

First reading Sirach 35:15-17,20-22**‘The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds.’**

The Lord is the judge, and with him is no partiality. He will not show partiality in the case of a poor man; and he will listen to the prayer of one who is wronged. He will not ignore the supplication of the orphan or the widow when she pours out her story. He whose service is pleasing to the Lord will be accepted, and his prayer will reach to the clouds. The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and he will not be consoled until it reaches the Lord; he will not desist until the Most High visits him and does justice for the righteous and executes judgement. And the Lord will not delay.

Responsorial Psalm 34(33): 2-3,17-19,23. R7a**The lowly one called, and the Lord heard him.**

I will bless the Lord at all times,
praise of him is always in my mouth.
In the Lord my soul shall make its boast;
the humble shall hear and be glad.

The Lord turns his face against the wicked
to cut off their remembrance from the earth.
When the just one cries out, the Lord hears,
and rescues him in all his distress.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted;
those whose spirit is crushed he will save.
The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants.
All who trust in him shall not be condemned.

Second reading 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18**‘There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.’**

Beloved: I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

At my first defence no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation 2 Corinthians 5:19**Alleluia, alleluia.**

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Alleluia.**Gospel Luke 18:9-14****‘The tax collector went down to his house justified, rather than the Pharisee.’**

At that time: Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ‘Two men went up into the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: “God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.” But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.’

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Feast Days this week

Tuesday 28th October: Sts Simon and Jude

Saturday 1st November: Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Cycle of Prayer**The Spread of the Gospel**

especially on *Evangelii Gaudium* Day: 3rd Sunday in September & World Mission Day: the penultimate Sunday in October

Background

World Mission Day is on the penultimate Sunday in October. A Mass 'for the Spread of the Gospel' may be celebrated on this Sunday. Each year the Holy Father writes a message for World Mission day. In England and Wales material is produced for parishes by the Pontifical Mission Societies. There may be a collection for their work on this day.

Prayer

O God, whose will it is that all should be saved
and come to the knowledge of the truth,
look upon your abundant harvest
and be pleased to send workers to gather it,
that the Gospel may be preached to all creation
and that your people, gathered by the word of life
and sustained by the power of the Sacraments,
may advance in the path of salvation and love.

Roman Missal

A Humbled Heart

Opposites Attract: In marriage and other human relationships we often notice how two unlike personalities complement each other, like the positive and negative sides of a magnetic field. One partner shows a natural flair for leadership and the other is happy to follow that lead, at least in many areas. Among ourselves, the taking of initiatives will be shared back and forth of course, neither partner being fully passive with respect to the other; but with God there is only one proper relationship: he is the powerful giver and we the dependent receivers.

This weakness on our side, this dependency towards our Creator and Father, is in fact our way to peace. As Paul so clearly saw: “when I am weak, then am I strong; I can do all things in him who strengthens me” (2 Cor. 12:10; Phil. 4:13.) The apostles attributed all their abilities and successes (cures, conversions) to the power of God, working through them. Only when we are humble in God’s presence can he do great things in us, as Our Lady so well declares, “He casts the mighty from their thrones and exalts the lowly.”

People often feel awkward about regarding humility as a virtue at all. Is it really a good thing to feel small? Or does it harm our ego and our self-confidence. Perhaps the word “humble” is too often misused, applied without much thought to dwellings that are shoddy or neglected, to efforts that are half-hearted failures and to characters who adopt a pose of false modesty in order to win approval.

Genuine humility is simply recognising the essential truth about ourselves. It is honest self-appraisal, in God’s presence, with no pretences, masks or poses. In the presence of the all-holy, all-powerful God each of us knows himself/herself as weak, imperfect and indeed sinful; and with this we recognise our need for mercy. There is no bribe that we can offer to blot out our guilt. There is no pressure we can exert (as we might among ourselves) to gain a credit we do not deserve. Our best recourse is a humble spirit; this attitude will draw down on us divine mercy and grace. The Publican felt this need for complete honesty, as he stood in the Temple of God. “Lord, be merciful,” he said; and went home with his sins forgiven and with relief in his heart.

On the other hand, what’s wrong with the outlook of this Pharisee, if anything? After all, he leads an admirable life and gives good example within the Jewish tradition. According to his self-appraisal, he kept all the rules, from fasting and almsgiving to honesty and purity. There was real effort there, a commitment to holiness within his tradition. But his virtues made him to forget that he remained weak and sinful, like other people. His sense of punctilious holiness took the place of prayer. He goes so far as to despise others, while giving thanks for his own merits. And by this attitude, he undermines his other virtues. Pride is like a worm, destroying the apple at its core. Indeed, it turns him from speaking to God, to talking about himself. His prayer dies.

This warning may apply to our church’s attitude, towards God and others. In the past, didn’t we sometimes take a stance of collective pride, towards people of other religions? We claimed ours as the fullest expression of Christ’s Church, with the best moral standards and sacramental practice, promoting a visible world-wide bond among believers. We continue to value these things and want to share them with people who are searching for the truth. But we must resist a niggling temptation to look down on outsiders, to disparage their values or under-rate their sincerity? We need to guard against self-righteous Catholicism and sincerely respect other pathways of faith. Leave it to God to judge the merits of other persons and their faiths. It is enough for us to trust in his mercy, recognise our own imperfections and try to live by the spirit of compassion. associationofcatholicpriests.ie