

HOM 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday 2019 C Sept 1

When it comes to practicing the virtue of humility which is the subject of today's first reading and Gospel reading, we do well to look to Jesus who is the model of *perfect* humility. Jesus reveals Man to himself, as St. John-Paul II wrote in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (*Redeemer of Man*). Jesus shows us what we must become in order to be who we are meant to be. We were created in His image and if we seek conformity to Him, we will be perfected in His likeness and come to share His divine glory. But first we must learn to be humble like Jesus.

In his plea for unity and humility to the Christians at Philippi, St. Paul also points to Jesus' example as the pattern for true humility. Paul writes:

Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but .... for those of others.

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.

Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave...he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him....(Philippians 2: 3-9),

So, Jesus showed His humility first by His Incarnation, that is, by voluntarily leaving behind His divine glory and becoming just like us in all things but sin. I think here of people like St Theresa of Calcutta who left behind a comfortable life to live and work among the poorest of the poor in India. That freely chosen solidarity with the poor was an act of charity and humility.

Other saints have also followed Christ's words and example in this regard. King Louis IX of France (1226-1270) regularly ate his meals with thirteen poor people, and at other times, served meals to the beggars near his palace. Queen Margaret of Scotland (1050-1093) did much the same. St. Frances of Rome (1384-1440) and St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231), both women of nobility, gave hands on care to the sick and destitute.

In fact our own parishioner, Karen Hunka, a former Pennsylvania state auditor, is now voluntarily living in incredibly poor circumstances in Ghana, Africa, as a lay missionary helper, working to raise up the people there in Christ.

We, too, need to humble ourselves with Christ and to show solidarity with the poor by truly serving them as family and friends, without lording it over them or patronizing them.

Christ's humility goes beyond His Incarnation, however. It takes Him to the Cross in obedience to the Father's will for the salvation of all whom the Father loves. And that's where Christ-like humility will take us, also. True humility, is first of all, choosing to obey the will of another for a

greater good ahead of asserting one's own will. And since Jesus humbled Himself in loving obedience to the Father's will, we do well to join Him in that.

We can choose to do that, most especially, by offering ourselves at Holy Communion to and with Jesus to the Father's will unto the Cross for the salvation of all, beginning with family and friends, including the poor, and striving to live this out. Eucharistic self-offering is foremost an act of profound obedience to God's will and therefore is an act of humility that opens our hearts to a superabundance of God's grace as was Mary's heart when she offered herself to God's love and His will at the Annunciation and, overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, was filled with God Himself in the Flesh.

Eucharistic self-offering through the intercession of Mary is also an act of humility by which we acknowledge that we are not able to become Christ-like people on our own, but only with Heaven's help – only by giving our consent for the Mother of the Church and our Mother – who is the also Mediatrix of all graces – to do whatever it takes to get the job done in us.

Today's second reading helps us to know that in making this act of obedience and humility we are approaching the Supreme God, the Creator, Who though all-powerful, has given His Flesh and poured out His Blood to us in the New and Everlasting Covenant offer of oneness with Himself. That's more than humility on God's part. That's sublime love – merciful love for us.

And Eucharistic self-offering will fill us with merciful love for others, a love that is willing to sacrifice and suffer for their true good, especially their eternal good. This is the kind of love that will move us to seek the lowest place with Jesus, which is on the Cross, so that all those we hold dear, including the poor, will be exalted with Jesus, and we with them, through, with, and in Him.

If all this resonates with you, brothers and sisters, and you want this for yourself, you may want to join me in praying these words silently and sincerely at Holy Communion: I AM ALL YOURS O MOST LOVING JESUS THROUGH MARY YOUR MOTHER.