

## HOMILY for 22<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year C

A woman chatting with her next-door neighbor. “I feel real good today. I started out this morning with an act of unselfish generosity. I gave a ten-dollar bill to a bum.”

“You mean you gave a bum ten dollars? That’s a lot of money to give away like that. What did your husband say about it?”

“Oh, he thought it was a nice thing to do. He said, ‘Thanks!’”

It takes a lot of courage & humility for that husband to ask his wife for some money as the cute story tells us. There’re other occasions that require us to have humility to get the job done. For we live in a world that desires fame & recognition. Everyone loves to have a seat of honor at a social event or be acknowledged around the world. That’s why we see people search for popularity & five minutes of fame by all means. Some go on Social Media like Tik Tok & Twitter to perform all kinds of strange things to attract their followers. Others search for unorthodox ways to get their five minutes of fame by carrying out horrific mass murdering of innocent people. Even some of our political & religious leaders would make outrageous statements to attract social attention & find their popularity.

But, the thirst for honor & popularity has been with us humans since the beginning of Creation. That’s why we’ve heard many stories in the Bible stating how God would pick one prophet or sacrifice over another. God has often chosen the prophet or sacrifice that has a humble & sincere attitude. Yet, God has rejected any prophet or sacrifice that is full of pride & deceits. In case we have not realized that yet, Jesus has this message for us in today’s Gospel, “...Noticing how people were trying to get the places of honor at the table, He says: ‘When you are invited by someone to a wedding party, do not sit in the place of honor in case some greater dignitary has been invited. Then, the host might come & say to you, ‘Make room for this man,’ & you would have to proceed shamefacedly to the lowest place. What you should do when you have been invited is go & sit in the lowest place so that when your host approaches you, he will say, ‘My friend, come up higher.’ This will win you the esteem of your fellow guest.’” So, Jesus wants to remind us to work on our humble attitude beginning with our seating at a wedding banquet. We must learn to choose the lowest place at a banquet & the unimportant positions in the world. That’s how we could resist the social pressure of desiring for honor & popularity & embrace the wonderful virtue of humility instead.

If anyone of us has ever tried to act humbly, we’d know how difficult that would be for us. For pride is rooted in our flesh and bone from the moment of our birth. Pride was the cause of the fight between the Archangel Lucifer & God. That fight has resulted in the birth of the Devil & the power of darkness. Pride was also the reason that the early humans like Adam & Eve were kicked out of the Garden of Eden. It made them think that they were better than God & led them to disobey God’s Commandments. As you can see, pride has brought us humans nothing but problems. That’s why the First Reading for today has this advice for us, “My son/daughter, conduct your affairs with humility, & you’ll be loved more than a giver of gifts. Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, & you’ll find favor with God. What is too sublime for you, seek not... An attentive ear is the wise person’s joy. Water quenches a flaming fire, & alms atone for sins.” So, we’re advised to do everything with a humble attitude. That way people would admire & respect us for adopting that attitude to guide our lives. We’re also encouraged to humble ourselves a lot more if we’re in a powerful position. Unfortunately, we

rarely see powerful people who would act humbly & talk kindly. These people often look down on the lowly & treat the common folks with contempt. Today we're also asked not seek what is lofty. Instead, we should search for wisdom of God by listening more & talking less. Humility will eventually lead us to the wisdom of God & other blessings. Today's Second Reading points out one of those blessings for us, which is our ability to put out a fire if we have a humble attitude. For a humble person knows how to calm down a heated situation by pouring water on its flaming fire instead of gasoline.

As you can see, there're a lot of benefits for adopting a humble attitude. But, how can we tell if we've made that attitude a part of our lives or not? What are the signs for us to see if someone is truly humble? If we have a humble attitude, we'd always be grateful for everything in our lives. One of the signs for us to see if someone is truly a humble person is how much he/she appreciates God's blessings in his/her life. A humble person will always give thanks to God & others for what he/she has. This person will look for opportunities to show appreciation to God & others. This person will often not take credits for his/her work & call attention to him/her. A humble person is indeed a grateful one.

Moreover, a humble person is also generous & kind. He/she is willing to roll up his/her sleeves to serve the poor & the needy without expecting anything in return. He/she is ready to share God's blessings for him/her with his/her neighbors to build up a loving & peaceful community. That's why, in the last part of today's Gospel, Jesus tells us to invite beggars & the crippled, instead of our families & friends, to our parties. That way they cannot repay us, & we'll humbly receive our great reward on the Last Day.

My dear brothers & sisters, humility is not an easy virtue for us to acquire. It takes daily practice & our commitment to a life of virtues to achieve it. One of the ways for us to be a humble person is to learn to be grateful to God's blessings & thank others more often. We also need to be generous & kind to people around us especially the poor & the lowly. Once we follow that way of life, we're on the path to humility; & we're going to achieve that great virtue for sure.