

FATHER MARK SCHULTE
HOMILY
TWENTY SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C)
August 31, 2025

“Seat of Honor”

My brothers and sisters, in the Gospel we hear how Jesus is invited to dine with some Pharisees on a sabbath. On the occasion Jesus takes notice of how many of the guests are scrambling to secure a seat of honor at the table. It is not mentioned where Jesus was seated. Jesus took the opportunity to teach the importance of humility, that of choosing the seat of least honor thus allowing for the opportunity to be selected for a higher seat of honor. He noted that he who is puffed up with pride takes honor upon himself and will eventually be humbled and cast down. But he who humbles himself initially allows for the opportunity of greater recognition (Lk 14:1, 7-14).

There was a meeting of high-ranking world leaders at the White House recently. The meeting was made visible to the press, and it was quickly noted the seating positions at the table and who selected the more prominent seats. For there was apparently no assigned seating. The world takes note of such matters as well.

The point Jesus was making was that humility should be an important part of each person's life. Humility draws down the Holy Spirit upon a person and prepares him to receive the mysteries of God. In a contrary way pride repels the Holy Spirit, for the prideful person is only open to his own counsel. The Holy Spirit cannot break through the prideful heart (CCC 2546, 2549).

Jesus is our prime example of humility for even though He is God he has still humbled Himself out of love for us and accepted the way of the cross. And because of this God highly exalted Him above every other name and sovereignty in both the created world and the spiritual world (Phil 2:9-11).

The Blessed Virgin Mary is our second example. Scripture tells us that it was her humility that drew the Holy Spirit to her and selected her to be the Mother of Jesus, our Lord and God (Lk 1:48).

Humility exalts whereas pride casts down. The devil is the principal example of pride. It is because of him that we have the phrase “pride goeth before the fall” (Prov 16:18). Because of his pride and unwillingness to serve he was cast out of heaven down to the lowest place in hell (2 Pt 2:4, Rev 12:7-9, 20:10).

The word humility comes from the Latin term “*humilis*” which means lowly, and is closely related is the word “*humus*” which means “earth”. And so in scripture when we hear of someone bowing down to the dust before someone else it means that they are profoundly humbling themselves (Ps 22:29, Is 49:23). Bending the knee before someone is a similar gesture, as we humble ourselves before Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. By the moral virtue of humility man understands his proper relationship to

God his creator. Adam was formed from the earth “*humus*”, thus the term “*homo-sapien*”, man from the earth.

In our relationship with others humility forms the basis of authentic love and conforms us more closely to Jesus of whom scripture describes as “meek and humble of heart” (Mt 11:29).

The virtue of humility is first learned in the home among our familial relationships. Parents should be very careful to foster the virtue of humility in their children if they hope to have their children well received by others in the world and then eventually into heaven. The world is a place filled with pride and prideful people thus imitating the prince of the world, the devil (Jn 12:31, 14:30) (2 Cor 4:4) (CCC 550, 2853). Thus it is always a battle against our broken nature to achieve a humble spirit (CCC 405, 1264, 1426, 2515).

Paul said that in humility consider others better than yourself because Jesus humbled himself and God exalted Him for it (Phil 2:3-11). For he who is full of pride imitates the devil. The humble person imitates Jesus Christ. Obedience is the handmaid to humility whereas rebellion is the partner to pride (CCC 1866).

In the home at the dinner table children should patiently wait for their parents to direct them allowing others to fill their plate first. Humility forms the basis of good manners. If a child is unruly at school it is usually because he is allowed to be unruly at home.

For practice in humility parents could take their children to a public establishment that would allow them to politely greet people and open doors for them. Teach your children to be of service at parish events. This teaches children that humble acts of service are a precursor to receiving benefits from the parish community. The first reading tells us “Conduct your affairs with humility and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts” (Sir 3:17).

Parents, do you want the marriages of your children to last? Teach them to select a spouse that is humble before God. Pride goes before a failed marriage.

Our broken nature impels us to recoil from acts of humility and pursue pride instead. If humility is to be victorious in this battle against pride then access to the grace of the sacraments is essential, especially the sacrament of confession. In it we humble ourselves before God, seek forgiveness of our sins and return to the road to eternal life in heaven, where all the saints and angels humble themselves before God (Rev 7:11).

NOTE: CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church