



This week Jesus teaches us an infallible principle of the spiritual life: "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled and he who humbles himself shall be exalted" (Lk 14:1,7-14). This truth was not invented by Jesus. Every human being created in the image of God is designed to achieve greatness and eternal bliss precisely by acknowledging God and all His works with a humble, loving, reverence. In the First Reading for today's Mass (Sir 3:17-18,20,28-29) composed about 200 years before Christ, we find a similar wise exhortation: "My son, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts. Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God."

Sounds simple right? —Humble yourself and God will exalt you! Unfortunately, we, poor sons of Adam, do not easily gravitate to this most beautiful of virtues. Furthermore, there are many misunderstandings about what authentic humility really is and at the same time there are many counterfeits which under the guise of humility actually oppose it! There are

a million ways humility can find expression and there are many things we can do to foster its growth in our souls, yet ultimately, only the hand of God can form a truly humble heart—it is a gift of grace. How do we obtain the gift? How can we dispose ourselves to receive this sublime virtue which God greatly desires to impart to us? One of the countless helps the Church offers us is the Holy Rosary. A consistently well-prayed Rosary can do wonders for the healing of a haughty heart!

John Paul II masterfully explains the deepest meaning of the Rosary, how to pray it well, and how it can serve as an effective spiritual weapon against the evils of society and the evils which obstruct our personal growth in holiness. Since I cannot do this rich document justice in half a page, I must encourage you to do some homework. The document can be found here: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2ROSAR.HTM>. Please print it out, highlight important insights, read it carefully. I liken the praying of the Rosary to playing a musical instrument. It takes time and effort to learn the discipline, but in the end, it opens up new horizons by enabling a deeper participation in the beautiful art of music. In the referenced document, John Paul writes, "What is needed is a Christian life distinguished above all in the *art of prayer*" (para. 5). We, as Christians, are called to be distinguished artists in the realm of prayer. In the end, this is the only way to enable the supreme Artist to take our haughty hearts in His mighty and creative hand and make something very beautiful: a truly humble soul.

I leave you with the last two paragraphs of Pope John Paul II's inspiring document:

I look to all of you, brothers and sisters of every state of life, to you, Christian families, to you, the sick and elderly, and to you, young people: *confidently take up the Rosary once again*. Rediscover the Rosary in the light of Scripture, in harmony with the Liturgy, and in the context of your daily lives.

May this appeal of mine not go unheard! At the start of the twenty-fifth year of my Pontificate, I entrust this Apostolic Letter to the loving hands of the Virgin Mary, *prostrating myself in spirit before her image in the splendid Shrine built for her by Blessed Bartolo Longo*, the apostle of the Rosary. I willingly make my own the touching words with which he concluded his well-known *Supplication to the Queen of the Holy Rosary*: "O Blessed Rosary of Mary, sweet chain which unites us to God, bond of love which unites us to the angels, tower of salvation against the assaults of Hell, safe port in our universal shipwreck, we will never abandon you. You will be our comfort in the hour of death: yours our final kiss as life ebbs away. And the last word from our lips will be your sweet name, O Queen of the Rosary of Pompei, O dearest Mother, O Refuge of Sinners, O Sovereign Consoler of the Afflicted. May you be everywhere blessed, today and always, on earth and in heaven".

What are we waiting for? Today is the day to heed our Holy Father's words: "*confidently take up the Rosary*" and become distinguished in the "art of prayer" – humble yourself, and God will exalt you!

Your Servant in Christ,
Fr. Terry Staples





Blessed John Francis Burté and Companions

Feast Day September 2

Blessed John Francis Burté was born in Rambervillers, Lorraine (northeastern France), and joined the Franciscans at the age of sixteen. Known for his piety, zeal, and leadership, he became superior of the large Conventual friary in Paris. The revolutionary government, in its drive to secularize the nation, enacted the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1791 which required all priests and religious to swear an oath of allegiance to the French government. This demand was widely recognized as amounting to a denial of the Catholic faith and subordination of the Church to secular control. During the Revolution, Burté encouraged his fellow priests to uphold their religious role and not acquiesce to the government's demands. Amid this turmoil, the Church and its ministers became direct targets for their steadfast faith and refusal to subordinate religious conviction to the secular authority of the revolutionary state. Among those who suffered most grievously were Blessed John Francis Burté and his companions, a group of priests and religious who gave their lives rather than compromise the integrity of their faith. When it became known that Burté allowed priests to conduct religious duties without swearing the oath, he was denounced and swiftly arrested by revolutionary authorities. He was not alone in his fate. Apollinaris of Posat, a Swiss-born Capuchin and gifted preacher preparing for missionary work in the East, was also imprisoned for his refusal. Severin Girault, a member of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis, was likewise seized after years of service as a chaplain and spiritual director. Each of these men, joined by bishops, priests, and religious from diverse backgrounds were rounded up and imprisoned in the convent of the Carmelites in Paris.

The Carmelite Massacre of September 1792 was one of many acts of violence against clergy during the Reign of Terror, yet it stands out for the dignity and unity of the martyrs. The massacre claimed the lives of 182 priests and religious at the Carmelite monastery, and many more died in subsequent purges. John Francis Burté, Apollinaris of Posat, Severin Girault, and their companions have since been recognized as martyrs by the Catholic Church, beatified for their heroic virtue and the ultimate testimony of their deaths.

Reflection: The stories of Blessed John Francis Burté and his companions inspire modern believers to defend their faith under threat by offering living examples of courage, conviction, and unwavering allegiance to principles even when facing intimidation, ridicule, or violence. Their willingness to suffer and even die rather than compromise core beliefs serves as a model of integrity and resilience for Christians navigating contemporary challenges. When believers today encounter situations where their convictions are questioned or threatened, the witness of the martyrs encourages them to proclaim their faith boldly; prioritize spiritual integrity over acceptance; trust God amid uncertainty; and to act courageously despite fear. Their legacies teach that the cost of discipleship may involve suffering but faithfulness transforms such trials into powerful testimonies; encouraging believers to stand firm, advocate for truth with love, and recognize that the struggle for faithfulness spans every generation. The courage of the martyrs assures modern Christians that, while the context may change, the call to steadfast witness remains as vital and transformative as ever.