

A reading from the book of Sirach.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

My child, perform your tasks with humility;  
then you will be loved by those whom God accepts.  
The greater you are,  
the more you must humble yourself;  
so you will find favour in the sight of the Lord.  
Many are lofty and renowned,  
but to the humble the Lord reveals his secrets.  
For great is the might of the Lord;  
but by the humble he is glorified.  
When calamity befalls someone proud,  
there is no healing,  
for an evil plant has taken root in him.  
The mind of the intelligent appreciates proverbs,  
and an attentive ear is the desire of the wise.

PAUSE for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters:

You have not come to something that can be touched,  
a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom,  
and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet,  
and a voice whose words made the hearers beg  
that not another word be spoken to them.  
But you have come to Mount Zion  
and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,  
with its innumerable of angels in festal gathering,  
and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven,  
and to God the judge of all,  
and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,  
and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – C 22

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

*Glory to you, O Lord.*

On one occasion  
when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees  
to eat a meal on the Sabbath,  
the lawyers and Pharisees were watching him closely.  
When Jesus noticed how the guests chose the places of honour,  
he told them a parable.  
“When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet,  
do not sit down at the place of honour,  
in case someone more distinguished than you  
has been invited by your host;  
and the host who invited both of you  
may come and say to you,  
‘Give this person your place,’  
and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place.  
But when you are invited,  
go and sit down at the lowest place,  
so that when your host comes,  
he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’;  
then you will be honoured  
in the presence of all who sit at the table with you.  
For whoever exalts himself will be humbled,  
and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”  
Jesus said also to the Pharisee who had invited him,  
“When you give a luncheon or a dinner,  
do not invite your friends or your brothers or sisters  
or your relatives or rich neighbours,  
in case they may invite you in return,  
and you would be repaid.  
But when you give a banquet,  
invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.  
And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you,  
for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29

This is a lesson on humility, chosen to fit the Gospel of the day.

Pride is the deadliest of the seven deadly sins, while humility is perhaps the most characteristic of Christian virtues.

The humble person finds “favor in the sight of the Lord,” not because that favor is a reward for humility, but because humility, like faith, means abandoning self-assertion, all trust in one’s own righteousness, and allowing God to act where we can do nothing.

Responsorial Psalm: 68:4-5, 6-7, 10-11

Psalm 68 is a confused melee of themes, thought by some scholars to be a series of headings to a number of different liturgical pieces rather than a unitary psalm. To read it is rather like reading the chapter headings of a book.

Nevertheless, it contains passages of considerable beauty, and it is possible, as is done here, to combine excerpts from it into a meaningful hymn.

This selection is a hymn of praise to God for granting his favor to the poor (the “humble” of the Second Reading).

Reading II: Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a

This reading from Hebrews would have fit last Sunday’s theme far better—the movement to Zion.

It presents a contrast between the law and the gospel, between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. Coming to this mountain is the favor the Lord grants to the “humble.”

Gospel: Luke 14:1, 7-14

The parables read here (Lk 14:7-11) and the ensuing exhortation are connected by their common context in a meal of Jesus. The parable looks like a piece of prudential advice on how to behave at a dinner party so as to avoid embarrassment.

But since it is a parable, it must not be interpreted as a piece of worldly wisdom or even as a lesson in humility, as usually understood. It deals rather with an aspect of one’s relationship with God.

God, in the person of Jesus (see Lk 14:8), is inviting all people to the messianic feast. The only way to respond to this invitation is to renounce any claim or merit of one’s own.

The Pharisees expected the best seats as a reward for keeping the Torah, but, like the outcast, they have to learn that salvation has to be accepted as an unmerited gift— exactly as we interpreted humility in the first reading.

The ensuing exhortation is likewise not a piece of worldly advice but a kind of parable, its point being that people's final acceptance at the messianic banquet depends on their acceptance of others now.

In other words, forgive and God will forgive you.

Thus, humility in the Christian sense is not purely a passive virtue; like faith, to which it is closely akin, it is highly active.

Reginald H. Fuller