

## **25th Sunday (B)**

In our Gospel today we see Jesus teaching us of the importance of humility and lowliness. We are called to imitate Jesus. This is what it means to be a follower of Christ, to put His words and His actions into practice.

At the very onset of His earthly life Jesus is teaching us humility. The Son, who enjoyed the heights of the divine, lowered Himself by becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ. He was born into poverty. Placed in a manger. He's communicating humility to us. All of this is to counter our pride. Pride is at the heart of all sin, that is we are doing what we want, not what God wants. Pride is the most dangerous of the capital sins as well, as it can cut us off from God, thinking that we don't need Him. So Jesus is reminding us of all of this by teaching humility.

In the Gospel the Apostles don't really understand who Jesus is, not what His teaching is. This is the case before the Resurrection. The Apostles become completely different people after Pentecost. So we see them in the Gospel trying to figure out who is the greatest, which is the complete opposite of Jesus' teaching. Jesus then shows them that the way of humility leads to heaven, not pride. Earthly greatness is far different from heavenly greatness. Jesus turns things upside down, or really puts them right side up from the heavenly perspective.

He tells them if you want to be the first and the greatest, then you must be the last and the servant. This sounds like a contradiction in terms. At face value it is contradictory. How can you become the first by being last?

From the logic of heaven, however, what Jesus says is true, that to be first you have to be last, put yourself last, put others before yourself. The way of humility leads to heaven. Greatness in this life is really foolish in the grand scheme. We will die and this world will end, so let's work for greatness in the next life, which will be permanent.

Our Lady shows this to be true. She lived out humility profoundly in her earthly life. There is a tradition that just before the angel Gabriel visited her in the Annunciation she was reading scripture and contemplating the coming Messiah, as many were expecting him to arrive soon. She was also praying and hoping to be able to know the mother of the Messiah, to be able to serve and help her. That would be enough for her, to serve the mother of the Messiah. And then her response to the angel shows her humility as well, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord..." She was so lowly in her earthly life, that God made her the most exalted in Heaven. After God, she is the highest being in Heaven.

Many of the saints show us humility, putting others before themselves.  
[Frassati example - ending relationship to be with parents].

So may we be renewed in this pursuit of following after Our Lord in humility. Let us pray to Him, ask Him to teach us. May Our Lady help us.

## The Litany of Humility

From the desire of being esteemed, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the desire of being loved, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the desire of being extolled, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the desire of being honored, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the desire of being praised, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the desire of being preferred to others, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the desire of being consulted, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the desire of being approved, deliver me, O Jesus.

From the fear of being humiliated, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the fear of being despised, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the fear of suffering rebukes, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the fear of being calumniated, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the fear of being forgotten, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the fear of being ridiculed, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the fear of being wronged, deliver me, O Jesus.  
From the fear of being suspected, deliver me, O Jesus.

That others may be loved more than I, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.  
That others may be esteemed more than I, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.  
That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.  
That others may be chosen and I set aside, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.  
That others may be praised and I unnoticed, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.  
That others may be preferred to me in everything, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.  
That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.