

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

This Sunday's Gospel talks about the importance of being humble. Reflecting about it, I'm reminded of this brand-new cute story that I would like to share with you.

A lonely stranger went into a deserted restaurant & humbly ordered the breakfast special. When his order arrived, he looked up at the waitress & asked, "How about a kind word?"

She leaned over & whispered, "Don't eat the meat!"

Anyway, by nature, human beings would like to be acknowledged & receive honor from their fellowmen. People would love to have their names mentioned in public settings. That is why well-known people have had their names & logos on buildings, monuments, billboards, currencies, & so on. Powerful people want to be seated in prominent places at the public engagements. Everyone seems to let pride dictate everything they do in their daily lives. They do not realize that pride has gotten a lot of people into all sorts of troubles since the beginning of Creation.

First, pride got the smartest & the most powerful angel in Heaven, Archangel Lucifer to desire to be equal to God & decide to overtake the whole Kingdom of God. Seeing that, the Archangel Michael rallied other faithful angels & the rest of the Heavenly hosts to defend God & throw Lucifer out of the Kingdom. That is how we humans have explained the beginning of evil & the power of darkness with Lucifer as its leader. But, the sin of pride did not end with Lucifer. It has continued to negatively influence our human race beginning with the first human couple, Adam & Eve. The cunning snake, which represents Lucifer & the power of darkness, tempted the couple to be like God & got them to violate God's Command by eating the forbidden fruit in the middle of the Garden of Eden. Yet, the sin of pride has kept on causing all sorts of other problems throughout our human history such as empty promising, cheating, murder, & so on. That is why our world has been wrecked with all kinds of destruction as a consequence of the sin of pride.

Realizing all the damages & potential problems that the sin of pride could do to the people of God, Jesus has given us & the public back then the following admonition in this Sunday's Gospel, "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 guests. For every one who exalts himself shall be humbled; & he who humbles himself shall be exalted." So, Jesus wants us to practice the virtue of humility at all time because it will bring us praises & admiration from the public. Moreover, God will find a way to exalt us along the way. However, if we act proudly & constantly exalt ourselves, God will find a way to humble us at some point.

In case we still hesitate to embrace the virtue of humility, this Sunday's First Reading gives us this advice, "My son/daughter, conduct your affairs with humility, & you will be loved more than a giver of gifts. Humble yourself the more, the greater you are; & you will find favor with God. What is too sublime for you, seek not; into things beyond your strength, search not." So, the Book of Sirach asks us to practice the virtue of humility in our daily lives because God &

everyone will love us for it. That is why we should avoid everything that is exalted & prideful. That way we would find ourselves on good terms with God. All the saints had practiced the virtue of humility to avoid the traps of pride by the power of darkness & also find a strong & intimate relationship with God. Their humble way of life has brought them admiration & lots of divine blessings in this life & the next.

In addition to connecting us with the divine, the virtue of humility also helps us to be kind & generous to everyone around us including the poor & the social outcast. That is why Jesus told his host to practice the virtue of humility by inviting beggars, the crippled, the lame, & the blind to a banquet or a social gathering instead of his friends, family members, & wealthy neighbors. That way those guests would not be able to repay him. But, God will repay him on the Last Day. Similarly, if everyone in our world practice the virtue of humility, people would be kinder & more generous to one another, especially to the poor & the social outcast. We would see less selfish & greedy acts as we do these days. We would witness less hateful & violent acts as we do now with the latest shooting in our country. We would have a more loving & peaceful world than the one we experience now. For everyone would try to act humbly & lift up one another instead of putting down one's neighbor & doing harm to him/her for some reason. So, I encourage you to practice the virtue of humility everyday & help our Lord Jesus to transform our current world into a loving & peaceful place. In fact, you could use the virtue of humility & other Gospel values to help you choose a spouse, friendship, & even leadership in the Church & the country. Don't use meaningless criteria such as conservative or liberal as the Christian measurement because it does not have any connection to our Christian tradition and Catholic way of life. On the other hand, humility will surely change our way of life & bring us lots of wonderful blessings every day. It will also help turn our Church & our world into a place of love & peace like Heaven.

My dear brothers & sisters, Benjamin Franklin once said, "After crosses & losses, people grow humbler & wiser." He is absolutely right about the lessons on humility & wisdom once we have been through challenging life experiences. If we, especially our Church & our country leaders, have dealt with crosses & losses in our lives, we would be wiser & humbler in dealing with the world. We would be able to avoid all the damages & destruction that pride might bring us. More importantly, we would be able to build up a loving & peaceful world for everyone to enjoy. So, let us work hard on the virtue of humility & let it be the guide & measurement in our daily life.