

The Twenty-second Sunday of Ordinary Time
(Year C)

<i>First Reading</i>	Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29
<i>Response</i>	God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 68:4-5, 6-7, 10-11
<i>Second Reading</i>	Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24A
<i>Gospel Acclamation</i>	Take my yoke upon you, says the Lord, and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.
<i>Gospel</i>	Luke 14:1, 7-14

The 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time for Year C takes us into Luke’s account of the banquet parables of Jesus, where he uses this imagery of a banquet to describe the kingdom of God. We’ve seen him do that before with the banquet of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the prophets. Now he’s going to do it again in the context of an actual banquet. So this is in Luke 14:1, and then it skips down to v. 7-14. So let’s read that together and unpack it:

One sabbath when he went to dine at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisees, they were watching him.

Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, “When you are invited by any one to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; and he who invited you both will come, and say to you, ‘Give place to this man,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, go up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite

the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”¹

Ok, so a couple of quick points. First, the context of these two parables is that Jesus is sitting in the house of a ruler of the Pharisees. So what that probably means here is it was some local leader, some prominent ruler, some prominent Jewish figure who had political or economic clout in the community, who also happened to be a member of the sect of the party of the Pharisees. And you’ll recall, I’ve said this before, that the Pharisees were the most popular religious sect or religious party within the Jewish people in the 1st Century A.D. They were widely respected for their piety. They were widely respected for their fidelity to the law. And the common people, according to Josephus, the majority of common Jewish people in the 1st Century A.D. followed the teachings and the practices of the Pharisees, followed their interpretation of the Torah (the law).

So Jesus is in the house of one of these Pharisees and he’s at table and he notices that people are coming in and they’re choosing the places of honor. So it says he told a parable to those who were invited to the banquet. Now you might be thinking, “Wait. Is this really a parable? Because in most parables, Jesus doesn’t address the audience directly.” So he’s saying here, “when you are invited to a banquet, don’t take the best seat.” That’s different from (you know), “There was a man who had two sons...” (a more narrative parable). So this is more of an exhortational kind of parable. It’s a mixture of exhortation and story; it’s not just a strict story. But it’s important to remember that parables could take wide variety of forms in ancient Judaism and in ancient Israel. The Hebrew word for parable, *mashal*, actually can refer from anything to a long detailed allegory to a short narrative story with a main point, all the way down to just a basic proverb or a riddle. So in this case Jesus is using this as a kind of a maxim, a saying, with a short story built into it and with a kind of main point about how to act in a certain situation. But, it is a parable. So we have two parables here. One that Jesus addresses to the guests at the banquet and then the other that he addresses to the host at the banquet. So let’s walk through each one of them.

The first one, the first parable is addressed to the guests. And so he says “look, when you are invited to a wedding feast, a marriage feast, don’t sit down in the

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible citations/quotations herein are from *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1994.

place of honor.” Now the Greek word here is *prōtoklisias*. *Prōtoklisias* is a banquet or a gathering to eat. *Proto* means “first”, so this is like “the first seat”. You’ll sometimes see this elsewhere in the gospels when Jesus will talk about the scribes (with like the biblical scholars, the professors) who take the best seat in the synagogue and the *prōtoklisias* at banquets. So whenever they show up to a banquet they take the best seat at the banquet, or when they get to the synagogue they take the best chair in the synagogue as a sign of honor.

Now in ancient culture (both Jewish and gentile culture), the idea of honor and shame was something that was very widespread; it was very deeply engrained. There were well known unspoken codes of honor and shame and where you stood in the pecking order of society. So in this case, Jesus is in the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, somebody who is in the upper echelons of society. So he probably would have had other rich and wealthy people coming to this banquet that Jesus is sitting at. So he notices that these elites are taking the *prōtoklisias*, the first seats, the best seat at the banquet, and so he gives them a parable in the sense that he says something to them that is kind of a narrative story, but also has a twist. I’ve talked about this in other videos. If you look at the parables of Jesus, they’re not just nice stories so that the farmers and the fishermen and the children could understand... simple stories so people can understand the kingdom of God. No, that’s not actually it. A lot of times what they are, they are simple; anyone can understand them. But they frequently include a surprising element, a twist, some unexpected element that’s meant to shock you or get your attention or turn upside down your ordinary expectations.

And that’s very true of this parable here because he says, “When you go to a marriage feast, don’t take the place of honor.” Instead, what do you do? Take the lowest place; take the lowest seat. That way, he says, you won’t end up being shamed, because if you take the high seat, the host might say to you, “actually I need you to move down the table to the bottom. Someone of more importance has come in.” I don’t know if this has ever happened to me, I’ve gone to these banquets where I’m speaking (or something like that) and they’ll say, “Here, come sit at table number one.” And I always feel a little nervous there. I was like “Where is table 25?” Because according the gospel, you don’t want to sit at the special people’s table, you want to go and sit in the back of the banquet hall. Actually, you know, as I’m thinking of this parable, this is the one parable Catholics take literally right? Because when we go to a Catholic church, no one wants to sit in the front pew. Have you ever noticed that? It’s very, very fascinating. Even if there’s only 8 people in

church, they're going to get 6 or 8 aisles back away from the altar. And maybe that's because we've all (you know) somehow imbibed this parable on a very deep, deep level. Go to the back pew. I'm a Catholic. I'm following Jesus' teaching in Luke 14.

In any case, that's not what people would do normally. Normally there was a pecking order (a social pecking order) and (you know), whether it be maybe the priests or the scribes, or maybe if you remember the party of Herod (like a Herodian), if you're in the upper echelon of society, you take the highest spot, not the lowest. Jesus flips that. That's the twist. "Take the lowest seat." And when you do that, what will happen is the host will come and he will say, you friend, go up higher and then you will be honored in the presence of all as opposed to being shamed in the presence of all. Now, this isn't just a nice piece of ethical advice about how to act at a banquet. As you know, Jesus' parables take earthly realities, but they're always about heavenly realities. They're always pointing forward to the nature of the kingdom of God. And usually if you want to see the meaning of the parable, you can go to the end. And at the end of the parable it was standard in Ancient Jewish parables for there to be what's called a *nimshal*. The best English translation of this that I can think of is "upshot." So what's the upshot of the parable? What's the point, so to speak? Usually you'll find the point at the end, not always, but usually. And here Jesus says, "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Now in the parable Jesus is talking about being humbled or exalted in the context of a banquet or wedding feast, but if you know Jesus' teachings elsewhere, what will he use a wedding feast as an image of? The image of the kingdom of God.

So for example, in Matthew 22 Jesus actually says, "The kingdom of Heaven is like a wedding feast that a king put on for his son." So the imagery there is of the joy of salvation, the joy of the world to come. The joy of the kingdom of Heaven is really only comparable to the joy of a wedding feast. So if you've ever been to a really great celebration at a wedding, a beautiful holy couple that are united in Holy Matrimony (in the sacrament of marriage) and then you're celebrating that sacramental union; it's awesome. It's amazing. You just feel overcome with joy, filled with joy — at least that is how it should be. Jesus says, well that's what the kingdom is like, elsewhere. So given those parables elsewhere, what he's really talking about here is how people should act in the kingdom of God. So if you want to be exalted in the kingdom of God, what do you need to do? You need to act humbly now. You need to cultivate the virtue of humility now so that you seek the

lowest place in this world, so that when the banquet of the kingdom comes you'll be exalted. That's the *nimshal*, that's the upshot of this parable. The parable to the host, in other words, it is a parable about humility.

Now the second parable is the parable to the host. So he turns to the man who had invited him and he gives him a parable as well. And this is what he says here:

When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors...

Well there's your twist right? That's the unexpected element of this parable. I mean how many of us, if we're going to have a banquet, who are the first people we think to invite? Friends and family, right? And if you're going to have a fancy banquet — something kind of prominent — what do you also want to do? Get prominent members of the community, right? The wealthy, the influential, the prominent. This is something that people do. They have fancy banquets for fancy people, influential people. What Jesus is saying here is, "Don't invite your friends, don't invite your family (and this is shocking for him to say this in 1st Century Jewish context) and don't invite your rich neighbor." Well why not? What's wrong with inviting my friends, my family, my rich neighbors? What's the problem with it? Is it wrong? Notice what he says: "Lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid." So you don't want to engage in actions in this earth, in this world, where you are going to be repaid, where you know you're going to be repaid. So there's the first twist. Now how many of us live our entire lives engaging in actions that we know we are going to get a return on? I mean, I don't care what it might be: investments, portfolios, 401Ks, just what friends you make and which ones you don't make, what friends you call back and which ones you don't call back. "Am I going to get a return on this action? Am I going to get repaid? Is this worth it?" Whether financially, or socially, economically, or politically, whatever it might be. We're always calculating the returns. That's how we operate as human beings. That is a natural inclination. And Jesus says if you know you're going to get a return, don't do it. Because if you do it and you get repaid now, then you won't be repaid later by God. So the second twist comes in the exhortation. "So what do I do?" Well "when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind and you will be blessed because they cannot repay you."

Notice here, the first parable to the guest was about humility. What's Jesus shifting to now? Charity. And in particular, almsgiving. Now we've looked at his teachings on almsgiving elsewhere in the Gospel of Luke when it comes to money, right? To

give and until it hurts, to give until you feel the sacrifice. Why? Well not just so you feel good about yourself or so that you help people, but to build up treasure in Heaven. Remember in Luke 12 (it wasn't that long ago), what did Jesus say? Verse 33:

Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

And in an earlier video I talked about how the word for almsgiving, *eleēmosunē*, literally means “to have mercy”; *eleos* is the word for mercy. So almsgiving is mercy giving (so to speak). So, Jesus talks about it earlier in Luke with regard to money. What's he talking about it here with regard to? Food. Food for the poor, for the maimed, for the lame, for the blind, for those who can't easily feed themselves and for those who (once you feed them), won't be able to pay you back in any earthly way. Jesus says feed those people because they can't repay you. Now again, think about this. That's the exact opposite of our natural tendency, to always calculate a return. This is why if you've ever participated in serving food at a soup kitchen or, especially down in South Louisiana, in the wake of hurricanes or things like that when people are hungry and they don't have food, they don't have access to food, they would go out and feed people, is a wonderful feeling. It's so counter-intuitive. It's so contrary to our natural inclinations. You feel the joy of almsgiving, the joy of giving without expecting any return. Jesus says do it that way because they can't repay you, but (and here's the *nimshal*, here's the upshot) you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just (or the resurrection of the righteous). So what would that have meant in a 1st Century Jewish setting? In Daniel 12 (the Jewish scriptures) it describes how in the age to come the righteous will be raised up (the same image here, the image of the righteous) and they will shine like the sun in the glory of this resurrection. It depicts those who are asleep, who are dead now, are being raised from the dead (Daniel 12:1-2). You can take a look at that if you have some time. In fact, let's read it together, just in case. Maybe you don't have Daniel memorized. Maybe it's been a week or two since you have read it. Let's go back and look at Daniel 12:1-2. So this would've established the context of Jesus' statement here in a Jewish setting:

At that time shall [meaning, the end] arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people [that's a reference to St. Michael, the archangel].

And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book [that's the Book of Life]. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness [or justice], like the stars for ever and ever.

So when Jesus talks about the resurrection of the righteous or the resurrection of the just, it's an allusion to the resurrection described in the book of Daniel 12. So what he's saying to the guests at this banquet is (and again, these are all Jews right? Pharisees are Jewish, Jesus is Jewish, his disciples are Jewish. So in a Jewish context, what he is saying to them is), if you invite the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind to your banquet now on earth, you won't be repaid in this life, but you will be repaid at the resurrection spoken of by the prophet Daniel, at the resurrection of the righteous in the age to come. So he's talking about the importance (there) of humility and charity.

Alright, so with that in mind, let's turn back to the book of Sirach, which is the Old Testament reading for today. Sirach is another one of these books sometimes called deuterocanonical, which means "second canon". I don't like that term because it's misleading, the Catholic Church doesn't have two canons, it just has one canon. So the book of Sirach is just part of the Catholic Old Testament, but it's not in Protestant Old Testaments, and it's not in the contemporary Jewish Bible. However, it was a very popular book in the time of Jesus. It was originally written in Hebrew and in this case the reading for today is focused on the first of the two themes of our parables, the theme of humility. So Sirach 3:17-18 and following (I'll read through it), the lectionary (kind of) skips around but I'll give you the text. It says this:

My son, perform your tasks in meekness;
then you will be loved by those whom God accepts.
The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself;
so you will find favor in the sight of the Lord.

And if you skip down to verse 20, it says:

For great is the might of the Lord;
he is glorified by the humble.

And then again, verse 28:

The affliction of the proud has no healing,
for a plant of wickedness has taken root in him.
The mind of the intelligent man will ponder a parable,
and an attentive ear is the wise man's desire.

Water extinguishes a blazing fire:
so almsgiving atones for sin.

Alright, so if you paid attention to the explanation of the gospel, you can see really clearly why these verses from Sirach have been chosen for the first reading. Because they hit both of the themes that Jesus addresses here: the importance of humility and the importance of almsgiving. So let's look at each of those for just a second.

First, when Sirach says "perform your works in meekness and humility," the Greek word there literally means "gentleness" or "littleness". It's the same word that Jesus will use in the beatitudes when he says, "Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth." See, the "meek" are those who are little in this world, who are gentle, and they don't have any land because the powerful and the strong come and take it away from them. That's what happens to this day. So what Jesus is saying is, "in the kingdom of God, the meek will inherit the earth." They're going to get the whole thing. They'll inherit the world to come. So Jesus says here, "the greater you are, the more you need to humble (or lower) yourself." The Greek word there for humble, *tapeinos*, literally means to make yourself low or little; lowly; little. It's a word that Mary uses in the magnificat, "my soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my savior, for he has exalted his lowly handmaid." A handmaid is a female servant, a female slave (basically). So the lowly get exalted. That's what Sirach is describing here. So this is important. Jesus' teaching on humility... although the parables he gave would have been surprising, the principle that he's teaching, about not exalting yourself and about being humble, is part of Jewish tradition. It's part of the Old Testament here. It's coming straight from the Wisdom literature, especially in this case the book of Sirach — which as I mentioned before was a very popular book in 1st Century Judaism, although it didn't eventually make it into the contemporary Hebrew Bible, there were some rabbis, even in the Jewish

Talmud, that cite the book of Sirach as if it's actually scripture. So it was regarded by some as scriptural. In this case, the principle we see in Sirach is Jesus' teaching to the guests: to be humble and not to exalt yourself. And when you do that, God's going to show you favor. And the Greek word there for favor, *charis*, means grace. He's going to give you grace if you seek to be humble. He's going to glorify you or exalt you.

And then the last part of this that's really striking is after laying out this importance of humility and also the affliction of pride...because, by the way, pride doesn't make you happy. Always seeking the highest place is going to make you miserable because there's always going to be someone who is going to come around and knock you out of your seat. There's going to be that struggle to be at the top. You can't stay at the top forever. Someone is going to come along and knock you down. So what it says here is that the proud are actually afflicted. It's like a plant of wickedness that takes root in him. We've seen that image of a good tree and bad tree in other teachings of Jesus in the gospels. So pride is like an evil plant. It just gets its roots in our hearts and it makes us unhappy, it makes us miserable, it afflicts us. Whereas an intelligent person will ponder a parable (just like Jesus gives in the gospel), and amazingly Sirach says here that "just as water puts out a fire, so almsgiving atones for sin". So we saw there Jesus is describing a kind of almsgiving where you invite the poor, the maimed and lame. You feed those who can't feed themselves (giving food to the poor). What does it do to your sins when you feed the poor, when you serve the poor in a soup kitchen, when you provide food for those in countries where there is famine and drought? What does it do to your sins? It's like dumping water onto a campfire. I don't know if you ever camped out before. You can have that fire blazing all night long, you take a bucket of water, you dump it, the whole thing goes out. Well that's what almsgiving does for our sins. It atones for sin.

And this is something that, for whatever reason, the modern period (especially after the Protestant Reformation), this idea of the power of almsgiving to atone for sin has been almost completely lost. Even in many Catholic circles we don't have a clear sense of just how powerful almsgiving is. So Jesus' parables bring that Jewish teaching we see in Sirach here back, front and center. The importance of humility and the importance of almsgiving as being a down payment, so to speak, so that at the resurrection we'll be repaid with treasure in Heaven. And I don't know about you, but I have a lot of debts I'd like to pay down in the old spiritual bank account here. So almsgiving is a very powerful way to atone for our sins.

I almost forgot about Psalm 68. The Psalm for today, the Responsorial Psalm is really about the fact that when we show hospitality, especially to the poor, we're simply imitating God because God himself is gracious to the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. And it gives the image in verse 6 of Psalm 68, it says that "God gives to the desolate a home to dwell in and he leads prisoners to prosperity." So God has a kind of preferential option for the poor and the desolate, the widow and the orphan, the homeless. And so if God shows hospitality to those who are in need of a home than how much more should we live that same kind of hospitality and that same kind of almsgiving in our own Christian lives? So if you're not giving alms now, start like yesterday. Get on it, because this is a basic principle of Jesus' teaching for us in the spiritual life.

In closing I'd like to end here with one of the most famous interpretations of the gospel for today from one of my favorite saints. It's from St. Benedict of Nursia. I don't know if there are any Benedictines out there watching the videos, but this one goes out for you here. In the rule of St. Benedict, there's a very famous chapter in St. Benedict's rule. This document was the foundation of Monasticism in Western Christianity. Saint Benedict is widely regarded as the father of Western Monasticism. In his *Rule of Life* that he wrote for his Benedictine monks, is this very short powerful book: *The Rules of St Benedict*. It's very short, but there's a lot in it. And one of the most famous chapters in the book is his chapter on humility. And many people are familiar with that chapter, but what they often miss is that Benedict anchors his famous teaching on humility in the gospel for today; in Luke 14. So let's look at what Saint Benedict has to say. In the *Rule of St Benedict*, he says this:

Holy Scripture proclaims to us brothers: "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted" (Lk. 14:11)...

So the quote we just saw from Jesus' parable of the banquet that he gave to the guests. Saint Benedict continues:

Therefore, brothers, if we wish to reach the highest peak of humility and soon arrive at the heavenly heights, we must, by our good deeds, set up a ladder like Jacob's, upon which he saw angels climbing up and down.

So you remember Jacob's ladder from Genesis 28? How do we get this ladder? How do we reach up to Heaven?

Without doubt, we should understand that climbing as showing us that we go up by humbling ourselves and down by praising ourselves... *We may think of the sides of the ladder as our body and soul, the rungs as the steps of humility and discipline we must climb...*

So pause there. St. Benedict's famous image of the rungs of Jacob's ladder to Heaven being rungs of humility is based on his interpretation of Luke 14, Jesus' words in the parable for today). But what's fascinating is he goes on to give 12 steps. Well you might be thinking, "Well how many rungs are there in this ladder?" Well there are 12 steps. So I thought this was funny. This is like the first twelve step program. You thought the twelve step program was invented in the 20th Century for alcoholics, people who are addicted to alcohol or drugs, but actually St Benedict invented the first twelve step program and it's for those of us who are addicted to ourselves. Sorry, I can't help it. I had to get that in there; I was waiting all day for that. So the twelve step program for those who are addicted to themselves is a program that's oriented around humility. I'm going to read the steps to you because you might think, "Ok, that's great Jesus, I want to be humble. I want to humble myself. How exactly do I do it?" Here are the steps that St. Benedict gave, in brief:

Step 1: Obeying all of God's commandments. In other words, act like God is God and you're not.

Step 2: Don't bother to please yourself. In other words, don't take the best seat at church. Don't take the biggest slice of pie. If you're in a religious house, you know, don't take the best seat in the choir. Whatever it might be:, seek the lowest position for yourself. In other words, whatever your inclination is to please yourself, go against that, go the opposite. Seek the lower place.

And this is something that's really important to do with your children. Start early teaching them to not seek to please themselves but to please others. For one thing, it will foster peace in the family. Another thing, it will help them to be happy. This is the road to happiness. This is the ladder to happiness. So do this early. Whether it's with children or if you're in a religious house, do this with novices. Don't bother to please yourself, step 2.

Step 3: Obedience to your superior, in the religious life or to parents in the home.

Step 4: Patient and quiet perseverance of everything inflicted on you by others. In other words, no complaining. If you meet somebody who complains all the time, you can basically rest assured that they're not humble. Because the reason people complain is they think they don't deserve it. "Why is this going wrong? I don't deserve this." If you really look at yourself and you look at what's going wrong, if you've ever committed a single mortal sin, what you deserve is eternal separation from God forever. So whatever's going on right now, relax, right? There's no reason to complain, you know. The idea that "I don't deserve it" is a kind of pride. So humility says be patient and quietly persevere everything that you have to endure.

Step 5: Humble and thorough confession of your sins and faults. There is nothing more humbling and humiliating than the Sacrament of Confession.

Step 6: The acceptance of crude and harsh tasks; so what? No grumbling. If you're a parent, and you have to change another diaper, just do it. Grumbling is also a sign of pride. Not to accept those things that are crude or difficult. If you're a professor, grading final exams, that would be yours.

Step 7: This one's important. Don't only confess that you are inferior to others, that other people are better than you, but really believe it in your heart. Start to see everyone else's virtues as greater than yours. And don't just say you think that's the case, but learn to believe it. So if you cultivate an ability, instead of judging others as less than you, exalting them above you. That's the cultivation of real humility. That's step 7. In other words, don't just seek the lowest place at the banquet, seek the lowest place in your own eyes.

Step 8: Strict observance of a Rule of Life. So Benedict here is talking to his monks who have rule to follow. So it's a form of obedience). The same thing could be true though within the family, like certain rules for the household. Follow a rule of life as a way of conquering your will for the greater common good of family life or work or whatever it might be, the duties of your state in life.

Step 9: The practice of silence. Only speak when necessary. People who never stop talking are usually not very humble, because they think what they have to say is so important that everyone needs to hear it. Thankfully that's not a problem for professors.

Step 10: Restraint from laughter and frivolity. So showing restraint in the question of jokes. It's very similar to "talking too much". A lot of times jokes and laughter are wonderful, bring lots of joy, but it's also real easy for it to become a temptation to draw attention to yourself. So people who tell too many jokes are often looking for attention. So showing restraint in those things is very important.

Step 11: Speaking few words, simply and seriously. So being a person of few words is also an act of humility, restraint.

Step 12: Showing humility in your heart and in your appearance and actions. In other words, don't just think about yourself in humble ways, but actually live it out. Show it both interiorly and exteriorly. In other words, don't just talk the talk, walk the walk as well, the path of humility.

Anyway, that's from Chapter 7 of the *Rule of St. Benedict* if you want to look at it. I just thought it was fascinating because what you see here is how the living tradition will take a single saying of Jesus: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, whoever humbles himself will exalt the exalted." And then uses that to draw out the deep meaning of this very short parable and explain practically speaking, how do we as Christians, how do we as disciples of Jesus, live this out in our state of life (in our everyday life), so that we can cultivate both humility (the virtue of humility) and also the virtue of charity through almsgiving? And if we do both those things (hopefully), we'll get a good seat at the table in the kingdom of Heaven.