

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – 08-31-2025

In the first reading today we heard, "Conduct your affairs with humility...Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God."

And then in the gospel Jesus made it very clear. "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

I was sent a beautiful story recently about a young lady named Justine Donahue who worked full-time for a Protestant evangelical mega-church before coming home to the Catholic Church.

She began her story with the heading, "Some truths once unveiled cannot be ignored."

Anyway, she grew up in a wonderful Christian home, she was baptized at age 16, and went on to follow Jesus as best she knew how.

After college she came upon a beautiful Protestant evangelical mega-church community and was surrounded by people who loved Jesus and she had every intention of remaining there for the rest of her life.

Until one day she met a stranger who asked her if she attended church.

Of course she said yes and then she went on to give her witness about her mega-church and invited the stranger to come and see.

The stranger told her that she was Catholic and could never leave the Eucharist or the Magisterium and would never even think about leaving the Church founded by Jesus Christ.

Justine said she had no idea what the Eucharist or the Magisterium were but she was immediately offended that someone would have the audacity to claim that Jesus Christ founded her Church. And yet she was captivated that anyone could have the confidence to make such a statement.

This began her quest for the Truth. So she started Googling, who founded the Baptist Church, who founded the Assembly of God Church, who founded the evangelical Church, the Pentecostal Church...the Catholic Church.

This was just the beginning. For the sake of time I'm going to skip some really good stuff but hopefully we can put a link to the full story on our website for anyone who wants to hear it directly from her.

Anyway, late in her journey she attended a Catholic conference with a pretty famous theologian by the name of Scott Hahn. She went there expecting to remain completely anonymous.

During the conference she realized she wasn't disagreeing with anything that was being said and decided she needed to learn more about the Eucharist so she went back to buy a book and found the largest one available. It turned out to be too expensive on her salary so she put it back thinking she could find it cheaper online.

Then toward the end of the conference she, like many others wrote a little note to Dr. Hahn. In the note she said, "Dear Dr. Hahn. I'm a Protestant but after today, not for long." She thought this would be for his eyes only.

And yet, at the end of his part in the conference, Dr. Hahn decided to pull one note out of a hat to read and then give the person who wrote it a book.

It was her note. "Dear Dr. Hahn. I'm a Protestant but after today, not for long." The audience erupted in cheers. Remember she had every intention

of remaining anonymous but she had to walk down the isle, amidst the cheering crowd, to receive her book from Dr. Hahn. He gave her a big hug and told her that she had made his day.

Then he gave her the book – the very book she had wanted to buy but was too expensive on her salary.

But even after this she still wasn't convinced because she knew that if Catholicism was true it was going to cost her everything. So the search continued.

In my own words the Eucharist began to consume her so, ironically, she stopped receiving communion at her Protestant church.

Now Fast-forward toward the end of her journey: She went to a five day silent retreat, where she was in Eucharistic Adoration five to seven hours a day and a priest was giving her spiritual direction. The priest was convinced that she would hear from the Lord before the end of her retreat.

But she said nothing was happening. Then suddenly she had the experience of being blindfolded and Jesus was behind her guiding her. She came to a door, pushed it open and took off her blindfold. Jesus had led her into a Catholic Church as Mass was going on.

She was actually disappointed and thought Jesus had made a wrong turn. She turned around but Jesus wasn't there. Then she turned around again and he was standing at the altar.

Then Jesus began showing her the Church. He began with the red candle. He said, this means I'm here. I did this for you. Don't you love it?

Then he showed her the stained-glass windows and said, these are stories from the Bible. I did this for you. Don't you love it?

Then he went to a statue of Mary and said, this is my mother, she's your mother too. I did this for you. Don't you love it?

Then he went to the priest and put his hands over the priest's hands and at the consecration he held the priest's hands and elevated the host and said, I did this for you. Do you love it? Do you love it?

She couldn't understand what Jesus meant, "I did this for you". She thought everything in the Catholic Church was man-made.

So in her meditation she decided to take Jesus to her Protestant church to show him everything they did for him – the lights, the screens, the stadium seating – and said to Jesus, we did this for you, don't you love it?

But he said to her, I love you!

That was it. The retreat ended on Saturday and she resigned from her Protestant church on Monday.

She said it was the most difficult decision of her life. It was like dying and many of her Protestant friends couldn't understand.

As difficult as it was for her to realize that the Catholic Church was the one true Church founded by Jesus she humbled herself and was exalted by the Lord.

There was nothing arrogant about that stranger saying to Justine Donahue on that fateful day that the Catholic Church was founded by Jesus Christ. "Some truths once unveiled cannot be ignored."

In fact it's humbling to speak the Truth knowing you might be hated for it.

But conduct your affairs with humility...because the one who humbles himself will be exalted and so will many, many, many others because of it.