

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Q. How can you make God laugh?

A. Tell him your plans.

Dear Friends,

Today's reading highlights the virtue of humility, which leads to a generous and blessed sharing with the needy. It also warns us to against all forms of pride and self-glorification. They present humility not only as a virtue, but also as a means of opening our hearts, our minds, and our hands to the poor, the needy, the disadvantaged, and the marginalized people in our society – a personal responsibility for every authentic Christian.

In the first reading from the Book of Sirach, Ben Sirach, the author the Book, being a head of the Academy of young men advises like a parent or an elder brother offering wise counsel, the author recommends that his readers find true greatness in living humbly. "Conduct your affairs in humility," Ben Sirach writes. "The more you humble yourselves, the greater you are." He instructs us to be honest about ourselves and to become conscious of our limitations, acknowledging our true position before God as creatures and sinners. Humble people do not deny their gifts and talents. They recognize that their gifts and talents come from God and use them accordingly.

In the Gospel, Jesus talks about humility and self-pride. It is both opposite to itself. He gave a parable for humility. Humility is an attempt to try to see ourselves as God sees us. True humility is recognizing that everything good we have, comes from God. A humble person is one who knows one's gifts and talents and is thankful to God for them. Humility does not imply denying our gifts, or not sharing our talents with others. God made us. We, in turn, are thankful to God for those gifts, and show our thankfulness by using our talents in service to one another.

The word humility comes from the Latin word *humus* which means "fertile soil." In other words, to be humble is to be ready to accept who we are, especially with our talents, abilities, limitations, and weaknesses. Humility does not mean thinking less of ourselves. It means living as Jesus lived – not for ourselves, but for others. For just as pride is the root of all sins, "humility is the root, mother, nurse, foundation and bond of all virtue," as St. John Chrysostom once remarked.

Paul describes in Phil 2:7-8, the six steps in humility that God took in coming to this earth. "Jesus emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and

found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Mother Teresa's Humility List: 1. Speak as little as possible about yourself. 2. Keep busy with your own affairs and not those of others. 3. Avoid curiosity. 4. Do not interfere in the affairs of others. 5. Accept small irritations with good humor. 6. Do not dwell on the faults of others. 7. Accept censures even if unmerited. 8. Give in to the will of others. 9. Accept insults and injuries. 10. Accept contempt, being forgotten and disregarded. 11. Be courteous and delicate even when provoked by someone. 12. Do not seek to be admired and loved. 13. Do not protect yourself behind your own dignity. 14. Give in, in discussions, even when you are right. 15. Choose always the more difficult task.

Learn to be humble by doing all the humble work and doing it for Jesus. You cannot learn humility from books; you learn it by accepting humiliations. Humiliations are not meant to torture us; they are gifts from God. These little humiliations—if we accept them with joy—will help us to be holy, to have a meek and humble heart like Jesus. (St. Teresa of Calcutta).