

Homily012923 (Sunday)

TRUE BLESSEDNESS IN HUMILITY

Have you ever inherited something? Someone died and they left you something in their will? That's happened to me a number of times. I would say, most of the time, I didn't even know that I was in their will. I remember I had an aunt down in Florida who left me some money, and I was very surprised at that. She outlived her husband. They didn't have any children, so their nieces and nephews, she left money for that. She set a little foundation together. And I remember I used those monies to take some people (e.g., godchildren) to the Holy Land because it was a nice thing; I could do that and so forth.

“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the land.” The meek didn't own any land then – the rich people owned the land. So Jesus says, *“blessed are the meek; they will inherit the land”* – not from the rich people, because all the land really belongs to the Lord. He will make sure that there's something for them. Those who have had not, will inherit it. It will be given to you.

“Blessed are the meek.” You and I know people who are meek; you know what happens to them a lot of times in this world – they don't fare so well. They don't look out after their own interests so well. They get taken advantage of sometimes. Sometimes people, as they get older, become meek, and they're really “easy pickings” for people who are unscrupulous. So, Jesus has this special place for the meek, and there were those who said of Him that he was “meek and humble of heart.” And if you look at the First Reading and the Second Reading, and then the Sermon on the Mount...in Zephaniah, He talks about the *humble people* and the grace of humility.

And then Paul, when he is writing through the Corinthians and he's saying, “you know, not many of you are well-born. Not many of you have a whole lot. Not many of you are the wisest people in the world. Not many of you are the owners of people. But God chooses you.” And God chooses those whom other people seem foolish to confound the wise, in terms of the world.

Our culture is a celebrity culture. All of our athletes are celebrities. All of our games now have become transformed. They're not just a game anymore. They're entertainment. And our entertainment celebrities – they're the people that everybody looks up to. And that's moved over into politics now. So you have to be an entertainer in politics as well. And it's moved into business and it's moved on to the social media. And so, these are the people that are put in front of us all the time. If I ask you to name some people from that world that you think are humble, would you be able to do that?

But the One in whom we believe, the One in whose Name we gather each weekend, the One to whom we pray, is meek and humble of heart.

Humility is not such a popular virtue these days...not culturally popular. I do think it was once upon a time, when the land was more prominent.

Years ago, I came across a prayer that I now have incorporated into my own life, and I pray every day. And it's a litany. And it's called the *Litany of Humility*. And, I came across it because it was one of the prayers of Mother Teresa used to pray. I saw that, and then it turns out that she prayed a shortened version of it. And I said, “Oh, Mother, like shortcuts too.” You know, that's always good to know about the saints, that if they like shortcuts, then “okay, I can be a, a person that likes shortcuts too.”

So it's probably written by this Cardinal named Cardinal Merry del Val. His father was the ambassador from Spain to England, and he was born in England and raised there. But he was just a very interesting man. He was very bright, greatest education, multi-language, a polyglot.

And he was a good man, a holy man, a priest. He was the Secretary of State for Pope St. Pius X in the early part of the 1900s. And, he prayed this prayer; he wrote this prayer. This is the hardest prayer for me to pray after the Our Father. The Our Father is the hardest prayer for me to pray because it's *our* Father. And forgive *us* as *we* forgive. There's a real humility underlying the praying of the Our Father.

So let me just pray this Litany of Humility for you. Just listen to it.

“O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, hear me. From the desire of being esteemed, deliver me Jesus. From the desire of being loved, deliver me Jesus. From the desire of being extolled, deliver me Jesus. From the desire of being honored, deliver me Jesus. From the desire of being praised, deliver me Jesus. From the desire of being preferred, deliver me Jesus. From the desire of being consulted, deliver me Jesus. From the desire of being approved, deliver me Jesus.” (These are things we desire. We pray for deliverance) *From the fear, from the fear of being humiliated, deliver me Jesus. From the fear of being despised, deliver me Jesus. From the fear of suffering rebukes, deliver me Jesus. From the fear of being calumniated (lied about), deliver me Jesus. From the fear of being forgotten, deliver me Jesus. From the fear of being ridiculed (made fun of; snarky statements about), deliver me Jesus. From the fear of being wronged, deliver me Jesus. From the fear of being suspected, deliver me Jesus.*

That others may be loved more than I – Jesus, grant me the grace to desire this. That others may be esteemed more than I – Jesus, grant me the grace to desire this. That in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease – Jesus, grant me the grace to desire this. That others may be chosen, and I set aside – Jesus, grant me the grace to desire this. That others may be praised and I unnoticed – Jesus, grant me the grace to desire this. That others may be preferred to me in everything – Jesus, grant me the grace to desire this. That others become holier than I, provided that I become as holy as I should – Jesus, grant me the grace to desire this.

You know why that's a hard prayer to pray. Humility - that's real. And the Lord says, *“My Father is humble and I am humble, I did not come to seek myself. I came to seek you. I came to bring you back. I came to forgive you. I came to love you. I came to invite you to come into My Kingdom forever. It's why I came. It's what I'm about. And I will endure all kinds of things for that to happen.”*

And so He says, *“as you live your life, don't be afraid of these things. Ask me, I'll help you.”* You'll not lose anything, any of the things I prayed. You won't lose anything if you, if you give them up, you won't. You will gain. You will gain in ways you have no idea. The meek will inherit the earth and the pure of spirit will be rewarded and the mourning will be comforted. The Lord has a way - His way. It's the only way that works in this world. That's not what the world says or thinks, but it's what we believe and know. And so once in a while, we just need to be reminded that the path of humility is the path that ends in the Kingdom for all who follow the way of Jesus.

May He bless us all today and give us His peace.