

English

30th Sunday of the Year C

First Reading Ecclesiasticus 35:12-14.16-19

The Lord is a judge who is no respecter of personages. He shows no respect of personages to the detriment of a poor man, he listens to the plea of the injured party. He does not ignore the orphan's supplication, nor the widow's as she pours out her story.

The man who with his whole heart serves God will be accepted, his petitions will carry to the clouds. The humble man's prayer pierces the clouds, until it arrives he is inconsolable, nor will he desist until the Most High takes notice of him, acquits the virtuous and delivers judgement.

And the Lord will not be slow, nor will he be dilatory on their behalf.

Second Reading 2 Timothy 4:6-8.16-18

As for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his Appearing.

The first time I had to present my defence, there was not a single witness to support me. Every one of them deserted me – may they not be held accountable for it. But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Luke 18:9-14

Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else, "Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, 'I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get.' The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted."

Meditation

One creates a caricature by taking a significant trait, exaggerating it, and making it larger than life. This is how Jesus sets up the two extremes of religious attitudes in his day.

The Pharisee asks nothing for himself. He is undoubtedly no hypocrite. What he says, he does to perfection. Unfortunately, he is preoccupied with himself and is judging others. He is interested in God primarily as the one who will reaffirm the merits he lists.

In contrast to this religiously active man stands the tax collector. He does not make a prayer of thanksgiving. He confesses, not out of a need to clear his conscience, but to express all the pain that he is feeling. Finding nothing which can give him assurance before his judge, he throws himself on the divine mercy. It is from that mercy that he hopes to receive his life as a grace, a gift.

This humble man goes home justified but the other does not. The Christian knows that the just one is never more than a person who has been justified, saved by God, beyond all merit.