

Twenty-Second Sunday Ordinary Time– Cycle C

September 1, 2019

Christ the Good Shepherd, ORCC

Reflection by Father Charles Blanchard

First Reading: Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29

Psalm 68:4-5, 6-8, 10-11

Second Reading: Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a

Gospel: Luke 14:1, 7-14

Welcome to Christ the Good Shepherd! To our enduring parishioners and new found-friends, you are welcome to hear God's word and be nourished at this Table where there is no partiality.

Welcome home!

My sisters and brothers, “**conduct your affairs with humility**”!

Humility is the operative theme of today's liturgy.

Great spiritual teachers in our Catholic tradition have taught about humility (e.g., *Mother Teresa* “*If you can't feed a hundred people just feed one*”).

Real humility is living in the truth of who we are before God and who we are in relationship to one another. Such an act is **meeting** a person where s/he is in life;

suspending personal judgement; and **checking** it out from her/his vantage point.

Our present culture **values** neither truth nor humility and so **today's homily on humility** is difficult to accept; a challenge to model in our living; and yet humility is a **God-like quality** to adopt as transformative of our relationship with God and one another.

In recent times, humility's absence squarely presented itself.

There was an elderly woman who **enjoyed** marital love for 50 years; **reared** her step-children as her own; and when her husband, protector and love died, two of the adult children approached their mother asking...

- Asking not how are you or
- Where might we help in this time of great need, but rather
- These fully grown daughters proceeded with asking "where's the will?"

Is this an action of humility or rather an action of resentment and greed?

The first reading today is from the Book of Sirach. The teaching is that humility will make a person loved, even more than giving gifts to others.

Humility always places us below others so as to serve them without resentment, with true love and abiding appreciation.

My sisters and brothers, the higher position that we have in the world, the deeper is our need for humility. Such humility will be shown in having an attentive ear.

Today, you and I might say listening to the other person is necessary. Humility rests within the person who listens attentively to wisdom stories, to proverbs and to real life situations; all of which help us understand other people and truly respect them.

Wisdom is not an intellectual exercise. No, it is **an action of good judgement**; grounded in meeting a person where s/he is in life; suspending personal judgement; and checking it out from her/his vantage point. It is the gift of knowing how to live well in every situation while maintaining our deepest values.

As a practical spiritual exercise, today we might try to be still; to be silent; to just listen to others; and to see what that listening does to us interiorly.

Today's Gospel from Luke invites us to ponder our relationships, closely evaluating how we think and act in relationship to others.

When we are in the company of others, do we put ourselves forward or do we stay in the background unless we are called forward?

Perhaps even more importantly, how do we think of ourselves in relationship to others?

We can stay in the background and still think of others as fools!

Jesus invites us to think of ourselves as always the last and the least. This is a difficult spiritual teaching, but one that needs to be heard at face value and not discussed away. We are invited to think of ourselves as less than others. This has nothing to do with poor self image nor with psychological problems!

Rather, this is an invitation to live in truth with others and to forge a new relationship with others by changing our way of thinking of them.

Just for a moment, try to imagine such a way of thinking among politicians. It boggles the mind.

On the other hand, if you and I are not willing to try living it in our own personal lives, then we can never understand the power of love and of humility.

Let us love others today, especially those who cannot repay our love! Let us serve each person who comes into

our life. Let us listen attentively so that we can know the divine presence at work in our world!