

Sunday Message

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 27 September 2026 • Psalter Week 2

HUMBLE OF HEART

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11



In today's second reading, St Paul offers advice to the church in Philippi on the importance of humility. It would make him completely happy, he tells them, if there were no competition or conceit among them, if they put others' interests before their own. They must be united in love, with a common purpose and a common mind.

To illustrate his point, Paul then includes a poem or hymn about the humility of Jesus: how he emptied himself to become human and humbled himself further still by accepting death on a cross. But God has raised Jesus up and given him a name above all other names.

Jesus is our model of humility. The only ambition the Christian must have is to love and serve others. ■

DO

Holiness is reacting with meekness and humility, Pope Francis said. Do you think people see you as humble?

SAY

'Lord, open my eyes and heart to see and serve you in my sisters and brothers. Amen.'

PRAY

This is World Day of Migrants and Refugees. Pray for migrants and refugees, that they will be treated with respect as children of God.

LEARN

The proof of our faith is in our living of it.

The Christian is called to a life of love and service.

It's never too late to say 'yes' to God.

REFLECT

The 17-year-old was working with a gang building a road in the Texas hill country in the 1920s. The road was being built by hand, and the tall, gangly teenager was pushing a scoop, a plough-like instrument with a sharpened front edge, that was pulled by four mules. It was back-breaking work, difficult even for older, stronger men. At lunch break each day, as they sat eating, the teenager would talk big to the older men. 'He wanted to do something big with his life,' one of his workmates recalled. 'And he was quite specific about what he wanted to do: "I'm going to be president of the United States one day,"' he boasted.

They laughed at him, this poor boy from nowhere. It's the sort of idle claim many people make, except this youth was deadly serious. And he began to work towards realising that dream – first as a school teacher, then a congressional aide, then a congressman, then a senator, then U.S. vice-president, and finally, on 22 November 1963, president Lyndon B. Johnson's lifelong ambition was fulfilled, albeit in the most tragic of circumstances. His life is a study in ambition: how to set a goal, a target, and never let go until it comes true.

Ambition takes many forms. It can be political, like LBJ. Or to be rich or famous, or to succeed in business or sport.

But what does ambition mean for the follower of Jesus? Christian ambition is the opposite of worldly ambition. It turns our usual understanding of ambition on its head. It is about being least, being last, being a servant, being little, being humble.

Jesus was big into humility. He chose the sick over the healthy, the weak over the powerful, the poor over the rich. He didn't select scholars and big shots as his apostles but fishermen and ordinary types. He practised humility. He washed feet, mixed with outcasts and died with criminals. 'I have given you an example,' he said, 'that you also must follow.'

What does it mean for us to be humble?

First, to be humble is to be self-aware. It is to know we are not perfect, that we are pilgrims on the journey. No matter how hard we try, we come up short. Despite our best efforts, we sin all the time. It's the one thing we all have in common. Humility is being aware of our unworthiness, our shadow side. It means being without ego or conceit. How can we look down on another when we know we're not perfect ourselves?

We acknowledge our humility before Holy Communion when we say, 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof...' I don't deserve you.

Second, to be humble is to be selfless. It demands that we set aside our selfish obsessions, ambitions, and desires and give ourselves to the other. Humility washes feet and loves without exception. Think of the last judgement scene in Matthew 25. On what basis will God separate the saved from the lost? I was hungry, and you gave me food; thirsty, and you gave me drink; a stranger, and you made me welcome, naked, and you clothed me; sick or in prison, and you came to see me. Humility is selflessness writ large.

Third, to be humble is to be prayerful. Archbishop Fulton Sheen said that 'Only the humble can pray, for prayer presumes we need someone and something.' Prayer presumes humility. When we ask God for something, or thank God for something, we are admitting our need for God, that on our own we can do nothing. And so we turn to God in our need, our gratitude, our joy, our heartbreak. We place ourselves before the God who gives us life. That's what we do every time we pray. Humility is at the heart of the Christian life. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*All that you have done to us, O Lord,
you have done with true judgement,
for we have sinned against you
and not obeyed your commandments.
But give glory to your name
and deal with us according to the bounty of your mercy.*

COLLECT

O God, who manifest your almighty power above all by pardoning and showing mercy, bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us and make those hastening to attain your promises heirs to the treasures of heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Ezekiel 18:25-28

A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel.

Thus says the Lord: 'You say, "The way of the Lord is not just." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 25(24):4-5b. 6-7. 8-9. R. 6a

R: Remember your compassion, O LORD.

1. O LORD, make me know your ways.
Teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth, and teach me;
for you are the God of my salvation. **R.**
2. Remember your compassion, O LORD,
and your merciful love, for they are from of old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth,
nor my transgressions.
In your merciful love remember me,
because of your goodness, O LORD. **R.**
3. Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he shows the way to sinners.
He guides the humble in right judgement;
to the humble he teaches his way. **R.**

SECOND READING Philippians 2:1-11

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians.

(for shorter form read between > <)

> Brothers and sisters: If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy; complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <

who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL John 10:27

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord,
and I know them, and they follow me.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL Matthew 21:28-32

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time: Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." And he answered, "I will not", but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, "I go, sir", but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterwards change your minds and believe him.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant us, O merciful God,
that this our offering may find acceptance with you
and that through it the wellspring of all blessing
may be laid open before us.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Remember your word to your servant, O Lord,
by which you have given me hope.
This is my comfort when I am brought low.*

Or

*By this we came to know the love of God:
that Christ laid down his life for us;
so we ought to lay down our lives for one another.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this heavenly mystery, O Lord,
restore us in mind and body,
that we may be coheirs in glory with Christ,
to whose suffering we are united
whenever we proclaim his Death.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.