

The homily on Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B

One day, St. Bernard was asked about the four fundamental virtues, he replied: “Humility, Humility, Humility and Humility.” He explained that humility is the mother of virtues, so practicing humility you will get all other virtues.

In the Old Testament, many prophets prophesied about the Savior who came from the descendants of David. He would build a universal kingdom. All nations would go to Jerusalem. The Jews waited for that day many years. However, these prophets spoke of a spiritual kingdom that the Messiah will institute in heaven; it is not on the earth.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus foretold that “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.” (Mark 9:31) The apostles were not aware of the meaning of his teaching. They still hoped that Jesus would establish a kingdom of Israel. So, along the way, they argued with each other who would be the most important person in the kingdom of God.

Jesus knew why they had argued. He taught them a lesson of humility: “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” (Mark 9:35) Jesus wanted to destroy their self-arrogance. It is a bad thing to be avoided by his disciples. St. James said in the second reading, “Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice.” (JAS 3:16)

Also, Jesus used the image of children to teach the apostles and us the lesson of humility and the lesson of service. The characteristics of children are trust, simplicity and sincerity. A humble person has the virtues of children. They are not fake but honest. They realize their weakness and sins, so they are dependent on the wisdom and providence of God. Moreover, Jesus also said, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me.” (Mark 9:37) Accepting children means accepting people like children. They are the humble people, the poor, the sick, the weak, the abandoned people, etc. When we serve these people that we are serving Jesus and serving God Himself.

There is a story of St. Francis of Silesia - a famous bishop. He had a housekeeper who had an alcohol addiction. In the evening, when his work was done, he often went down the street with some friends to drink.

One time, he got drunk, and it was too late at night. He did not know how to get into the house, so he laid in front of bishop Francis’ door and slept. At the time, St. Francis was still awake and heard the sound, so he opened the door and recognized

his housekeeper. The saint held and put the man in his own bed to sleep. In the morning, the man woke up and realized he was in the bishop's room. He hurried to kneel down and asked the bishop for forgiveness. The saint smiled and let him go. Since that time, the man has given up with alcohol.

Through this story, we see that the attitude of St. Francis of Silesia is beautiful. As a bishop, he did not hesitate to stoop down, hold the dull servant, and laid him on his own bed to sleep. We learn from the saint a lesson of humility and service. Jesus himself made a best example of humble service. He is God but humble, became man, and lived among humanity. At the Passover feast, he washed the feet of the apostles and taught them to wash one another's feet. Indeed, whoever wants to be greatest, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all!

Saying that Jesus does not mean to prevent us to be a great one. In a society or the religion association, there must be the great men who hold and run its positions. Thus, Jesus means one is great to serve others better.

Other example, the Virgin Mary exemplifies humility. Our Lady did not dream of being the Mother of our Savior. However, God saw the Virgin Mary as a humble girl and he chose her to be the mother of his only Son. Realizing the truth about her, the Virgin Mary praised God for the great things he had done for her in Magnificat. With a lovely and humble heart, our Lady did not fear difficulties in visiting St. Elizabeth – her cousin and staying to serve Elizabeth for 3 months. This is a great example of humble service for us.

In our daily life, if we look at our brothers and sisters with a lovely and humble heart, our lives will be beautiful. We will be easy to serve and share with others in their need. Then, we will find joy, happiness and peace in our serving lives.

May God bless you!