

REFLECTIONS ON THE VIRTUES OF MOTHER FRANCES STREITEL

HUMILITY



Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother
Third Order Regular of Saint Francis of Assisi

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DEFINITION

Humility



All the Christian virtues and the practice of the evangelical counsels are based on humility which shone in the life of the Servant of God; a life marked by a search for silence, lack of self consideration, and acceptance of any kind of humiliation. In her, humility and charity were associated. She was meek and friendly to everyone, also accepting advice from others.

The Servant of God desired to perform the most menial tasks even when she was Superior General. She would serve as cook, launderer, and wait on the sisters at table. In the United States she surprised the sisters by cleaning floors on her knees until late at night with them. When deposed from office, the Servant of God did not defend herself but accepted the ecclesiastic decision with heroic humility. Humble is the person who places her trust in God. This is what the Servant of God always did because she placed her hope in God.



TESTIMONIALS ... of the past ...

One can say that humility was her most favorite virtue. She fled immediately from every, even the smallest, praise. She withdrew herself to a great extent and did not want anyone to speak about the good that she had done.

Whenever she had an opportunity she would practice humility. In her humility she avoided every exception or privilege and she sought nothing else than the glory of God and the salvation of souls. She loved the most difficult occupations; she watched over and washed the sick children, overcoming every repugnance. When she was in need of something she asked with much humility and modesty. (Sr. M. Regina Galletti)



In spite of her spirit of humility and humiliations she never forgot her dignity.

(Sr. M. Jolanda Windisch)



SOURCES

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Ps. 25:9 Ps. 147:6 Ps. 149:4 Is. 29:19 Dan. 10:12
Zeph. 2:3 Mt. 11:29 Lk. 1:52 Eph. 4:2 1 Pt. 5:5-6
Prov. 11:2 Prov. 18:12 Jas. 3:13 Mi. 6:8

OUR WAY OF LIFE: Articles: #44, 48, 53, 85
Journeying: General Principles of Formation, #3

(over)

WRITINGS OF MOTHER FRANCES

Letters to Father John Francis Jordan:

Letter 12 (81), February/March 1883, #1 and 2

Letter 32 (24), April 16, 1883, #3

Letter 39 (86), July 1883, #6



REFLECTIONS

COMMUNITY QUESTION:

In our community living, do we recognize and accept our limitations and abilities?

How do we as a community relate to and support legitimate authority in our congregation and the church?

PERSONAL QUESTION:

Do I recognize the virtues and talents that others possess, particularly those that surpass my own, and rejoice over their gifts?

Do I do the little things in life well and with great love?



TESTIMONIALS ... of today ...

The aspect of Mother Frances life and spiritual journey that influenced my life is all about her HUMILITY. The humility of Mother Frances was extraordinary and this help her to live with all kinds of people. It touched me and influence my life everyday, especially her silence after deposition that reveal the kind of person she was, that she was looking for God's will and not her will by keeping silence. I learned that sometimes I have to keep silence to let God do his will.

LOVE: especially to the poor, also this influenced my life because the place where I am here there are still people like those Mother Frances met so I have the responsibility to serve and to love them.

Sr. M. Pracidia (Tanzania)



"The virtue of humility":

At the basis of all the Christian virtues, as well as the practice of the evangelical counsels, is humility, which shines brightly in the life of the Servant of God, Mother Frances Streitel. Her life was a life of seeking silence and seclusion, of considering herself as little as possible and

accepting every humiliation. Humility and charity were associated with her. She was kind to everyone and knew how to accept advice from others.

Humility was Mother Frances' favorite virtue; she avoided the slightest praise.

Because she cultivated a spirit of humility, she never forgot her dignity when she was humiliated.

Reflecting on how the Servant of God lived this virtue, I felt touched by her humility, and so I felt the desire to follow God and cultivate this virtue in my life. I ask God every day to grant me the grace of humility.

Mother Frances, pray to God for us!

Sr. Maria Nair (Brazil)



One of Mother Frances Streitel's virtues that attracts me the most and that I try to draw inspiration from is her humility, her willingness to let go of her own will in order to do the will of God and her brothers and sisters.



It's this letting go of oneself in order to serve others that I most admire and that influences me in my desire to give more and more of myself in the service of those most in need. And Mother Frances Streitel's letter to Father Jordan 54,5 helps me along this path: the best way to teach humility is to practice it.

I ask the Lord to continue to inspire me through Mother Frances Streitel and her virtues so that I can grow in living these virtues and her example of life.

Nov. Luana Vitória (Brazil)



Mother Frances Streitel attracted my attention because of her humility, acceptance of the Divine Will, complete trust in God.

She dedicated herself to her mission for the poorest, creating schools for children. Compassion for the sick, supporting the start of hospitals. Uninterested in the applause of the world, she had total dedication to her life project: the SSM Congregation.

Sr. Arabia (USA)



We took part in numerous religious meetings in the Mãe Dolorosa Convent. We were impressed by the way the sisters live, by their love for God, by the way they live together and by their support for the humble, which made us want to be closer to the community. When we were invited to become associates, we willingly accepted. Over time, we have tried to practice love of God and humility, helping the church to spread the word both in the temple and in our daily services to others, making those who receive it feel welcomed in Christ.

"I always receive the light I need from above, intrepid courage, love and gentleness..."

(Mother Frances)

Gildete and Sebastião, SSM Associates (Brazil)



When I think about the life of our foundress, the Venerable Mother Frances, who was a bold and courageous woman for her time, I always feel that what struck me most about her precious story, which was not immediately understood by the Church and perhaps not even by all her sisters at the time, was her humility and faithfulness after being removed from her role as Mother General.

Mother Frances achieved many great and wonderful things, overcoming historical prejudices about women and the roles of religious sisters. However, the last period of her life is what has made the deepest impression on me. She spent those years in a tiny village near Viterbo, serving the poor children and sick people of the area. She served with love and prayed tirelessly in seclusion. The people did not know she was the foundress of the congregation; they loved her for her humble service. When she died, the village cried out, "The Saint is gone."



That's it. I feel her holiness because of her humility. She was a humble servant who, even when she was abandoned, felt the grace of always being able to live with her Lord.

Sr. Rosa (Italy)



One thing I learned from the example of Mother Franziska is the enormous humility with which she bore her dismissal, especially when she was probably the only one here in Vienna who knew that it was a misunderstanding. I am particularly touched by this, probably because it happened in Vienna, where I live. I don't know if I could be so humbly silent when I know that I have been wronged.

Sr. Michaela (Austria)



"In the world of that time, bristling with watchtowers and defensive walls, cities were a theater of brutal wars between powerful families, even as poverty was spreading through the countryside. Yet there Francis was able to welcome true peace into his heart and free himself of the desire to wield power over others. He became one of the poor and sought to live in harmony with all."

This is a narrative that we are called to continue today, and that means joining forces to contribute to a disarming peace, a peace born of openness and evangelical humility.

Pope Leo XIV,
Message for the LIX World Day of Peace,
January 1, 2026