

Lumen Leadership Circle

January, 2017

“Humility”

Humility is the foundation of all the other virtues hence, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist, there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance.

—St. Augustine

Arrivals/Cocktails/Buffer Dinner (30 Minutes)

Virtue corner

The four cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, and all other moral virtues are annexed to these. Humility is related to the virtue of temperance because temperance includes all those virtues that help us direct the inordinate movements of our desires or appetites. Humility is a moderating virtue opposed to pride and vainglory (that spirit within us which urges us to great things above our strength and ability) and is included in temperance just as meekness, which tempers anger, is a part of the same virtue.

Humility is not the first or the greatest of the virtues. The theological virtues (faith, hope, love) have the first place, then the intellectual virtues, as these immediately direct the reason of man to good. Justice is placed in the order of the virtues before humility, and so should obedience be, for it is part of justice.

Humility is, however, said to be **the foundation of the spiritual life**, though it is inferior to faith, on which humility is founded. Humility is the first virtue inasmuch as it removes the obstacles to faith. It removes pride and makes a man open to grace according to the words of St. James: "God resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble" (James 4:6). Faith is the first and the positive fundamental virtue of all the infused virtues, because it is by it we can take the first step in the supernatural life and in our access to God: "For he that comes to God, must believe that he is, and he rewards those that seek him"(Hebrews 11:6). Humility, inasmuch as it seems to keep the mind and heart submissive to reason and to God, has its own function in connection with faith and all the other virtues, and it may therefore be said to be a universal virtue.

According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere flea bites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind... it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. **CS Lewis, Mere Christianity**

Gospel Reflection (40 minutes)

“Humility and Obedience”

PHILLIPIANS 2:1-11

1 If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. 3 Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, 4 each looking out not for his own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others. 5 Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, 6 Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. 7 Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; 8 and found human in appearance, 8 he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. 9 Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Context. St Paul is writing to the Christians of Philippi and encouraging these new believers in the essentials of the faith, especially in living together in the community. What are the key motivations given at the beginning?
2. St Paul tells them to do nothing out of vain glory. Is that even possible? How is that possible?
3. What is the healthy way to consider others more than yourself? Is it based on an objective comparison of your talents vs. theirs, or something else?
4. What does it mean to look out for other's interests more than your own? How does that apply to being a Father, Husband, Boss, your clients?
5. St. Paul sets up Jesus as the example of what a Christian's attitude should be. In what did Christ's self emptying consist?
6. He humbled himself and became obedient. Where and when do I have to practice obedience? As an expression of my humility and imitation of Jesus, how can I find joy in it?
7. The power and glory of Christ seems to be related to the fact that he emptied himself, served, laid down his life. If I want true glory, true success, does it have to be through laying down my life?
8. Humility and Faith. How does the one feed the other? Can you have Faith without Humility? Can you have Humility before God without Faith?
9. Confession. How does the sacrament of confession help us to practice the virtue of Humility?

Secular Corner (20 minutes)

Here is the Harvard Business Review's take on humility. Spend 5 minutes reading it, and another 15 minutes discussing how it relates back to Paul's letter, if at all.

"The best leaders are humble leaders"

Harvard Business Review Online. May 2014. In a global marketplace where problems are increasingly complex, no *one* person will ever have all the answers. That's why Google's SVP of People Operations, Lazlo Bock, says humility is one of the traits he's looking for in new hires. "Your end goal," explained Bock, "is what can we do together to problem-solve. I've contributed my piece, and then I step back." And it is not just humility in creating space for others to contribute, says Bock—it's "intellectual humility. Without humility, you are unable to learn."

A recent Catalyst study backs this up, showing that humility is one of four critical leadership factors for creating an environment where employees from different demographic backgrounds feel included. In a survey of more than 1500 workers...we found that when employees observed altruistic or selfless behavior in their managers — a style characterized by 1) acts of humility, such as learning from criticism and admitting mistakes); 2) empowering followers to learn and develop; 3) acts of courage, such as taking personal risks for the greater good; and 4) holding employees responsible for results — they were more likely to report feeling included in their work teams. ...

Employees who perceived altruistic behavior from their managers also reported being more innovative, suggesting new product ideas and ways of doing work better. Moreover, they were more likely to report engaging in team citizenship behavior, going beyond the call of duty, picking up the slack for an absent colleague — all indirect effects of feeling more included in their workgroups.

Our research was also able to isolate the combination of two separate, underlying sentiments that make employees feel included: uniqueness *and* belongingness. Employees feel unique when they are recognized for the distinct talents and skills they bring to their teams; they feel they belong when they share important commonalities with co-workers.

It's tricky for leaders to get this balance right, and emphasizing uniqueness too much can diminish employees' sense of belonging. However, we found that altruism is one of the key attributes of leaders who can coax this balance out of their employees, almost across the board.

Nonetheless, our study raises one common, perhaps universal implication: To promote inclusion and reap its rewards, leaders should embrace a selfless leadership style. Here are some concrete ways to get started based on both our current research and our ongoing study of leadership development practices at one company, Rockwell Automation:

- **Share your mistakes as teachable moments.** When leaders showcase their own personal growth, they legitimize the growth and learning of others; by admitting to their own imperfections, they make it okay for others to be fallible, too. We also tend to connect with

people who share their imperfections and foibles—they appear more “human,” more like us. Particularly in diverse workgroups, displays of humility may help to remind group members of their common humanity and shared objectives.

- **Engage in dialogue, not debates.** Another way to practice humility is to truly engage with different points of view. Too often leaders are focused on swaying others and “winning” arguments. When people debate in this way, they become so focused on proving the validity of their own views that they miss out on the opportunity to learn about *other* points of view. Inclusive leaders are humble enough to suspend their own agendas and beliefs. In so doing, they not only enhance their own learning but they validate followers’ unique perspectives.
- **Embrace uncertainty.** Ambiguity and uncertainty are par for the course in today’s business environment. So why not embrace them? When leaders humbly admit that they don’t have all the answers, they create space for others to step forward and offer solutions. They also engender a sense of interdependence. Followers understand that the best bet is to rely on each other to work through complex, ill-defined problems.
- **Role model being a “follower.”** Inclusive leaders empower *others* to lead. By reversing roles, leaders not only facilitate employees’ development but they model the act of taking a different perspective, something that is so critical to working effectively in diverse teams.

Saint’s Corner (10 minutes)

“Mother Teresa’s Humility List”

- ✓ Speak as little as possible about yourself.
- ✓ Keep busy with your own affairs and not those of others.
- ✓ Avoid curiosity (though I don’t think that she is referring to learning, here)
- ✓ Do not interfere in the affairs of others.
- ✓ Accept small irritations with good humor.
- ✓ Do not dwell on the faults of others.
- ✓ Accept censures even if unmerited.
- ✓ Give in to the will of others.
- ✓ Accept insults and injuries.
- ✓ Accept contempt, being forgotten and disregarded.
- ✓ Be courteous and delicate even when provoked by someone.
- ✓ Do not seek to be admired and loved.
- ✓ Do not protect yourself behind your own dignity.
- ✓ Give in, in discussions, even when you are right.
- ✓ Choose always the more difficult task.

6 Ways to cultivate Humility

- ✓ Pray for it
- ✓ Accept humiliations
- ✓ Obey legitimate authority
- ✓ Distrust yourself
- ✓ Acknowledge your littleness

- ✓ Think more of others, less of self

Case Discussion (20 Minutes)

Ask a member of your circle in advance to bring a personal case about how an attitude of humility helped them in a family or business situation recently. Alternatively, use the case below to elicit a discussion on humility in a business context.

At Rockwell Automation, a leading provider of manufacturing automation, control, and information solutions, practicing humility in these ways has been essential to promoting an inclusive culture — a culture Rockwell's leaders see as critical to leveraging the diversity of its global workforce.

One of the key strategies they've adopted to model this leadership style is the fishbowl — a method for facilitating dialogue. At a typical fishbowl gathering, a small group of employees and leaders sit in circle at the center of the room, while a larger group of employees are seated around the perimeter. Employees are encouraged to engage with each other and leaders on *any* topic and are invited into the innermost circle. In these unscripted conversations, held throughout the year in a variety of venues, leaders routinely demonstrate humility —by admitting to employees that don't have all the answers and by sharing their own personal journeys of growth and development.

At one fishbowl session, shortly after the company introduced same-sex partner benefits in 2007, a devoutly religious employee expressed concerns about the new benefits policy — in front of hundreds of other employees. Rather than going on the defensive, a senior leader skillfully engaged that employee in dialogue, asking him questions and probing to understand his perspectives. By responding in this way, the leader validated the perspectives of that employee and others who shared his views. Other leaders shared their own dilemmas and approaches to holding firm to their own religious beliefs yet embracing the company's values of treating *all* employees fairly. Dialogues such as these have made a palpable difference at Rockwell Automation. Employees have higher confidence in their leaders, are more engaged, and feel more included — despite their differences.

As the Rockwell example suggests, a selfless leader should not be mistaken for a weak one. It takes tremendous courage to practice humility in the ways described above. Yet regrettably, this sort of courage isn't always rewarded in organizations.

Lumen Core Values Self-Assessment (25 minutes)

- **Core Values Assessment.** Spend 10 minutes in silence assessing positive and negative examples of how you have demonstrated humility in your relationship with others and God. What times have you most often had this attitude and in what circumstances do you tend to lose it? Referring to the quadrant below, pick one column where you would be more effective if you better practiced the virtue of Humility. Jot down notes generated during the circle in the boxes for that column. You can use this tool for the rest of the month to fill in other thoughts for improving in Humility in your prayer, family, business lives, and “Lumen Action” lives.

“My Plan for Improving in Humility”

	<i>Prayer</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Lumen Action</i>
<i>What interesting new THINKING surfaced from the discussion?</i>				
<i>What is my biggest CHALLENGE in dealing with these issues.</i>				
<i>What are the OPPORTUNITIES of growth presented here?</i>				
<i>What ACTION STEPS can I take</i>				

<i>now or long term? (Insert into your Business Plan for the Soul)</i>				
--	--	--	--	--

Resolution (5 minutes)

Following the ideas brought out this evening, develop a group resolution for improving in the virtue of Humility during the next month.

Resources:

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Ph1/Ph1_2.cfm

<http://www.catholicgentleman.net/2014/07/6-ways-to-cultivate-the-virtue-of-humility/>

<http://virtuefirst.org/virtues/humility/>

Takeaways from Stephen Auth:

Dear Brothers,

Great circle this week at Raul's. We had five of us there, including new members Jason Swiatek and Mike Eble. Maylene spoiled us with her amazing cooking. Even better than when she cooked at Vong!

Here are my notes:

1. Pride cuts us off from God. "Other sins, if you will, evade God. Pride opposes Him." (Boylan, "This Tremendous Lover") Pride is the sin that above all others prevents us from finding God. To relate to God, we have to first acknowledge his superiority to us in all things, to cede control to Him in all matters. Too often, we want to set our own rules, go our own way. We studied the image of the Egyptian Pharaoh Hatsheput, positioning herself as a God to be adored. In this posture, she never found God. How often do we do this ourselves? We all have a little Pharaoh in us, itching for adoration, anxious to set our own rules. In this state, there is no way we can connect in a properly ordered way with our Creator. Without Humility, there ultimately can be no Faith.
2. Pride cuts us off from others. When we give in to our prideful side, it is not long before we are cut off not only from God, but also from our fellow men. We walk alone. We studied a self portrait of Picasso called "The Actor." He stands alone on the stage, back to his audience, face turned diffidently sideward. He is "a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more." (Shakespeare, "Macbeth") In a state of pride, we are quick to cut off our secretary before she can finish her sentence, or find ourselves unable to offer much sympathy to our wives after work, since they obviously don't get how much harder of a day we ourselves have had, attending to more important matters. In meetings, we shout down others and can't hear valuable input. Humility is the virtue that allows us to connect with others in a loving way. Without Humility, there can be no Love.
3. Humility is a state of heart, not a technique. We studied the Harvard case on fishbowl meetings, and concluded that as a mere technique, false "humility" can be quickly seen through and easily counterproductive. Once the discussion gets heated, our pride gets the better of us and all bets are off. Humility, to be effective, has to be real-- a state of heart as much as a state of mind. We can practice it, even train for it, but we have to do so because we believe in it, we are committed to it. We concluded that the best way of practicing humility is prayer. We concluded that while humility is a virtue that all men have within them (perhaps as an outcome of having the image of God implanted in their souls), prayerful people have a leg up on becoming humble people. We studied the image of "The Penitent Magdalene" as an example of someone surrounded by the things of the world in which she had taken great

pride, but now transfixed humbly by the light of Christ in the mirror in which she had previously exercised her own vanity. Magdalene has embarked on a different path, accompanied by Christ. She hopes now in Him. Without humility, there can be no Hope.

Resolution: In the month ahead, in our interactions with others, we will all lean a little harder into humility, and a little further from pride. We will reference our Mother Theresa prayer cards daily as an aide. (Mary will send one to the absent.)

Next circles: Our next four circles are as follows:

February 15 (I will be away)

March 4 (at National Retreat, with spouses)

March 15

April 12 (in SoHo, after Holy Week Mission)

Please get these dates on your calenders. If you have not yet signed up for the National Retreat, email Paivie Eck; there may still be time.

God Bless,

Steve