

The Twelve Steps to Humility

At first glance, the Twelve Steps to Humility seem impossible and unwanted. Who would want to destroy their self-esteem and all they had accomplished over a lifetime? Fortunately, that is NOT what God or St. Benedict are requiring.

Think about this... We have been taught that self-esteem is vital to our happiness and is gained by acquiring things, positions, and power. How quickly all that can be destroyed by one simple mistake, someone's critical judgment on our efforts or even a natural disaster. The consequences of this erroneous teaching are anxiety and depression.

When challenged, my self-esteem crumbles, even with my best efforts at positive thinking. When I look at myself, I see garbage.

The Steps to Humility teach us how to change what we see in that mirror.

Rather than seeing with our eyes and self-judgment, we now see how God sees and judges.

The all-knowing, merciful, and loving God sees us, you, as precious creations that He has uniquely gifted with eternal, everlasting empowerment to continue His work of creation.

He will never change His mind or abandon you.

You are in, with, and through Him every moment of every day.

You are an heir to His Kingdom NOW and FOREVER.

Let us call that God's esteem.

The Steps to Humility teach us how to move from our failing self-interest and self-promotion to the never-failing God's esteem to happily giving our loving Creator all the Glory.

We were created to want that Godly point of view.

However, the world wants to claim us with lies and deception. It misdirects us by seemingly pleasurable self-indulgence. The ultimate consequences are exhaustion, anxiety, and depression.

Yes, moving from self-focus to God-focus will take some effort.

At first, the journey can be confusing.

Fortunately, God the Father has graced us.

He has given us the redemption of Jesus. Jesus, in turn, empowered the apostles with the authority and Holy Spirit to continue His mission through His Church.

St. Benedict and the Cistercians are fruits of that Church.

We, the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, are icons of hope. We will guide and help you towards humble intimacy with God and His creation.

What is required from you is cooperation with God's grace and your willingness to listen.

Please understand that the Twelve Steps are a metaphor. There could be a hundred steps or a thousand. No one is ever perfectly on one step. You could have a toe on one step and a foot on another. You could trip and fall. This is a journey.

Do not judge yourself by how you think it should go. Do not measure yourself by the success or failure of others. Be patient. Persevere in prayer. Listen.

We will focus on Scripture, The Rule of St. Benedict, The Liturgy of the Hours, and Lectio Divina.

We will direct our efforts toward humility using the three steps of Stability, Obedience, and Conversatio.

Stability is a rooted engaging commitment to place, time, and relationships.

Obedience is an action taken when we exercise both physical and emotional stability.

Conversatio is changing behaviors to respond to God's plan for your life.

You are not alone on this journey. Your Cistercian family and leaders will guide and encourage you. We will show you how to persevere in prayer and create a supporting lifestyle.

In turn, we ask that you do your best, respect your leaders and the Cistercian family through your cooperation, tithes, prayers, and participation.

St. Benedict encourages honest transparency and service to one another. Know that God has graced you to this monastic call as an oblate or monastic. He will grace and empower you. A new and exciting life is available to you and your loved ones.