



EXCERPT



Learning Humility *A Year of Searching for a Vanishing Virtue*

December 6, 2022 | \$25, 192 pages, hardcover | 978-1-5140-0212-4

In a society dominated by raging narcissism, the virtue of humility is vanishing. Yet Richard Foster insists that humility is central to spiritual formation. Engaging with diverse sources including Native American culture, Julian of Norwich, and Scripture, Foster shares profound insight into what humility can look like in our contemporary culture.

Using the Lakota Calendar as a Guide

Tonight I have been meditating on New Year's resolutions, wondering if I need to undertake any for this next year. Actually, I dislike these attempts at self-improvement. For the most part they are simply humanly initiated efforts that usually last about two and a half weeks. Still, while I was holding the idea before myself I sensed a nudge . . . perhaps a divine nudge. It came to me in two words: "learn humility."

Hmm. I wonder, "Should I give this next year to see what I can learn about humility by study and by experience?" Both the Bible and the Devotional Masters give high priority to this virtue.

Yet it is a virtue that is not thought much of today. Nowadays people give scant attention to the subject of humility, and frankly its street value is nil in modern society.

So, what would happen if I were to write a book about humility using both analysis and lived experience?

Perhaps I could follow the calendar year and then maybe I can keep a journal record of my observations and musings. I'm not particularly good at journal writing . . . I probably have a dozen half-written journals sitting over there on my bookshelves. Still, I'd like to see how things develop here.

❖ ❖ ❖

❖ – New Year's Day – The Lakota Calendar

Thoughts about writing on the subject of humility keep pressing in on me. If I am going to use the calendar year as the organizing principle for this book, I think I would prefer to use one of the Native American calendars rather than using the Latin names for the months . . . January, February, etc. Their intentional rootedness in the natural world is a welcome departure from the scattered, patchwork nature of today's social rhythms.

All of the Native American calendars have their merits; however, I like the Lakota Moon Calendar best, especially its close connection to the earth. These are the northern plains people, and, while a part of my personal background is Ojibwa, I find the Lakota calendar most attractive to me. Perhaps learning more about the culture that gave rise to it will yield some interesting insights next to a contemporary culture that presumes it can engineer human society to achieve more and better. I'll see how this contrast works out.

—Adapted from "A Beginning Word"



Tara Burns, print and online publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or tburns@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



ivpress.com/media



Q & A



Learning Humility *A Year of Searching for a Vanishing Virtue*

December 6, 2022 | \$25, 192 pages, hardcover | 978-1-5140-0212-4

Richard J. Foster is the founder of Renovaré. He is the author of several books, including *Streams of Living Water*, *Prayer*, *Freedom of Simplicity*, *Sanctuary of the Soul*, and *Celebration of Discipline*, which has sold over two million copies worldwide; he is coauthor (with Gayle Beebe) of *Longing for God*.

The Most Important Virtue of Our Time

In your view, what is the most important virtue of our time?

Richard Foster: Humility is THE virtue desperately needed in our day of raging narcissism. It is the one thing that can conquer our all-consuming pride and provide a solid foundation for developing a genuinely good life.

What motivated you to write this book?

Richard: As I observed modern culture, I found the virtue of humility vanishing. I found this reality strange as it has been a virtue so highly valued and sought after all through the Christian centuries. So I set out to discover the reasons for the contemporary neglect and even disdain of such a central virtue.

What is the main idea you wish to share through this latest writing?

Richard: The central thesis of this book is that humility is a distinctively Christian virtue inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus. Before the coming of Christ other traditions in virtue ethics have ignored this virtue. After the Christ event, Christian thinkers have seen humility as absolutely essential to a moral life. All other virtues flow from the foundation of a humble life.

What are five main things you hope readers will take away from your book?

Richard: I hope readers take away the following five ideas:

1. That humility has been a prized virtue all through Christian history.
2. That we can actually make progress in humility by cooperating with the grace of God.
3. That humility makes us more human, more genuinely accessible to other people.
4. That humility allows us to care more fully for the needs of others.
5. That humility is a virtue immensely worth seeking hard after.



Tara Burns, print and online publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or tburns@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



ivpress.com/media