

# WEDNESDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

May 20, 2020 • Thirty-second day of Paschaltide

~ on this day, the Feast of Mid-Pentecost is given up, and the morning hymns are of the Feast. ~



## CHRIST IS RISEN!

*Canticle*

**C**hrist revealed Himself as a man when He was born from the Virgin's womb; as a mortal, He was called the Lamb. As One not tasting corruption, our Pascha is blameless; and as true God, He is proclaimed perfect.

*Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down Death by death,  
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*

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### AT MORNING PRAYER

*from the Pentecostarion, at Orthros*

**O** Sovereign Master and Creator of all things, O Christ our God, Thou didst cry unto those present at the Judaic Mid-feast and address them thus: Come and draw the water of immortality freely. Wherefore, we fall down before Thee and faithfully cry out: Grant Thy compassions unto us, O Lord, for Thou art truly the Well-spring of life for all.

*Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.*

**O**n the day of the Mid-feast of holy Pentecost, the Sovereign Master of all things stood in the temple of God, and while talking to the Hebrews, He spake openly and as both King and God, reproved their tyrannic insolence and laid bare their great presumption. But as for us, in His goodness, He doth bestow great mercy on us all.

*Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.*

**T**hou hast contained in thy womb, O Virgin Mother, One of the Trinity, Christ the Giver of Life, Whom all creation praiseth, and before Whom the thrones on high tremble. Entreat Him, O all-blessed Maid, that our souls be saved.

### AT EVENING PRAYER

*from the Pentecostarion, at Vespers*

**T**hou didst enlighten the choir of the Apostles with the Holy Spirit, O Christ. Through them do Thou wash away the filth of our sins also, O God, and have mercy on us.

*Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.*

**W**hen the Lord came unto the well, the Samaritan woman entreated Him Who is compassionate, saying: Grant me the water faith, and I shall receive the streams of the font of baptism, unto exceeding gladness and redemption. O Giver of Life, Lord, glory be to Thee.

*Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.*

**T**he mystery which was hidden from everlasting and was unknown of the Angels, O Theotokos, was revealed through thee to those who dwell upon earth, in that God, having become incarnate in unconfused union, of His own good will, accepted the Cross for our sake. Whereby, He raised again the first created and hath saved our souls from death.

## BENEDICT OF NURSIA

Abbot

†547

~ on humility, from his Rule ~

[St. Benedict composed his Rule in the year 516 for the instruction of the monastics in his charge, and it became a standard, in both the West and the East, for monastic life.

Most of this Rule is not applicable to the laity, but much of his chapter on humility is of great benefit to all.]

**B**RETHREN, the Holy Scripture cries to us saying: *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.* (Luke 14:11) This shows us that every exaltation is a kind of pride. The Prophet David declares that he guards himself against this, saying: *O Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are mine eyes become lofty. Nor have I walked in things too great or too marvelous for me.* (Psalm 130:1-2) What then? *If I were not humble-minded but exalted my soul, as one weaned from his mother, so wouldst Thou requite my soul.* (Psalm 130:3)

Hence, brethren, if we wish to reach the greatest height of humility, and speedily to arrive at that heavenly exaltation to which ascent is made in this present life by humility, then, mounting by our actions, we must erect the ladder which appeared to Jacob in his dream, by means of which Angels were shown to him ascending and descending. (cf. Genesis 28:12) Without a doubt, we understand this ascending and descending to be nothing else but that we descend by pride and ascend by humility. The erected ladder, however, is our life in this present world, which, if the heart is humble, is lifted up to heaven by the Lord. For we say that our body and our soul are the two sides of this ladder; and into these sides the divine calling has inserted various degrees of humility or discipline which we must mount.

The first degree of humility, then, is that we always have the *fear of God before our eyes*, (cf. Psalm 35:1) shunning all forgetfulness, and that we be ever mindful of all that God has commanded, that we always consider in our minds how those who despise God will burn in hell for their sins, and that life everlasting is prepared for those who fear God. And whilst we guard ourselves evermore against sin and vices of thought, word, deed, and self-will, let us also hasten to cut off the desires of the flesh.

Let us consider that God always sees us from heaven, that the eye of God beholds our works everywhere, and that the Angels report them to Him every hour. The Prophet David tells us this when he shows God thus ever present in our thoughts, saying: *The searcher of hearts and reins is God.* (cf. Psalm 7:9) And again: *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men.* (Psalm 93:11) And David also says: *Thou hast discerned my thoughts from afar,* (Psalm 138:2) and, *the inward thought of man shall give praise unto Thee.* (Psalm 75:9) Therefore, in order that we may always be on our guard against evil thoughts, let us, in humility, always say in our hearts: *I shall be blameless before Him, and I shall keep myself from mine iniquity.* (Psalm 17:23)

We are thus forbidden to do our own will, since the Scripture says to us: *turn away from thine own will.* (Sirach 18:30) And thus, too, we ask God in prayer that His will may be done in us. (cf. Matthew 6:10) We are, therefore, rightly taught not to do our own will, when we guard against what Scripture says: *There are ways that seem to be right to a man, but the end of them looks to the depths of hell.* (Proverbs 16:25) And also, when we are filled with dread at what is said of the negligent: *They are become corrupt and loathsome in their ways.* (Psalm 13:2) But as regards desires of the flesh, let us believe that God is thus ever present with us, since the Prophet says to the Lord: *Before Thee is all my desire.* (Psalm 37:9)

We must, therefore, guard against evil desires, because death has his station near the entrance of pleasure. Whence the Scripture commands, saying: *Go not after thy lusts.* (Sirach 18:30) If, therefore, *the eyes of the Lord behold both the evil and the good,* (Proverbs 15:3) and the Lord always looks down from heaven on the sons of men, *to see if there be any that understand or seek after God,* (Psalm 13:3) and if our actions are reported to the Lord day and night by the Angels who are appointed to watch over us daily, we must ever be on our guard, brethren, that God may at no time see us *gone astray...and altogether rendered useless,* (Psalm 13:4) and, having spared us in this present time because He is kind and waits for us to be changed for the better, that He may not say to us in the future: *These things thou didst, and I kept silence.* (Psalm 49:21)

The second degree of humility is when we love not our own will, nor are we pleased to fulfill our own desires, but by our deeds we carry out that word of the Lord which says: *I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me.* (John 6:38) It is likewise said: *Self-will hath its punishment, but necessity winneth the crown.*

The next degree of humility is that if hard and distasteful things are given to us, even if injuries are inflicted, we accept them with patience and an even temper, and not grow weary or give up, but hold out, as the Scripture says: *he*

*who endures to the end will be saved. (Matthew 10:22) And again: let thy heart be strengthened, and wait on the Lord. (Psalm 26:16)* And showing that a faithful person ought even to bear every disagreeable thing for the Lord, Scripture says: *For Thy sake we are slain all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. (Psalm 43:23 & Romans 8:36)* And, secure in the hope of the divine reward, we go on joyfully, saying: *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. (Romans 8:37)* And likewise in another place the Scripture says: *Thou hast proved us, O God, and by fire hast Thou tried us even as silver is tried by fire; Thou hast brought us into the snare, Thou hast laid afflictions upon our back. (Psalm 65:10-11)* Fulfilling the command of the Lord by patience also in adversities and injuries, when struck on the one cheek, we turn also the other.

The next degree of humility is when we hide from our confessor none of the evil thoughts which rise in our hearts or the evils we have committed in secret, but humbly confess them. Concerning this, the Scripture exhorts us, saying: *Disclose unto the Lord thy way, and trust in Him. (Psalm 36:5)* And the Prophet likewise says: *Mine iniquity have I acknowledged, and my sin have I not hid. I said: I will confess mine iniquities before the Lord against myself; and Thou forgavest the ungodliness of my heart. (Psalm 31:5)*

The next degree of humility is when we declare not only with our tongue, but also believe in our innermost soul, that we are the lowest of persons, humbling ourselves and saying with the Prophet: *But as for me, I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and the outcast of the people; (Psalm 21:6) having been exalted, I was humbled and brought to distress, (Psalm 87:16)* and also: *It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy commandments. (Psalm 118:71)*

The next degree of humility is when we withhold our tongue from speaking and keep silence until we are asked; for the Scripture shows that one *will not escape sin by a multitude of words; (Proverbs 10:20)* and that *a babbling man shall not prosper on the earth. (Psalm 139:11)*

The next degree of humility is that when we speak, we do so gently, humbly, and with gravity, with few and sensible words, and that we be not loud of voice, as it is said: *The wise man is known by the fewness of his words.*

The next degree of humility is being not only humble of heart, but always letting it appear also in our whole exterior to all that see us; wherever we may be—sitting, walking, or standing—let us always have our head bowed, ever remembering our sins, thinking that we are already standing before the dread judgment seat of God, and always saying to ourselves in our hearts what the publican in the Gospel said, with his eyes fixed on the ground: *God, be merciful to me a sinner! (Luke 18:13)* And again, as the Prophet says: *I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly. (Psalm 37:8)*

Having, therefore, ascended these degrees of humility, a person will presently arrive at that love of God which, being perfect, *casts out fear. (1 John 4:18)* In virtue of this love, all things which at first we observed only out of fear, we will now begin to keep without any effort and—as it were, naturally by force of habit—no longer from the fear of hell, but from the love of Christ, from the very habit of good and the pleasure in virtue. May the Lord be pleased to manifest all this by His Holy Spirit in His laborers who are cleansed from vice and sin. *Amen.*

