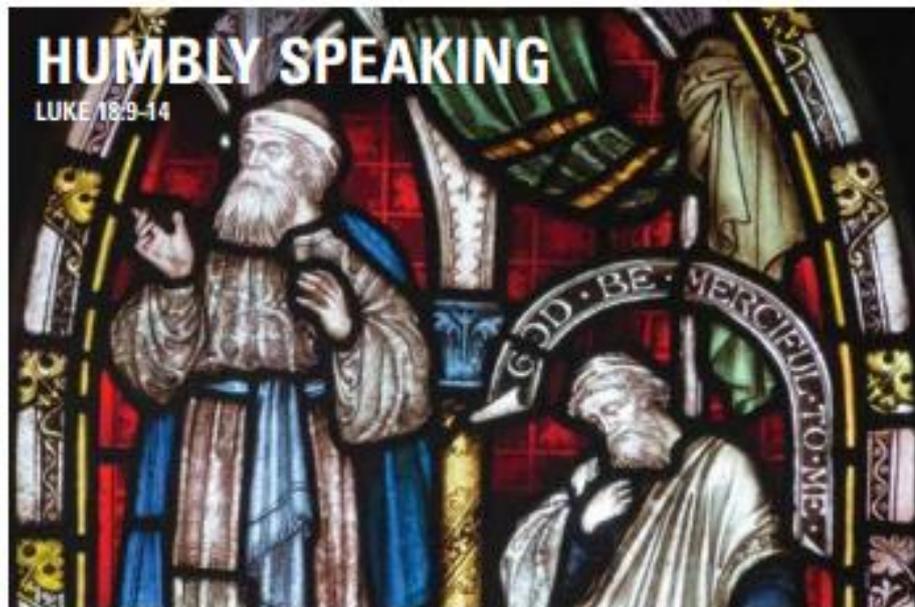


# Sunday Message

30<sup>TH</sup> 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

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**23<sup>rd</sup> October 2022**  
**30<sup>th</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> Peter Joseph Kelly (Derryneil) and  
Deceased Members of Kelly Family  
Eileen Fitzpatrick and Lily Sweeney

### Leitrim

Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> Pat and Mary Teresa Morgan  
Wed 26<sup>th</sup> John McAlarney (MM)  
Sat 29<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> Michael Rice  
Bridget, Peter and Frank McEvoy

**Dromara GAC Gala Ball (Black Tie) Sat 12<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday recently.

## SVP Helplines

Drumgooland 078 2541 9067  
Dromara 077 3883 8191

**Safeguarding** P Carville 077 8991 7741

Collections Parish	Dromara	Drumgooland
	£390	£705

**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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct, SMA Dromantine. Cost £15.  
To book contact Clare McCullough 07446209726

**Rosary at the Windy Gap** Tues 25<sup>th</sup> Oct at 8pm

**Traditional Folk Night** Fri 28<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:bradley@gilligan.co.uk) at Gilligan Consulting Engineers, before Mon 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.  
The parish does not bind itself to accept the lowest, or any, tender received.

### Confirmation Dates (all at 6:00pm)

28<sup>th</sup> Mar - St Michael's; 29<sup>th</sup> Mar - St Matthew's;  
31<sup>st</sup> Mar - St Mary's

### First Communion Dates (all at 11:00am)

6<sup>th</sup> May - St Mary's; 13<sup>th</sup> May - St Michael's;  
20<sup>th</sup> 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