

AN OPEN & HUMBLE RESPONSE TO WHEREVER THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS US
30th Sunday Ordinary Time Year C, 27th October 2019

THE CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF THE AMAZON

The scene is set.

They have been on a journey. A lifetime of experiences, heartaches and joys,
For some, it is a part of the journey begun by their ancestors over these recent centuries.
And the questions –

Will they listen to us? Is it worth the effort? Are we wasting our time?

Do we dare to hope?



And finally two years ago came an agreement to present their insights.

There have been two years of wide consultations and preparations by so many people.

Then becoming centre stage with three weeks of sharing and discussing,
in October 2019 at the Vatican.

Participants listen together and break into language groups to discern the way forward.
Then back a whole group.

A draft document tries to capture the insights and important issues.
The draft document is revised and discussed again.

The final draft document is voted upon. *When?* Yesterday. October 26.

A group is established to take forward the next stage.
The Document is presented to Pope Francis.

To take the many issues further, attitude is so important.
Not a haughty attitude, but a humble response.
Not journeying alone but responding to the Holy Spirit.

We gather to pray now for wherever this final Amazon document will lead.

OCEANIA

The Amazon Region of churches have come together.
Yet over in this part of the world, in the churches of Oceania,
we have not yet achieved this.
There are assemblies of Oceania every four years.
The assembly last year examined the critical issue of changing sea levels
and its effects on communities.
And investigating the causes of rising sea levels in our world.

There has been an Oceania Synod before, but not with the mandate
to explore and prepare and challenge and share
what the Amazon Region has now done.

The last Oceania Synod was many years before Pope Francis became Pope.
Many years before the writing **Laudato Si' on the Earth Our Common Home**.

Is it our turn?

What would be our attitude?

Let us turn to today's Gospel and reflect on the attitude needed.

GOSPEL OF LUKE 18:9-14

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.

*"He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves
that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt:*

Jesus contrasts two different responses,

in such a way that we know the ending, before we come to it.

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*'.

'Righteous' is a person who lives out their faithfulness to God in all they do.

'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector.

The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus,

*"God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves,
rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector.*

I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income."

The Pharisee prays to himself, glorifying himself.

'But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look

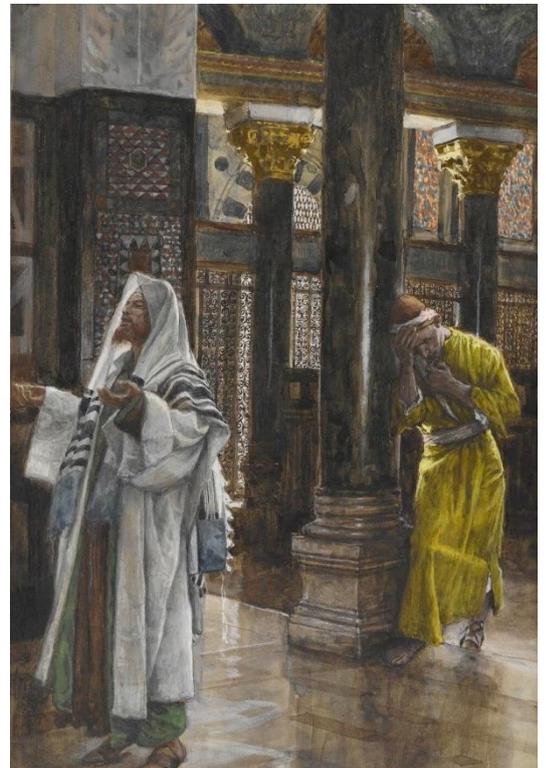
up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying,

"God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

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.

*"I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather
than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled,
but all who humble themselves will be exalted."*



The Pharisee and the Publican by James Tissot

*How does humility become our core, instead of an image, a mask or an illusion?
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 our loving God has done for us and does for us.**

HUMILITY

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."*

OCEANIA

*In an attitude of humility and openness to the Holy Spirit, is it time to plan together in the Spirit
for a more participatory Assembly, or even a Synod?*

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

What is the Holy Spirit saying to us in Oceania?

What insights from the Amazon Synod might show us a way forward, here in Oceania?

Throughout the month of November in the Catholic Church in Australia,
we will pray for rain and for those affected by the drought.

Throughout the month of November in the Catholic Church internationally,
we will pray for those who have died.

During this month of November, we continue our group reflections
as part of the Plenary process.

**In Australia and in Oceania, the Gospel as a whole,
invites us to grow in our awareness of God in our lives,**

and of what our loving God has done for us and does for us.

During this month of November, we can reflect together on the outcomes of the Amazon Synod.

We will share international online Amazon insights through our parish social media.

May we have an open and humble response to wherever the Holy Spirit leads us.

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/102719.cfm>]

