

Father O'Connor's Homily for 31 August 2025  
Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time-C

Sirach 3: 17-18, 20, 28-29  
Hebrews 12: 18-19, 22-24a  
Luke 14: 1, 7-14

Aesop tells a fable about a frog that wanted to fly. One day a stork landed in the cove and the frog had an idea. The stork was looking for minnows, but the frog's noisy voice had driven them all away. So the frog offered the stork a deal: "I will show you where the minnows' secret hiding place is if you help me to fly."

It was a deal. The frog betrayed his minnow-neighbors and the stork had a feast. Then the stork asked the frog, "Now, how am I going to help you to fly?"

The frog responded, "I'll just take hold of one of your legs with my mouth and then as you fly, I can go with you." And it worked out perfectly.

People on the ground saw the stork flying with the frog attached to his leg, and they were marveling. One of them said, "I wonder which one of them came up with this brilliant idea?"

The frog opened his mouth to say, "It was all my idea." And the consequence of his pride caused the frog to plummet to the earth.

And Aesop gives us this moral to the story: "Pride precedes the fall."

We know that to be true, for pride precedes our falls as well. Pride attacks us when we are successful, and then we begin a litany of self-congratulations. Pride accepts no criticism. Pride sees everyone else as a subordinate. Pride expects to be on a par with God – or even above God!

The Fathers of the Church put pride at the top of the list of the seven "capital" or "deadly sins": pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. "Pride precedes the fall."

The Scriptures today speak about humility. The first reading from the Old Testament, the Book of Sirach, opens with this line: "My child, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts." And isn't that true? Humble people are wonderful people to be around.

In the Gospel Jesus is dining at the home of a leading Pharisee, and He teaches us about humility. He tells a parable about a wedding banquet: those who would take the place of honor at the table and then are moved to a lower place when someone more important arrives, and those who would

choose the lowest place and then be invited to come up higher. Jesus says, “Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, but those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Imagine how refreshing your work-place or school or social circle would be if there were no more games of one-upsmanship, or posturing to be noticed, or maneuvering to be seen with the powerful and popular.

Jesus is teaching us a new way of life where we are not competitors but companions on the journey, where life is not a castle to be conquered but a banquet to be shared, where we do not need to struggle and grab for power, because we recognize that power’s pure purpose is to serve other people. And Jesus mentions some of them in today’s Gospel: “the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind.”

Now you may think that we are making a little too much of first-century table etiquette. But may I remind you that, most often, character is formed and character is revealed in the little things.

In many job interviews there is a golf game or a meal out. Why? Because our character comes through especially at moments when we think that nobody is watching. The ways that we treat the most invisible people around us reveal what we really think of the rest of humanity.

The little things are important. And a table is a good place to start, and that is where Jesus teaches us in today’s Gospel.

In the legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, there is a profound lesson in the shape of that table. There was no head or foot. Rather, it was round. Every knight mattered.

In His humility, Jesus chooses to be with us at His banquet table, at this altar. Here we are nourished with His Word in the Scriptures and with His Body and Blood in the Eucharist, under the humble appearances of bread and wine. Here everyone matters.

It is here that we grow together as one family in Christ. For we all need His grace, His mercy and His providential care.

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