

October 1 2023  
26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

As the oldest in my family, I have always liked to be in charge boss my brothers and sisters around. One day my parents sat me down and told me lovingly and firmly, "Gary, we are the parents, you are not." That was a real lesson humility that I remember to this day. For three Sundays in a row we have heard lessons in humility that remind us that God is God, and we are not. Two weeks ago, it was "forgive as I have forgiven you." Last week it was "Your thoughts are not my thoughts, your ways are not my ways, says the Lord." This week it is, "Have the same attitude as Christ" who "humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross."

What does mean for us to have the attitude of humility of Christ in our prayer and our lives? Frist in our prayer. We express in the Mass that we are of the same attitude with Christ this way: At the dialogue that happens at what we call the "Preface" to the Eucharistic Prayer; when the priest says, "The Lord be with you and all respond, "And with your spirit", "Lift up your hearts" and all say, "We life them up to the Lord". You know that part of the Mass? So, what is happening at that point? I am going to quote Fr. Gerald Dennis Gill because he says it better than I can:

*The Eucharistic prayer takes place with the priest and people living distinct roles and yet acting together. The preface dialogue declares the praying of this prayer is a sacramental action of the whole Christ, Head and members, with the priest and people. The priest directs himself to the baptized, "the Lord be with you." The baptized are linked to the priest, "And with your spirit," so that they might be the sacramental Christ, the whole Christ, for this event of his offering. The priest further directs himself to those linked with him in Christ to move to the place of this eternal offering at the right hand of the Father: "Lift up your hearts." The baptized quickly respond that they there. "We have lifted them up to the Lord," Now the work of the Eucharist can take place. "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." It is the duty of the Church, of the priest and the people. "It is right and just." (p. 70 *The Priest* September 2023, "The Eucharistic Prayer: A meeting place for the National Eucharistic Revival and the "ars celebrandi")*

Fr. Gill is pointing out that we, together as the People of God, the priest and the baptized are to have the same attitude of humility as Christ in how we pray. The way we pray will shape the way we believe and the way we believe will shape how we live.

Now, the second point. How do we live the attitude of Christ? If we, the people of God, priest who represents the head and the people who represent the body, together are lifting up our hearts to the Lord our God, are we also doing what is right and just? Are we not saying in our prayer at Mass, “this is not about me”? Are we not saying, “God is God and I am not”? Are we not letting go of our own pre-conceived ideas, our fears and anxieties and placing all our trust in God? Are we allowing God to teach to live humble lives, to change the things we can change and to accept what we cannot? If we take seriously what that simple dialogue that we say at every Mass, will we not grow more and more into the humble attitude of Jesus Christ?

We best know the humble attitude of Christ by looking at Jesus on the cross when he lifted up his hands and his heart to the Father *and to us*. He gave himself without reserve to the Father and handed himself over to us looking like a criminal condemned to death for our sakes. He, though innocent, died for our crimes against the Father. It is “right and just” to imitate Christ as we lift up our hearts at the sacrifice of the Mass to the Father he offered his sacrifice on the on the cross

*and* by lifting up our hands to those in need around us. Do we truly lift up our hearts to the Lord to seek his will with humility in making our decisions, or do we remain stuck in our pride and our own way of thinking? Do we lift up our hearts and hands to show our care to those the weak, the vulnerable, the unborn, the immigrant and the stranger? Do we lift up our hearts and our lives to think of God and of others in everything that we do, rather than just thinking of ourselves? If not, then confessions are every Saturday at 3:00 pm!