

INSCAPE October 2014

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

May you always be consciously aware of the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love and mercy of God the Father, and the communion of the Life-Giving Holy Spirit dwelling within your heart!

God-Trinity, the perfect community of Love by nature, has called us from all eternity to share the kingdom of God within the innermost sanctuary of our heart, the core of our being, where we possess the three divine persons. There we share in God's love, joy, peace, rest and fruitfulness. Jesus promised us a kingdom of God which comes only to those who are poor in spirit.

For God's chosen people, poverty of spirit is the most basic and fundamental disposition of mind and heart. It is the experience in childlike trust of the love of their heavenly Father in and through His Only-Begotten Son and the Holy Spirit. We who strive daily to become poor in spirit find our ancestors both in the Old and New Testament *anawim*: "the poor in spirit," "the little ones," "the lowly," "the humble of heart," "the handmaids" and "servants of the Lord." These, in their total childlike trust of God, place themselves completely at his disposal, so he can work in them all that he calls them to be as daughters and sons of his Son (John 1:12-13), participators of God's very own divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). By this inner poverty and authentic humility before God and others, we respond to God's call to be holy as he is holy (Matthew 5:48); merciful in all relations with our neighbors, as the Father is merciful to all his children (Luke 6:36); loving everyone as Christ love us (John 15:12).

MEANING OF ANAWIM

The word, *anawim*, is plural for the Hebrew word, *anaw*, which originally meant "to be stooped, bowed, lowered, overwhelmed," (The Poor of Yahweh, Albert Gelin). From Sacred Scripture, *anawim* took on a profound significance, especially embodying the meaning of spirituality as found in both Testaments. Basically, *anawim* are persons poor in spirit, the lowly and humble of heart, the true handmaids and servants of the Lord, who place their entire trust in God. This is epitomized in the saying of Jesus: "The kingdom of God belongs to those who have hearts as trusting as these little children. And anyone who does not have their kind of faith will never get within the kingdom's gates. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it" (Luke 18:16-17).

THE ANAWIM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

"For Yahweh loves his people and he adorns the lowly [the *anawim*] with victory" (Psalms 149:4). Throughout the Old Testament we find that the *anawim* are God's people---the ones he has prepared for himself (Isaiah 60:21; 62:12; 63:8); the people who are faithful to his eternal covenant with them (Isaiah 61:8); the real Israel, a blessed race (Isaiah 65:9,23); a holy people (Isaiah 62:12); the authentic "elect" of God (Isaiah 65:9,15,22); the redeemed (Isaiah 62:12).

They are God's servants and handmaids (Isaiah 44:1; 54:17), his disciples (Isaiah 54:13) who keep the law imprinted upon their hearts (Isaiah 51:7). The *anawim* place all their hope in the Lord (Psalms 50:9). They find their refuge in him (Psalms 33:9). They are the little ones, the poor and humble of heart. "May the humble not retire in confusion, may the poor and the afflicted [the *anawim*] praise your Name, O Lord" (Psalm 73:21). "Yahweh hears the poor [the *anawim*], and his own who are in bonds he spurns not" (Psalms 68:34).

THE ANAWIM IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHETS

“Give praise, O you heavens and rejoice. O earth; you mountains, give praise with jubilation; because Yahweh has comforted his people and has shown mercy to his poor ones” (Isaiah 49:13). It is mainly the great prophet Isaiah who expounds the doctrine about the *anawim* as God’s favorite children. Over and over he writes that the poor, the little ones, the meek and humble of heart receive God’s constant help and protection, which is offered to everyone but rejected by many. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me and sent me to preach good tidings to the meek [*anawim*], to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and release to prisoners; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of the salvation of our God; to comfort all that mourn” (Isaiah 61:1-2). “For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, whose abode is high and holy, to the meek [*anawim*] and the distressed in spirit, to receive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of those who are in pain” (Isaiah 57:15). “Thus says the Lord: Heaven is my throne and the earth my footstool; what is the house that you built for me? And what is the place of my rest? For all those things has my own hand made, and all those things belong to me, says the Lord; and to whom shall I look, and where shall I dwell? But to him who is calm and humble, and trembles at my word” (Isaiah 66:1-2).

In the Book of Psalms we find: “The Lord is close to those whose hearts are breaking and saves those who are of a contrite spirit” (Psalms 34:18). If we are to imitate the *anawim* of the Old Testament, we must show total openness to God at all times, absolute humility, respect, obedience to his will, a conscious abiding spirit of compunction and repentance, a willingness to be used by God, and total trust in his promise to be faithful to his covenant, which binds him to his chosen people in total self-giving.

The Prophets Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets of God reveal on the pages of Sacred Scripture that God’s promises, which were once entrusted to the people of Israel as a whole, would one day belong only to a small select group of Israelites called the “Remnant,” formed by God himself in preparation for the coming of the Messiah and the full establishment of the kingdom of God on this earth.

It is these Remnant, the poor of Yahweh (Isaiah 49:13), who constitute the faithful, humble ones of Israel. They completely surrender themselves in obedience to God’s commands out of total trust in his power. “For Yahweh loves his people and he adorns the lowly with the victory” (Psalms 149:4). One day, all that the *anawim* of the Old Testament represent will be concentrated in Mary, the Mother of God, the true link connecting the Old Testament and the New. She will be the consummation of the spirituality of the *anawim*, drawing into herself all the power of their welcome for the God who comes. She will epitomize the measureless longing that is the spiritual dimension of Israel, and which will at last bring forth Christ in the ineffable victory of the Incarnation.

THE ANAWIM IN THE PSALMS

As we know, Jesus himself and his followers made the Psalter their own most fruitful prayer to the Father as a summary of *anawim* spirituality. As we pray the psalms, in and with Jesus and through his Spirit, the author of the psalms, we cannot help but grow in the spirituality they express and beget in our hearts, that of the little ones who place all their trust in God. There is no characteristic of this spirituality of the poor in spirit that is not, in some divinely efficacious way, expressed for us in the psalms.

In psalm 34 we experience how the poor cry out to Yahweh: “A cry goes up from the poor man, and Yahweh hears and helps him in all his troubles: (v. 6). “Those who fear the Lord

want for nothing” (v. 9). “The eyes of the Lord are turned toward the virtuous, his ears to their cry” (v. 15).

In psalm 51 the *anawim* weep for their sins and cry out unceasingly with repentant David for mercy (v.1, *passim*). “God, create a clean heart in me, put into me a new and constant spirit” (v.10). “My sacrifice is this broken spirit, you will not scorn this crushed and broken heart: (v. 17).

The psalms are God’s disclosure to his chosen people, the poor ones. They are his divine providence, his goodness and eternal mercy that is above all his works. Not only do the *anawim* accept such revelation as true, they thirst to respond to God’s humble love toward them. They trust and show complete confidence in God’s caring love, perfect and eternal, especially in times of trials and tribulations. “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to rest in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely thy goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (Psalm 23).

THE ANAWIM OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

How dramatically the New Testament portrays the *anawim*: “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider also your own calling, my brethren, not many among you are wise in terms of worldly things and not many among you are mighty and not many among you belong to nobility. **But**, God has chosen the foolish ones of the world to put the wise to shame; and God has chosen the weak ones of the world to embarrass the mighty; and he has chosen those of humble families in the world, and the lowly and those who are insignificant, in order to belittle those who consider themselves important. So that no man should boast in his presence. But you also belong to God through Jesus Christ who, from God, is wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and salvation to all of us. As it is written, He who glories, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:25-31).

As we have already stated, Mary [Our Ever-Holy, Ever-Pure, Ever-Blessed and Glorious Lady, the Birth-Giver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, *Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*] is the true link connecting the Old and New Covenant of God with us human beings. By her free will, she welcomes the power of God to work through her. Our created human nature and God’s uncreated divine nature become inseparably united in her for our healing and salvation. Mary is the Theotokos.

It was in Nazareth that the announcement of the Messiah’s coming was made to Mary, the new Eve. Her life reflected that of the desert *anawim*, the faithful ones who lived in inner desert silence (*hesychia*), in total surrender in their emptiness to God’s All-ness. Mary is the first of the New Testament *anawim* to be part of the Remnant of God. “Behold, I am the handmaid, the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

She was totally at the disposition of God, the center of her life. Because of her humility and emptiness, he could do whatever he wished, even to incarnate Love Itself, his Only-Begotten Son. “Blessed are you, Mary, because you have believed that God would do all that he said” (Luke 1:45), is the homage paid to Mary by Elizabeth, her cousin. Mary’s humble response is the Ode of the Theotokos, which is the canticle of the *anawim* of the New Testament. In this beautiful heart-song we find distilled in lyrical language the perfect and living expression of the spirituality of the *anawim* of the desert. “...My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; for he has regarded the meekness of his handmaid; for behold, from

henceforth, all generations shall bless me. For he who is mighty has done great things to me; holy is his name. And his mercy is for centuries and generations, upon those who reverence him. He has brought victory with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart. He has put down the mighty from their seats, and he has lifted up the meek. He has filled the hungry with good things, and dismissed the rich empty. He has helped his servant Israel, and has remembered his mercy, just as he spoke with our forefathers, with Abraham and with his descendants for ever” (Luke 1:46-55).

Deeply conscious of her littleness, her radical poverty of spirit as a created being and handmaid of the Lord, Mary’s heart breaks forth in an ecstasy of happiness and gratitude, knowing that in some hidden way she was at the very heart of the history of salvation. All ages to come will remember her and all ages past have prepared for this ineffable mystery of the incarnation. Only the truly humble can speak of their humility. “God chooses the weak things of this world” (1 Corinthians 1:27).

JESUS: SUMMIT OF ANAWIM SPIRITUALITY

On every page of the gospels we contemplate the great depths of Jesus’ poverty of spirit, his total humility and limitless trust in his heavenly Father. We see him fulfilling the mission his Father gave him to bring about our redemption and divinization as sharers with him of divine life in the kingdom of God. In human form, especially as the poorest of the poor on the cross, he manifests the *anawim* community of the Trinity---persons who empty themselves in a gift of self-sacrificing love to each other. Thus they discover that emptiness is fullness, death is resurrection, to lose one’s life in love for another is to really gain it.

For this reason Jesus calls us: “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden light” (Matthew 11:29). Our Lord does not merely say that he has all the spiritual qualities of the *anawim*, but he *is* in his very being as the eternal Son and image of God, all these qualities. Jesus himself constitutes the very essence of the spirituality of the *anawim*, the very reality itself of radical poverty of spirit, humility of heart, complete trust in and abandonment to the heavenly Father.

OUR ONENESS WITH THE RISEN LORD

Because Jesus emptied himself totally for love of us, the Father raised him up in glory, and as we share even now through his Spirit in that glory, we are also able to identify with his radical poverty. As we put on the mind of Christ and by his Spirit live in love, we hunger also to be more emptied. We desire deep prayerful union with Jesus, poor yet perfect image of the kenotic, emptying love of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Negatively, poverty of spirit is total self-emptying of all that impedes the fullness of divine life, the fusion of our spirit with God’s Spirit. Positively, it is the life of our spirit, knowing, loving, possessing, and delighting in God, our neighbor, and all creation in the same divine light. In a word, one who loves knows nothing but love. To be truly empty and poor in spirit is to receive riches from the Only Triune Community of perfect and eternal love.

JESUS' TEACHING ON HUMILITY

We have seen in previous months of *Inscape* Newsletters how Jesus lived on this earth humbly before the *Allness* of the heavenly Father, both in his hidden life and public life. Now we need to look at Jesus' teaching on humility as recorded in the gospels. "For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the point of division between soul and spirit, and between the joints and marrow and bones, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from his sight; but all things are naked and open before the eyes of his to whom we are to answer" (Hebrews 4:12-13).

If Jesus came on this earth to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6), then his teachings are life-giving. We need to examine Jesus' teachings on humility as recorded in the gospels. And we need to embrace what to our sin-laden minds, so clouded by self-pride, would appear as "folly" and a stumbling block, as it was to the Jews and Gentiles and to most modern Christians today.

1. The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)

In Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount", Jesus explains how those who accepted his preaching would possess the kingdom of God. He is the one who speaks in the place of God; the law Moses brought down from Mount Sinai and imposed upon his people is no longer. "It was said by God...but I say to you...."

Let us ponder on what he teaches about the necessity of humility and meekness, if we are to enter into the kingdom of God.

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up to the mountain; and as he sat down, his disciples drew near to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying; Blessed are the humble [Aramaic, poor in pride], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be well satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall have mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men reproach you and persecute you and speak against you every kind of evil, falsely for my sake, then be glad and rejoice, for your reward is increased in heaven; for in this very manner they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:1-12).

In various ways Jesus describes the necessity of humility in order to enter intimately into relationship with the Trinity, "the kingdom of God," where God is all in the lives of Jesus' disciples. We see humility as the essential door through which we enter into God's kingdom. The blessings of both heaven and earth are received from God by the lowly in spirit. God blesses abundantly the poor in spirit. Such persons are not seen as possessing any special greatness in the eyes of the worldly ones, but God is greatly drawn to them in their ordinary, constant self-abandonment. This is the way Jesus lived while on earth, and this is what he teaches us to learn from him as recorded in the gospels (Matthew 11:29).

Jesus teaches his disciples through Saint Paul: "Abraham believed and hoped, even when there was no reason for hoping, and so became 'the father of many nations' " (Romans 4:18). We are to respond to the great dignity to which we are called by hoping that what is impossible to us is possible to God. We disciples are taught by Jesus to hope in God's power when all seems impossible according to our strength. We are to give everything to God in each moment and thus experience the paradox of true living: "Whoever tries to gain his own life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will gain it" (Matthew 10:39).

2. Mark (10:35-45)

In this text the disciples James and John, the sons of Zebedee, requested out of prideful ambition to be granted the highest places of honor, “to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory” (Mark 10:36). In Matthew 20:26-28 we find that it is the mother of James and John that requests this honor of Jesus. The ten disciples became very indignant toward the sons of Zebedee, no doubt because they also wanted to have places of honor in the coming of the kingdom, which they saw as one of temporal glory and power. Thus, Jesus teaches them and us modern disciples about true discipleship: “Jesus called them and said to them, You know that those who consider themselves princes of the people are also their lords; and their officials rule over them. Let this not be so among you; but he who wishes to be great among you, let him minister to you. And anyone of you who wishes to be first, let him be the servant of all. For the Son of man also did not come to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life as a salvation for the sake of many” (Mark 10:42-45).

Jesus is teaching us also that those who have authority within the loving community of the Church must not use it with personal ambition, but rather in the performance of their leadership by *diakonia* or humble service to the other members of the Body. He calls our attention to himself, who served by being a “ransom” for us to take away our sins.

Jesus insists that not only servants but also leaders should be “slaves” of all, even while they exercise their God-given authority. They need to exercise this authority without any self-pride or self-interest, but rather in loving dedication. They need to help each member of the Body to attain his or her potential (theosis, divinization) to also become a humble servant.

3. Luke (9:16; Matthew 18:3)

In these two texts we find Christ enunciate to his disciples the basic principle as to what truly constitutes greatness in the kingdom of God. Both Saint Luke and Saint Matthew present the disciples as approaching Jesus after they have been discussing who was the greatest among the twelve of them. Jesus answers them: “Then a reasoning entered into their minds as to who was the greatest among them. But Jesus knew the reasoning of their hearts, and he took a boy and made him stand by him. And he said to them, ‘Everyone who receives a little child like this one in my name, receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me; for whoever is least among you, let him be great’” (Luke 9:46-48; Matthew 18:2-4).

Here Jesus teaches that in heaven as on earth the sign of greatness is the mindset of being humble before God and neighbor, as all members of the Body of Christ lovingly seek to serve others with *agapic* love. Thus Jesus teaches that those possess true greatness who have a childlike sense of littleness, and therefore show that they belong to the free children of God.

4. Matthew (23:11)

Here Matthew repeats what he had written in 18:1-4 about who is the greatest among the disciples. But in this text Jesus is teaching his disciples to avoid the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the Scribes. To do this they must become servants. “But he who is greatest among you, let him be your servant. For whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:11-12).

5. John (13:4-17)

Here is John's summary of Jesus' teaching as to who is the greatest in God's kingdom. In a parabolic gesture, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples as though he were a mere servant, he who is the Master. He then teaches them: "You call me Teacher and Lord; and what you say is well, for I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, how much more should you wash one another's feet? For I have given you this as an example, so that just as I have done to you, you should also do. Truly, truly, I say to you, there is no servant who is greater than his master; and no apostle who is greater than he who sent him" (John 13:13-17).

GOD'S KENOTIC LOVE

Jesus points out that his washing of the disciples' feet shows his superiority over them as their Master and Teacher; it is his supreme freedom which prompts him to perform the humblest task of a slave, so that his disciples and those who will follow them will "know" how great his love is for them. Peter does not understand the meaning of Jesus' actions, but Jesus explains: "What I intend to do, you do not understand right now, but you will understand by and by" (John 13:7). Peter and other Christians would understand only through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' death and resurrection.

That understanding embraces two truths absolutely essential to living the true Christian life. The first is that Jesus shows that he in human form images the Triune God from all eternity in choosing a life of loving service on behalf of others. God's love for us is a *kenotic* or self-emptying love. This love Jesus images by his total availability, by his mutuality in sharing himself as our equal, and by the complete gift of himself out of his self-sacrificing love for us unto death.

What is God like? He is like Jesus, who is the "image of the unseen God" (Colossians 1:15). How does God love us? He loves us in the way Jesus images that perfect love for us. In the Mystical Supper on Great and Holy Thursday, Jesus opens his loving heart to his disciples. It is a humble heart that wishes to serve as a slave. Jesus bends down and washes the feet of Peter and John, Judas and the other disciples. The heart of God never bent lower to touch his children than in that gesture of humble service. The primary meaning of this gesture, beyond the example Jesus gives for his disciples' imitation, is that he is the image of God's divine power placed at the service of us human beings. "My Father goes on working, and so do I" (John 5:17)!

In Saint Paul's hymn in Philippians 2:6-10, Jesus, one with God, did not deem this an honor to hold on to but "emptied himself." Jesus did not give up his divinity in becoming human, but, more positively, he became a most perfect expression of it. He reveals that at the heart of all reality is the Triune community of Loving Persons, who live for each other. It is an *I* and a *Thee* in a *We* community, constituted by the bonding, hidden love of the Spirit. It is based on *ekstasis*, the ecstasy of standing beyond or outside of oneself, in order to move toward others in self-giving. It means to be "othered into new levels of personhood" by living for the other. It is emptying love which brings true fulfillment, as the gift of oneself comes back to birth the giver into true *I-ness* through the gift of the beloved.

SERVANTS TO OTHERS

Jesus chose the symbol of washing his disciples' feet with water to indicate a complete, comprehensive cleansing of all our worldly values, so as to live as he did (cf. 1 John 1:7).

The proof that we are disciples of Christ and truly "saved," must lie in our readiness to give away our beautifully transformed selves in humble, loving service to others. We live this in utter

availability, mutuality and the *self-gift of creative suffering*, just as Jesus became the servant of us all, especially in shedding his blood. Jesus experienced the complete outpouring love of the Father through his Spirit. He chose a human style of life that best reflected his return of love, or better, the transformation he experienced in becoming the beautiful, beloved Son through his Father's love.

So as we experience the infinite, emptying, serving love of the Indwelling Trinity for us, we too should live for others in self-sacrificing service. Following Jesus means to be washed thoroughly of all our desires for power and domination to live as he lived: as a humble, suffering servant.

6. Luke 18:9-14

Jesus gives this teaching as a parable that he tells at the banquet table of the Pharisee. It is directed against the men "who relied upon themselves, that they were righteous, and despised every other man" (Luke 18:9): "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. And the Pharisee stood by himself, and prayed thus: O God, I thank thee, that I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, grafters, adulterers, and not like this tax collector. But I fast twice a week, and I give tithes on everything I earn. But the tax collector stood afar off, and he would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote his breast, saying, O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you that this man went down to his house more righteous than the Pharisee. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled; and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted" (Like 10-14).

Jesus contrasts in inner dispositions of the Pharisee and the publican. Publicans were despised "sinners," tax collectors for the Romans, and hated for cheating their own Jewish people of their money. The Pharisee was full of pride and self-conceit. He observed externally the laws of fasting, tithing and saying prayers. But he placed his claim to righteousness not to a humble, contrite conversion within his heart, but to the works he did. In a word, he considered himself a holy person because of the external works that others saw him do. But he had little true love for God or neighbor, as he considered himself superior to others whom he branded as sinners, especially the publican in the back of the synagogue.

SUMMARY

In the gospels' presentation of his teachings on humility, we see Jesus living a style of life which he wants all those to live who follow him. If we are humble, we will not exalt ourselves through distorted pride, but we will recognize the privilege to serve others in order to grow more in the likeness of Jesus, our Master.

It is to experience the paradox that Jesus repeats in all four gospels: the necessity to lose our life, our present motivation so often distorted by false pride, in order to find our true life in God's divine love. He assures us that if we become poor, humble servants toward others, we lose what is false and unreal in our lives and become exalted by God and full of imperishable riches. We serve God and each other, and this sets us free from all selfish pride, helping us to enjoy even now the true freedom of the Holy Spirit "But we all, with open faces, see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and we shall be transformed into the same likeness, from one glory to another, just as the Spirit comes from the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

We need to embrace Jesus' teaching on the necessity to acquire humility and to study his example. He was obedient unto his death on the cross. We will take seriously his teaching by living it, for he is our way, truth and life (John 14:6).

The above texts do not exhaust Jesus' teachings on humility. But they present this ever-recurring virtue and our need to cultivate it. If you and I, like his first disciples, desire to enter into God's kingdom and enjoy a high and intense union with God-Trinity, we must not seek to be exalted but to be little as children. We must be humble as servants, humble as Jesus was and still wishes to be in and through you and me and all of his disciples living on this earth.

That must be our constant prayer, as we joyfully strive in every moment to be like Mary, the Mother of Jesus: "He has remembered me, his lowly servant....He has stretched out his mighty arm and scattered the proud with all their plans. He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away with empty hands (Luke 1:48. 51-53).

In the kingdom of God true greatness is true humility. This may seem like abasement and degradation to the world, but to God it is to be God-like. In fact, God in Jesus Christ lived as a servant for all of his created beings, teaching us to be humble servants of each other. Truly, God's power is not of this world; that would be no real power at all. Jesus humbled himself, and the Father exalted him. He lost his life, only to find it is and through his death and resurrection. He became a humble servant who died so that we might be exalted in our lowly service of love toward others and even now share in his divine glory.

Like attracts like. Jesus lived humbly and served us. He taught us over and over the necessity of learning from him how to become gentle and humble of heart (Matthew 11:9). What Jesus is, he wishes to give us, as he draws us into greater consciousness and oneness with him and the Father through the Spirit's gift of humility.

"In all our days, let us be glad for the days wherein **Thou didst humble us**, for the years wherein we saw evils" (Psalms 89:17).

Next month, in November's *Inscape*, we will conclude...with the "practice" of joyful humility even unto suffering and death.

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