscence of the flesh and concupiscence of the eyes leads us to live according to a worldly spirit, and now we must finish by meditating on *the pride of life*.

Almost half way through our first week wherein we are trying to empty ourselves of worldliness we finally come to the root of it all: pride. First, let’s consider the evils it leads us to and secondly, the benefits of emptying ourselves of it.

Pride is a capital sin. It is the “head” from which other sins are born. This is what is meant by “capital” (*caput* in Latin means “head”). As our head engenders thoughts or is the circuit-board, so to speak, from which all other bodily functions come from, so pride engenders other vices and sins. Pride is what lies behind our envy, our injustice, our greed, our vanity, our perfectionism etc.

Besides being a seedbed for other sins, pride also manifests that we are thinking like the devil. To think and act according to pride is to think and act according to diabolical wisdom. St. Louis de Montfort writes, “Diabolical wisdom is the love of esteem and honors. This is the wisdom of the worldly-wise who, secretly of course, long for distinctions, honors, dignities and high offices. They strive to be seen, esteemed, praised and applauded by men. In their studies, their work, their words and actions, all they want is the esteem and praise of men, to be reputed as devout or learned people, as great leaders, eminent lawyers, men [and women] of great and distinguished merit or deserving of high consideration. They cannot bear insult or blame and so they hide their shortcomings and parade their better qualities” (*Love of Eternal Wisdom*, 82).<sup>1</sup>

The greatest evil we commit by pride, however, is the turning away from God. Through pride we seek to overthrow God’s dominion of our lives and take His place ourselves. Pride is the *coup d’etat* of creature against Creator; of sons/daughters against their Father; of disciples against their Lord. In other words, it’s insane and nonsensical. Why? Well, if by pride we replace God with ourselves, we destroy ourselves. Every sin of pride is an echo of the sin of our first parents: Adam and Eve. As the Catechism says, “In that sin man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good.”

When we replace God by trying to be “like gods” ourselves through pride we end up destroying ourselves. All good comes from God, as we meditated on yesterday, even the goodness of our very being and life. If we supplant God, we take away our own goodness. In pride we grasp at a goodness that can never exist. In our self-centeredness, self-absorption, and selfishness we gain nothing and lose everything.

Having said that, what is the benefit of emptying ourselves of pride? Freedom and peace of heart. Humility (the virtue opposed to pride) gives to us what pride cannot: true freedom, and when we

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<sup>1</sup> The last part of that last line sounds like the mantra of most social media profiles. Who doesn’t “hide their shortcomings or parade their better qualities”? But does that make us better people?

live in true freedom then we also find peace of heart. This is what Christ and by extension His Blessed Mother bring us: freedom and peace. "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5:1).

Through their example of humility both the Redeemer and the Mother of the Redeemer show us how to walk this path of freedom. Remember that we are not seeking to empty ourselves for emptiness's sake, but to be filled. We must strive to empty ourselves of pride so as to be filled with humility, freedom and peace of heart. Only then can we belong entirely to Jesus through Mary.

*Questions to guide your meditation:*

Where do I fall into the sin of pride? Where am I being lazy in overcoming my pride? Where is pride "hiding" itself in my life? Does it masquerade as vanity? Envy? Injustice? Being overly critical of others? False humility? Perfectionism? Exaggerated individualism?

St. Teresa of Avila says humility is the truth of who we are before God: What is the image of yourself that you present to the world? What is the reality within you?

### **- Today's Prayer -**

(Part of the Litany of Humility)

That others may be loved more than I,  
**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be esteemed more than I ...

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease ...

That others may be chosen and I set aside ...

That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...

That others may be preferred to me in everything...

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should...

Jesus meek and humble of heart,  
Make my heart like unto Thine.