

Homily 11th Sunday of the Year C

Today's homily is entitled, "Walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). The way of humility is the way of the Christian life. The Scripture says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Jam 4:6; 1Pet 5:5). Jesus taught us the way of humility as St. Paul states, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:5-8). So we pray, "Jesus meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto thine." Amen!

In our First Reading (2Sam 12:7-10, 13), humility helped against "God's wrath." God was "provoked" and condemned David through the Prophet Nathan, saying,

I anointed you king of Israel. I rescued you...
I gave you the house of Israel and of Judah.
And if this were not enough, I could count up
for you still more. Why have you spurned the
Lord and done evil in his sight? You have cut
down Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you
took his wife as your own.... Now, therefore,
the sword shall never depart from your
house....

Obviously, it seemed fire and brimstone were about to exterminate David's house. Simply because David repented and confessed, "I have sinned against the LORD," everything changed. Immediately, our God of love and mercy forgave David through Nathan, "The LORD on his part has forgiven your sin: you shall not die." Can you see how HUMILITY is the KEY? This points to the power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is the sacrament of humility. Once we repent and go to confession, everything changes. Let us never live in bondage.

Many times we fail to live up to God's standards, yet we go to Church. Yes, we may not be able to live out the totality of the Gospel message, yet, "To whom shall we go?" Everyone should go to Church; only God can save us. Those who argue and say, "I don't commit any sin; I'm a good person though I don't go to Church", are simply blind to their sins. Only God can cleanse us and make us holy. Hence, in the Second Reading (Gal 2:16, 19-21), St. Paul points out that "a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ ... For if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing."

In our Gospel passage (Luke 7:3 - 8:3), Jesus shows us plainly that we do not go to Church because we are holy people; rather we go because we are sinners in need of God's mercy, forgiveness and love. Surely, we are also "saints" in Christ, but our saintliness is often tainted by sin. As David rightly acknowledged in the Psalms, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love... Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Ps 51:1-3). This means that we should never have the "Pharisee mentality of looking down on some people who come to Church". The Pharisee that hosted Jesus said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner." Let us never ask, "What is this person doing here?"

See the beautiful way Jesus pointed out that all are sinners. All are in debt to God. He said to the Pharisee, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?" Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven." He said to him, "You have judged rightly." Jesus makes the point that there is no room for hypocrisy; all are sinners and all are in debt to God. However little, no sin is worthy of God's majesty and beauty. Coming to Church regularly then, is a way to return love to God. Our commitment to the stewardship of time, talent and treasure becomes a measure of our thanksgiving; of how much we think we have been forgiven and blessed. And we do all these in humility, not grudgingly or through complaining.

Finally, let us emulate this woman in our Gospel. In spite of her situation, she humbly devoted herself to an extraordinary act of stewardship of time, talent and treasure. Let us also be like the others who achieved a turn around and humbly exhibited extraordinary stewardship of time, talent and treasure in support of the mission of Christ and his Church: "Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their resources." "God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19).