

ALL SAINTS

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL



Love God • Serve Others • Form Disciples

**August 30 & August 31, 2025;
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Father Eric's Homily

Ecclesiasticus 3rd 17-20, 28-29; Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24; Luke 14:1, 7-14.

A call to humility

In Ghana, I was the secretary to my Bishop for four years. During my time as his secretary, he sometimes asked me to represent him at a program that he couldn't personally attend. One time, he sent me to represent him at a program in a community along with the pastor of the parish in that town. The other priest and I arrived a bit early at the venue of the program. There were few people there at the time. One person there directed us to take two of the front seats. The other priest who was many years older than me in the priesthood decided to take a seat a bit further at the back. I went ahead to take one of the front seats because in my mind I was representing the bishop, and that was where they would have asked him to sit if he had gone in person. With the passing of time, the hall eventually got filled with people and we were asked to be on our feet because the chief of the town and his elders were about entering the hall. Just when they were about to enter the hall, somebody rushed to whisper in my ear to leave my seat for them and take another seat, three rows behind where I was sitting. I did it but I felt embarrassed because there were many people in the hall. At that moment the Gospel reading of today became so vivid to me. Anytime I come across this reading that incident comes to mind.

In today's Gospel, Jesus after noticing the guests in the house of one of the leading pharisees pick the places of honor, told them a parable. He told them that when someone invites them to a wedding feast, they must not take their seats in the place of honor because a more distinguished person than them might have also been invited, and the host may ask them to give up their place and take the lowest place, which will result in embarrassment. This is what happened to me at the program I went to represent my bishop.

There were however other programs I attended where I went to sit on a back seat and I was later called to take a front seat. That is what Jesus tells us to do. He tells us to take the lowest place at an event so that we will be honored when we are called to move higher. This advice of Jesus is relevant and applicable to all spheres of life. Jesus by this parable seeks to make it crystal clear to us that honor is not taken. Rather it is given. We can earn it by the way we conduct ourselves. Jesus indicates that the way to earn honor, esteem, and exaltation is by being humble. He states: "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted".

When Jesus tells us to be humble, he is not saying any other thing than telling us to live as he lived. The life of Jesus from birth to death was characterized by humility: he was born in a manger; in his ministry he identified himself with the lowly, the poor, the outcast, the marginalized, and those society tagged as sinners; he died on a cross, one of the most shameful and cruel ways a person could die. His humility, however, led to his exaltation. In his letter to the Philippians 2:6-11, St. Paul writes that, Jesus, *“who, being in the form of God did not count equality with God, something to be grasped. But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names; so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at name of Jesus....”* St Paul before the above words, calls on us to make our own the mind of Christ. We are called to be humble as Christ was.

The word “humility” derives from the Latin root *humus* which means “earth” or “ground”. To be humble therefore means “to go low/to lower oneself”. It is thinking of ourselves less (not thinking less of ourselves). We must note that, being humble is not synonymous to self-degradation. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen points out what humility is and what it is not. He says: *“Humility does not mean a submissiveness, a passiveness, a willingness to be walked on, or a desire to live in the doghouse. Humility is a virtue by which we recognize ourselves as we really are, not as we would like to be in the eyes of the public; not as our press notices say we are, but as we are in the sight of God when we examine our conscience.”*

Humility originates in the mind and manifests itself in words and deeds. Humility does not make us place ourselves above others but makes us see everyone we meet as our equal, that is, as having the same dignity like us. It is not humility when we consider ourselves as better than anyone we meet. It is not humility when we think and behave that we are the most intelligent people in a group. It is not humility when we think and behave that without us nothing good can be done. That is pride.

The author of the first reading, Ben Sirach, offers us this precious advice: “Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God”. A rise in social and/or economic status must not make us exalt ourselves but must make us lead a humbler life. If we want to find favor with God and be exalted, let us be humble because as St Padre asserts, “humility and purity are the wings which carry us to God and make us almost divine”. Let us take the advice of Sirach in the first reading of today and conduct all our affairs with humility.

