

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All who exalt themselves shall be humbled and all who humble themselves shall be exalted.

On a sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, '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, 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. 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. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

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. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

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WONDER FOR GIFTS RECEIVED

It has been said that the problem with humility is that it's the only virtue you can't boast about! For some it is a sign of maturity, for others, it shows a lack of belief in oneself, or it can be a means of subtly advancing your own cause in a way that is socially acceptable, but self-serving.

As Jesus addresses the question of humility, he wisely takes it in stages. Firstly, using the example of the wedding feast, he leads the Pharisees to admit that a self-serving humility can result in a person being exalted. Having gained their attention, Jesus moves on to deal with the nature of authentic humility which expresses itself in care for those who are less fortunate.

Over the last few weeks, the passages taken from the letter to the Hebrews have been reflecting on various aspects of the life of faith. These passages have been both encouraging and challenging. As the reflection concludes there is a call to awe, gratitude and humility for the marvellous gifts every Christian has received. In the ancient world the firstborn son would enjoy the lion's share of the inheritance, and many Christians, as slaves, did not enjoy the status of citizenship. This meant that they had, at best, limited rights. As Christians, however, their status has been radically changed. The covenant in Jesus' blood makes us all 'firstborn sons', sharing the same dignity and status as citizens in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Sir 3:17-20, 28-29

A reading from the book of Sirach

Humble yourself and you will find favour with the Lord.

My son, be gentle in carrying out your business,
and you will be better loved than a lavish giver.

The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly,
and then you will find favour with the Lord;
for great though the power of the Lord is,
he accepts the homage of the humble.

There is no cure for the proud man's malady,
since an evil growth has taken root in him.
The heart of a sensible man will reflect on parables,
an attentive ear is the sage's dream.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 67:4-7, 10-11. R. cf. v. 11

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

1. The just shall rejoice at the presence of God, / they shall exult and dance for joy. / O sing to the Lord, make music to his name; / rejoice in the Lord, exult at his presence. **R.**
2. Father of the orphan, defender of the widow, / such is God in his holy place. / God gives the lonely a home to live in; / he leads the prisoners forth into freedom. **R.**
3. You poured down, O God, a generous rain: / when your people were starved you gave them new life. / It was there that your people found a home, / prepared in your goodness, O God, for the poor. **R.**



SECOND READING

Heb 12:18-19, 22-24

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God.

What you have come to is nothing known to the senses: not a blazing fire, or a gloom turning to total darkness, or a storm; or trumpeting thunder or the great voice speaking which made everyone that heard it beg that no more should be said to them. But what you have come to is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gathered for the festival, with the whole Church in which everyone is a 'first-born son' and a citizen of heaven. You have come to God himself, the supreme Judge, and been placed with spirits of the saints who have been made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Mt 11:29

Alleluia, alleluia!

Take my yoke upon you;
learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.
Alleluia!