

Sunday Message

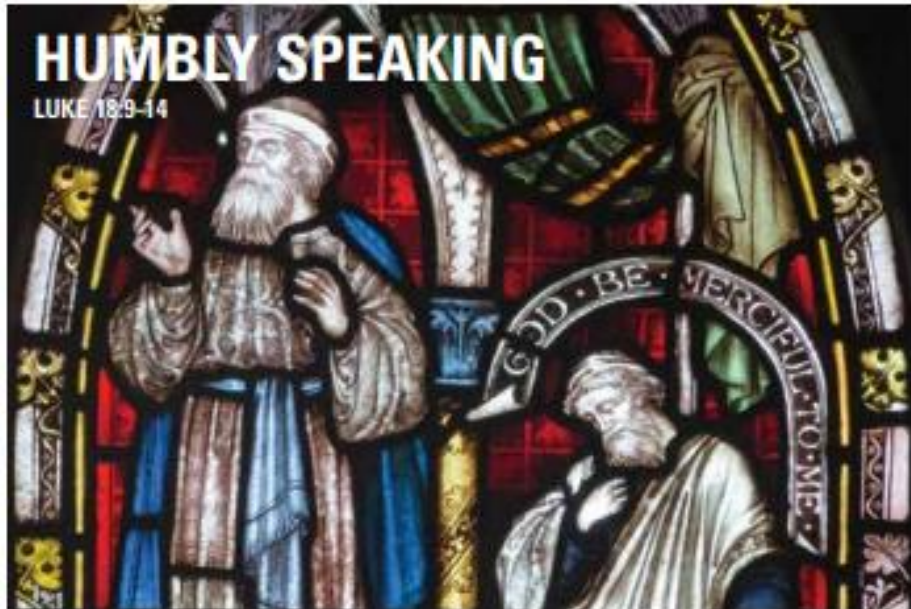
30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 23 October 2022 • Season Colour: Green • Psalter Week 2

HUMBLY SPEAKING

LUKE 18:9-14



You could say that this Gospel is asking a question: who prays best? Is it the professional, who knows all the techniques, or the amateur, who doesn't even trust himself to get it right?

The opening words make it clear that it is addressed to those who pride themselves on being virtuous and look down on everyone else. The characters represent the two extremes of Jewish society in the time of Jesus.

The Pharisee was the totally dedicated religious professional. Strictly speaking, the Pharisees didn't have any place in the religious hierarchy. They were a fellowship of like-minded Jews that included priests and laity but their influence came from the popular esteem they enjoyed. The Pharisee's prayer could be described as a commercial for the movement.

Tax collectors, or publicans, were at the other end of the social scale. They bought the rights to collect the taxes of their own people from the Roman occupying power. If that wasn't bad enough in a strongly nationalist society like Palestine, they made their profit by adding a percentage to the taxes for themselves. Throughout the Gospels, tax collectors are presented as outsiders, who had long ago abandoned any loyalty to their own, so that 'tax collector' and 'sinner' effectively means the same thing.

One might imagine Jesus' audience waiting in expectation to hear what such a person would pray for. The surprise is that, quite unconsciously, it is this person rather than the religious one who knows instinctively how to pray. He is not there to overwhelm God with a catalogue of his good deeds. Even his demeanour speaks of a humble heart: he stands barely inside the area of the temple reserved for prayer, he keeps his eyes downcast, he strikes his breast as a sign of penitence and pleads for mercy. After his prayer, he returns home "at rights with God".

Why was the prayer of the Pharisee without effect? It was because he made the fatal mistake of comparing himself favourably with others and judging that God would not hear the prayer of the tax collector. In other words, he was playing God. Luke rounds off the parable with yet another reference to one of his favourite themes: "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but those who humble themselves will be exalted." ■

REFLECT

Rabbi Lionel Blue tells a humorous modern Jewish story that echoes this parable. Once, on the Day of Atonement, a man was selected to lead in his local synagogue one of the long confessional prayers that is central to that day's worship. He was not known for his piety, and the fact that he was selected didn't impress some of his critics in the congregation. As he chanted the part of the confession where it says that, on account of his sins, he is but dust and ashes, one critic nudged another and said, "Look who thinks he is dust and ashes!"

Consecrated and familiar words of prayer can sometimes lull us into a false sense of security about ourselves. That is precisely what happened to the Pharisee in the parable. He was blinded by such a false sense of his own righteousness that he failed to recognise his need of salvation. There is not a word of repentance in his prayer; it is a litany of self-congratulation from beginning to end.

Coming face to face with our sinful side is never easy. The tax collector knows he can sink no further and that if anyone is to rescue him, it can only be God, and that is what he prays for. As we think over this Gospel again, we might ask whether our prayer is closer to that of the Pharisee or the tax collector. ■

SAY

Lord, I know I am far from perfect. Help me to live in a way that is pleasing to you. Amen.

LEARN

The Christian has the same human weakness and sin as everyone else.

The Christian trusts in God's love and forgiveness and knows that God forgives him or her first.

PRAY

Make the publican's prayer your own. Repeat slowly and from the heart: "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

DO

The Pharisee looked down on the tax collector. Is there a person or group of people you look down on? What do you need to do about it?

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

Fr Peter McNeill Tel: 406 50207 Emergency Tel: 079 69403762
Email: dromaradrumgooland@dromorediocese.org Web: www.dromaradrumgooland.org

23rd October 2022
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet
7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory
11:00am Dromara

Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet
Tues 9:00am Dromara
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim
Fri 7:30pm Dromara

Recently deceased Edward McBride, Downpatrick

Anniversaries (2023 Anniversary Book now available)

Dechomet

Sat 22nd Peter Joseph Kelly (Derryneil) and
Deceased Members of Kelly Family
Eileen Fitzpatrick and Lily Sweeney

Leitrim

Sat 22nd Pat and Mary Teresa Morgan
Wed 26th John McAlarney (MM)
Sat 29th Nicky and Anne Duggan and Deceased
Family Members
Rose McAleenan; John and Bridget
O'Hare and Deceased Family Members
Annie B Morgan and Deceased Family
Members

Dromara

Sun 30th Michael Rice
Bridget, Peter and Frank McEvoy

Dromara GAC Gala Ball (Black Tie) Sat 12th Nov
Millbrook Lodge Hotel. For 16 years and over. Tickets
£50. Entertainment by The Untouchables. Awards
evening for footballers and camogs. Tickets can be
purchased from any committee member or via:-
<https://www.klubfunder.com/Clubs/Dromara%20GAC>
Please book ASAP as the Hotel require numbers by 28th Oct.
We have secured a tuxedo hire deal with JJ Donnelly
Menswear, Ballynahinch (suit, shirt and bow tie) £35.

Congratulations to Annie Taylor, Dromara, who
celebrated her 90th Birthday recently.

SVP Helplines

Drumgooland 078 2541 9067
Dromara 077 3883 8191

Safeguarding P Carville 077 8991 7741

| Collections Parish | Dromara £390 | Drumgooland £705 |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|
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Southern Area Collection £1,252 in so far. If
anyone wishes to make a donation, please put it
in an envelope marked 'Hospice' and leave in the
collection basket.

St Michael's PS, Finnis, Halloween Bingo

Sun 23rd Oct at 3pm. Doors open at 2.30pm.
Money raised will go towards school funds and
developing a sensory area in the school.
Hope to see you there!

St Joseph's Young Priest Society - Annual
Retreat Sun 23rd Oct, SMA Dromantine. Cost £15.
To book contact Clare McCullough 07446209726

Rosary at the Windy Gap Tues 25th Oct at 8pm

Traditional Folk Night Fri 28th Oct, 8pm, Peter
Morgan's Cottage Finnis. Everyone welcome.

Do This In Memory The second weekend for
the First Communion preparation programme
will take place on 29th/30th Oct. The children are
asked to bring a pair of rosary beads, which will
be blessed at mass.

St Michael's New Cemetery - Notice to Contractors

Graveyard extension including provision of
footpaths and guard rails/fencing.
Expressions of tender interest to be emailed to
bradley@gilligan.co.uk at Gilligan Consulting
Engineers, before Mon 31st Oct.
The parish does not bind itself to accept the
lowest, or any, tender received.

Confirmation Dates (all at 6:00pm)

28th Mar - St Michael's; 29th Mar - St Matthew's;
31st Mar - St Mary's

First Communion Dates (all at 11:00am)

6th May - St Mary's; 13th May - St Michael's;
20th May - St Matthew's

Drumgooland SVP A little help at the right time
can make a big difference. SVP can provide
practical help and support, in strict confidence.
If you are struggling with food/heating bills, etc.,
please contact us 078 2541 9067