

- Louisiana collection
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- Now today the theme of the readings is primarily upon the virtue of humility—one of the greatest of virtues...a trait very often evident by its absence.
- Humans seem to have the desire to be seen and admired...and few among us don't want to be approved by those around us. That's why criticism stings so sharply.
- Even as children we rant and rave in order to get attention.
- As adults we try to have the fanciest car, or the biggest house, or the nicest clothes. The whole fashion industry is based on this.
- This is rather ubiquitous throughout mankind. Even the apostles weren't immune; remember when Jesus chastises them for arguing among themselves about who was the greatest among them?
- How we fight and claw for notoriety—like the people at the dinner table in the parable we just heard.
- But, contrary to our inclinations, in our parable today Jesus tells us to go the lowest place...and that he who exalts himself will be humbled, and God will exalt the humble...as Mary says in her canticle: *“He has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from the thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.”* (Luke 1:51-52)...for, as He tells the apostles in that rather shameful incident in which they are trying to exalt themselves above one another: *“He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”* (Matthew 23:11-12 RSV)
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- For we recall that God has always cherished the humble...a fact reiterated continuously throughout the Gospels, the New Testament and all the scriptures.

- For what matters is not wealth or fame, but seeking the way of God...because we only really become true children of God when we walk in the way that he has shown us. The way Jesus has shown us.
- For, as St. Francis of Assisi said: *“What we are in the eyes of God is what we are, and nothing more.”*
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- Jesus tells us in the Beatitudes: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.”* And *“whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*
(Matthew 23:12)
- And long before Jesus the scriptures were extolling the virtue of humility:
 - *“He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.”* (Psalm 25:9)
 - *“...what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”*
(Micah 6:8)
 - *“Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool...[and] this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.”* (Isaiah 66:1-2)
- And then the writers of the letters of the New Testament:
 - *“God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”*
(James 4:6 RSV)
 - *“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another.”* (1 Peter 5:5)
- And to quote Paul to the Philippians somewhat at length: *“...in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look*

not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, [took] the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men...[he] humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name...” (Phil 2:3-9 RSV)

- When we consider the outrages committed upon Jesus’ divine person...and the outrages still committed against His goodness... how can we not but be in awe of the divine humility of God.
- This is why humility is such an overarching virtue...and in all things, we, His disciples, are emulate and imitate Jesus, the meek and humble of heart in the literally infinite degree—God becoming one of His creatures in the Incarnation.
- Like Moses, too, God’s chosen to lead the people of Israel to the Promised Land and a foreshadowing of Jesus, we read in Numbers 12: “*Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men that were on the face of the earth.*” (Numbers 12:3)
- Because in arrogance we despise others...disregarding the fact that the other person is just as much God’s creation, and that for everything we are dependent upon God.
- But in humility is kindness and generosity—we acknowledge our utter dependence upon Him...that we are His creation, and that to serve Him and others is our purpose...and in that we most perfectly imitate Christ, who gave himself so that we might have eternal life.
- From the classic *The Imitation of Christ* we read:
- *Why should you mind serving others or being poor in the eyes of the world, as long as you do it for the love of Jesus Christ?...Do*

not boast of riches...or of your important friends; but glory in God only, from Whom all good things come...Do not boast of beauty of body...[or] be proud of any talents or skills you possess, for in this way you displease God from Whom you have received them. Do not consider yourself better than others, for you may be worse in God's sight. Do not be proud of your works, for often what pleases us displeases God, Whose judgments differ from that of men. Whatever goodness or virtue is in you, believe that your neighbor has better qualities; in this way you will preserve humility. It will not hurt you to consider yourself worse than others...but it will hurt greatly if you prefer yourself above another, although that person might be a great sinner. A humble person is a peaceful person; but the hearts of the proud are full of envy and resentment.” (Book 1, Ch. 7)

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- The humble sapling bends its face in the wind and thrives...but the proud, stubborn tree refuses to bend, and is snapped off.
- We, like Christ, are called to serve and not to be served...to bend before God and men in service, in imitation of our Lord.
- And whenever we are humble and kind before God and others... this pleases him...for then He sees in us the reflection of the Divine Son.

Reading 1

[Sir 3:17-18, 20, 28-29](#)

My child, conduct your affairs with humility,
and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts.

Humble yourself the more, the greater you are,
and you will find favor with God.

What is too sublime for you, seek not,
into things beyond your strength search not.

The mind of a sage appreciates proverbs,
and an attentive ear is the joy of the wise.

Water quenches a flaming fire,
and alms atone for sins.

[Ps. 68:4-5, 6-7, 10-11](#)

Responsorial Psalm

R. (cf. 11b) **God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.**

The just rejoice and exult before God;
they are glad and rejoice.

Sing to God, chant praise to his name;
whose name is the LORD.

R. **God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.**

The father of orphans and the defender of widows
is God in his holy dwelling.

God gives a home to the forsaken;
he leads forth prisoners to prosperity.

R. **God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.**

A bountiful rain you showered down, O God, upon your inheritance;
you restored the land when it languished;
your flock settled in it;

in your goodness, O God, you provided it for the needy.

R. **God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.**

[Heb 12:18-19, 22-24a](#)

Reading 2

Brothers and sisters:

You have not approached that which could be touched
and a blazing fire and gloomy darkness
and storm and a trumpet blast

and a voice speaking words such that those who heard
begged that no message be further addressed to them.

No, you have approached Mount Zion
and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,
and countless angels in festal gathering,
and the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven,
and God the judge of all,
and the spirits of the just made perfect,
and Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant,
and the sprinkled blood that speaks more eloquently than that of Abel.

[Lk 14:1, 7-14](#)

Gospel

On a sabbath Jesus went to dine
at the home of one of the leading Pharisees,
and the people there were observing him carefully.

He told a parable to those who had been invited,
noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table.
“When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet,
do not recline at table in the place of honor.
A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him,
and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say,
‘Give your place to this man,’
and then you would proceed with embarrassment
to take the lowest place.
Rather, when you are invited,
go and take the lowest place
so that when the host comes to you he may say,
‘My friend, move up to a higher position.’
Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table.
For every one who exalts himself will be humbled,
but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”
Then he said to the host who invited him,
“When you hold a lunch or a dinner,
do not invite your friends or your brothers
or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors,
in case they may invite you back and you have repayment.
Rather, when you hold a banquet,
invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind;
blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you.
For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”