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“I am meek and humble of heart” (Matt 11:30).

### **Sacred Heart of Jesus**

*1 John 4:7-16; Matt 11:25-30*

To call someone “meek” might not be taken as a compliment by the American standard that prizes self-assurance, but Jesus uses the term to describe himself and those who will inherit the earth. Humility relates etymologically to the earth and those who are down to earth. As a poignant observer of human society, Jesus saw that the last would be first and the first last in God’s Kingdom. He must have seen enough arrogance in high places and unpretentious innocence among peasants and the poor to arrive at this conclusion.

It was more than just a preference, because real humility actually works better in human relationships than pride. It follows the golden rule and the basic truth that we reap what we sow. People who defer and show respect get better service than those who push their way to the head of the line. Today’s commemoration of the Sacred Heart takes this virtue to its highest expression by attributing meekness to Jesus in both his humanity and his divinity.

This is why the wise and learned had difficulty relating to God and little ones caught on so easily. God remains hidden to human pride and is transparent to the humble. Ordinary people recognized God in Jesus while the scribes and Pharisees couldn’t get past their own erudition and moral superiority to see the obvious holiness in this blue collar carpenter from the hill country of Galilee.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart, like Marian devotion, is another example of the popular spirituality so prized by Pope Francis. Theological learning and Bible scholarship are essential to evangelization, but in matters of the heart nothing suffices in the clutch like the blessings anxious parents trace on their children's foreheads at bedtime, the murmur of voices in the night praying the rosary, candles lit for a sick loved one or the small altars and images that grace humble homes around the world.

Even the wise and learned need to come down from their high stations when they pray. Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner used to sit behind the lectern saying the rosary while his translated talks were delivered in English to university faculties. Pope Francis writes his concerns on scraps of paper he places under a small statue of St. Joseph when he goes to bed.

When day is done and shadows fall, we become as children again in our need for reassurance. Jesus blesses us and invites us to lay our burdens down and join him in the rest reserved for the meek and humble of heart.

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