

30th Sunday in OT_C

October 26, 2025

St. Edward's Parish

Friends, today Our Lord gives a concrete picture of pride and humility by contrasting a Pharisee and

a Tax Collector praying in the Temple. The account begins by noting the purpose of this parable:

“Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt”. To focus our homily today, I would like to simply consider these two aspects of pride: trusting in self and regarding others with contempt. They are aspects of pride that perhaps everyone struggles with. I will also use two stories from the Life of St. Francis of Assisi to show a dramatic example of the corresponding virtue of humility for each case.

Let us look first at trusting in ourselves that we are righteous. Notice how the Pharisee approaches God in prayer. He stands proudly before God and recounts how he is not as bad as so many others and then lists the good he has done: “I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of my income.” A simple definition of pride is the: “excessive love of one’s own excellence” (Catholic Encyclopedia). Pride tends to attribute the good we do or have to our own efforts and not to God. The Pharisee told God all about his fasting and almsgiving. These works are not bad, but the Pharisee took the credit to himself. Humility, on the other hand, sees every good we do or have as coming ultimately from God. The Tax collector did not mention any good deed; perhaps he had none to mention. Instead, he simply beat his breast and begged for God’s mercy. There is not a hint of a self-centered love of his own excellence.

A story from the life of St. Francis of Assisi illustrates this humility: Brother Masseo, one of St. Francis’ early companions, once asked him: “Why after you? Why is it that the whole world seems to run after you? For you are neither handsome, nor highly educated, nor of noble birth.” Francis lifted his eyes to heaven and then replied (abbreviated): “...the Lord...has found no one more wicked, more imperfect or a greater sinner than I am...For this reason He has chosen me...so

that men may learn that every virtue and every good gift comes from Him, and not from any creature, and that no one may glorify himself in His presence. (Little Flowers of St. Francis Ch. 10).

Next, let us consider regarding others with contempt. The Pharisee stood before God and gave thanks that he is not like other people, especially this tax collector. Because pride is a love for our own excellence, it is essentially competitive. When we are proud, we necessarily must convince ourselves that we are above others. As a result, we tend to dwell on the defects of others and minimize our own. We get highly offended when anyone speaks badly of us or points out our faults. We see elsewhere that the Pharisees get outraged when Jesus tries to correct them. Humility, on the other hand, recognizes that we are nothing without God and any good that we do is merely because of God's grace. Unlike the Pharisee, the Tax Collector, makes no mention of the faults of others. Humble people realize their own sins clearly enough that they do not dwell on the defects of others.

Another story from the Life of St. Francis illustrates this: a devout companion of St. Francis had a vision of the holiness of St. Francis, so he decided to ask what Francis thought of himself. Francis replied, "I think of myself to be the greatest of sinners." The brother challenged Francis that he could not sincerely say such a thing. Then Francis added: "If Christ had shown to the most wicked man on earth such mercy as He has shown to me, I believe assuredly that that man would have been far more grateful to God than I have been" (The Life of St. Francis, Ch. 6). If we are tempted to think ourselves above others, we can always find reason to acknowledge ways that others are better than us. As St. Paul wrote: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves" (Phil 2:3).

Let us ask the Holy Spirit to give us a true knowledge of ourselves so that we can be purified of all pride and live in the peace of humility. We can look to the Virgin Mary as our model. She, more than anyone, knew her total dependence upon God and can show us the way.