

The vanity and vainglory - our restless enemies



All vices grow feeble when conquered, and when beaten are day by day made weaker, and lessen and subside both in place and time—or at any rate, as they are unlike the opposite virtues, are more easily shunned and avoided.

But vanity, when it is beaten, rises again keener than ever for the struggle. When we think it is destroyed, it revives again, the stronger for its death. The other kinds of vices usually only attack those whom they have overcome in the conflict; but this one pursues its victors only the more keenly; and the more thoroughly it has been resisted, so much the more vigorously does it attack the man who is elated by his victory over it.

Here we see the crafty cunning of our adversary. When he cannot overcome the soldier of Christ by the weapons of the Enemy, he lays him low by his own spear.

The sun shines on all alike, and vainglory beams on all activities. For instance, I am vainglorious when I fast, and when I relax the fast in order to be unnoticed I am again vainglorious over my prudence. When well-dressed I am quite overcome by

vainglory, and when I put on poor clothes I am vainglorious again. When I talk I am defeated, and when I am silent I am again defeated by it. However I throw this prickly-pear, a spike stands upright.

A vainglorious person is a believing idolater; he apparently honors God, but he wants to please not God but men.

Every lover of self-display is vainglorious. The struggle of the vainglorious person is without reward and his prayer is futile, because he does both for the praise of men.

Based on Saint John Cassian, Saint John of the Ladder

- Source: asceticexperience.com