

The Litany of Humility Novena



DAILY PRAYER

O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, **hear me.**

From the desire of being esteemed, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the desire of being loved, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the desire of being extolled, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the desire of being honored, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the desire of being praised, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the desire of being preferred to others, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the desire of being consulted, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the desire of being approved, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the fear of being humiliated, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the fear of being despised, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the fear of suffering rebukes, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the fear of being calumniated, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the fear of being forgotten, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the fear of being ridiculed, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the fear of being wronged, **deliver me O Jesus.**

From the fear of being suspected, **deliver me O Jesus.**

That others may be loved more than I, **Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be esteemed more than I, **Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.**

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease, **Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be chosen and I set aside, **Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be praised and I go unnoticed, **Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be preferred to me in everything, **Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should, **Jesus grant me the grace to desire it.**

Repeat this prayer each day of the novena.

Continue to the next page for each day's bonus reflection.

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DAY 1:

BONUS REFLECTION: DISCOVER YOUR TRUE SELF

Saint Teresa of Ávila wrote, “Humility is truth.” This simple statement reflects a profound understanding. Humility isn’t about thinking less of ourselves, putting ourselves down, or denying our inherent worth. It’s about acknowledging reality.

We are children of God who are capable of amazing things. We are finite, fallible, and sinful. And we are completely and utterly dependent on God who is the source of life and everything good. “In Him we live and move and have our being.” (Acts 17:28) This is reality and the more our sense of self is grounded in these truths, the more authentic our sense of self will be.

1. What are my three greatest strengths? What are my three greatest weaknesses?

2. How would my self-image change if I really believed I was a child of God?

DAY 2:

BONUS REFLECTION: CHECK YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

This may come as a surprise—a healthy self-esteem is the foundation of humility. Prideful arrogance isn’t the result of a healthy sense of self. It is born out of a thousand insecurities. Believing that you are worthless is unholy because it is untrue. Believing that you are more worthy than others is unholy because it is untrue. These are overreactions of the ego.

A strong sense of self comes from knowing that you are loved, that you matter, that you are here for a reason in this world and that you have something to offer, that you are the son or daughter of a great King who has given you every gift and ability you need to live the unique life he created you to live. Humility is truth: You are amazing because God made you amazing.

1. How would I rate my self-esteem health on a scale of 1-10?

2. What lies do you believe about yourself that are keeping you from flourishing?

DAY 3:

BONUS REFLECTION: REMEMBER THE GIVER OF THE GIFT

Once there was an ancient Jewish Rabbi who was known to be a man of exceptional talent and towering virtue. Above all he was known to be a man of humility, despite his considerable gifts. One day he was asked, “How do you remain humble?” He replied, “I carry two notes in my pockets.

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DAY 3 (CONTINUED):

When I am feeling lowly and depressed, discouraged or disconsolate, I reach into the right pocket, and there, find the words: 'For my sake was the world created.' And when I am feeling exceptional, righteous, self-important, or superior in any way, I reach into my left pocket, and there, find the words, 'You are dust and unto dust you shall return.'"

You are extraordinary. Make no mistake about that. You are a child of God, made in his image and likeness. But all that you have, you have received. All is gift. All is grace. Humility is simply remembering who the Giver of the gifts is.

- 1. Which message do I need to hear more often: "You are extraordinary" or "You are dust"?**
- 2. Which of my talents and blessings do I need to thank God for today?**

DAY 4:

BONUS REFLECTION: NO MORE PRETENDING

The battle between humility and pride is central to the spiritual life. Pride contaminates anything that is good, destroys relationships, and blinds us to what is good, true, right, and just. It is the source of all moral evil. But what is humility, why does it matter, and how do we grow in this essential virtue?

C.S. Lewis observed, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less."

Humility is essential to spiritual flourishing, and yet, it seems to be more misunderstood than understood. Humility is highly desirable, and yet, it has been shunned by the modern world for the most part.

We live in a world dominated by pretending, and pretending is exhausting. So, there is no point trading one type of pretending for another. And this is often what happens in our first attempts to grow in the virtue of humility.

Humility is truth. It is false to devalue yourself or your talents. That isn't humility. Humility is acknowledging the source of your talents. God is the giver of all gifts, the origin of all our talents and abilities, and the source of all goodness and every blessing. You can have exceptional abilities and be humble, you can be an exceptional human being and possess deep humility.

- 1. How would growing in humility impact my relationships?**
- 2. How am I being tempted to pretend at this time in my life?**

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DAY 5:

BONUS REFLECTION: THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL DANGER

One of the greatest spiritual dangers is intellectual pride. It is so easy to fall into the trap of thinking we know a lot, when in reality even those among us who know the most know very little. What we don't know about God dwarfs what we do know about God. And when it comes to the afterlife, we know even less.

Pride, arrogance, and ego can all play large roles in our lives and become huge obstacles that prevent us from hearing God's voice clearly. But in Mary we find the antidote for all three: humility.

Mary's radical humility is an encyclopedia of lessons about the inner life. Imagine how rich her inner life must have been. Imagine what it was like for the first Christians to seek her counsel and guidance. Then, at the end of her life, Mary was taken body and soul into heaven, her reward for a life lived entirely for God.

- 1. What's keeping you from just giving everything to God?**
- 2. How would your life be different if you surrendered everything to God?**

DAY 6:

BONUS REFLECTION: THE PATHWAY TO PEACE

Humility isn't about pretending to be small and fragile. The humblest people I know have a very powerful presence. They have a very strong sense of self. They also tend to have a beautiful awareness of reality.

Humility is also sometimes thought of as weak, but nothing could be further from the truth. Humility is tender and meek, and yet it possesses extraordinary strength, because in it we realize the unquenchable source of our strength. Our strength is in the Lord, as the Psalm says (Psalm 46).

Our desire for humility grows the more we understand what it actually is, and how it differs from pride.

Prideful arrogance is repugnant. Humility is also supremely attractive.

Pride wrestles with the whole universe, trying to get everyone and everything to conform to our will. Humility surrenders gently to God.

Pride is impertinent, disrespectful, and rude. Humility is well mannered and respectful.

Pride thinks only of self and now. Humility thinks of everyone and everything, forever.

Scratch just beneath the surface and you will discover that pride is small, mean, and scared. Humility is all-encompassing, generous, and trusting.

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DAY 6 (CONTINUED):

Pride is restless. Humility is peaceful and at ease.

Jesus invites us to a life of humility because he is supremely interested in our happiness.

And here we may have stumbled upon the most important and practical aspect of humility. Only a humble soul can be led. It takes real humility to quiet our desires, and all the distractions of the world, and listen to the voice of the Spirit. And it takes humility to follow wherever that voice leads.

Teresa of Ávila proposed that a little humility is more valuable than all the knowledge in the world. Humility seeks to rearrange our values and priorities, and turn our lives upside down, which as it turns out will be right side up.

1. How has pride negatively impacted your life or relationships?

2. Who is the most humble person you know? What can you learn from their example?

DAY 7:

BONUS REFLECTION: CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOTS

There is one fundamental truth that we each need to come to grips with if we want to grow spiritually. Unless we are willing to embrace this truth, any spiritual growth we do experience will be stilted, minimal, and not a fraction of what is actually possible.

This is the truth: We don't see things as they really are—especially ourselves. We all think we have twenty-twenty vision in life, but we don't. We don't see things as they really are.

If you think this is not true, record yourself doing anything. You don't look like what you think you look like. You don't move like you think you move. You don't sound like what you think you sound like. Here's another example: Get out some old photos, from perhaps twenty years ago. Did you think you looked like that at the time? We don't see things as they really are. You don't see your marriage as it really is. You don't see your parenting as it really is. You don't see your career as it really is. You don't see your health as it really is. You don't see your church as it really is. You don't see your life as it really is.

Why? Because we all have blind spots. Our pasts are full of experiences that are influencing our present and our future. These past experiences have given birth to fear and insecurity, which create huge blind spots. The past has also given birth to a thousand hopes, dreams, and ambitions that we carry deep within, and these also prevent us from seeing ourselves as we really are.

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DAY 7 (CONTINUED):

Once we recognize and accept this, the real work can begin, because three things happen. We develop humility; we become docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and we stop judging ourselves and other people.

- 1. How have past experiences or fears shaped the way I see myself and others?**
- 2. What blind spots might God be inviting you to address at this time in your life?**

DAY 8:

BONUS REFLECTION: THE HUMILITY LITMUS TEST

“It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels,” Saint Augustine observed. And C.S. Lewis wrote, “As long as you are proud, you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”

To walk humbly with God. That is the mandate placed before us in Micah 6:8, “He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To live justly, love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.” Our culture advocates incessant self-promotion, the flaunting of our material possession, and shameless boasting of worldly success. The fruits of these behaviors are pride, vanity, an inflated but empty sense of self, and a distorted view of what matters most. Humility in this environment is massively counter-cultural.

Cultivating humility in this cultural climate requires a conscious effort to shift our focus from self-centeredness to love of God and neighbor. One very practical way to foster a growing humility is to thank God specifically for a litany of things. Entitlement is a tell-tale sign of pride, and gratitude banishes entitlement. And one very practical litmus test of humility is to observe whether we are more interested in spiritual growth or external validation.

- 1. What would it look like for me to “walk humbly with God” today?**
- 2. What am I most grateful for today?**

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DAY 9:

BONUS REFLECTION: IT'S TIME FOR A NEW BEGINNING

Are you ready for a new beginning? Throughout his life Jesus was constantly offering people second chances and new beginnings. Tax collectors, adulterers, lepers, prostitutes and the possessed, the disciples and the thief on the cross. His message was clear: Everyone deserves a new beginning.

Peter is a perfect example. One of Jesus' first disciples, Peter loved Jesus deeply. But in Jesus' darkest hour, Peter denied him three times. Imagine the shame and self-loathing Peter must have felt. And yet, after his Resurrection Jesus didn't cast Peter aside, he drew him nearer than ever. He knew Peter loved him and ultimately would appoint Peter as the first pope. Jesus was telling Peter that his past mistakes did not define his future, and Jesus is telling you the same thing today. He will not allow your past mistakes to define your future. This is central to Christianity: the belief that we are not defined by our worst moments.

Jesus gives us the grace to start again. But to embrace our new beginning, we need to release our grip on the things that no longer serve us: regret, bitterness, pride, fear, and doubt.

But letting go isn't easy. It requires trust—and humility. It takes humility to admit we need help, to acknowledge our need for God's mercy, and to allow him to lead us. Humility opens the door to healing and transformation.

Now, what's holding you back from your new beginning? What burden do you need to lay at the foot of the Cross? Jesus is waiting with open arms, ready to walk with you into a future filled with hope and promise. The question is not whether he can transform your life but whether you will let him. Say yes to him today and he will turn the page to a new chapter in your life.

1. What past mistake or regret do I need to let go of today?

2. In what area of my life do I need a new beginning?