

Sunday, September 27, 2015

The Cross is Remedy

Pride is the most dangerous of spiritual ailments that threaten our salvation. Indeed, it is extremely dangerous, such that when an archangel (cherub) succumbs to pride, it casts him down to the lowest levels of darkness.

Pride is a potent disease, gradually emptying us of God's grace and allowing our wretched selves to take its place. Thus, a person becomes poor in grace and a vessel for all evil, rather than a **dwelling place for God and a fertile ground for virtues through the work of the spirit of humility.**

God's children who keep His commandments are generally successful and stand out in whatever they do. They are thus more prone than others to the disease of pride, conceit, and vain-glory. This disease may stealthily enter the soul through words of praise, attention to appearances or popularity and then may develop into seeking glory or praise from others, where people may think that they are better than others and are worthy of honor.

There may also be factors which sometimes increase the complications of this accursed disease, causing it to take hold of the person even more and have a more devastating effect. Examples for this include when someone is gifted with noticeable talents, achieves success in a public scale, or reaches a high position of leadership with power and authority.

But generally, **God – the Lover of mankind – does not leave us prey to this deadly sickness but always provides us the appropriate remedy to protect us from it or to cure us from it.** The remedies are different in form, but in essence, are all one thing at the core: **the Cross.**

The Cross in all its forms, be it illness, loss, injustice, insults or any other grief of any kind, is a great protection from, and a sure cure for, pride, and it preserves the inner balance of a successful person so that they may not be puffed up or become conceited, but they would rather know the truth of themselves and the weakness of their nature..!!

Even though the Cross is bitter medicine, it offers benefits and healing. The wise do not reject it, but accept it with thanksgiving, knowing that it is beneficial for the soul.

God always provides a Cross with every gift (or grace) to preserve a person from pride, and to ensure the continuing flow of grace to this person, without them losing their inner balance and succumbing to conceit. **This is God's approach with us and it stems from His great love for us and His desire for our salvation.** Thus, whoever accepts the cross with thanks, will continue to receive grace and will grow from strength to strength, and from glory to glory. But **to those who reject the Cross, God will not continue the flow of grace** (and gifts), lest the blessings and the talents (being without a cross) lead to deadly pride.

If we examine the lives of the saints, we will clearly see the Cross in their lives insomuch as we see the grace and the gifts. For example, the **Holy Virgin Mary**, to whom the Scriptures bear witness as being **"full of grace"** and who has become more exalted than the heavenly and the earthly beings, carried the cross throughout her life without grumbling up to the point of the **"sword piercing her own soul"** (Luke 2:35). Another example is **St. Paul** to whom God gave a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations (II Corinthians 12). And so it was with all the saints, the cross was the most important remedy God provided to save them from deadly pride.

May these words draw our attention to the importance of accepting the cross in our lives as it will benefit us, since it preserves our humility, and thus guarantees the flow of grace from God and also His consolations and blessings in our lives.

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