

# Sunday Message

22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 31 August 2025 • Psalter Week 2

## IT'S HARD TO BE HUMBLE!

LUKE 14:1. 7-14

Today's readings focus on humility. In the book of Ecclesiasticus, the author advises that the greater someone is, the more humbly they should behave. There is no cure for the proud person's malady, since an evil growth has taken root in him.

In the Gospel, Jesus advises that if you're a guest at a party, sit at the lowest place, so that when your host arrives you may be told to move higher. When you hold a party, he goes on, don't invite those who are rich and influential, who can repay you, but rather those who are poor and insignificant.

Jesus' point is clear: the Christian mustn't be concerned with image, power or status, but with service. Service of God and neighbour is what counts.

Jesus is the best example of humility. He identified with the least of all. He chose the sick over the healthy, the weak over the powerful, the poor over the rich, sinners over the pious. He washed feet. He mixed with outcasts. He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. He shows us how to live.

Still, it's difficult to be humble in today's social-media world, with its focus on beauty, bigness and bling. Our competitive environment promotes individualism, vanity, vaulting ambition. To succeed in life, you are told you must be aggressive, driven, ruthless.

Humility is different. Humility is the opposite of Me First. It's the ability to stand in the other's shoes; to consider experiences that are not our own. It is revolving our actions around others rather than ourselves. It is being least, being servant, being little, being last. Live like that, Jesus tells us, and heaven awaits us. ■

## REFLECT

To be humble is to have four attitudes writ large.

First, it is the honest recognition we are not perfect. Despite our best intentions, we sin all the time. Whatever our rank in society or church, we are not perfect. We know we're not perfect. And so the humble person doesn't have a big head. The humble person doesn't rush to judge, doesn't discriminate against, bully, hurt or exclude. How can I look down on another when I know how imperfect I am?

We acknowledge this at Holy Communion when we say, "Lord, I am not worthy..." I'm not worthy that you should come into my house. I'm not worthy to be in your presence. I don't deserve you. The journey to perfection will never be complete this side of the grave. Humility is honest awareness of my imperfection writ large.

Second, humility is simplicity of life. It's an attitude Pope Francis has trademarked since his election – his refusal to live in the papal apartments. His refusal to wear flashy vestments. His use of ordinary language.

Our world is greedy and grasping, constantly insisting we need to look young

and perfect, never to be content with how we look, to always want more, to always be optimising, believing we can never have enough.

Humility is being satisfied with sufficient. It's knowing our biggest treasure, our ultimate security, is God. Always wanting more gets in the way of putting God and others first.

Simplicity of life is also a way of cherishing our endangered earth, and of showing solidarity with those who through others' greed are denied life's basic comforts. Humility is simplicity of life writ large.

Third, humility is prayerfulness. Archbishop Fulton Sheen once said: "Only the humble can pray, for prayer presumes we need someone and something." When we ask God for something, when we thank God for something, we are admitting our dependence on God, that on our own we can do nothing. And so we turn to God in our need, our gratitude, our joy, our heartbreak. We place ourselves before the God who is our strength. Humility is prayerfulness writ large.

Fourth, humility is knowing I don't know everything. The reservoir of human learning

## SAY

"Lord, I know the values of your kingdom are different from those I see around me. Yours are the values I would like to have. Help me to have an attitude of humility and of gratitude. Amen."

## DO

Examine your values, your attitudes. Do you always expect to be treated better than others? What sort of opinion do you have of yourself?

## PRAY

During Mass, pray for a greater awareness of your utter dependence on God.

## LEARN

The Christian is always humble.

The Christian trusts in God's goodness and love.

All are equal in the eyes of God.

is larger now than ever in our history, and expands every day. We have access to more knowledge than ever before – about the brain and matter and the origins of things. Ask Siri or Alexa almost any question, and they'll supply an instant answer. Everyone is now an expert, or thinks they are. This is especially true on platforms like X, TikTok and Facebook. Few on social media admit to being wrong. You follow those you agree with; you unfollow those you disagree with. We have become more testy, insistent, dogmatic, strident.

Humility is acknowledging I don't know everything and that that's okay. It's how it should be. The poet TS Eliot said, "The only wisdom we can hope to acquire is the wisdom of humility." Humility is admitting my limitations writ large.

Today's readings aren't about shunning the limelight, being invisible, staying silent. They're not about not taking legitimate pride in positive achievements – like a loved one's success. They are, rather, a summons to a wholesome, selfless, generous way of living that imitates Jesus, our model, the Servant King. ■



**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

*Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.  
O Lord, you are good and forgiving,  
full of mercy to all who call to you.*

**COLLECT**

God of might, giver of every good gift,  
put into our hearts the love of your name,  
so that, by deepening our sense of reverence,  
you may nurture in us what is good  
and, by your watchful care,  
keep safe what you have nurtured.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

*Amen.*

**FIRST READING** Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29

A reading from the Book of Sirach.

My son, perform your tasks in meekness; then you will be loved by those whom God accepts. The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself; so you will find favour in the sight of the Lord. For great is the might of the Lord; he is glorified by the humble. The affliction of the proud has no healing, for a plant of wickedness has taken root in him. The mind of the intelligent man will ponder a parable, and an attentive ear is the wise man's desire.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

Psalms 68(67):4-5ac, 6-7b, 10-11.

R. cf. 11b

*R: In your goodness, O God, you provided a home for the poor.*

1. The upright shall rejoice at the presence of God;  
they shall exult with glad rejoicing.  
O sing to God; make music to his name.  
The LORD is his name. **R.**
2. Father of orphans, defender of widows:  
such is God in his holy place.  
God gives the desolate a home to dwell in;  
he leads the prisoners forth into prosperity. **R.**
3. You poured down, O God, a generous rain;  
when your heritage languished, you restored it.  
It was there that your flock began to dwell.  
In your goodness, O God, you provided for the poor. **R.**

**SECOND READING** Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Brothers and sisters: You have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

**ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL** Matthew 11:29ab

*R: Alleluia, alleluia.*

Take my yoke upon you, says the Lord,  
and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.

*R: Alleluia.*

**GOSPEL** Luke 14:1, 7-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully.

Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honour, saying to them, 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honour, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, "Give your place to this person", and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher." Then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'

He said also to the man who had invited him, 'When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends, or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbours, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

May this sacred offering, O Lord,  
confer on us always the blessing of salvation,  
that what it celebrates in mystery  
it may accomplish in power.  
Through Christ our Lord.

*Amen.*

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

*How great is the goodness, Lord,  
that you keep for those who fear you.*

Or

*Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they shall be called children of God.  
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake  
of righteousness,  
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Renewed by this bread from the heavenly table,  
we beseech you, Lord,  
that, being the food of charity,  
it may confirm our hearts  
and stir us to serve you in our neighbour.  
Through Christ our Lord.

*Amen.*