

Homily: 22nd Sunday: Cycle C: 2016: Sir 3: 17-18, 20, 28-29; Ps. 68; Heb 12: 18-19, 22-24; Lk 14: 1, 7-14

“The Virtue of Humility”

For everyone who exults himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exulted. So says the Lord Jesus in the Gospel. How do we put this into daily practice?

1. **Humility does not mean being a door-mat for others; rather it is the virtue, intimately tied into Truth, by which we know our place in the grand scheme of things, in God’s plan.** That sometimes means speaking up and sometimes it means being silent. It is also the virtue by which we realize more and more that without God’s love and grace we are not much. Humility leads to self-knowledge, realizing both our weaknesses and our strengths, and being honest about them, with ourselves and others. It is an ongoing process. We are never perfectly humble, and if we say we are, we’re probably not! To grow in humility, we must rely on the Lord in all the areas and activities of our lives asking for His strength and beseeching His mercy, so that we can be faithful disciples, and be kind and merciful to others. If we are docile to the Lord and let Him work, we will grow in humility through the trials and tribulations of daily life in union with Him.
2. **Nothing is more beautiful than a truly humble person.** As we hear in Sirach today, the greater a person is on a natural level, the more one needs to humble oneself, and then you will find favor with God; and remember as Sirach says, *“What is too sublime for you, seek not, into things beyond your strength search not.”* Or to put it another way directly from St. John the Baptist, *“He must increase and I must decrease.”* **That should be the motto of every Christian life!** Along with Our Lady’s response to the Angel Gabriel, *“Be it done to me according to thy Word, O’ Lord.”* How do we discover and put into practice this profound humility which was the secret of all the holy men and women of the Bible and of the saints of the Church? By holy silence, reflection and prayer - in those precious moments the Holy Spirit will reveal to us the pride that keeps us from loving God and neighbor, to remember who we are: **servants of the Lord** who alone is the source of all that is good, beautiful, true and loving. It is only by

dying to self that we learn to truly live the new life Jesus won for us on the Cross and in His glorious Resurrection from the dead.

3. **How is the virtue of humility lived in daily life?** One example: *when we are complimented by someone for some legitimate reason, what do we do?* Do we graciously accept it, but not let it go to our heads, and then immediately praise God for that gift which someone else recognizes is us? Or because we love flattery do we immediately start to imagine ourselves better than we actually are? And to keep up the false illusion to those who have praised us, over time, do we shade our opinions, i.e., tell them what they want to hear, rather than sometimes what needs to be said in the service of truth and fraternal charity? And so if we are not careful we can **live a lie** to please others and have them falsely think well of us, and the result is a lack of integrity and peace of soul, and this can multiply again and again over time. Remember in the end we have to give an account of our lives to God alone, not other people - thankfully! - since we are all weak and imperfect in our judgments and evaluations of people. We need to be authentic - not a fake person. Yes in life, accept a compliment, accept a gift, be magnanimous (big hearted) and gracious to others which is fruit of charity and humility - but always give God the glory - the final credit for all that is good in life. **Don't aggrandize yourself or be self-willed, but rather defer to the Lord and His Holy teaching made known to us through His Catholic Church.** May all of us accept the discipline of the Lord with open hearts and minds: the Cross, the trials and tribulations of earthly life, resisting the temptations to selfishness and pride that come daily our way, with the counter of humility and trust in God which will transform us over time in holiness. Let's also humble ourselves and go to the Sacrament of Confession frequently to grow in grace and humility - there is no better way on earth to grow in humility. Finally let us beg the Lord to teach us to know who we truly are: *His children called to imitate His love and generosity, especially in forgiving others and praying for them instead of repeating their faults, and to fast and pray and give alms - which will atone for our sins.* *Jesus meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto thine.* God bless you.