**22nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

READINGS: Sirach 3:7-20, 28-29 /Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24 /Luke 14:7-14

THEME: HUMILITY

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

Last Sunday, it was mentioned that to enter the ‘narrow door’ of God’s kingdom we must be humble. Today’s readings offer us the opportunity to reflect more on the virtue of HUMILITY. According to the first reading, ‘The greater you are, the more you should behave HUMBLY, and then you will find favour with the Lord” (Sir. 3:18). Similarly at the end of the parable in today’s gospel, Jesus says: ‘for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who HUMBLES himself will be exalted” (Luke 14:11).

For us (Christians), HUMILITY means that attitude which considers all that one has and one is as coming ultimately from God – for one’s life, strength, talents, intelligence, and therefore his or her achievements are all from God. Humility also means acknowledging one’s limitations: that one is human, and unlike God, he/she cannot do everything on his/her own!

Pride is the opposite of humility: The proud person boasts of his/her achievements, talents and status. He/she usually sees him/herself as more important than others. To an extreme extent, the proud person does not know or see his/her limitations: he/she thinks he/she can do everything. He/she equates him/herself to God. This was the sin of our first parents: Adam and Eve. They were tempted to take the fruit of the tree so that they would ***be like God***. Prov. 18:12 says: ‘Pride goes before one’s downfall’, and certainly it preceded the first and GREAT FALL of Adam and Eve.

When pride had closed the gates of paradise for mankind, HUMILITY became the key with which the gates were opened. This is because for the Son of God to leave his glory and become man to save us, he had to humble himself (Phil. 2:6-11).

So it’s by humility that God would accept believers into Paradise. Or to use the image of today’s second reading (Heb. 12), to approach ‘**Mount Zion and the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem**’ we need humility. God says: ‘I will dwell in the High and Holy place with him who has a contrite and **humble** spirit’ (Is. 57:15).

Beloved, let us be humble for there are many blessings God has for the humble. Let me comb through the scriptures, and mention a few of these blessings:

* Job. 22:29: God ‘will save the **humble** person’.
* Prov. 15:13: ‘before honour is **humility**’ (*cf*. Prov. 22:14).
* Ps. 10:17: ‘Lord, you have heard the desire of the **humble**’(*cf*. Ps. 9:12).
* Sir. 35:17-18: ‘the prayer of the **humble *pierces the clouds and he will not be consoled until it reaches the Lord’.* [**Beloved, planes and space-shuttles may pierce the clouds, but they cannot reach heaven: You see, then, how powerful the prayer of the humble is!!! ***Humility is a powerful spiritual fuel*** that pushes our prayers beyond the clouds and space to God’s very throne of grace.]

CONCLUSION: Let me conclude with these words of St. Peter: ‘All of you, be humble in your dealings with each other because God opposes the proud but gives his grace to the humble. Bow down, then, before the power of God so that he will raise you up at the appointed time’ (1 Peter 5:5-6).