

'HUMBLE PRAYER' – HOMILY - 23 OCTOBER 2016

The scene is set.

Jesus continues on the [journey](#) to Jerusalem and finds the time to speak about prayer and humility.

Why? Because prayer and humility are essential as followers of Jesus Christ.

[On our journey of faith through life, we too, as Christians, need to be people of prayer and humility.](#)

Jesus contrasts two different responses, in such a way that we know the ending, before we come to it.

In the parable of the '[Pharisee and the Tax Collector](#)', the Pharisee prays to himself, glorifying himself. The second man, the Tax Collector, prays humbly to God.

Only the Tax Collector goes away justified – [dedikaiomenos](#) - from the word [dikaios \(Gk. δίκαιος\)](#) for just, righteous.

The parable had begun by Jesus explaining that some people think they are righteous [dikaioi \(Gk. δίκαιοι\)](#) and yet despising others.

In the English language we find it difficult to describe the word for righteous.

Sometimes we translate it as 'upright'.

Perhaps as we use the negative word 'self-righteous', we fail to see the positive meaning of righteous.

In the context of our faith and today's Gospel, when we have a Parish Pastoral Council meeting, A Catholic School Board Meeting, a liturgy planning meeting, A Maintenance Meeting, a St Vincent de Paul Meeting, A parish Finance Council Meeting, a Parents and Friends Meeting, A building planning meeting, a Care and Concern meeting, A Fete Meeting, an Out of School Hours Meeting, A Wedding Party, a Seniors Party, and many other church gatherings, [PRAYER](#) and [HUMILITY](#) would need to be part of it.

In the context of our working lives and social lives,

When we are together with others for a secular event or work or planning,

When others would not be open to prayer,

We can still pray silently and humbly to God.

Today's Gospel is for every part of our lives, not just for church on Sunday.

Jesus tells the parable on a [journey](#), even though, for effect, he highlights the Temple.

If we write an auto-biographical book or article about ourselves, [where would God appear in it?](#)
[How would God appear in it?](#)

For all our partnerships in life, would others be mentioned in the article?

Would we write about those who made sacrifices themselves so that we could be educated and housed and clothed and nourished?

Would we remember those who helped us develop our gifts?

Would we remember those who supported us when we made our mistakes?

Those who shared their insights?

When we compile a CV for job interviews,

[Do we compile a second CV for ourselves, where we acknowledge God and others?](#)

Image is seen as so important today in secular society.

How does humility become our core instead of an image, a mask or an illusion?

This year we celebrate 45 years since the World Synod of Bishops' 1971 Document ["Justice in the World"](#).

It was a different document, in that, when it spoke of justice, it looked within the church as well as without.

It realised that humility is essential in following Jesus, and advocating for a better and more just world.

How many of our church documents are humble?

When we speak or act, do we bring it to prayer, do we humbly look at ourselves as well?

Then again, does humility only mean acknowledging our weaknesses and faults like in today's parable? No.

The Gospel as a whole invites us [to grow in our awareness of God](#) in our lives, Of what God in love, has done for us and does for us.

Gazing at the [Christmas Crib](#), do we deeply appreciate Jesus humbly coming among us as a baby, a child, a teenager, and adult?

Gazing at the [crucifix](#), do we deeply appreciate Jesus suffering and dying for us?

Gazing at the [cross](#) with no figure on it, do we deeply appreciate Jesus rising from the dead to give us life eternal?

This past week, our clergy prayer retreat focussed on

- 1) [Who are we? – Our Identity](#)
- 2) [Whose are we? - Our Vocation](#)
- 3) [Why are we here? - Our Mission](#)

Putting this within today's parable's context of humbleness, we could say:

Humility calls us to respond to our loving God in gratitude and praise and thanksgiving.

Humility, inspired by God's inclusive love, calls us to love our neighbour, [to live a 'righteous' relationship](#).

Humility, touched by God's love, helps us understand our true [identity](#) as beloved.

Humility, touched by God's love, helps us know deeply that we [belong](#) to God.

Humility, touched by God's love, helps us see our [mission](#) in God's creation.

[Loved by God, we desire to love, to be in love, to share our love.](#)

[Jesus shows us throughout the Gospels how to love.](#)

Sometimes in love there are no words, and sometimes we are weak, needing guidance.

St Paul in the Letter to the Romans Chapter 8:26 shares about the Holy Spirit:

*["Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness;
For we do not know how to pray as we ought,
But that very Spirit intercedes with signs too deep for words."](#)*

Amen.

Fr Gerry Hefferan – 'Humble Prayer' – 23 October 2016]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/102316.cfm>]

[Reference: [Justice in the World *Justicia in Mundo*, World Synod of Bishops – 1971](#)]

[Short two minute YouTube video ["Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector"](#)]