

Lord Jesus,
Forgive us for the times we forgot humility, Lord have mercy

Christ Jesus,
We come before you now, son of the living God, Christ have mercy

Lord Jesus,
We approach your table. Help us be humble as we accept your body and blood as a gift, a gift of grace. Lord have mercy



Sunday August 29, 2010
Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday was the Memorial of St. Augustine, bishop and doctor of the church and Friday was the memorial of his mother, St. Monica

For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The message in today’s Gospel, a message of humility and of modesty, is particularly important. We frequently forget this message, and we have to relearn the consequences many times during our lives.

There is such a thing as false humility. An inferiority complex, a refusal to accept others’ praise, or fishing for complements are examples of false humility. But here we want to focus on true humility.

Our church calendar of memorials, feasts and solemnities has an especially good fit with the message of today's Gospel. Saturday was the memorial of St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo¹ and doctor of the church. I really like St. Augustine because of the number of times he messed up (big time) as a younger man and came to the church later in life. St. Augustine is famous for what he wrote.

I'd like to share a quote from Augustine that fits today's message:

*"It was pride that turned angels into devils"*²

This was the case with Lucifer, and I'm am sure that we have all met people who had such a high opinion of themselves that dealing with them was like dealing with a devil. However, what we forget, is that from time to time we have to examine ourselves carefully, to see if we ourselves have the same problem. It can be harder to see pride in ourselves ... that's one reason why frequent confession is helpful.

I would like to share another quote with you. This comes from a person who is also a favorite of mine, Thomas Merton, the

¹ Now located in Algeria

² http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/s/saint_augustine.html

Trappist monk from the Abbey of Gethsemane, the Abbey just South of Louisville, Kentucky.

*Humility ... is absolutely necessary ... to avoid acting like a baby. To grow up means ... to throw away the illusion that I am the center of everything and that other people only exist to provide me with comfort and pleasure.*³

I have to admit that the lesson of being humble and modest is something I have had to re-learn many times. I'd like to share a story about modesty with you.

I have had two heart attacks. During one of them I was in an ambulance taking me to St. Vincent's hospital. During the ride the ambulance had a flat tire. We pulled off the road and had to wait until a replacement ambulance could come. Now it was a windy December day. We were pulled over at the corner of north 86th street and Meridian, one of the busiest intersections in Indianapolis. I had received three or four shots of morphine, and I was dressed in one of those hospital gowns that don't close in the back.

³ <http://www.toddiestand.com/thomas-merton-on-humility/07/>, August 24, 2010

When the second ambulance came they moved me from the first to second ambulance. On that cold, windy day, a gust of wind came up, lifting my hospital gown so that I showed my backside to every car driving past 86th and Meridian.

Immodest? Well, I was humbled. Just my bare, naked, self.

When I feel like everyone else is wrong, and I am the center of everything, I try to remember the 86th street experience that God gave to me.

Today's Gospel:

For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

You can remember this message, before you show your naked self. Our you can wait for God to expose you. Pay me now, or pay me later. I hope you remember 86th street and Meridian.

