



Day 19: Magnanimity and Generosity

Jesus, Magnanimous and Generous

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13

The virtue of magnanimity means, 'greatness of soul.' St. Thomas Aquinas taught that it is a manly virtue, a habit that allows for the "stretching forth of the mind to great things" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, Q. 129, Art. 1). When a person is magnanimous, they seem to operate at a different level, possessing a generosity in all areas of life, that might include time, attention, talent, and perhaps most importantly, love. Jesus, truly God and truly man, possessed the virtue of magnanimity to perfection. Jesus' "great soul" was made manifest in a variety of different ways through the Gospel story. There was a fullness to His life and personality, particularly in the way he engaged others and the world around Him. But, to no surprise, His magnanimous soul was most perfect in the way that He loved, finding its perfection when He laid down His life on the cross. Jesus had a greatness of soul because He possessed a greatness of love. With Jesus as our example, this is the call of every man.

Mary, Full of Magnanimity

In the Gospel parables, Jesus liked to tell stories about agriculture, often talking about weeds and wheat, and the importance of good soil for growth (Matthew 13). Using this image to explore our own human growth, it is clear that we all need good soil to grow. The environment we are placed in matters for our healthy maturity and flourishing. It is powerful to meditate on this reality in the context of the life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. In the wonder of the Incarnation, Jesus 'was planted' in the vineyard of the family of Mary and Joseph. Though fully God, He best grew as a man in a nurturing and safe environment. It was God's will that He was formed by Mary and Joseph, and He learned about life and love from their very examples. When it comes to the gift of magnanimity, it is amazing to think about how full their house in Nazareth was with this virtue. Likewise, in Mary's Magnificat, she sings of the greatness of God and the greatness of her own vocation. She lived this virtue with such strength and humility. Living with Mary and Joseph, Jesus was surrounded by greatness of soul, and thus a greatness of love.

St. Juan Diego and Us

You are meant to be a man who does great things for and with God. Growing in the natural virtue of magnanimity will lead us to a full life, following after the grand plans God has in

store for us. There is a desire for greatness written into our hearts, a greatness that does not seek acclaim or reward, but a greatness that demands from us our whole being. The native cultures of Mexico had this same desire but pursued it in ways that needed to be purified by the Gospel. With our western eyes today, it is impossible to see anything but horror and evil in the practice of human sacrifice, and neither did the Spanish of the 16th century who eradicated the practice. Jacques Soustelle, a French anthropologist who specialized in Pre-Columbian civilizations, argued that human sacrifice amongst Mexicas “was not inspired by cruelty nor hate. It was a response—the one they could conceive—to the instability of a world constantly threatened.” Msgr. Chavez explains they truly believed that as a people “they had the divine responsibility of caring and nourishing the gods with human sacrifices.” With a restless longing for God, they truly stretched forth their humanity to collaborate with what they believed to be the divine responsibility of saving the world and humanity. Mary, who witnessed and accompanied her Son during the harrowing sacrifice of His humanity, purifies the magnanimous longings of this people, and invites them to recognize in her Son the only perfect sacrifice. Brother, in what ways do you need the Gospel to purify your actions and thoughts to live a truly magnanimous life? Our Lady is asking for greatness from you, but not the greatness of our culture today. We must leave behind all that is contrary to the Gospel to pursue the full life to which we are called.

Prayer

O Jesus, we adore You, we love You, and we thank You for the gift of Your presence. You are the beloved Son of the Father who possessed magnanimity to the full. Please come and increase our capacity to love like You. We ask You now to hear this prayer.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of God and Mother of us, draw us close to your heart. As God blessed St. Juan Diego with magnanimity of soul to live his mission, you were there to guide him along the way. We ask you to come and accompany us on our way. Please come and fill us with your love.

Amen.

After reading today's reflection, [pray the Litany of Restoration of Sonship.](#)