Humility in Seeking and Finding Peace

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CAN THE ATTITUDE or habit of humility in leadership and life contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding? In an attempt to answer the question I use insights from the following: the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle, the rhetorical masterpiece of Abigail in Hebrew Scripture, and relevant aphorisms of Raimon Panikkar, an intercultural philosopher and theologian.[1] This chapter argues for an understanding of humility that is helpful especially for communities in which people have felt humiliated by their poverty or have been dehumanized by violence.

Jewish Christianity introduced a challenging innovation in the Western classical tradition in making humility a fundamental virtue for leadership and day-to-day life.[2] Christian humility is valued as an imitative attitude in which Jesus of Nazareth is the model of followers and believers. Such an attitude entails greater consideration of the well-being of others, and thus includes attention to their experience of peace and justice in society.

In contrast, classical Greek and Roman cultures ignored or despised humility (*tapeinos [Gk]*, *humilitas* [Lat]), for it generally meant a shameful lowering of oneself before those who were one's peers or subordinates in terms of rank and status.[3] For example, in his

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2 See John Dickson, locations 1044–62.

3 Ibid., location 844.

Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle describes *megalopsychia* (pride, or proper pride) as "a sort of crown of the virtues."[4] It has been translated also as "magnanimity."[5] As a virtue, megalopsychia is the mean between two vices: *chaunotes* (vanity) and *mikropsychia* (small-mindedness or undue humility). The two vices are harmful unequally. Aristotle says, "undue humility (*mikropsychia*) is more opposed to pride (*megalopsychia*) than vanity (*chaunotes*) is; for it is both commoner and worse."[6]

Humility in the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle

In Aristotle's culture and time, humility as a habit could never be good among noble men. John Dickson, however, mentions Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which suggests that one thing that can be good about people who humble themselves is the nonthreatening quality they acquire which can calm those who are angry at them.[7] One reads in the *Rhetoric*:

> People become angry at those who belittle [them]… [They are calm] toward those who admit and repent [having belittled someone]; for regarding [the other's] distress as just retribution, they cease from their anger at those who have provoked it…We cease our wrath toward those who confess themselves justly punished…
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> [People are also calm] toward those who humble themselves toward them and do not contradict them; for they seem to admit being inferiors, and inferiors are afraid, and no one who is afraid belittles…
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> And [they are calm] toward those begging a favor and entreating them [not to be angry]; for they are humbler. (*Rhetoric*, 2.3.3–8)[8]

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4 *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by David Ross, 69.
5 Mary Keys, 219.
6 *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, 71.
7 Dickson, location 833.
8 *Aristotle on Rhetoric*, 131.

For Aristotle, although humility is not a virtue, an act of humbling oneself can be useful for calming or pacifying an angry person, for it is difficult to communicate and reason with anybody who is in the grip of anger. As a Filipino proverb puts it: *Ang taong nagagalit walang kilalang matuwid* (An angry person knows no reason).[9]

Returning to the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle suggests that an act of humbling oneself before an angry person pacifies because the humble person admits his inferiority and concomitantly admits the superiority of the angry one. Furthermore, when the angry one regards the other's shameful lowering as just punishment already, his pain of anger gets relief, and pleasure follows; specifically, the pleasure of witnessing the humiliation of the person at whom the anger was directed. Thus, even though it is not a virtue, humility can bring initial relief to a tense situation and begin a process of conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution is one of the reasons for the importance Aristotle gave to the study of rhetoric. For him, rhetoric is the art and practice of persuasion especially in public speech. He hints that the poor use, or the improper use, of rhetoric to defend and promote persons, practices, or ideas is more shameful than the improper use of coercion or violence. He says: "It would be strange if an inability to defend oneself by means of the body is shameful, while there is no shame in an inability to use speech; the latter is more characteristic of humans than is the use of the body" (1.1.12).[10]

In the art of persuasion, Aristotle identifies three means (1.2.2–6): (1) *ethos* (character) of the speaker, (2) *pathos* (emotion) of the listener(s), and (3) *logos* (argument, reason).[11] His sixteen chapters

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[9] Damiana Eugenio, 13.

[10] *Aristotle on Rhetoric*, 35.

[11] Ibid., 37–39. A Filipino proverb affirms the importance of sensitivity to one's listeners: *Bagay-bagay ang pagkausap sa tao mong kinakaharap* (Adjust your manner of speaking to the person you are facing). See Eugenio, 520. Another Filipino proverb hints at the greater importance many Filipinos give to the character of a proponent over the quality of the reasons he or she propounds especially if the proponent is an authority figure: *Sa pagtingin at alang-alang, napapawi ang katuwiran* (Because of respect and deference, reason is set aside). See Eugenio, 458. The second proverb hints at a weakness of the traditional community or society in which truth is based usually on trust in the authority of formal leaders. For true believers in modern democracy, in contrast, truth especially in the realm of politics is based on what remains standing after a participatory process of vigorous debate.

(2.2–17) on different emotions and "the emotional predispositions of several types of character" constitute "the first systematic account of emotional psychology ever provided."[12] Aristotle recognizes that "the psychological dynamics of *pathos* may 'warp' an audience of judges, forcing important and relevant *doxa* (opinions), and even 'facts' that are acknowledged to be true, completely out of the process of deliberation."[13]

Every major means of persuasion (*ethos, pathos*, *logos*) should be given due consideration, otherwise the process of persuasion likely will fail.[14] Thus, in the case of an angry audience or one in which the target listeners are in the tight grip of fury, their minds are likely to be closed even to solid or superior reasons offered to them, and thus the priority is to calm them through the presentation of a humble character on the part of the speaker.

Because the *ethos* of the speaker (and the listener) is a major consideration, and rhetoric is superior to coercion for conflict resolution among free citizens, Aristotle considers rhetoric an offshoot of ethics and politics (1.2.7).[15] Especially when the listeners are average or inferior citizens or belong to the majority, who in Aristotle's view are ruled more often by emotion rather than reason, the right practice of rhetoric by superior citizens and leaders can serve as "an antidote to unconsidered *pathos*-driven judgment, and would promote *katharsis* of more reasonable, 'ethical' moods more suitable to prudent choice and action."[16]

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[12] Jeffrey Walker, location 1187.

[13] Ibid., 1292.

[14] In Walker, location 1356: the persuasive argument is the "simultaneous embodiment of a heterogeneous set of *pisteis* (assurances), combining the 'assurances' of *logos* (as apodictic propositional reasoning) with those of *pathos* and *ethos*, that makes it a powerful 'encouragement' to belief and action." Using references to *pathos* and *katharsis* (expression/purification/healing) in other works of Aristotle, Walker argues that Aristotle implies rather unintentionally that rhetoric is "an art of shaping and guiding an audience's *pathe* (emotions) toward a *katharsis* of particular moods/intentionalities in practical judgments/actions" (location 1361).

[15] *Aristotle on Rhetoric*. In the interpretation of Alan Gross, however, rhetoric is "a productive art, and only a productive art," and "in Aristotle's scheme of things, a narrowly circumscribed set of skills" in which an ethical purpose is preferable but not necessary. See Gross, locations 381–84.

[16] Walker, location 1477.

Rhetorical Masterpiece of Abigail in 1 Samuel

At this point, let us look at a biblical portrayal of humility in 1 Samuel chapter 25, the story of David, Abigail, and Nabal which contains "a rhetorical masterpiece."[17] In light of the story, we shall offer comments on the sufficiency of Aristotle's view on the particular usefulness of humility in a rhetorical process that aims at conflict resolution.

For the narrative context, what happened previous to the story? In 1 Samuel chapter 24, David spared the life of King Saul, who was hunting David down to kill him. David had a chance to attack and kill Saul, while the latter was relieving himself inside a cave, but David continued to recognize Saul as the Lord's anointed, and he declared it better for the Lord to avenge the wrongs Saul had done to him (24:9–15).

In chapter 25, the prophet Samuel dies and is buried. David hides from Saul in a part of the Judean desert where there lived a very wealthy Calebite identified as Nabal, a name that in Hebrew means fool. The Calebites constituted an important tribe that was closely associated with the tribe of Judah.[18] The story describes Nabal as surly and mean in his dealings, while Abigail, his wife, is intelligent and beautiful. It is sheep-shearing time, which is a time of festival, when the wealthy are expected to share their bounty with the needy. David needs provisions and sends ten young men to Nabal with this courteous request:

> Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours! Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not ill-treat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable towards my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them. (25:6–8)[19]

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[17] Jon Levenson, 19.

[18] Peter Ackroyd, 195.

[19] All biblical quotations in this article are taken from the New International Version (NIV), 1984.

Without verifying the information with his servants, Nabal responded as follows: "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?" (25:10–11). Nabal insults David by implying that David is simply a disloyal servant running away or hiding from his master, Saul. When Nabal's response reaches David, he orders 400 of his men to put on their swords and to proceed with him to attack Nabal's camp and kill all the male members of his household (25:12–13, 21–22).

Before we continue with the story, let me mention that, in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle describes the three species of belittling that incites anger. One of them is *hubris*: pride that takes pleasure in insulting others (*Rhetoric*, 2.2.5).[20] One reads: "The cause of pleasure to those who give insult is that they think they themselves become more superior by ill-treating others. That is why the young and the rich are given to insults; for by insulting they think they are superior" (2.2.6).[21] One can say that Nabal's response to David's men is an example of the hubris of the rich.

To continue with the biblical story, a servant senses the dangerous situation of the household, and takes initiative to report to Abigail Nabal's insulting response to David's courteous and reasonable request (1 Sam 25:14–17). The servant warns her of impending disaster especially with the wickedness and stubbornness of her husband.

Abigail acts quickly and decisively (25:18–20). She puts together gifts of bread, wine, dressed sheep, grain, raisins, and figs, and loads them on donkeys to be sent ahead. Then she herself proceeds to meet David and his army, she on her donkey and they on their horses of war. Abigail meets David face to face, and humbles herself (25:23–24). She falls at his feet with her face to the ground, one might say with her face in contact with humus, the fertile soil from which the Lord God formed the human (Genesis 2:7).

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[20] *Aristotle on Rhetoric*, 125–26.

[21] Ibid.,126.

Abigail says to David: “My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent” (1 Sam 25:24–25).

Abigail assumes responsibility for David’s hurt. She mentions her absence when his messengers came, and she admits the folly of her husband. Objectively, we would say, she is blameless. Yet she offers to become the sole object of blame in order to save lives in her household, including the life of her blameworthy husband. She continues:

> Now since the Lord has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal. And let this gift,[22] which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you. Please forgive your servant’s offence, for the Lord will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the Lord’s battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live. (25:26–28)

Abigail invokes the sacred name of a third party to the conflict, Yhwh, someone dear to David and a mystery that transcends the two parties in trouble, David and his army on one side, and Nabal and his household on the other. Through her decisive and humble actions and words, Abigail aims for conflict resolution that honors God in both parties. Implicitly, she teaches David to see his personal hurt in the much larger context of God’s will and way. She attempts to save him from his rash decision to avenge himself through bloodshed.

Abigail wisely avoids any suggestion that David could be bribed to change his mind. She calls a “blessing” what comprises the provisions she brought for his men.[23] Thus, she also affirms his original nobility

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[22] The NIV chose “gift” as translation of *berakah* (Hebrew): blessing.

[23] “Abigail plays with words, like David does, euphemistically renaming the food she has brought as a ‘blessing’ and offering it, not directly to David but ‘unto the young men’ (1 Sam 25:27).” See Francesca Murphy, 242.

in which his request for provisions was primarily for his men and not for himself. She knows the urgency to seek the goodness in him and to evoke it. She evokes a goodness that got buried under his anger. She asks forgiveness for her offence, presumably her absence when his messengers came. Her rhetorical masterpiece continues and concludes:

> Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. When the Lord has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the Lord has brought my master success, remember your servant. (25:29–31)

Abigail disarms David with a combination of humility, faith, and intelligence. An example of her cunning is her allusion to the story of his incredible victory over Goliath by comparing David's enemies to stones that God will hurl away from the pocket of a sling. In response to Abigail, David praises the Lord for sending her to meet him, and he blesses her for her good judgment in dissuading him from vengeance and bloodshed (25:32–33). David accepts the blessing and the offerings of peace she brought, and he lets her go home in peace (25:35). Ten days later, the Lord strikes Nabal dead. After David hears of it, he sends messengers to ask Abigail to be his wife, and she humbly accepts (25:39–42).

Later, a party of Amalekites will raid David's camp, while he and his men are away, and Abigail and Ahinoam, another wife of David, will be among those captured and carried off (1 Sam 30:1–5). David and his men will eventually rescue them (30:17–20). Abigail agreed to become the wife of David before he was king and during a dangerous and difficult period of his life. In hindsight, the acquisition of the widow and household of a wealthy Calebite by David, a non-Calebite,

would help him later "to assume kingship at the capital of the Calebite patrimony, Hebron,"[24] and to lay claim to political authority in Judah (2 Samuel 2:2–4).

In Jewish tradition, Abigail, whose name means "my father's joy," is counted among the seven biblical women who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to prophesy and preach to Israel.[25] Abigail rode a donkey and dared to meet her household's enemies in order to seek peace. Her humble boldness evokes for us the image of another joy of the Father a thousand years later. On the last week of his life, the Father's beloved rode on "a young donkey" (John 12:14) to enter Jerusalem, the City of Shalom, to meet its hostile leaders face-to-face.

"Only the rhetorical genius of Abigail saves him (David) from bloodying his hands."[26] She lowered herself in order to bring down his murderous rage and evoke goodness within him. Francesca Murphy says: "This proverbial woman has reminded David that he *can* show mercy, because his strength is not his own, but the Lord's. The law of recompense of evil for evil, good for good, is not abrogated, but left in the hands of God…What he must rise to is the magnanimity and generosity expected of a king in a heroic culture."[27]

Another commentator mentions "David's magnanimity"[28] evoked by Abigail, who admitted her inferiority. I think that commentators who mention magnanimity only in connection with David miss a nobler example of magnanimity, namely, Abigail's magnanimous humility, which we can consider a corrective to David's *egoliath (ego* inflation) and a biblical alternative to Aristotle's *megalopsychia.*

At the same time, we should keep in mind that, in Aristotle's culture and with his aristocratic sensibility, only a few men, or only

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[24] Levenson, 25.

[25] Ibid., 20. The six others are Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Huldah, and Esther.

[26] Ibid., 23. "The episode of Nabal is the very first revelation of evil in David's character. He can kill (for a grudge). This time he stops short…Just as Abigail feared, David's shedding of innocent blood was to be his downfall…[at] the pivotal episode of Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Sam 11:1–12:25)." See Levenson, 23.

[27] Murphy, 242.

[28] Ackroyd, 197.

educated and financially independent men, and no woman, could practice and achieve the virtue of *megalopsychia*. If truly noble men can never develop the habit of humility, does that mean that the superior person who humbles himself in order initially to calm down an angry opponent is putting on pseudo-humility, an artificial or hollow humility in rhetoric? May the person of superior rationality adopt humility as a rhetorical tactic to disarm angry people, especially inferior people in the fist of fury, in order eventually to conquer them or to impose one's superior assessment, preference, idea, or practice on them?

Imagine an intelligent and artificially humble Abigail in her meeting with angry David. "Is she a schemer?"[29] What if she exercises her superior rhetorical skill to disarm him, and then tells him that she is fleeing from her foolish husband, but that she can show David how to get rid of him and take possession of her and the whole household with minimal loss of life, only the life of her blameworthy husband? David can get his revenge and acquire an intelligent and beautiful wife, much property, and a whole retinue of male and female servants. Will David resist such an offer from attractive Abigail? A cynical interpreter can say that Abigail got rid of her husband, perhaps by poisoning him, with the tacit approval of David.

Such an imaginative yet plausible storyline raises for us another question: Is it acceptable to use rhetoric, including religious rhetoric, as a means of imposing one's ideas or values on others if it could minimize bloodshed, resolve a conflict, or achieve peace?

Raimon Panikkar's Aphorisms on Peace

At this point, let me bring in the perspective of the interreligious and intercultural philosopher and theologian, Raimon Pannikar (1918–2010). In his view, one of the contemporary obstacles to peace on earth is our "technocratic civilization" in which "armed reason" for covert conquest is the *logos* that leaders use in addressing

[29] Ibid., 195.

conflicts among nations, communities, and cultures.[30] The arming of reason is not new. Panikkar points out that the English verb "to convince" is rooted in the Latin *vincere, victus*, meaning to overcome, to conquer. It suggests that, in general, the attempt to convince others who strongly disagree with us is the attempt to become victorious over them.

In one of his sutras, *or* pithy aphorisms about peace on earth, Panikkar states: "Victory never leads to peace." He explains: "Victory is always victory over people, and people are never absolutely evil…The conquered cannot enjoy the peace of the conquerors. Peace is not the outcome of any dialectical process."[31] Panikkar quotes from the *Dhammapada*, a collection of sayings of the Buddha: "Conquering, we engender hatred; conquered, we suffer. With serenity and gladness we live if victory and defeat are overcome" (*Dhammapada* XV, 5).[32] For Panikkar, real reconciliation and peace require that there be no victors, no vanquished, and no scapegoats.[33]

Panikkar's aphorism on victory reminds me of the first horseman of Revelation: "He rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest" (Revelation 6:2). He was followed by the horseman who "was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other" (6:4). I am also reminded of the Apostle Paul's memorable line: "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). Indeed believers in Christ are more than conquerors, for they are sinners who are justified in his Spirit of love which moves them to offer their bodies as living sacrifices.

Returning to Panikkar, he says that peace is not the outcome of any dialectical process, or a process of discussion or debate through logical arguments and counter-arguments. But can peace be the outcome of a rhetorical process, especially a process whose structure comprises the three means of persuasion in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*? Can this formula be sufficient: *ethos* + *pathos* + *logos* = *eirene*? Or

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[30] Raimon Panikkar, *Cultural Disarmament*, 85–88.
[31] Ibid., 18–19.
[32] Ibid,, v.
[33] Ibid., 93–99.

can *ethos* that is responsive to *pathos* and which offers proper *logos* produce peace? Can this also be Abigail's formula for resolving conflict?

If we continue with Panikkar, I believe he would find such a formula sorely deficient owing to a missing key element, for one of his aphorisms says: "Peace pertains essentially to the order of *mythos*, not to that of *logos*." He continues: "Peace is not simply a concept. Peace is the eminent myth of our days."[34] It is a myth whose truth entails silence and imagination that enable reason to shine and burn sufficiently.

Myth and Peace

Panikkar explains myth as follows: "A myth is something in which we believe in such a way as to take it for granted. A myth is not incomprehensible or irrational…It is that on which intelligibility is founded in any given situation."[35] In a posthumous edition of his works, he says:

> The *mythos* is like a picture frame in which we place everything that we become conscious of, thanks to our *logos*. What we believe in, without feeling the need to ask ourselves why this is so, is what constitutes the *mythos* on which we rely…The *logos* is light, but it is the obscurity of the *mythos* that allows the rays of light to shine.[36]

For Panikkar, where *logos* burns brightly, *mythos* does not die. He says: "We cannot eliminate myth. What we are doing is adopting another myth that seems to us more adequate for an understanding of the new situation. Hence the senselessness of absolutism. We are all dependent on the myth that envelops us, in which we obtain a certain understanding of our place in the world."[37]

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[34] Ibid., 21.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Panikkar, *Mysticism, Fullness of Life*, locations 3690–3703.

[37] Panikkar, *Cultural Disarmament*, 36.We are also dependent on other cultures. One reads in the same work of Panikkar, 35: "No one is fully aware of his or her own myth. In order to recognize our own myth, we need the contribution of other cultures."

Owing to our primal dependence on myth in thinking of our place and purpose in the world, it has been a serious mistake of many thinkers throughout history to conclude that rationality is the supreme characteristic of humankind. In the case of the well-known Aristotelian assertion that "man is a rational animal," Panikkar comments: "Aristotle's original phrase says rather that 'Man, among the animals, is the one in whom language goes through' (*Politics*, I, 2 [1253a9]). *Logos* passes by way of Man, and Man is not its sovereign."[38]

Unfortunately, modern men have trivialized myth and treated reason as their possession and weapon for accumulating possessions and conquering others. For Panikkar, "if one conceives of Man as an animal (a being 'driven' by an *anima*), Man is the mystic animal."[39] Thinking and speaking are necessary activities for the mystic animal, but they are neither sufficient nor supreme, in order to enable humankind to experience Being or to live Life in its fullness, rather than just to do more or to have more things.

Going back to the biblical story of Abigail in the light of Panikkar's aphorisms on peace, one appreciates better Abigail's careful invocation of a shared myth: Yhwh, who has chosen David to exercise leadership, is the God who will demand an accounting from every human who kills another (for the human is made in the image of God).

For Panikkar, the acknowledgment of a shared myth (transcendency) is the requisite third party in the process of conflict resolution, reconciliation, and peace.[40] By acknowledging transcendency within both parties in conflict and beyond them, mutual forgiveness becomes possible. Especially wherever there are festering or repressed torments over age-old injustices and massacres, only forgiveness can heal and liberate. Nothing else can do so, neither immense monetary compensation nor a monstrous vengeance.

Conflicting parties that engage in dialogue today can sense and acknowledge the presence of a reconciling transcendency in their common humanity and in their common dwelling-place, the earth;

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[38] Ibid. 88.
[39] Panikkar, *Mysticism*, location 223.
[40] Panikkar, *Cultural Disarmament*, 99–100.

although this transcendency is neither humankind nor earth itself. This transcendency is present also in some deep desires that are often repressed, namely, desires to be forgiven and to forgive. Such transcendency is the deep source of the will to reconcile.

Especially in settings of official dialogue or intentional dialogue between parties in recurring conflicts over politics, economics, or culture, Panikkar proposes: "[P]erhaps before sitting down to the tables, we ought to 'pray'—invoke something higher, which unites us—thereby acknowledging some transcendency which precisely makes us all equally worthy, and which will enable us to find the right language for each case [of divergence]."[41]

Owing to the necessity of seeking and finding a shared myth (transcendency), the authentic Abigail formula for conflict resolution and peace can be: *ethos* + *pathos* + *mythos* +*logos* = *eirene*. Or *ethos* that is responsive to *pathos* and seeks shared *mythos* and *logos* together open the way to *eirene*.This brings us to a question for further study and reflection with the help of Panikkar's aphorisms: Can the *ethos* of magnanimous humility like that of Abigail originate from and find sustenance in the *mythos* of universal *charis*, the inner radiance or intrinsic harmony of the *macrocosmos* in which every human is a *microcosmos*?

Magnanimous Humility

Here is a fine description of magnanimous humility, or in the words of Mark Strom, a Pauline researcher and a leadership mentor, "humility with nobility," and I have slightly expanded his description:

> To be humble is to recognize that we are both small and big. Small in the face of a big world offering a large life. Big in the face of the petty fears and self-doubt that may rob us of the joy of life. Small as those who have much to learn. Big as those who can learn [and share with others]

[41] Ibid., 102.

> far more than we can imagine. Small as a child helpless in his mother's arms. Big as a child who brings a father to his knees.[42]

Leaders in cultures and religions who want to seek and find peace on earth face the challenge of discovering and invoking shared myths that can evoke and sustain magnanimous humility, like the lovely and lofty lowliness of Abigail, among persons, communities, nations, and cultures. We need shared myths that show us, and enable us to feel and understand that men and women on earth are both fittingly small and fittingly big no matter who they are. We are rightly *micro* and rightly *macro*, as each one of us, although infinitesimally small in our expanding universe, is a real reflection or representation of it all.

Within poor communities in which people have felt humiliated by long-term or intergenerational poverty or have been dehumanized by violent crime, war, or periodic violence with deep economic, political, or cultural roots, how can believers promote magnanimous humility? In my opinion, we have to help people feel, understand, and express their dignity as sons and daughters of God[43] through a combination of some or all of the following: sustained conversations and interactions, mutual storytelling, participatory problem solving, symbolic actions, and sustainable practices.

Wherever people feel too small, or see only their smallness, the promotion of magnanimous humility will have to focus on helping them to discover their bigness, their giftedness and gifts, and to develop and share their gifts generously and especially with others in greater need in their families and communities. Magnanimous humility is not the mock humility that involves the cowardice, laziness, or pettiness of hiding, or refusing to see and share one's gift(s), to the detriment of someone in greater need. "Humility with nobility" is vital

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[42] Mark Strom, 13.

[43] These verses, some of which I have adapted from a haiku of Basho, constitute a brief summary of the story of the baptized and the source for magnanimous humility in their lives: Silence of ancient river/ plunge of pauper/ sound of water/ voice of heaven/ rise and reign of son and daughter.

encouragement "to live beyond (my) pettiness."[44] Whether one feels too small or too big, the following is helpful in order to learn the humility that escapes pettiness: "Find people who will tell us the truth—mentors who will challenge us to live humbly and nobly…[and] face our mistakes."[45]

The magnanimous humility of Abigail and Jesus clearly was not cowardly but entailed sufficient awareness of putting oneself at risk for the sake of others. It is a relational virtue not only because the truly humble person is other-oriented and interdependent, but also because it is related to other virtues like courage, compassion, integrity, and wisdom. These virtues, in turn, need to be related to humility. For example, "courage without humility is likely to be foolhardy" or rash.[46] Beautiful boldness was the courage with humility of Abigail.

Conclusion

We end with a reiteration of three key points: (1) For Aristotle, humility is not a virtue for noble men, but in a rhetorical process in which listeners are in the *pathos* of wrath, it is better for a speaker to present an *ethos* of humility in order to calm them down and open their minds for the entry and power of *logos*. (2) In the light of Raimon Panikkar's aphorisms on peace, the Abigail story in Hebrew Scripture offers and portrays a superior formula in which an *ethos* of magnanimous humility is authentic: *ethos* + *pathos* + *mythos* + *logos* = *eirene*. (3) Magnanimous humility is not the mock humility that involves the cowardice, laziness, or pettiness of hiding, or refusing to see and share one's gift(s), to the detriment of someone in greater need.

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[44] Strom, 28.

[45] Ibid., 17.

[46] Ibid., 19. On other leadership virtues, Strom says, "Compassion without humility is likely to be patronizing…Integrity without humility is likely to be self-righteous….Wisdom without humility is likely to be pompous."

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