

Twenty Second Sunday of the Year – September 1, 2019

Sirach 3: 17-18, 20, 28-28 Hebrews 12: 18-19, 22-24a Luke 14: 1, 7-14

Once again, as Jesus and his followers continue their journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, they stop to share in the hospitality offered to them. This time it is by one who is known as a “leading Pharisee.” As St. Luke tells the story, Jesus uses this situation as an opportunity to give an instruction about the need for his followers to show a genuine sense of humility in their lives. He does this by means of a parable he relates which may well have been brought on by what had been experienced.

✘ Expanding on what Jesus says in this lesson, what are we to understand about being humble? We may often think that we are being humble when this really is not the case. For example, avoiding responsibility and letting someone else take care of a matter is not humility. Thinking poorly of one’s self, having low self-esteem, is not humility. Being unwilling to make up one’s mind, being indecisive and allowing someone else to make a decision that is really ours, is not humility.

Humility is accepting reality for what it is. It is not making ourselves or our situations greater or more important than they are. It is not living or acting in some fantasy world. It is an openness to the active presence of God in all that surrounds us. It is an acknowledgment and thanksgiving to God from whom we have received all that we have and are. All that

surrounds us, if we are honest, leads us to recognize this loving God.

A good understanding of this is pointed out in the wisdom found in the reading from the Book of Proverbs that we heard. Humility, to this author, means recognizing our particular situation in life and extending respect and dignity to everyone else. They, too, are creatures of our loving God. Being humble is being honest with ourselves. This is what finds favor with God. This is what reflects in ourselves the reality of a loving God.

Humility, then, is a genuine response that is living in such a way that makes known the love that has been shown to us. It is in this way that we love God, we love all others, we love all of creation.

We are able to do this because of our relationship with God. It is not a relationship based on a blazing fire or gloomy darkness as the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews points out. It is a relationship founded on being able to approach our living God with the love that is shown for us by the totality of Christ's giving of himself.

The true humility that the Lord seeks in each of us, the recognition of the importance and the role of God in our lives, the recognition that what we are and what we are to do, is found in acknowledging, praising and loving in return our truly good and gracious God.