



There is a particularly dangerous spiritual lie because, unlike other temptations, it can present itself under the appearance of virtue.

It is the following:

“Do not aspire to too much. Do not try to stand out. Do not dream of great things. Do not try to do more. Be content with what you are. That is humility.”

But it is not always.

Sometimes, behind that apparent humility there is fear. Or laziness. Or comfort. Or fear of failure. Or even a certain lack of trust in God.

And here we encounter one of the most interesting questions in the moral theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas: **pusillanimity**.

For Saint Thomas, man can sin not only when he attempts to be more than he ought to be, but also when he deliberately remains **below what he could and ought to become**.

This is especially important in an age such as ours.

We live in a culture that, on the one hand, can foster disordered individualism, an obsession with success, and a constant search for recognition; but, on the other hand, can also create paralyzed, insecure, comfortable people who are convinced that aspiring to something great is almost a form of pride.

And between these two extremes there is a profoundly Christian path:

humility united with magnanimity.

Saint Thomas teaches something surprising: these two virtues are not enemies.

Humility does not mean thinking that we are worth nothing.

Magnanimity does not mean thinking that we are extraordinary.

Both consist in **living according to the truth**.

Humility recognizes that every good comes from God.

Magnanimity accepts that God may desire to accomplish great things through us.



And here begins a question every Christian should ask:

“Am I being humble... or am I simply afraid to grow?”

1. The False Equation: “Humility = Thinking Little of Myself”

One of the greatest spiritual confusions consists in identifying humility with a low opinion of oneself.

“I am no good at this.”

“I do not have the ability.”

“There are others much better than me.”

“That is too great for me.”

“I only want to do my own thing.”

“I do not need to aspire to anything more.”

Sometimes these statements may be true. The problem arises when they become a permanent attitude and, above all, when they serve to justify refusing to use the gifts we have received.

Because Christianity does not teach that we should despise the talents God has given us.

Quite the contrary.

Saint Paul says:

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us”

(Romans 12:6).



And he goes on to explain that these gifts must be placed at the service of others: whoever has a ministry should exercise it; whoever teaches should teach; whoever exhorts should exhort; whoever serves should serve. (biblegateway.com)😊

The question, therefore, is not:

“Do I have talents?”

The question is:

“What am I doing with them?”

2. Saint Thomas Introduces a Fundamental Distinction

Saint Thomas Aquinas addresses the question of pusillanimity in the *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Question 133.

And his reasoning is extraordinarily relevant today.

For him, pusillanimity consists in **shrinking from what is proportionate to one's own abilities**.

It is not about attempting something impossible.

It is not about wanting to be something for which God has not given us the capacity.

It is not about recklessly embarking upon enterprises that exceed our strength.

That would be presumption.

Pusillanimity is precisely the opposite movement:

not doing what we could reasonably do.

Saint Thomas explains that, just as presumption leads a man to attempt more than is



proportionate to his abilities, pusillanimity causes him to remain below them.
(newadvent.org)☺

And here we find a decisive idea:

God may not only ask us to avoid doing evil.

He may also ask us to do the good that is within our power.

This profoundly changes our vision of Christian life.

3. The Sin of Burying the Talent

To explain pusillanimity, Saint Thomas refers precisely to the parable of the talents.

Christ tells of a master who entrusts different amounts to his servants before departing.

One receives five talents.

Another receives two.

Another receives one.

The first two work with what they have received.

The third, however, buries the talent.

He does not lose it.

He does not steal it.

He does not destroy it.

He simply...

buries it.



And this is astonishing.

Because we often think that sin consists only in misusing what we have received.

But Jesus presents another possibility as well:

not using it.

The third servant does not say:

“I am going to use my talent to do evil.”

He essentially says:

“I am afraid.”

And he decides to do nothing.

Saint Thomas interprets precisely this behavior as a manifestation of pusillanimity: the servant, through fear, does not use what he had received. (newadvent.org)☺

The parable contains a spiritual warning of enormous relevance today.

Perhaps one of the great dangers facing the contemporary Christian is not only using his talents badly.

Perhaps it is also **burying them.**

4. How Many Talents Do We Bury Today?

Perhaps God has given you the ability to teach.

But you never teach because you are afraid of making mistakes.

Perhaps He has given you the ability to lead.

But you never assume responsibility because you are afraid of being judged.



Perhaps you have the ability to write.

But you never write because you think others will do it better.

Perhaps you can help many people.

But you always remain on the sidelines.

Perhaps you have knowledge that could serve the Church.

But you prefer to think:

“I am nobody.”

Perhaps you could begin an apostolate.

But you tell yourself:

“There are already too many people doing that.”

Perhaps you could form a holy family, educate children, teach the faith, serve in your parish, evangelize those around you, or develop your profession with genuine Christian excellence.

But you do not.

Not because it is impossible.

But because it is uncomfortable.

Because there is risk.

Because there may be failure.

Because perhaps someone will criticize you.

Because perhaps you will discover that you have to leave your comfort zone.

And then a dangerous word appears:

“Humility.”



"I do not want to stand out."

"I do not want to seem important."

"I do not want to aspire to too much."

But we must honestly ask ourselves:

Is it humility, or is it fear?

5. Pusillanimity Is Not Humility

Here Saint Thomas offers an extraordinarily precise distinction.

Humility and magnanimity belong to the same general sphere: both concern great goods and the way in which man relates to them.

But they act differently.

Humility **moderates** the desire for greatness.

Magnanimity **impels one toward great works that are reasonable and proportionate.**

Saint Thomas explains that we need both virtues because, when faced with a difficult good, we can make two opposite mistakes.

We can desire it in a disordered way.

Or we can retreat from it out of fear.

Humility prevents man from elevating himself beyond what is appropriate.

Magnanimity prevents him from collapsing below what he is capable of achieving.
(newadvent.org)☺

Therefore, humility and magnanimity do not contradict one another.



They need one another.

6. The Magnanimous Person Is Not Proud

This is another very common confusion.

When we hear the word “magnanimity,” we may immediately think of someone ambitious, proud, or hungry for power.

But Christian magnanimity is not that.

The magnanimous person does not say:

“I am great because I am superior to others.”

He says:

“There are great goods that are worth pursuing, and I am willing to give myself to them.”

The difference is radical.

Pride places the “I” at the center.

Magnanimity places **the good** at the center.

The proud person wants to accomplish great things in order to be admired.

The magnanimous person is willing to accomplish great things even if nobody admires him.

The proud person seeks greatness for himself.

The magnanimous person seeks greatness **for a worthy cause**.

And for the Christian, the supreme cause is God and His glory.



7. Magnanimity Is a Profoundly Christian Virtue

Saint Thomas studies magnanimity in II-II, Question 129.

He considers it a virtue concerned with great works and with the disposition of man to undertake what is truly great.

But something is particularly important:

magnanimity does not eliminate humility.

On the contrary.

Saint Thomas explains that both can coexist because they concern different aspects. Humility considers one's deficiencies and moderates the disordered desire for greatness; magnanimity impels one toward great things when they are truly proportionate to reason.
(newadvent.org)😊

Therefore, we can put it simply:

Humility says:

“Without God I can do nothing.”

Magnanimity says:

“With God's grace, I want to do all the good He allows me to do.”

Both statements are profoundly Christian.



8. “I Cannot” Can Be Humility... or Pusillanimity

Here we need great spiritual discernment.

Saying “I cannot” is not always wrong.

There are times when we must honestly recognize our limitations.

Not everyone has the same talents.

Not everyone can carry out the same works.

Not everyone has the same education.

Not everyone has the same health, time, resources, or responsibilities.

Humility requires recognizing reality.

But there is a difference between saying:

“This objectively exceeds my present possibilities”

and saying:

“I do not want to try because I might fail.”

The first may be prudence.

The second may be pusillanimity.

That is why Saint Thomas relates pusillanimity to a defective awareness of one’s own abilities and to fear of undertaking what is reasonably within one’s possibilities. (newadvent.org)😊

The problem is not knowing our limitations.

The problem is **turning our limitations into a permanent excuse not to grow.**



9. The Devil Does Not Always Need to Lead Us into Scandalous Sin

From a pastoral perspective, an important question emerges here.

When we speak of temptation, we normally think of something obvious:

lust,

greed,

hatred,

envy,

anger,

pride,

manifest vices.

But there is a much quieter temptation:

to convince us that it is not worth attempting something great for God.

The Christian does not have to renounce Christ.

It may be enough for him to become spiritually irrelevant.

He does not have to abandon the faith.

It may be enough for him to stop using his gifts.

He does not have to do evil.

It may be enough for him to stop doing the good he could do.



This is one of the great spiritual lessons we can draw from the parable of the talents.

The buried talent did not cause a scandal.

It did not immediately produce a tragedy.

It made no noise.

It simply remained underground.

And precisely because of that, it is so dangerous.

10. “God Does Not Need You to Be Extraordinary”... But He Does Need You to Be Faithful

An important clarification is necessary here.

Speaking against mediocrity does not mean claiming that we are all called to perform extraordinary works in the eyes of the world.

No.

Christian greatness is not measured by fame.

A mother who raises her children in holiness may be carrying out a work of far greater spiritual magnitude than someone famous.

A father who works honestly and supports his family may be living authentic Christian greatness.

A priest who hears confessions for years without anyone knowing his name may carry out an immense apostolate.

A person who cares for a sick relative may be living genuine magnanimity.



A Christian who prays daily for others may be doing work whose value will never appear in the statistics of the world.

Therefore:

magnanimity does not mean spectacularity.

It means **greatness of soul directed toward the good.**

Sometimes that greatness appears in visible works.

Very often it remains completely hidden.

11. Do Not Confuse Mediocrity with Simplicity

We must also distinguish between two concepts.

Christian simplicity is beautiful.

Spiritual mediocrity is not.

A simple person may have a humble, discreet, apparently small life, yet live it with extraordinary supernatural intensity.

Mediocrity, on the other hand, appears when someone could love more, serve more, study more, pray more, work better, forgive more, grow more, or give more... but deliberately decides not to.

The difference is not in the external size of the work.

It is in the **interior disposition.**

Saint Teresa of Ávila did not need a comfortable life to be great.

Saint Francis of Assisi did not need wealth.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe did not need political power.



Saint Teresa of Calcutta did not need great financial resources.

The saints were not great because they had spectacular lives according to the criteria of the world.

They were great because **they gave themselves completely to God from within the concrete circumstances in which He placed them.**

12. The Christian Is Not Called to “Be Someone,” but to Bear Fruit

There is an enormous difference between wanting to be important and wanting to be fruitful.

The first asks:

“How can I be recognized?”

The second asks:

“How can I serve?”

Magnanimity belongs to the second.

And here the parable of the talents appears again.

Christ does not ask:

“How many followers did you have?”

“How many people admired you?”

“How many titles did you obtain?”

The question is what you did with what you received.

Christianity does not consist in constantly comparing ourselves with others.



It consists in responding faithfully to the grace we have received.

Therefore, we should not ask:

“Am I as good as that person?”

But:

“Am I developing what God has entrusted to me?”

13. The Danger of Comparing Ourselves

Comparison can destroy both humility and magnanimity.

If I compare myself with someone I consider inferior, I may fall into pride.

If I compare myself with someone I consider superior, I may fall into discouragement.

Both attitudes distance us from the truth.

God has not asked you to be someone else.

He has asked you to be faithful to the grace you have received.

Saint Paul expresses this beautifully when he speaks of the different gifts within the Body of Christ.

We do not all perform the same function.

We do not all have the same gift.

We do not all receive the same mission.

But we are all called to use what we have received.

Therefore the question is not:



“Why do I not have someone else’s talent?”

But:

“What talent do I have, and what am I doing with it?”

14. True Humility Knows Its Limits... but Also Its Gifts

There is a false humility that only lists defects.

“I am bad.”

“I know nothing.”

“I have no talent.”

“I am useless.”

“But I am not worthy.”

But if someone genuinely has a particular gift, stubbornly denying that he possesses it is not humility either.

Because humility does not consist in lying about ourselves.

Saint Thomas insists that humility must agree with the truth. True humility recognizes one’s deficiency, but it does not require a person to deny what he has genuinely received.

(newadvent.org)😊

If you know how to teach, acknowledge that you know how to teach.

If you know how to work well, acknowledge that you know how to work well.

If you have intellectual ability, acknowledge that you have it.



If you have an ability to comfort others, acknowledge it.

If you have an ability to evangelize, acknowledge it.

But immediately add:

“I have received all of this.”

There lies Christian humility.

15. “What Do You Have That You Did Not Receive?”

Saint Paul asks a devastating question:

“*What do you have that you did not receive?*”
(1 Corinthians 4:7).

This phrase resolves much of the problem.

The Christian does not need to deny his gifts in order to be humble.

He needs to recognize their **origin**.

He does not say:

“I am not intelligent.”

He says:

“The intelligence I have is a gift.”

He does not say:



“I have no ability for this.”

If objectively he does have it, he says:

“God has granted me this ability; I must use it responsibly.”

Humility does not destroy talent.

It brings it to its knees.

And then raises it up to serve.

16. True Humility and Magnanimity Meet in Christ

Here we reach the Christological heart of this whole question.

Our model is not simply a collection of abstract virtues.

It is Jesus Christ.

Christ can say:

“*Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart*”
(Matthew 11:29).

But the same Christ who is humble is also the One who speaks with authority, publicly confronts error, drives the sellers from the Temple, announces the Kingdom, calls the Apostles, performs miracles, accepts the Cross, and perfectly fulfills the mission received from the Father.

Christ is not mediocre.



Christ does not hide out of fear.

Christ does not bury His mission.

Christ does not say:

“Perhaps this is too much for me.”

His humility consists precisely in **living fully from the Father.**

And here we find the perfect union between humility and magnanimity.

Christ does not seek His own glory.

But neither does He diminish His mission.

He does not reduce the truth in order to be acceptable.

He does not abandon the Cross because it is difficult.

He does not give up doing good because some reject Him.

Christ’s humility does not diminish His greatness.

It reveals it.

17. The Christian Must Aspire to Holiness

Perhaps one of the clearest signs of spiritual mediocrity is having reduced Christian life to “not doing bad things.”

But Christian life is much more.

The goal is not simply:

“I will not sin too much.”



The goal is:

holiness.

The universal call to holiness does not mean that we are all going to perform the same works.

It means that we are all called to love God with all our soul.

Therefore, the Christian should not easily settle for a minimal spiritual life:

“I go to Mass when I can.”

“I pray a little from time to time.”

“I try to be a good person.”

“I do not hurt anyone.”

That may be a beginning.

But it should not become the final horizon.

Christian life is called to grow.

The grace received is called to bear fruit.

Charity is called to increase.

The virtues are called to become stronger.

Prayer is called to deepen.

Knowledge of the faith is called to mature.



18. Spiritual Mediocrity Has a Favorite Phrase: “That Is Enough”

“That is enough.”

This phrase may be reasonable in some circumstances.

But it can also become a genuine spiritual barrier.

Is it enough to pray for five minutes when you could dedicate more time?

Is it enough to know the faith superficially when you have the ability to study it?

Is it enough to fulfill externally when you could grow internally?

Is it enough to avoid sin when you could grow in virtue?

Is it enough to do the minimum when you could love more?

The Christian question is not how much we have to do in order to “fulfill the requirements.”

The deeper Christian question is:

“How much love can I put into what God is asking of me?”

19. Do Not Confuse Prudence with Cowardice

This point is especially important.

Magnanimity does not eliminate prudence.

Saint Thomas is not defending a kind of naive optimism.

It does not mean saying:



“I am going to do it because I am capable of everything.”

That would be presumption.

Virtue seeks the mean according to reason.

Therefore, before undertaking something, we should ask ourselves:

- Is it good?
- Is it lawful?
- Is it truly necessary?
- Do I have the ability to do it?
- Do I have the means?
- Is it compatible with my duties?
- Am I prepared?
- What is my true motivation?
- Am I seeking the glory of God or my own?
- Am I running away from something?
- Am I seeking something in a disordered way?

After answering, an uncomfortable conclusion may emerge:

“Yes, I can do it. And I probably should do it.”

Then continuing to call the renunciation “humility” could simply be a way of avoiding responsibility.

20. Ask Yourself: “What Am I Burying?”

This can be one of the best questions for a spiritual examination.

Do not ask only:

“What sins am I committing?”

Also ask:



“What good things am I failing to do?”

What talent am I burying?

What responsibility am I avoiding?

What calling am I ignoring?

What virtue should I cultivate but keep postponing?

What knowledge could I acquire?

Whom could I help?

What good work could I begin?

Whom could I evangelize?

Whom should I ask for forgiveness?

What aspect of my character should I correct?

What spiritual commitment do I keep postponing?

Christian life does not consist only in removing weeds.

It also consists in cultivating the garden.

21. There Are People Who Need to Hear: “You Are Not Less Humble Because You Try”

Perhaps someone reading these words has spent years thinking:

“I am worthless.”

And perhaps he needs to hear something different.



You do not need to become someone else.

You do not need to be famous.

You do not need to prove anything to the world.

But neither do you have the right to systematically despise the gifts God has given you.

If God has given you intelligence, use it.

If He has given you the ability to work, work well.

If He has given you a family, sanctify it.

If He has given you knowledge, share it.

If He has given you leadership ability, exercise leadership as service.

If He has given you the ability to teach, teach.

If He has given you the ability to create, create good things.

If He has given you the ability to evangelize, evangelize.

If He has given you the ability to pray, intercede.

And if your mission seems small...

do it with greatness of soul.

22. True Magnanimity Also Accepts Failure

There is another reason why many people remain small:

they are too afraid of making mistakes.

They want to be certain that everything will turn out well before beginning.



But many great works require assuming prudent risks.

The magnanimous person is not someone who knows that he will never fail.

He is someone who considers that a particular good is worth the effort even when difficulty exists.

And this has enormous spiritual application.

Perhaps you will never know whether a conversation helped someone draw closer to God.

Perhaps you will never know how much one of your words helped another person.

Perhaps nobody will recognize your effort.

Perhaps an apostolate will fail.

Perhaps a project will not turn out as you expected.

Perhaps you will be criticized.

But the Christian does not measure the value of an action exclusively by its visible results.

He must also ask:

“Was it good? Was it prudent? Was it my duty? Did I do it out of love for God?”

23. Magnanimity Needs Humility So That It Does Not Become Pride

Here we encounter the other extreme.

We cannot use this article to justify the ego.

“I am magnanimous.”



"I am destined for great things."

"God has chosen me for something extraordinary."

"I am different from others."

Be careful.

That may be precisely the opposite.

Christian magnanimity never says:

"I am great by myself."

It says:

"God is great and allows me to participate in His work."

The truly magnanimous person can accomplish great things while remaining deeply conscious of his dependence upon God.

That is why Saint Thomas can place humility and magnanimity together: one prevents the soul from rising in a disordered way; the other prevents it from cowardly remaining below what corresponds to its possibilities. (newadvent.org)😊

24. The Virgin Mary: Humility and Greatness in a Single Soul

Few figures demonstrate this union better than the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mary proclaims:

*"For he has looked upon the humility of his handmaid; for behold,
from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed"*



| *(Luke 1:48).*

It is extraordinary.

Mary speaks of her humility.

But she also declares that all generations will call her blessed.

There is no contradiction.

Because Mary does not attribute her greatness to herself.

She says:

| *“The Mighty One has done great things for me.”*

This is perhaps one of the most beautiful definitions of true humility:

to recognize that God has done great things without taking for oneself the glory that belongs to God.

Mary does not say:

“I am nothing and God cannot do anything with me.”

She says, in essence:

“I am His handmaid; and precisely for that reason I am available for Him to do great things.”

That is Christian magnanimity.



25. Humility Does Not Mean Rejecting a Mission

There are people who, when faced with a responsibility, immediately respond:

“I am not worthy.”

It may be an understandable reaction.

But we must distinguish between two moments.

First:

recognizing one's own insufficiency.

Then:

obeying God if He calls.

Moses experienced something similar.

Jeremiah did as well.

Both expressed their insufficiency before a mission received from God.

But God did not tell them:

“You are right; then do nothing.”

Grace came precisely to sustain what they could not accomplish by themselves.

Saint Thomas uses precisely the examples of Moses and Jeremiah to explain that recognizing one's own insufficiency does not necessarily imply pusillanimity; it can be humility, provided that it does not become an obstinate refusal to obey God's call. (newadvent.org)😊



26. How Can We Know Whether It Is Humility or Pusillanimity?

We can ask ourselves some questions.

When I say “I cannot,” am I acknowledging a real limitation?

Or am I avoiding the effort?

When I say “I am not worthy,” am I acknowledging my dependence on God?

Or am I avoiding a responsibility?

When I say “others do it better,” am I acknowledging the diversity of gifts?

Or am I justifying my passivity?

When I say “I do not want to stand out,” am I avoiding vanity?

Or am I afraid of being judged?

When I say “I want a simple life,” am I seeking holiness?

Or am I seeking comfort?

When I say “God does not need my work,” am I trusting in Providence?

Or am I forgetting that God often makes use of human instruments?

These questions can reveal much.



27. A Simple Rule: Do Not Seek Greatness for Yourself; Do Not Reject the Greatness God Asks of You

We can summarize Saint Thomas's teaching in a practical formula:

Do not seek to be great in order to feed your ego.

But neither:

reject doing great things out of fear, laziness, or false humility when God has given you the ability to do them.

The first attitude is pride.

The second may be pusillanimity.

Virtue lies between the two.

Humility to recognize where the gift comes from.

Magnanimity to use it.

28. The World Needs Christians Who Are Not Afraid to Live Their Vocation

In a world that needs strong families, faithful marriages, holy priests, honest professionals, responsible parents, virtuous young people, well-formed Catholic intellectuals, catechists who are well trained, and laypeople capable of giving reasons for their faith, the Church does not need Christians who are permanently paralyzed.

She needs holy Christians.



But holiness requires courage.

It takes courage to defend the truth without hatred.

Courage to live chastity in a culture that mocks it.

Courage to form a Christian family.

Courage to have children and educate them in the faith.

Courage to forgive.

Courage to ask forgiveness.

Courage to begin again.

Courage to pray when one does not feel like it.

Courage to study when it is difficult.

Courage to remain faithful when others abandon the faith.

Courage to say “no” when everyone else says “yes.”

And also courage to say:

“Yes, Lord, even though it seems too great for me.”

29. Holiness Is Not Mediocrity Decorated with Religious Language

This phrase may sound harsh, but it is necessary.

We can construct a kind of “spiritual mediocrity” and dress it in pious words.

“God knows my heart.”



"This is just how I am."

"I do not want to complicate my life."

"What matters is having good intentions."

"There is no need to study so much."

"There is no need to try so hard."

"There is no need to go so deeply."

"There is no need to pray so much."

"There is no need to change."

Sometimes all of this may contain a part of truth.

But it can also become a barrier against conversion.

Grace does not destroy nature.

It **perfects** it.

God does not call us to remain forever as we are.

He calls us to grow.

30. Christian Life Is Growth

Saint Paul speaks of growing into the maturity of Christ.

Saint Peter exhorts us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic tradition constantly speaks of spiritual progress.

Because Christian life is not static.



A living tree grows.

A living faith grows.

A living charity grows.

A living virtue becomes stronger through repeated acts.

Therefore, if we have lived ten, twenty, or thirty years of Christian life and remain exactly at the same interior point, we should humbly ask ourselves what is happening.

Not in order to despair.

But in order to begin again.

31. The Answer Is Not “Do Great Things,” but “Do Well What God Entrusts to You”

This is fundamental.

The message of this article is not:

“You have to do something extraordinary.”

The message is:

“Do not reject what God entrusts to you out of fear of not being extraordinary.”

Perhaps your great work is caring for someone.

Perhaps it is educating your children.

Perhaps it is supporting your family.

Perhaps it is working honestly.



Perhaps it is studying.

Perhaps it is teaching catechism.

Perhaps it is writing.

Perhaps it is evangelizing.

Perhaps it is praying.

Perhaps it is patiently enduring an illness or difficulty.

Perhaps it is rebuilding your spiritual life after years away from God.

Perhaps it is simply getting up every morning and beginning again.

Christian greatness does not depend on the size of the platform.

It depends on the size of the love.

32. A Small Examination of Conscience Against Pusillanimity

At the end of the day, we can ask ourselves:

- 1. What good could I have done today that I did not do?**
- 2. What talent have I left unused?**
- 3. Have I used humility as an excuse for not assuming a responsibility?**
- 4. Have I been afraid of failure?**
- 5. Have I stopped doing something good because I feared other people's opinions?**
- 6. Am I confusing prudence with comfort?**



7. Am I comparing myself with others instead of responding to my own vocation?
8. Am I seeking God's glory or my own?
9. Is there some good that I know I should begin but keep postponing?
10. If God asked me today to give an account of the talents I received, what could I show Him?

That last question should accompany us frequently.

33. The Christian Alternative: Humility + Magnanimity + Prudence

We can summarize the entire teaching in three virtues.

Humility

It allows me to recognize:

"I am not God. I cannot do everything. I need grace. Every good comes from Him."

Magnanimity

It allows me to respond:

"But I will not bury the gifts God has given me. I want to use them for the good."

Prudence

It allows me to discern:

"What should I actually do, how, when, and to what extent?"

Together, the three produce balance.



Without humility, greatness can become pride.

Without magnanimity, humility can become distorted into pusillanimity.

Without prudence, both can become disordered.

34. Do Not Be Afraid to Be a Saint

Perhaps this is the message we most need to recover.

Do not be afraid to be a saint.

Do not be afraid to take spiritual life seriously.

Do not be afraid to pray.

Do not be afraid to study the faith.

Do not be afraid to defend the truth with charity.

Do not be afraid to build a Christian family.

Do not be afraid to give your talents.

Do not be afraid to assume responsibilities.

Do not be afraid to begin a prudent apostolate.

Do not be afraid to grow.

Do not be afraid to try to do good.

Do not be afraid to aspire to holiness.

But also do not be afraid to recognize that everything good you may accomplish will ultimately be the fruit of God's grace.



35. True Humility Does Not Say “God Cannot Do Anything with Me”

True humility says:

“God can do much with me, precisely because everything depends on Him.”

This difference is enormous.

The humble person does not place himself at the center.

But neither does he remove himself from the history of grace.

He places himself at God’s disposal.

The Blessed Virgin is the perfect example.

A young woman apparently insignificant in the eyes of the world receives a mission that surpasses every human expectation.

And she responds:

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me
according to your word”
(Luke 1:38).

There is no pusillanimity.

There is no pride.

There is no search for prominence.

There is availability.



Humility to receive.

Magnanimity to respond.

Conclusion: Perhaps You Do Not Need to Think Less of Yourself, but to Trust God More

For a long time, we may have been taught a distorted version of humility.

As though being humble meant constantly thinking:

“I am insignificant.”

But Christianity proposes something much deeper.

Humility does not consist in despising what God has created.

It consists in recognizing the truth about ourselves.

We are creatures.

We are limited.

We are sinners in need of grace.

But we are also people created by God, redeemed by Christ, called to holiness, and endowed with gifts that we are called to place at the service of the good.

That is why Saint Thomas places two dangers opposite one another:

presumption, which seeks to rise beyond what is appropriate,

and **pusillanimity**, which remains below what one can reasonably attain.

Between them appears the path of virtue.



Humility prevents us from saying:

“I am great by myself.”

Magnanimity prevents us from saying:

“There is no point in attempting anything great.”

And faith enables us to say:

“If God entrusts me with a mission, He will also give me the grace necessary to fulfill it.”

Perhaps some Christians do not need to become more humble.

Perhaps they need to become **more courageous**.

Perhaps they do not need to think less of themselves.

They need to stop thinking so much about themselves.

Perhaps they do not need to reduce their aspirations.

They need to purify them.

Not to seek greatness for themselves, but to be willing to do great things **for God**.

Because there is a mediocrity that can look like prudence.

There is a cowardice that can look like humility.

There is a laziness that can look like simplicity.

And there is a fear of failure that can hide behind pious words.

That is why we should remember the warning of the Gospel:

God will not ask us to give an account of the talents that others received.

He will ask us to give an account of ours.



The final question will not be:

“Why were you not like that person?”

It will be much simpler and much deeper:

“What did you do with what I gave you?”

May we never have to answer:

“Lord, I was afraid and I buried it.”

May we be able to answer, even with our limitations, our falls, and our poverty:

“Lord, I was not capable of doing everything. But I tried not to bury what You gave me. I placed it in Your hands. And I tried to make it fruitful for Your glory.”

That is not pride.

That is **Christian magnanimity**.

And perhaps, precisely there, we will discover true humility