

Embracing Our Neediness

What does the helpless infant-humannity of Jesus teach us about our own humanity? The Incarnation of Christ unveils the reality that weakness and need are part of what it means to be fully human. All of us have God-given limits that expose our need to receive from others. From another angle, our limits are gifts (sacraments) that truly open us up to God, others, and the world around us. When we open up the gift of limitations, we receive a deeper faith and trust in God, and a greater love for and acceptance of others.

When we have eyes to see, limitations in life help us discover life in the limitations. We are freed from our independence and individualism to live life together with others. We can then truly discover and celebrate the unique ways God has wired us (and we realize where we need the gifts and kindness of others). In this “ecology of giftedness” we live in a beautiful exchange of sharing our gifts and talents while also freely receiving the gifts and talents of others. In this way, we begin to experience our limits as gracious gifts even as we experience our gifts as gracious blessings.

The heart of true spirituality (and true humanity) is founded upon the recognition and acceptance of our creatureliness and finitude. The sacred is revealed to us in the experience of weakness and need, in our lack of knowledge, and in our awareness of insufficiency.

Awareness, acknowledgment, and acceptance of our own weaknesses, needs, and limits creates a context where compassion emerges for the limitations and weaknesses of others. This self-knowledge becomes the rich soil in which empathy, compassion, and love for others can grow.

Compassion is all about the recognition that others' weaknesses render them not different from but very much like ourselves. Reflecting on the humanity of Jesus allows us to see that each one of us is created with limited ways and abilities to know the world, so all of us are truly able to enjoy needing God and each other.



For Reflection:

- What might be some reasons that we have such a hard time wrapping our minds around the full humanity of Jesus?
- What are some ways that being weak and needy can become a struggle for you? Why does ignorance frequently seem like a great difficulty or even a source of shame? How might the full humanity of Jesus help you to see those things in a different light?
- Can you remember a time when you experienced the freedom of saying, “I don’t know. Teach me”?