



Humility

By Bro. David Betz

...though he was in the form of God, [he] did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself ... (Philippians 2:6-7)

As I read this passage, I say, “WOW!” and think, what a sign of great humility! Yes, humility, and it is a theme to consider as we endure a pandemic during this time of Advent and Christmas. Jesus’ coming to earth as a child and not as an adult is a great act of humility. It encourages us to reflect on what it means to be not in control. As a child Jesus had to lean on his parents for his religious, emotional, and physical upbringing from the time he was an infant and maybe up to the time of his young adult years. Jesus became one of us and he wanted to experience all things human including family life which is the foundation of our lives. It is also important to note that Jesus, by becoming the Son of Mary, according to **Fr. Joseph Stefanelli**, “...learned from her, on a human level, how to express his relationship to his Father. It means the perfection of Jesus’ expression of his relationship to his Father is due to the influence of Mary. She was really his mother.” (p. 35, *Our Marianist Heritage*) And we know that our mothers are essential in understanding humility because raising children is a primary example of letting go of one’s control. Tending to the needs of others becomes a greater good. I see this as representative of bearing Jesus as Mary did which is our Marianist Mission.

Let us, then, turn to **Blessed Adèle** as she wrote to **Agathe Diché** in Agen on December 17, 1806 where she shared her thoughts on the humility of Jesus (An aside – when I was looking at Blessed Adèle’s letters written during December close to Christmas, she always began them with these phrases: “Come, O divine Infant Jesus, come!” or “Be born in my heart, O divine Jesus, and reign there forever.” or “O Jesus, come and be born in my heart!” And as we know the heart was key in Adèle’s life)

“Come, O divine Infant Jesus, come! This is my last letter to you before Christmas, my dear and good friend. Let us speak a little of him who will be born for us, and let us invite him to be born in our hearts.

This divine Savior will be born poor, stripped of all the conveniences of this life, like an outcast, he to whom the earth belongs. And we are so much in love with our comfort! To urge him to come and be born in our hearts, let us conscientiously practice mortification. The interval between now and his birth must be a time of penance.

He is born in a stable in the midst of lowly animals. What humility! It is also by the deepest humility that we shall attract him to ourselves. Let us be truly convinced that we are nothing, that we can do nothing, that we have nothing, and in patience and silence let others think that we are utterly incapable of anything.

Jesus is born in the darkness of night. We must learn from this to love the hidden life in God, to avoid the world, and to love solitude and silence. It is in solitude that God speaks to the heart.”

(pp 69 & 70, Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, Volume 1, edited by Joseph Stefanelli, SM)