

22nd Sun. Ord. Time (C)
St. Athanasius and St. Francis Parishes
August 27, 28, 2016

“Like a child rests in its mother's arms, so will I rest in you. (repeat)
O God, I am not proud; I do not look for things too great.” (words of Psalm 131)

I could hardly pull these words of Psalm 131 from my mind after reading today's First Scripture, and today's Gospel about one's place at table and whom to invite and not invite when hosting a banquet.

Humility is a foundational virtue to being a disciple of Jesus. A disciple always recognizes the primacy of the Master, and that everything we have is ultimately from the Master. All that I am and all that I have is given to me by a loving and generous God. Thus, humility cuts through self-importance and pride. And in connection with the end of year report that we will do later, the humble person recognizes the gifts received and shares them in a generous and even sacrificial way.

I thought of three areas that are good indicators of my humility.... whether I am a humble man or not

How well do I listen to God/others?

How well do I receive guests into my life?

How generous am I?

LISTEN: when I do not listen to God or to another person, it indicates that I don't think they have much to offer me. I have no need of their wisdom or their experience. By not listening to others I am saying “ you are not that important to me you really don't matter all that much to me.” These are more the thoughts of a proud man than of a humble man.

HOSPITALITY : how do I receive guests into my life? When someone comes into the office I have the habit of continuing right on working when they are present to me. I am not attentive to them, or at least not completely as I continuing on with what I may have been doing. It is like they are an 'intrusion'. It says a lot about what I think of their worth, and how I compare their worth to mine or to what I happen to be doing. And it is the same with God. What is really so important up against another person, and especially when the other person is God? Again, these are more the actions of a proud man, a self-inflated person, than of a humble man.

ALMSGIVING: how generous are my donations to others, and to whom and to what as I willing to donate? Is it limited to those I know will probably repay me, or to that from which I will get some immediate recognition? Is my almsgiving calculated? Or genuinely generous?

To be humble means to recognize my place. And, not just my place at a banquet table as in today's Gospel text. But I must recognize my place in relationship to God's place and in relationship to your place. We all have a place!

-I am not humble when I do not recognize God's rightful place in my life.

-I am not humble when I do not recognize the rightful place of others in my life, in the world as a whole.

-to ignore the rightful place of another is an act of a pride-filled person, the type of person that the Lord will eventually depose in favor of lifting up the lowly.

Listen to Psalm 131, a prayer that Jesus certainly knew and no doubt thought about often:

Lord, my heart is not proud,
nor are my eyes haughty;
Neither do I aspire after great things,
or matters above me.
Indeed, I have calmed and quieted my soul.
As a weaned child on its mother's lap,
as a little child, so is my soul within me.
O Israel, hope in the Lord,
both now and forever.