

SUNDAY *Plus*

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time **Divine Office Week II** Year C

The loser's script where everybody wins

With this parable, Jesus invites us to struggle with the contrast between a spirituality of perfection and what I'm calling a spirituality of imperfection... Jesus, a consummate Jew, uses examples from his own culture and time. According to common definitions of the day, the Pharisees are the good guys and tax collectors are the bad guys. The tax collectors are those who have totally aligned with the Roman Empire, charging money to their own Jewish people, and giving it to the Empire. No one likes the tax collectors, and

everyone looks up to the Pharisees. The Pharisees are simply religious people trying to obey the law, just like faithful Catholics or Bible-reading Protestants today. And as always, Jesus, with his nondual way of thinking, turns it all on its head...

This [parable] repositions the whole role of religion. Didn't most of us think that it's all a meritocracy? I certainly did! Many religious people think that it's all a merit badge system – all achievement, accomplishment, performance, and perfection. The good people win and the bad people lose. Of

course, once we cast anything as a win-lose scenario, the irony is that everybody loses. Why can't people see that competitive games are not the way to go?

I'm convinced that Jesus' good news is that God's choice is always for the excluded one. Jesus learned this from his Jewish tradition: God always chooses the rejected son, the barren woman, the people enslaved in Egypt or exiled in Babylon. It's not a winner's script



in the Bible – it's a loser's script. It's a loser's script where, ironically, everybody wins.

Richard Rohr OFM, The Little Way: a spirituality of imperfection

It is the risen Lord, present among us, who protects and guides the Church, and continues to fill her with hope through the love "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us".

Pope Leo XIV

Humility helps

By Mary Bell

Nobody likes a show-off. Unhappily we live in a society where there is endless scope for self-publicity: selfies, television reality shows which declare, "Look at me. Aren't I the bees' knees?". Humility is a rare and endangered commodity.

There is plenty of false modesty about, like a friend who sells her paintings and exhibits regularly whilst denying she is an artist. "It's all an accident," she will say until we contradict her. Self-deprecation was

a device used by medieval writers, expected of the author, who really didn't think he was all that bad.

There is no harm in acknowledging our God-given talents. The danger is to think we are therefore better than people less fortunate, or who don't seem to be as pious as we are. We are all subject to temptation. True humility acknowledges both shortcomings and success. God sees into our hearts. He sees hypocrisy. We shall not be able to pretend before him.

Following many years in the classroom, retired teacher and head of RE, Mary Bell now has time to enjoy the beauties of the natural world around her.

Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope God's mercy

Truly, God's mercy is forever; it never ends, it never runs out, it never gives up when faced with closed doors, and it never tires. In this forever we find strength in moments of trial and weakness because we are sure that God does not abandon us. He remains with us forever. Let us give thanks for so great a love, which we find impossible to grasp; it is immense! Let us pray for the grace to never grow tired of drawing from the well of the Father's mercy and bringing it to the world. Let us ask that we too may be merciful, to spread the power of the Gospel everywhere.

Pope Francis, Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy

READINGS

Today:
Sirach 35:12-14. 16-18
2 Timothy 4:6-8. 16-18
Luke 18:9-14

Monday:
Romans 8:12-17
Luke 6:12-16

Tuesday:
Ephesians 2:19-22
Luke 6:12-19

Wednesday:
Romans 8:26-30
Luke 13:22-30

Thursday:
Romans 8:31b-39
Luke 13:31-35

Friday:
Romans 9:1-5
Luke 14:1-6

Saturday:
Romans 11:1-2a. 11-12.
25-29
Luke 14:1. 7-11

Next Sunday:
Revelation 7:2-4. 9-14
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12a

Loving Lord, when I make a mistake, please pick me up and set me on the right path once again. Teach me humility so that I can boast about you and not about myself.  Amen.

