

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

[Reading I: Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29](#)

[Responsorial Psalm 68:4-5, 6-7, 10-11](#)

[Reading II: Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a](#)

[Gospel: Luke 14:1, 7-14](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/082822.cfm>



Jesus with the Pharisees

Meals in the ancient world had great significance. One's social status and friendships were determined by with whom one ate and what your seating position at the table was. Honor was the principal goal in society in this period. One was always aware of steps that could bring honor and avoiding acts that would bring shame.

Behavior was watched at these social gatherings: Did one wash? When and what a person ate or drank. With whom a person eats and when a person arrives at the table. Accepting an invitation to dine at another's house, indebted a person and required a reciprocal invitation. People would decline an invitation if they did not want to invite that person to their home. There was a constant set of expectations that if I do something for you, you owe me something.

One can simply pretend to be humble to gain more recognition but if the host does not notice, one will be sitting at bottom of the table and be shamed. It is not a game worth playing.

Jesus takes this social setting to inaugurate a new understanding of honor. The Pharisees were locked into one perspective about life. Jesus opened a new vision about the source of honor. It is not the honor that one's fellow diners show and accept. The important honor is from God. Jesus proposes that one invite those who cannot repay and God will be the one who shows you honor. This honor will neither grow weak nor end for it will come in God's reign at the eternal banquet.

Humility is an important virtue. Humus (earth) connects humanity to its origin. "God formed man of the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7). To be humble is to be rooted or to have both feet on the ground. One knows one's gifts and call, knows one's weaknesses and faults, and is honest about them. One neither exaggerates one's gifts nor denies them but lives them in honesty.

It is an expression of balance and centeredness. One can exaggerate one's gifts, build up one's importance, and strive to be better than others. This leads to pride and self-centeredness. The opposite fault is also being off balance. When one refuses to accept the gifts that God has given or denies having any gifts, one is not being humble. One is degrading God's work and rejecting God's gifts.

Humility is the middle stance of neither exaggerating nor denying one's gifts and worth. It is a stance of honesty about one's dignity and giftedness and about one's weakness and lack of gifts. It is the middle way. It manifests that God is the source of all good things and of my need for God in all my incompleteness.

The Book of **Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)** was probably written around 200 years before Jesus. It contains ethical teachings about numerous aspects of life from parenting and marriage, to proper attitudes for the rich and poor, to suggestions on courtesy and polite behavior.

The passage presented today stresses the importance of humility in background to the message of Jesus. Pride brings destruction but humility shows one's surrender to God. It highlights how humbling one's self will bring you into closer connection with God for God

holds the real power. This is the message that Jesus brought in his self-surrender on the cross and preached repeatedly in calling people to recognize that it is God who saves them.

The passage from the letter to the Hebrews presents the contrast between the experience of Moses at Mt Sinai and the experience of the apostles in Jerusalem (Mt Zion). Moses experienced thunder and lightning and came before God with fear. The apostles encountered Jesus as one who washed their feet, shared meals with them, and shared his own Spirit with them.

Jesus came in humility to raise others into a relationship with God. All who have been called by God, approach others, not by their own power or authority, but as people gifted by God and sent to share God's love and mercy with others.

Reflection Questions:

What are things that build relationships with others in your life?

What does living humility look like in your life?

How can you address the needs of those who cannot repay you?

How does the church reach out to those who are forgotten? Where does it fail to do this?

Themes

Humility vs Pride

Preferential Option for the Poor

Ultimate Goals in life

Prayer Suggestions:

For the Church: that we may recognize the many ways God is present and active in our lives so that we may cooperate with God more fully

For openness to God's invitations: that we may respond to God's call to eternal life and recognize that salvation comes not from our efforts but as a gift from God

For the grace of humility: that we may come to a deeper understanding and ownership of our gifts and acknowledge our need for God amidst all our weaknesses

For the grace to be more inclusive: that we may be open to all the gifts that different cultural, ethnic, economic, educational, and age groups bring to our community and work to include these gifts in our ministries and activities