

Day Nine: *Entitled to Nothing, Grateful for Everything*

1. Place yourself in God's presence

2. Ask Him for the grace you seek: to be emptied of any sense of entitlement and to grow in the virtue of gratitude.

3. Today's Meditation:

When you have done all you have been commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do" (Lk. 17:10).

If there ever was anyone who had a claim to entitlement it was Jesus. When you are God made flesh you have the right to many things. Why? Because being God you are their Creator and Lord. But what is interesting is that Jesus demanded nothing of what belonged to Him. The King of kings was born in a manger. The Lord of lords was obedient to parents and the Law. The Prince of peace made a living as a carpenter. The Son of God had no where to rest his head. The Innocent Judge suffered execution on a Cross.

He was "entitled" to everything so to speak, and yet he demanded nothing. And what about you? Do you ever get that feeling of entitlement, that you deserve something for who you are or what you've done? Do you ever act on it? Do you ever lose peace because that thing or opportunity is not given to you? But let's be honest, what do we really deserve in this life?

Nothing. (Nothing, save punishment for our sins.)

We deserve nothing. Everything is a gift. Entitlement makes us lose sight of this.

To paraphrase Fr. Mike Schmitz, when we start seeing things as "rights" we tend to stop seeing them as gifts. The greatest gift that suffers from this way of thinking is our freedom. We have a right to act freely, but only because it is a gift from God. We would never have the "right" without the gift.

If we want to empty ourselves of worldliness, we need to empty ourselves of a sense of entitlement. There's almost nothing less Christ-like than to consider oneself entitled to anything.

Consider this teaching of our Lord to his disciples, "When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do'" (Lk 17:10). The Lord is telling us, "Be grateful."

"Be grateful for life. Be grateful for your talents. Be grateful for your opportunities. Be grateful that you can freely serve God. Be grateful for everything you have, because everything is a gift. Recognize that I am the Lord and you are the servant. This order is for your good. And for your good I, the Lord, have become your servant. I became poor so that you might be rich."

Before the great mystery of the Incarnation, all sense of human entitlement crumbles. God has become man. The Lord has become a servant. The Savior has become the sacrifice. If gazing into this mystery, a man could still cling to any sense of entitlement, then he has not understood the

mystery at all.

Have this mind among yourselves, says St. Paul, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself (Phil 2:5-6).

Christ made no demands of “being entitled”. We should follow Him. We should follow Him along the path of humility and gratitude which is opposed to the path of entitlement. Entitled people are self-made. We are called to be God-made. And only those who are humble enough to see all things as gifts truly belong to God. See how emptying ourselves of entitlement leads us down this path to consecration. Who is humbler than Mary? Who more than Mary has recognized the abundant gifts of God in their life? Who more than Mary proclaims the greatness of the Lord?

Further questions to guide your meditation: Where might you be falling into the mindset of “entitlement”? Do you think that everything you need or desire is something you deserve? Do you do God justice in giving thanks for all His gifts? Do you show Him gratitude daily? Are you grateful to others for what they do for you? Do you express this gratitude to them?

St. Gianna Beretta Molla once wrote, “The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for what He is sending us every day in His goodness.” Where is one place in your life that you can be less entitled and more grateful?

- Today's Prayer -

*Jesus living in Mary,
teach me to be generous,
to serve you as you deserve,
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and not to look for any reward,
save that of knowing that I do your holy will.*