

30TH SUNDAY – ORD. (C)

THE PRAYER OF THE LOWLY PIERCES THE CLOUDS

October 22/23, 2022

Last week, we were told to pray persistently, or to pray without growing weary. Today, the message is to pray with humility. Humility is the opposite of pride. Pride makes one feel that he is the best in everything, and no one can equal him, and that leads to idolatry.

We hear today, the reward of being humble or lowly. Sirach makes it clear that God has no favorites. He listens to the prayers of the weak and hears the cry of the oppressed. “The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds, and it does not rest until it reaches its goal”. Also, God listens to the one who serves Him willingly.

This is what Jesus talked about in the gospel about the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee prayed with pride and as a result his prayer was not answered. Instead of praising God, he congratulated himself about what he was doing. He despised everybody, including the tax collector. The tax collector prayed with humility; he admitted that he was a sinner, and his prayer pierced the clouds.

Jesus began His sermon on the mount, or the Beatitudes, with the poor, saying that the poor in Spirit will inherit the kingdom of Heaven, (Mt.5:3). One who is poor in Spirit focuses on spiritual matters and less on worldly things. Poverty here is not about having nothing to eat or drink, but about surrendering oneself to God and not allowing anything to take the place of God. St. Peter after the good catch of fish, fell at the feet of Jesus and said: “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man” (Lk.5:8). In the Magnificat, Mary revealed how God cast down the mighty from their thrones and raises the lowly; (Lk.1:52). Jesus Himself was humble to the extent of dying a shameful death in order to save the world.

St. Paul when converted considered everything as rubbish, because he found treasure in the cross of Christ. When he was tried for being a Christian almost all his companions deserted him, but he was supported by the Lord. He knew God to be a just judge so he was ready to serve God willingly and selflessly to receive an award from Him. God does not abandon us.

6Who am I in relation to God? Am I meek and humble, am I proud and arrogant? What makes me feel that I am better than other people and therefore, look down upon them? Is it because of my position in the society, the work I am doing, the financial position I find myself in, the family I have, or the number of times I pray in a day?

God has no favorites, so He hears the cry of the poor, and listens to those who serve Him willingly. I cannot impress God with external display of righteousness. I have to worship Him with a humble and contrite heart, for “the sacrifice acceptable to Him is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, God will not despise” (Ps.51:52). Spiritual pride can make me think that I am more righteous than others. It can even prevent me from going to confession, because I see myself as having no sin, or consider myself holier than the priest at the confessional. Spiritual pride can lead to trumpeting the small, good things I do. It can also lead to vainglory.

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