30th Sunday of Ordinary Time
Cycle C, 10.23.16
Sirach 35:12-14,16-18; 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18; Luke 18:9-14

GRATEFUL HEART... HUMBLE SPIRIT

A couple years ago an Italian priest, Fr. Antonio Spadaro, requested and was granted an extensive interview with Pope Francis. Fr. Antonio reflected on his encounter with the Holy Father:

It is Monday, Aug. 19, 2013. I have an appointment with Pope Francis at 10 a.m. in Santa Marta. I have the first question ready, but then I decide not to follow the script that I had prepared for myself, and I ask him point-blank: “Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?” The pope stares at me in silence. I ask him if this is a question that I am allowed to ask.... He nods that it is, and he tells me: “I do not know what might be the most fitting description.... I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner.” The pope continues to reflect and concentrate, as if he did not expect this question, as if he were forced to reflect further. “Yes, perhaps I can say that I am a bit astute, that I can adapt to circumstances, but it is also true that I am a bit naïve. Yes, but the best summary, the one that comes more from the inside and I feel most true is this: I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon.”

Pope Francis’ words echo the humble spirit of the tax collector in today’s gospel. Before God we are all sinners, but the mercy of God lifts us up and sets us on a path of righteousness, not in our own eyes, but in the eyes of God who is the source of all goodness and blessing.

Today, on this “Stewardship Sunday,” as we look to the needs of our parish community and invite everyone’s support and participation, we know that our most authentic response comes from hearts that are grateful for all the blessings that God has given us and spirits that are humble enough to serve rather than be served.

Which prayer is mine?

O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity.
-- OR --

O God, be merciful to me - a sinner.

The firm foundation for faithful stewardship is a generous heart and a humble spirit. Those two qualities open us to God and to our neighbor. Acknowledging the utmost importance of gratitude, Meister Eckhart, the
medieval mystic and spiritual guide, once wrote: *If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.* The final words of Jesus in today’s gospel offer a warning as well as a promise: *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles herself will be exalted.*

This short film entitled *Gratitude,* by Louis Schwartzberg and narrated by Benedictine monk David Steindl-Rast, offers an invitation to live each day fully by dwelling in a spirit of thankfulness and awe.

[Video on Gratitude](#)