

## **Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time “C” Cycle October 23, 2016**

**As Election Day draws near, we hear from every candidate for every political office how great they and their achievements and plans are. We also hear how terrible their opponents are. What is largely missing is the virtue of humility.**

**Humility is viewing oneself honestly, acknowledging and accepting our good qualities graciously and admitting our limitations and faults. Humility also means not rash judging others. A venerable Christian expression goes: “there but for the grace of God, go I.” Humility is a gift from God, which, however, does need our cooperation to accept and develop.**

**Today’s Scriptures, especially the Gospel parable, is about humility, especially humility in prayer. St. Luke tells us that “Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else.”**

**The Pharisee and the tax collector went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee boasts of his self-righteousness in strictly observing and even surpassing the requirements of the Jewish law. He is not greedy, dishonest, or adulterous, like the rest of humanity, especially not like the tax collector daring to come into the temple**

**In contrast, the tax collector, realizing his faults and sins, stands back and does not even raise his eyes to heaven. He strikes his chest and simply prays: “O God, be merciful to me a sinner.”**

**Pharisees have been branded negatively, but not all of them were like the one in the parable. A number of them admired Jesus and became his disciples.**

**Tax collectors in Jesus’ time were often dishonest and were viewed as traitors because they were in the employ of the Roman occupiers of Israel. Many of them were certainly in need of conversion and redemption. In his ministry, Jesus reached out to them, like he did for Zacchaeus, whom we will hear about in next weekend’s Gospel.**

**Jesus uses the prayers of both men in the parable to teach that when we pray we are to acknowledge that whatever good we do stems not solely from our human efforts. The good we do is motivated by God's grace at work within us. The Lord also teaches that we are all imperfect and need God's mercy, forgiveness, and love. Jesus also teaches us not to rash judge others, but to pray for one another.**

**In all of us, including our politicians, there is a mixture of good and not so good qualities. May we be humble enough to acknowledge this in our prayers and in our daily life. Lord Jesus Christ, meek and humble of heart, help us to cultivate humility.**