

## Homily of Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, 2025

Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29; Psalm 68:4-7, 10-11; Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24; Luke 14:1, 7-14

Today's readings invite us to reflect on the virtue of humility.

First reading: "My child, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved more than a giver of gift. Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God.... What is too sublime for you, seek not, into things beyond your strength search not" (Sirach 3:17-18, 21). Many people have perished and many more are perishing because this advice is not heeded.

Gospel: "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table of honor... For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:7-11).

A few more Bible passages on humility:

- Proverbs 8:13 - "The Lord says, 'I hate pride and arrogance, and perverse speech.'"
- Proverbs 11:12 - "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."
- Proverbs 29:23 - "Pride brings a person low, but the lowly in spirit gains honor."
- James 4:10 - "Humble yourself before the Lord and he will lift you up."

It is not a coincidence that the words 'humble' and 'human' are closely related. Both words are derived from the Latin word *humus* or earth. Biology teaches us that *humus* is the best part of the soil that makes plants grow. God made human beings from *humus*, the best part of the soil. And human beings return to *humus* at the end of their life span.

Humility can be defined as devoid of pride or devoid of vanity. That is why some spiritual fathers and mothers see humility as the foundation of all virtues. According to St. Augustine, "In a soul humility does not exist, there can be no true virtue, but mere appearance." St. Augustine also says, "If you are seeking perfection, there are three ways to reach it; first is humility, second is humility, and third is humility." St. Dominic says, "Arm yourself with prayer rather than a sword; wear humility rather than fine clothes." St. Thomas Villanova says, "Humility is the mother of many virtues. From it springs obedience, holy fear, reverence, patience, modesty, mildness, and peace." St. Thomas Villanova also says, "A humble person does not feel the insult which may be inflicted upon him or her."

A humble person does not retain in himself or herself insults inflicted upon him or her. When we experience prolonged anger or disturbance of soul, mind, and body due to insults from someone, it means that the pride in us or our self-importance has retained the insults. The less proud we are or the less self-important we feel, the less we are wounded by insults, and the more forgiving we are. At the root of many unforgiveness,

misunderstandings, and arguments is wounded pride and wounded self-importance. Scripture says, "Where there is strife, there is pride" (Proverbs 13:10).

A humble person is content and detached, and does not engage in unhealthy competitions and comparisons. He or she is respectful. He or she is not arrogant. He or she does not depend on human recognition. Jesus did not depend on human testimony (John 5:34). He admonishes us, "Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matthew 11:29). He teaches us humility when he washed the feet of his disciples. During the time of Jesus, it was the servants who washed the feet of their masters and visitors after their journeys on dusty paths and roads. Jesus says, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do" (John 13:12-15).

St. Paul encourages us to, "Have among yourselves the same attitude [as] Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; ...he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him..." (Philippians 2:5-9). When ridiculed, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we respond gently" (1 Corinthians 4:12).

Jesus draws our attention to another virtue as he concludes today's gospel. He says, "When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14:12-14). By this Jesus differentiates 'quid pro quo' giving (something for something) or transactional giving (gift in anticipation of favor or benefit) which is worldly, and sacrificial giving or selfless giving which is spiritual.

We conclude with the Prayer for Generosity by St. Ignatius Loyola:

*Lord, teach me to be generous, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to look for any reward, save that of knowing that I do your holy will. Amen.*

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