

# **PASCAL THE TUMBLER**

From: Stories, Parables and Fables of life of P. Ribes, s.j.

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## **Intent of this Story:**

- ✓ *Holiness is a matter of simplicity of heart, not of cleverness of mind*
- ✓ *The love with which we do things for God is more important than all we do or may do.*
- ✓ *God does not look so much at all we do for Him or offer Him, but at our heart.*

## **The Story**

Pascal was an orphan child. He never had a chance of schooling and learning at all. He, he grew up as an urchin in the pavements of the city streets. As young a man, he was illiterate, without a friend and jobless. People judged him to be a good-for-nothing fellow.

Pascal, however, uncouth and uneducated, had a large heart. He loved people, specially the poor and forsaken ones like himself. In his own little way, he was forever ready to help anyone in need.

By chance, Pascal happened to join a troupe of tumblers and street acrobats. They taught him the tricks of their trade. Very soon Pascal became proficient in that sort of street art.

Whenever Pascal managed to collected some little money from passersby, he distributed it among urchins and the street children. He could not forget the days when, he alone as an urchin, spent his days hungry and unwanted in the city streets

On one occasion, Pascal stepped into a big beautiful Shrine of Our Lady. He was greatly impressed by the majesty and silence of the place. Then, when a religious service started in that Shrine, the inspiring singing and the devotional prayers he witnessed touched him to the quick. In all his life, he had never experienced a peace and a joy like the one he felt now in that Shrine. Beside himself with joy, he decided, not to leave that place but to stay put there for good.

When he met the Priest in charge of the Shrine, he begged of him to allow him stay there. After a long chat with Pascal, the good old priest discovered in him such goodness and simplicity of heart that charmed him. He even felt inclined to keep him in the church as one of his workers. But the old good priest said to himself: "What sort of work can I offer to a man like this? He cannot read or write, he has no training whatsoever, he never held any job as such.. What use can the church have of a man like this?"

Pascal, however, in tears, pleaded: “Please, Father, do not send me away from here. Help me to know more of God and to love him more. I want to serve him with all my heart! Truly, Father, no one ever spoke to me about God or taught me any prayers. Keep me here. Give me a chance to serve him in this Church till the end of my life!”

The old priest touched by Pascal’s sincerity, finally decided to keep him in the church as a helper to the Sacristan. His work would be to sweep, wash, mop and dust the church.

Pascal began doing his work with enthusiasm and joy. From now on, the Church looked spick and span as never did before. Pascal was very happy. He enjoyed a peace and joy which he never knew before. In his heart of hearts, Pascal wanted for ever to please Jesus and Mother Mary more and more, but being such an uncouth and ignorant man, what else could he do?

One day, late in the night, Pascal quietly, slipped into the church, fell on his knees in front of the statue of our Lady and prayed: “My dearest Mother Mary, I love you dearly. I wish I could say Mass and preach as the Fathers do, I wish I could teach catechism as the Brothers do, but I am a useless fellow, good for nothing. I did not go to school and learned anything. The only thing I know is dancing and tumbling tricks. Dearest Mother, will you enjoy watching my tricks? I am sure you will;”

And with that, in the semi-darkness of the Church, in the quiet of the night, Pascal put up a show of his choicest tricks for Mother Mary. He danced like mad before the statue of our Lady, he tumbled over the pews and benches, he swung from fan to fan and from one ceiling lamp to another, as if in the circus. He sung, he cracked jokes, he clowned about.

While Pascal’s show was going on, the Priest in charge of the Church quietly dropped in for his night prayers. He was surprised to hear strange noises and shouts in the Church, and then he was even more puzzled to see the ceiling fans and the lamps of the Church swinging this side, that side. Finally, he discovered Pascal precariously hanging from one of the ceiling lamps like a monkey on a tree branch. Both, in anger and in shock, Father was about to stop Pascal’s wild performance, and show him the door to the road.

Just then, Pascal came down to the floor panting, sweaty and exhausted. He ran to the feet of our Lady’s the statue and with tears in his eyes prayed aloud: “Dearest Mother, did you enjoy my tricks? Did you like my show? I tried, with all my heart, to make you happy. Did you like it?”

Just then, Father got the shocked of his life – he couldn’t believe his eyes and his ears – Our Lady’s statue came alive. She smiled at Pascal; and with a big, broad smile, and with the sweetest voice ever heard, she said: “Yes, dear Pascal, I am delighted. I liked each and every one of your tricks. They made me very happy. I have never been so

pleased here in this Church before. Yours is the best offering and the best prayer I ever received in this Shrine. Well done, my dearest child”

Pascal beside himself, with joy exclaimed: “Yes, Mother, you liked it? Oh, I am so happy! Thank you mother;” Pascal remained in silence on his knees for a long time. Sweet, hot tears of joy kept rolling down his cheeks.

Humbly, in whispers, father prayed to Mother Mary: “I thank you, dear Mother for bringing this “*Foolish Pascal*” to our Shrine. I am sorry for misjudging him. **He is not such as useless and foolish fellow as I thought! He is a living saint:**”

(Inspired in the legend of the Juggler of Our Lady.)

### **POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION.**

1. Did Pascal being such a simple and foolish man please God? Why?
2. What’s necessary to please God and Our Lady?
3. Were The Parents of Jesus - Our Lady and St. Joseph- highly qualified and degree holders? Did they please God? Why?
4. Are, cleverness, wealth, High Education necessary to please God? Why?
5. Then why should we work and study hard and struggle for a higher education?
6. What are the value and the purpose of all earthly things, even the best of them - in order to serve God?
7. Why did God create them all? Why has He given them to us?
8. Are we the owners of God’s gifts or rather their users? Explain. How should we use them?
9. Reflect on this: :”Is God pleased with you in the way you serve Him with all you have?
10. What do we mean by being humble, simple and sincere in our dealings with God?
11. Explain the following sentences:
  - Humility is truth. (*St. Theresa of Avila*)
  - God does not need us, but he wants us.
  - All created things have no value in themselves, yet they are very valuable for us in order to serve God.
  - We have to prize and use worldly things in as much as they help us to know, to love and to serve God.
  - Holiness is found in our hearts, not in our brains.
  - The devils are clever, yet they are wicked.
  - To please God the important thing is not how great the things we do are, but how great is the love with which we do them.
  - The key to holiness is to do all things – great and small – with our hearts
  - Wherever you go and whatever you do, take your heart along.