

SEPTEMBER 1, 2019
Sunday of the 22nd Week in OT
Lk. 14: 1, 7-14

JESUS CHRIST "EMPTIED HIMSELF"

In the 18th century, in a stormy night, a huge tree got uprooted and fell across a busy road in Baltimore in the state of Maryland in the United States. A team of soldiers were deputed to clear the block. They cut the branches of the tree and tried their best to move the large log from the road. But they, could not move it as it was very heavy. Their superior officer, a stout and strong man on horseback, was watching their work, giving strong directions and stern commands, without any physical participation in the work. A passerby on a white horse saw the scene. He asked the officer why he did not lend a helping hand to the sweating soldiers instead of giving loud oral orders. The officer replied in a rage, "I am the officer in command of this operation. I am their superior officer; it is below my dignity to work with them." The traveller readily removed his hat and coat and joined the soldiers. Tolling together, after much effort, they could remove the log and clear the block on the road. While departing, the traveller told the officer, "When you have a difficult work, you can call me. I will come to help you." "Who are you?" asked the officer. "I am George Washington," replied the stranger as he speeded on his horse. The officer was struck with wonder and shame. The stranger was the President of the United States and the Commander-in-Chief of the US military.

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Today's reading especially our gospel for today, calls us to consider the topic of humility. Humility is a virtue that all of us are struggling to obtain. The parable of the guests invited to the marriage feast which our Lord Jesus Christ is talking about in our gospel for today, examines our motives for seeking honor and position. We know that self-promotion is most often attained at the expense of others! But what is true humility

and why should we make it a characteristic mark of our life and action? True humility is not feeling bad about oneself, or having a low opinion of oneself, or thinking inferior to others. Humility is truth in self-understanding and truth in action. It means when we view ourselves truthfully, with clear-headed judgment, we are seeing ourselves the way God sees us. A humble person makes a realistic assessment of himself or herself without deception or pretense to be something he or she is not. Humble persons regard themselves neither smaller nor larger than they truly are. The humble are not influenced by accidentals, such as fame, reputation, success, or failure. Humility is the queen or foundation of all the other virtues because it enables us to view and judge ourselves correctly, the way God sees us. Humility leads to true self-knowledge, honesty, realism, strength, and dedication to give ourselves to something greater than ourselves. When we are humble, we free us to love and serve others selflessly, for their sake, rather than our own. St Paul the Apostles describes Jesus Christ as the greatest example and model of humility. Paul said in his letter to the Philippians, Jesus Christ “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross.”

Philippians 2:7-8 Catholic Bible Press.

We need this virtue of humility. We need people of humility to inspire us and show us how to live in proper relationship to God. We have many great examples: St. Teresa of Calcutta, a humble little lady who was a giant before God, St. John Paul II who was a kind man who did not think so highly about himself, St. Padre Pio who practiced what he preached, seeking only to please Christ and in spite of his wondrous gifts from God, he looked upon himself as a simple, and sinful friar. Look at our present Holy Father, Pope Francis, who is a man of humility. Before Pope Francis, the Holy Father lived in the Apostolic Palace where his meals were taken there. But Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, who became Pope Francis, lives in one of the rooms available for any of the Vatican clergy. He

takes his meals as one of the many who line up for the buffet. Can you imagine when you turn around, the Pope is behind you? That is exactly what is happening most days in the Vatican. When it comes to himself, Pope Francis is a humble man before the Lord.

My brothers and sisters, we are being challenged by our gospel for today. Do you always want to be recognized: that you do this or do that for how many years already? In our relationship with others: Are we humble enough to accept our own faults? Do we say sorry to our parents, friends, husband or wife? Or do you accept your own value not to assert it but to use it for the greater glory of God? So, who am I before the Lord? When the priest elevated the Body and Blood of Christ and present Christ to the congregation, "Behold the Lamb of God" your responded "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed" are not just a prayer formula but who we are. So, my brothers and sisters, let us be humble.

I would like to close this homily with the sharing of Father James Gilhooley, one of the famous preachers that I always like to read. He said: "Let me tell you of the most important words in life. The six most important are, 'I admit I made a mistake.' The five most important are, 'You did a good job.' The four most important are, 'What is your opinion?' The three most important are, 'If you please.' The two most important are, 'My gratitude.' The least important is 'I.' Knowing God makes us humble. Knowing ourselves keeps us humble." Catholic Homilies

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, you are my Savior who became a servant for my sake and help me free from the tyranny of sin, selfishness, and conceit. Assist and lead me to be humble as you are humble and to love freely and graciously all whom you call me to serve. Amen."