

Reflections

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MAGNANIMOUS

If we decidedly want to go further along the way towards sanctity, our aim must be to reach the highest level of sanctity possible. And the first thing we have to do in order to reach this aim is to put aside all excuses.

An essential attitude is magnanimity. Without it, the Christian cannot fulfill his mission. He would barely be able to survive as a mutilated, disfigured child, destined to disappear sooner or later.

Likewise with freedom, magnanimity is indispensable for sanctity. Father Joseph Kentenich, founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, therefore assures: *“Nobody can become a saint if he is not magnanimous.”* He calls magnanimity “the boldness of the saints.” Because as a realist, he knows that the saint must not only bow before the greatness of God, but before the Cross of Christ as well.

What is magnanimity? It means to have a great soul (anima magna). It is a soul which has surpassed mediocrity, aspires to the highest and makes lofty demands on itself. It is a greatness of soul which does not revolve around itself but rather seeks to serve others and to please God. Whoever always responds to that call to magnanimity will be a light and guide for others and will lift them to the greatest heights. Those who are magnanimous live what our Father and Founder proposes: *“Not simply the great and the greater, but the greatest heights ought to be the object of our increased efforts.”*

It should be something great to which we consecrate our time and energy. We have been born for greatness – that is our heart’s demand. Therefore, our fundamental attitude should be based on generosity and magnanimity. St. Teresa was already convinced that the height of a mountain on a high ridge does not awaken heroism or boldness in great souls. This can only be done by the high mountains reaching toward Heaven. Therefore, we do not want to build small thin houses which can crumble with any storm.

Our heart demands a construction which will last for centuries, offering future generations shelter and consistent security.

But this greatness is not only our heart’s demand, but also is an imperative of our time. Its typically apocalyptic catastrophes only halt before creatures guided by the most sublime. The future will show if we entered history as a generation of giants or a bunch of midgets.

But let us not be mistaken. Greatness of soul is not, in the first place, to perform great deeds, but to do all things with heart, with soul. It is to do the small, everyday, routine things with great love. *“To do the ordinary things extraordinarily well”* – magnanimity consists in this. For people who truly love, small things do not exist. Perhaps they may seem insignificant for the world. But before God, that is true greatness.

Obligation and magnanimity. We should be very careful not to confuse magnanimity with obligation. Do not impose an obligation where it does not belong, on the contrary, they form slaves, that is, men who are good by mistake and not by their own decision. Therefore, in our dictionary, the following words should exist as little as possible: “you have to do it!” In their place should be: “could you do it?” There where obligation ends, magnanimity should begin.

Today, demand is placed on obligation. We place it on magnanimity. We appeal only to wanting to, and not to obligation. Demands based on honor and obligation crumble. But if we have matured based on generosity and great ideals, then we remain faithful. We have to see our mission and make demands, but demands on magnanimity.

Question for reflection

To what degree do I do the ordinary things extraordinarily well?

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