

First Reading: Ecclesiasticus (*Ben Sirach*) 3:17-20. 28-29
Response: *"In your goodness, O God, you prepared a home for the poor"* (Ps.67:11)
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 67:4-7,10,11
Second Reading: Hebrews 12:18-19,22-24
Gospel: Luke 14:1,7-14

Christ the Risen Lord, was on earth as gentle Jesus meek and mild. His incarnation spells a life of love and service. He humbled himself even to death on a cross but God raised him up and he is now as close to us as ever, in the new covenant, in the building of the Kingdom.

The ancient wisdom from a sage of Israel, Ben Sirach, counsels us to follow God's ways. *"Be gentle in carrying out your business"* (Eccl.3:17).

God's way is that the higher you are, the more humble you should be. Humility counts much more in the eyes of God than boastful pride. *"The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly"* (Eccl.3:18).

The lowly and humble are not full of themselves but empty and open to the grace of God. The responsorial psalm expresses God's preference for the humble. *"In your goodness, O God, you prepared a home for the poor"* (Ps.67:11). It is a song of praise and faith.

It is a psalm of hope and trust in God's protection. He is the *"Father of the orphan, defender of the widow...He gives the lonely a home and leads prisoners to freedom"* (Ps.67:11). The psalm ends proclaiming God is a *"God, for the poor"* (Ps.67:11).

Even as God came down to Mount Sinai for the old covenant, so the 'Letter to the Hebrews' portrays God coming down to his people *"on Mount Zion, holy city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where millions of angels have gathered for the festival"* (12:22), where heaven and earth meet.

The Church is the meeting point where *"everyone is a first-born son"* (Heb:12:23), where we in communion with angels and saints, *"come to God himself.. and been placed with spirits of the saints; and to Jesus the mediator who brings a new covenant"* (Heb.12:24).

The way up in the new covenant is different to social climbing. It is not one-upmanship or going for the high places. Jesus teaches that *"everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted"* (Lk. 14:11).

And *"When you have a party, invite the poor, the lame and the blind"* (Lk.14:13), the marginalized. These are the Kingdom people. The values of the Kingdom are not the same as values of the world. In humbly serving the lowly, great will be your reward in heaven.

Scripture: Study the situation of Jesus in the Gospel and parable of the feast (Lk. 14:1,7-14).

Liturgy: What seats do we seek at Worship, if not in front, why not?

Doctrine: Jesus' humility is seen in his Incarnation where he leaves his place in heaven for the last place on earth, even dying ignominiously on the cross.

Witness: Be an alter Christus, be like Christ who came not to be served but to serve. Put others first.

FOR THE CHILDREN

Read and discuss the Gospel of the day with the children (Lk. 14:1,7-14). (**Scripture**)

Jesus wants us to be close to him. **Where do we sit when we come to Mass?**

Encourage children to attend Mass and listen to the sermon. Share **Teaching** on humility.

Seek and decide ways on how to be humble and readiness to serve others. (**Witness**)

FOR TEENAGERS (Shared Christian Praxis)

Jesus calls us to be humble. **Why? What is humility? What is pride? What it does to us?**

What are your experiences and what you learned about being humbled or exalted?

Give a catechesis in sharing what the Church says about humility and the kingdom of God.

In striving for the building of the Kingdom, seek ways of humbly being there for others.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH (CCC)

When we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or 'out of the depths' of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer. Man is a beggar before God (CCC.2559). Discuss.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

I knew a priest who actually showed off his humility. He ostentatiously dived for what was the least. I recall when he and I were hosted by a family with a guestroom and an attic, leaving us to choose which we want. My confrere, in all humility, insisted that I choose. To his surprise, I took the attic. He was upset that I became seemingly more humble than he. I could not help feeling that I was seeing more the humility of Uriah Heep than the humility of Jesus Christ.

LITTLE ANGELINA

I don't think Angelina will forget how she and her father battled to get to a world-cup soccer match. They even paid twice as much for their seats at the stadium because of the confusion, bribery and corruption. What would one do to attend the greatest drama in creation, the Eucharistic mystery, where the best seats are available and free in the house of God? "God says to the pilgrim: 'I want you here,' and close to me." (i) Interestingly, most people prefer to be seated farther away in the back of the church.

(i) BUTLER Barbara and Jo WHITE. 'To be a Pilgrim'. Kevin Mayhew Ltd., Stowmarket, Suffolk, U.K. 2002. p.41.

IMPORTANT WORD: Being humble.

Jesus teaches us the way of the Kingdom. It is not a rat-race nor elbowing your way to the top, seeking places of honour. It is not a matter of exalting ourselves or being exclusive. It means being humble and open to everyone. The kingdom is more about service than status. Aristophanes wrote a play where humans having lost the plot, go to the birds, to rediscover a way of life, *συ διδάσκει παρων ως ζην ουκ αξιον ημιν, ει μη κομιουμεθα παντι τροπω την ημετεραν βασιλειαν* (OPNIΘΕΣ. 547), which freely translates "help us build another kingdom. Instruct us how to set about it." (i) The pagan playwright seeks a vision from the birds but we have the vision of Christ and the reality.

We see the humility of Christ. He comes down from heaven to our level and becomes human, born of a humble virgin, to be God-with-us, Emmanuel. He showed us how to live, not to be served but to serve. How closely do we walk with him? How genuine is our humility?

True humility is not ostentatious, seeking the praise of others. Humility is truth, not simply comparing ourselves with others but rather seeing self compared to Christ the Lord in whom we hope to hear: "**You are not far from the kingdom of God**" (Mk. 12:34).

(i) ARISTOPHANES "The Birds" 547. Translat. David Barrett. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK. 1982. p.173

Watchword: “*The man who humbles himself will be exalted*” (Lk.14:11)

Hebrew: כֹּל־הַמְשַׁפִּיל אֶת־עַצְמוֹ יִרְמָם *Kol hamashpil ‘eth-’atsmo yeromam*

Greek: Ὁ ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται. *Ho tapeinon eauton hupsothesetai.*

Latin: **Qui se humiliat, exaltabitur.**

Portuguese: **Aquele que a si mesmo se humilhar seera exaltado.**

Spanish: **El que se humilia, sera enaltecido.**

French: **Celui qui s’abaisse sera eleve.**

German: **Und wer sich selbst erniedrigt, der soll erhöht werden.**

Afrikaans: **Elkeen wat nederig is, sal verhoog word.**

Zulu: **Ozifojisayo uyakuphakanyiswa.**

Xhosa: **Ozithobayo uya kuphakaniswa.**

Sotho: **Athe ya ikokobetsang o tla phahamiswa.**

Irish: **An te a islionn e fein, ardofar e.**