**“We are Called to be Humble”**

All our readings today point us to the word ‘Humility.’ We as Christians must never become completely satisfied with ourselves. When we are satisfied with ourselves, we become complacent and think we have it all. We think we are holy. Complacency means the end of progress. It means self-satisfaction. Humility is what allows us to recognize our never ending need for growth. Humility leads us to God.

The word “humility” comes from the Latin word “humus” which means earth.One of the things the Church as instituted on Ash Wednesday is to remind us of humility. When we get the ash, we are reminded that we come from dust and we will return first to dust, before our resurrection to eternal life.

What is humility? Humility is not thinking little of ourselves! It is not thinking of ourselves at all! It means to be like Jesus who said **“The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.”** As the Son of God, who is divine, Jesus took up our lowly human form to become a slave in other to serve us by dying for us on the cross.

As St Francis of Assisi wrote in his letter to the faithful **“*We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh. Rather we must be simple, humble and pure. We should never desire to be over others. Instead, we ought to be servants who are submissive to every human being for God’s sake. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on all who live in this way and persevere in it to the end. He will permanently dwell in them. They will be the Father’s children who do His work. They are the spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

God reveals His secrets to the humble of heart and draws them to Himself. Should a humble person be troubled, God will give the person His peace because a humble person knows God. A humble person firm in God, does not conform to the ways of this world.

Humility teaches us that we must continue to grow in our faith and in our dependency on God. Humility also makes us realize that we do not have the means within ourselves to make progress in holiness. We cannot lift ourselves up by our own boot straps or by our shoe strings. God is the one who makes us holy.

Our first reading by Sirach ask us to be humble in everything we do, in our relationship with God and in our relationship with each other. He exhort us to be humble the more power or authority we have and God the source of all graces, will reward us for being humble and meek. He informs us that God looks more favorably at those who are humble than those who are generous givers, even thou alms-giving cleanse our souls from the stain of sin.

The book of the Hebrews contrasted both the first and second covenant. The fearful transcendent of the God at Mount Sinai was compared to a festive celebration of mount Zion especially when viewed from the perspective of final victory over sin. We heard about the false humility of the people of the first covenant. They begged not to hear messages directly from God as if they were in awe of Him. However, we know their story, that they kept disobeying God over and over again.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus spoke about us being humble even when we are invited to a banquet. He said a guest should take a lower seat when invited to a banquet. However, should the host then decide that the guest deserves a high place at the table, then the guest would be in high esteem in the presence of other invited guests. Thereby those who humble themselves would be exalted and those who exalt themselves would be humbled.

However, the guest who takes the lower seat might have false humility. The guest might be a ‘wise guy’ in taking the lower seat expecting to be invited to a higher seat. That would be false humility! While that guest might enjoy the high esteem of other guest, to God who sees and know our inner thoughts, the guest would be foolish. As St Francis said, **“*We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh.”***

As we come to receive the true body and blood of Christ, let us ask Him for the grace to be humble.