

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

GOSPEL

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On a sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, 'When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, "Give up your place to this man." And then, to your embarrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place. No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, "My friend, move up higher." In that way, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

Then he said to his host, 'When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again.'

(Luke 14:1,7-14)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- In Scripture, as we have noted before, the wedding feast—a time of joyous celebration and abundance—is one of the traditional images of the kingdom of God.
- At the time of Jesus, society was organised along strictly hierarchical lines. People were very sensitive to their status in society and how they were treated.
- Pharisees are one among a number of groups within Jewish society. They were especially observant of the law and were influential in society.

EXPLORING THE WORD

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is often depicted as sharing meals with people who were not considered at that time and in that culture to be appropriate table companions: publicans, tax collectors, sinners and women of dubious reputation. In this meal, Jesus reveals more of the radical reversal that is characteristic of God's way. He challenges the way the Pharisees see their own standing in society as people of status, urging them instead to take the more humble positions at table and to allow the host, or God, to choose those who should be exalted. He also shatters the Pharisees' idea of table fellowship by urging them to share their festive table with those who are the least important or the outcasts of society. The way to God cannot be organised according to human priority! It is in the ultimate humiliation of crucifixion that Jesus is exalted in resurrection and ascension.

- What challenges does this text offer to society today or to the Church, which sometimes excludes people of 'inappropriate status' from the Eucharistic table?
- Who are treated as the 'least important' in our modern world? Who are treated as the 'most important' in our modern world? Do we need to offer a critique of this?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- Do you appreciate all things while expecting nothing?
- What does honour mean to you?
- How do you repay kindnesses done to you?
- Share a story (and enjoy the humour of hindsight) about an embarrassing moment you have experienced!
- Offer table fellowship and share a meal with someone who would appreciate your company this week.
- Use today's collect as your prayer this week:

*God of might, giver of every good gift,
put into our hearts the love of your name,
so that, by deepening our sense of reverence,
you may nurture in us what is good
and, by your watchful care, keep safe what you have
nurtured.*

