

“Don't be sorry to be nothing”

Don't worry if they see your defects; the offence against God and the scandal you may give; that is what should worry you. Apart from this, may you be known for what you are and be despised. Don't be sorry to be nothing, since then Jesus will have to be everything for you. (The Way, 596)

20 January

'No man,' St John writes, 'has ever seen God; but now his only-begotten

Son, who abides in the bosom of the Father, has himself revealed him,' appearing to the astonished gaze of men: first, as a new-born babe, in Bethlehem; then, as a child just like other children; later on, in the Temple, as a bright and alert 12-year old; and finally in the lovable and attractive image of the Teacher who stirred the hearts of the enthusiastic crowds that accompanied him.

We have only to consider a few traits of God's Love made flesh and our souls are touched by his generosity; they are set on fire and feel gently impelled to contrition for having been petty and selfish on so many occasions. Jesus does not mind lowering himself in order to raise us from our destitution to the dignity of being children of God and brothers of his. You and I, unlike him, often pride ourselves stupidly on the gifts and talents we have received, to the point of making them a pedestal

from which to impose our will on others, as if the merits of our few relatively successful efforts derived from ourselves alone. 'What do you have that you have not received from God? And if what you have, you have received, why do you boast as if you had not received it?'

When we think of God's self-giving and the way he humbled himself — I am saying this so that each one of us can meditate on it and apply it to himself — then the vainglory and presumption of the proud man stands out as a truly hideous sin, for the very reason that such conduct is poles apart from the model given us by Jesus Christ. Think about it slowly: He, being God, humiliated himself; man, puffed up with self-love, tries to build himself up at any cost, without recognizing that he is but a creature of clay, and poor clay at that. (Friends of God, 111-112)

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