

In Jesus's parable about the wedding banquet, the prideful man takes a place at the place of honor and is embarrassed when the host repositions him to the lowest spot. It is better to be humble and take the lowest spot. You have no place to go but up.

As a second grader, I had difficulty learning to read. With the help of parents and a good teacher, I progressed in my reading abilities and the teacher asked me to move up to a higher group. I felt embarrassed even though the teacher was trying to recognize the progress I made. Perhaps there was a bit of pride in me being in the lowest spot and not wanting to be repositioned by the teacher to a higher spot. There is a human tendency in each of us to have a blind spot in judging ourselves.

So, let us look to Jesus for a better example. "Though he was in the form of God, [Jesus] did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave" (Phil 2:6-7). We see this same humility when Jesus washes the feet of the Apostles. If anyone deserved to be waited on by others, it is Jesus. But instead, he shows how a leader should serve. He cares for the sheep and places himself as a servant even though he is the master. No wonder Jesus always saw the sick and suffering and reached out to them. He never overlooked anyone. He saw the lowly and invited them to take an honored spot at his table.

Last year, a simple parish priest born in Waterbury, Connecticut was beatified. He takes a position of honor for his humble service. He died in 1890 at the age of 38 serving people amidst an outbreak of the Russian flu.<sup>i</sup> Like Jesus, he had a servant's heart and an eye for those overlooked in life.<sup>ii</sup>

- As a young parish priest, he visited the local jail as part of his ministry to offer spiritual counsel. There he encountered a man on death row for killing the chief of police. On behalf of the convicted murderer, he asked everyone to pray for the convict including those who went to see him executed. Like Jesus on the cross, Father Michael recognized the sincerity of a repentant sinner and reached out to him with the mercy of Christ.
- Life in that era was particularly difficult for the struggling immigrant population. It was not uncommon for a family provider to die on the job in unsafe working conditions. He often left behind him a widow and children with no other means of support. With God's help, Fr Michael was inspired to form the Knights of Columbus based on the ideals of charity and unity. Through an insurance program those with little were able to pool their meager resources and extend benefits to widows and their children.

Who is overlooked in life today? Who is the most vulnerable in society with no voice to advocate for themselves? Many believe it is the child in the womb who has scant legal rights and is often discarded if imperfect in the eyes of men. It should come as no surprise then that the miracle that was accepted in order to beatify Father Michael McGivney was the healing of a child in the womb with severe birth defects. "Dan and Michelle Schachle, of Dickson, Tennessee, prayed to McGivney to intercede with God to save their son, still in his mother's womb, who was given no hope of surviving a life-threatening case of fetal hydrops"<sup>iii</sup> complicated by Down Syndrome. The Schachle's already had a dozen children and believed that all things are possible with the help of God.

Along with the child's family, hundreds of people prayed for Fr Michael McGivney to intervene from heaven. When Michelle went to the hospital for her next ultrasound, her child was cured of the fetal hydrops. In thanksgiving, Dan and Michelle named their child Michael. He is now 6 years old. He is a beautiful child with Down Syndrome deeply loved and appreciated

by his family. To the doctors who were skeptical whether or not Michael would survive, his mother simply states: “I don’t think you understand, God has big plans for this child.<sup>iv</sup>”

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<sup>i</sup> [ncronline.org/news/people/beatification-father-mcgivney-take-place-oct-31-hartford-conn](http://ncronline.org/news/people/beatification-father-mcgivney-take-place-oct-31-hartford-conn)

<sup>ii</sup> [kofc.org/en/columbia/detail/the-mcgivney-letters.html](http://kofc.org/en/columbia/detail/the-mcgivney-letters.html)

<sup>iii</sup> [catholicnewsagency.com/news/let-michael-be-the-miracle---the-baby-healed-through-fr-mcgivneys-prayers-10629](http://catholicnewsagency.com/news/let-michael-be-the-miracle---the-baby-healed-through-fr-mcgivneys-prayers-10629)

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.