

## PREGO PLUS: BACKGROUND NOTES

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

### Psalm 67 (68)

Many commentators find this psalm taken as a whole one of the most difficult to interpret; some think that it might be a collection of fragments from a series of ancient hymns. Nevertheless, the verses selected for us today (vv. 3-6a and 9-10 of the complete psalm) are clear enough: as in many other psalms of praise, they invite people to sing and dance their praises to God, listing all the good things God has done—and is still doing—for his people. God is the helper of the helpless. He is the father of orphans and the protector of widows. (Similar ideas are also found in Ugaritic literature of the time Ugarit is in present-day northern Syria and its language is related to Hebrew and Aramaic; it can help scholars clarify biblical texts.)



The last stanza recalls God's activity at the time of the Exodus, providing rain, manna and sustenance as the Israelites made their way to the Promised Land.

The onus on us, as contemporary Christians, is to extend the same compassion to the vulnerable, dispossessed and oppressed.



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH  
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

## Gospel Luke 14: 1, 7-14

**The one who humbles himself will be exalted**

Today's story is found only in Luke's Gospel. The setting is a meal on a Sabbath day at a Pharisee's house.

### Jesus had gone for a meal

Meals and banquets were crucial moments in first-century society. They were times when political and business affairs were conducted. Some commentators have seen in this meal a Greek Symposium—i.e. a meal followed by discussion and debate; however, others note that Pharisees did not like Greek customs as they sought to keep themselves apart from outside influences.

### They watched him closely

In previous chapters (6, 11, 12), there had been friction and controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees. By inviting him into their home, they were evaluating how much of a threat he represents. They could appraise him quietly away from admiring crowds.

### He had noticed how they picked the places of honour.

In his turn Jesus is also watching the seating arrangements. The local custom was that you could tell the importance of a guest depending on his place at table. The closer to the host, the more important you were. Guests did not sit on chairs but reclined leaning on one elbow at a low table.

### Give up your place to this man

Being asked to move down a place in favour of a more honoured guest would be a severe humiliation, especially in a society which valued a person's honour above all things. Jesus gives common-sense advice which is also found in the Old Testament (Proverbs 25: 6-7 and Ecclesiasticus 32: 1-2). He advocates behaving with humility. This was not a highly esteemed virtue, as society preferred to value strength and power.

### Then he said to his host ...

In choosing who to invite to his meal, a host kept in mind the guests who had invited him (to whom good manners required him to return the invitation). He would also have worked out who would invite him back after their first invitation. This practice formed the backbone of first-century social encounters.

### Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind

These groups were despised by Jews and Greeks, as disabilities were seen as a punishment from God following a wrong doing. Such people could not invite you back. God will reward your good deed at the end of time when his Kingdom comes. For Jesus, what matters is to give to people without expecting anything in return in the near future.