

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice; turn to the Lord and his strength; constantly seek his face.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 32)

ANTIPHON: The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

RESPONSE: The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

LECTOR: I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise always on my lips; in the Lord my soul shall make its boast. The humble shall hear and be glad. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord turns his face against the wicked to destroy their remembrance from the earth. The just call and the Lord hears and rescues them in all their distress. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; those whose spirit is crushed he will save. The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants. Those who hide in him shall not be condemned. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself; and the Good News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) We will ring out our joy at your saving help and exult in the name of our God.

Or

Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering to God.

TODAY'S READINGS Sir 35:12-14, 16-18; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

NEXT WEEK (All Soul's Day Year C) Wisdom 4:7-15; Psalm 22; Romans 5:5-11; John 6: 37-40

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The good and the bad



26 October 2025 30th Sunday Year C

As church-people, we may think we know what it means to worship God. After all, we go to church, say some prayers, pay our dues, and try to live a decent life. Indeed, all this is well and good. But God asks something more of us. Do we think the good things we do in life arise from our own virtue? Do we find ourselves somewhat judgmental and intolerant of those who don't quite live up to our standards?

We are confronted with these kinds of questions by Jesus' story of the publican (or tax collector) and the Pharisee. A modern-day version might contrast a good church-going Catholic lawyer with a less than scrupulous property developer. One day the Catholic lawyer decides to make an extra visit to the church to praise and thank God for all the good things he does in life (including the pro bono work he does for the church). But his prayer drifts especially when, to his surprise, he sees the low-life property developer standing at the back of the church. He especially thanks God he is not like that!

What we note about our property developer is that he hardly dares enter the church and, when he does, keeps his eyes downcast. Being neither fancy with words nor knowing how to pray, all he says is (repeatedly): "God forgive me". Jesus praises the property developer while suggesting our lawyer was not really worshipping – or "at rights with" – God.

In the original parable, Jesus finishes with the saying: 'those who exalt themselves will

be humbled; but those who humble themselves will be exalted'. Humility in prayer, linked to God's 'option for the poor', is also a central feature in today's other readings: the Lord hears the cry of the poor, is close to the broken-hearted, answers the prayer of orphans, widows and victims of injustice, and rescues those in distress. Indeed, it is 'the humble person's prayer that pierces the clouds'; and 'the humble shall hear and be glad'.

What is interesting in the life of Jesus is that he not only told stories that confronted people's attitudes and beliefs. He acted those stories out by befriending the poor, healing the disabled, 'eating with tax collectors and sinners'. However, unlike our 'self-referential' lawyer friend, Jesus' ministry does not focus on himself, the good he does or the choices he makes, but on the love and mercy of an all-forgiving God. The property developer in our story reaches a similar point in his own life whereby his entire focus becomes God-centred.

Popes Francis and Leo have been saying something similar about the kind of church they understand God is calling us to be, namely, a church of the poor, a church that reaches out to touch all people, especially those on the margins of life, with the message of God's mercy and compassion. For this to occur, the church needs to become less like our lawyer in the story, and more like our property developer.

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