



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time.
August 31st 2025**

Theme: "For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"

Gathering Prayer

All: 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, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Luke 14:1, 7-14

¹ Now on a Sabbath day he had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely.

⁷ He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, ⁸ 'When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, ⁹ and the person who invited you both may come and say, "Give up your place to this man". And then, to your embarrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place. ¹⁰ No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, "My friend, move up higher". In that way, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured.

¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.' ¹² Then he said to his host, 'When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return. ¹³ No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; ¹⁴ that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again.'

Gospel Focus

Jesus makes several points in this gospel, but there is a common theme between them: the ways we conduct our human relationships are not the ways of heaven. It is normal, even good, to be hospitable to friends and family and to enjoy their hospitality in return; this is part of how communities are built. But these tidy social exchanges do not make us into who we are meant to be. For that, we are to go a step further, offering more radical hospitality to those outside our usual circles, and especially to those who will be unable to repay us. In doing so, we mimic the extravagant self-gift of God, who always gives more than we deserve and more than we can return.

Gospel Reflection

The readings from both Sirach and the gospel pass on proverbial wisdom about the virtue of humility. This is earthy wisdom. The word *humility* comes from the Latin word *humus*, "earth." So when we are advised to humble ourselves. It is an invitation to be "grounded," to be attentive to our connectedness with Earth.

In the gospel, Jesus gives examples of how one can go about growing in humility. He is at a dinner hosted by a leading Pharisee, and the invited guest are watching him closely. As the story progresses, there is growing hostility between Jesus and the Pharisees. Yet this is the third time he is said to be dining with them.

One way in which Jesus models authentic humility is by not cutting off those whose theology and pastoral approach differ from his own. In Jesus' day, likes ate with likes. Eating together was a way to signify shared values. By dining with those who opposed him, he signals that their shared common humanity forged a connection that superseded their differences.

Jesus first addresses the invited guests about choosing places at the table. The setting presumes that these are people with a certain measure of power and prestige. Banquets were occasions for people to enhance their social standing and Jesus describes how guests would compete for honor. The way to gain the most honor, he says, is actually to take the lowest place. Choosing to sit with those whose status would not enhance one's own honor could instead lead to growth in humility, that is, engage in interactions with persons who are more *earthly* and to forge bonds with them. If such a person is then invited by the host to a higher position, he or she would be able to represent the perspectives of those at the other end of the table in the discussions and decisions that take place at the head.

Jesus then turns his attention to the host of the dinner and talks about how to formulate a guest list. From this angle, he again prods his hearers to break out of the structures of likes eating with likes. The conversations at tables of the like-minded serve only to reinforce their own views, and the circle tightens as they reciprocate invitations to one another. Instead, Jesus proposes to the host, invite those unlike yourself, those with whom no one wants to associate. From a stance of humility, such a host recognizes the bond shared through common humanity that is stronger than differences in abilities or social positions.

It is easy to fall prey to false humility, pretending to take a lowly place in the hopes of receiving adulations and an invitation to come up higher. Or false humility can be manifested in persons whose self-esteem has never developed properly. True humility is grounded in earthly wisdom, a knowledge that all persons no matter their circumstances, and the entire created world share in an unbreakable interconnection of life given by God. We are equally loved and esteemed by the Holy One who desires the flourishing of all.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading – Sirach 3:17-18, 21, 29-30

¹⁷ My son, perform your tasks in meekness; then you will be loved by those whom God accepts. ¹⁸ The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself; so you will find favor in the sight of the Lord. ...

²¹ Seek not what is too difficult for you, nor investigate what is beyond your power....

²⁹ The mind of the intelligent man will ponder a parable, and an attentive ear is the wise man's desire. ³⁰ Water extinguishes a blazing fire: so almsgiving atones for sin.

Responsorial Reading - Ps 68:4-5, 6-7, 10-11

R: God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.

The just rejoice and exult before God; they are glad and rejoice. Sing to God, chant praise to his name; whose name is the Lord. **(R)**

The father of orphans and the defender of widows is God in his holy dwelling. God gives a home to the forsaken; he leads forth prisoners to prosperity. **(R)**

A bountiful rain you showered down, O God, upon your inheritance; you restored the land when it languished; your flock settled in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided it for the needy. **(R)**

Second Reading – Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24

¹⁸ For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers entreat that no further messages be spoken to them. ...²² 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, ²³ and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

575. Many of Jesus' deeds and words constituted a "sign of contradiction", (*Lk* 2:34.) but more so for the religious authorities in Jerusalem, whom the Gospel according to John often calls simply "the Jews", (Cf. *Jn* 1:19; 2:18; 5:10; 7:13; 9:22; 18:12; 19:38; 20:19.) than for the ordinary People of God. (*Jn* 7:48-49.) To be sure, Christ's relations with the Pharisees were not exclusively polemical. Some Pharisees warn him of the danger he was courting; (Cf. *Lk* 13:31) Jesus praises some of them, like the scribe of *Mark* 12:34, and dines several times at their homes. (Cf. *Lk* 7:36; 14:1.) Jesus endorses some of the teachings imparted by this religious elite of God's people: the resurrection of the dead, (Cf. *Mt* 22:23-34; *Lk* 20:39.) certain forms of piety (almsgiving, fasting and prayer), (Cf. *Mt* 6:18.) the custom of addressing God as Father, and the centrality of the commandment to love God and neighbor. (Cf. *Mk* 12:28-34.)

588. Jesus scandalized the Pharisees by eating with tax collectors and sinners as familiarly as with themselves. (Cf. *Lk* 5:30; 7:36; 11:37; 14:1.) Against those among them "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others", Jesus affirmed: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (*Lk* 18:9; 5:32; cf. *Jn* 7:49; 9:34.) He went further by proclaiming before the Pharisees that, since sin is universal, those who pretend not to need salvation are blind to themselves. (Cf. *Jn* 8:33-36; 9:40-41.)

Sharing and Discussion

1. How have you experienced Jesus' saying, "[E]veryone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted," to be true?

2. What is at the heart of a humble spirit? How would you define it?
3. In your parish community, how are you following Jesus' command? How are you being called to live and serve with a humble spirit?

Closing Prayer

All: Loving God, you assure us that you are our source of blessing. Hear our prayers and those of the world. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.