

22nd Sunday of the Year C

*My child, be gentle in carrying out your business,
and you will be better loved than a lavish giver.
(Si 3:17)*



First Reading

Ecclesiasticus 3:17-20.28-29

My child, be gentle in carrying out your business, and you will be better loved than a lavish giver. The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly, and then you will find favour with the Lord; for great though the power of the Lord is, he accepts the homage of the humble. There is no cure for the proud man's malady, since an evil growth has taken root in him. The heart of a sensible man will reflect on parables, an attentive ear is the sage's dream.

Second Reading

Hebrews 12:18-19.22-24

What you have come to is nothing known to the senses: not a blazing fire, or a gloom turning to total darkness, or a storm; or trumpeting thunder or the great voice speaking which made everyone that heard it beg that no more should be said to them. But what you have come to is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gathered for the festival, with the whole Church in which everyone is a "first-born son" and a citizen of heaven. You have come to God himself, the supreme Judge, and been placed with spirits of the saints who have been made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant.

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."

Meditation

At the banquet of life, we do not hesitate to elbow other people out of the way to get the best places. But Jesus shows us how different this is from the kingdom. To enter his reign we must be humble. Gospel humility is not a religious sado-masochism motivated by self-hatred or obsequiousness. Assertiveness and humility are not mutually exclusive. They both require that we be true to our dignity as image of God. Jesus who was in the form of God left the first place to take the last. That is why "God highly exalted him" (Ph 2:6-9). In a second meal image we find another warning against clever calculation. Our invitation list must include those who have no means to repay us. Christ, who is found in these least ones (Mt 25:31-46), will return the invitation in the banquet of the kingdom.