

Christ is a **King**, and kings rule their kingdoms with **laws**. One of the most important laws in Christ's Kingdom is the law of **humility**. This law says that "everyone who **exalts** himself will be **humbled**, and everyone who **humbles** himself will be **exalted**". In other words, **greatness** in his Kingdom comes **not** from **outdoing** other people, **outperforming** them, and **outdistancing** them. Greatness in **Christ's** eyes comes from **serving** other people, from **elevating** them, **helping** them advance, and keeping **oneself** in the **background**. In his very first sermon, Jesus had taught the **same** law with **different** words: "Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." It's the same law stated so directly in today's First Reading: "Child, conduct your affairs with humility... Humble yourself the more, the greater you are and you will find favour with God." Jesus reprises this idea in the gospel, and declares that "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." He's calling us to see ourselves as God sees us: sinners infinitely loved by God, and in desperate need of his mercy. This law goes **directly against** everything this fallen world **teaches** us. It's **extremely** hard for us to swallow, which is why Jesus explained it by using this **parable** and Jesus also taught it to us by **living it out** in an **extreme** way: through his **passion and death**. And yet, because

he **humbled himself so thoroughly**, he has been glorified so **magnificently**. Such is the law of his Kingdom. It's a masterly lesson: In fact, He invites us to practice the perfect humility, consisting in not judging ourselves or the others, and to be conscious of our individual insignificance. In the Old Testament in the book of Proverbs Chapter 25...the scripture says: ***Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence or stand in the place of the great; for it is better to be told, "Come up here," than to be put lower in the presence of the prince.*** Thus, Jesus, proposes us, by precaution, to always choose the lowest seat, because, while we may not know the intimate reality of the others, we are fully aware that in the great show of the Universe we are totally irrelevant. Therefore, to place us in the last position is to be on the safe side. In doing so, we should seek the **true** reward of **lasting happiness** that comes from **living in friendship with God**. And we should put ourselves in "**the lowest place**" now, serving others while we can, so that we can be lifted higher **later**. In the same line of thought, Jesus invites us to place ourselves with humility beside those chosen by God: the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, and to be at the same level than them to find ourselves amidst those God loves with special tenderness, and to overcome the repugnance and shame to share with them table and friendship. We might

include the people we don't like too and, that is challenging because normally we don't do that since we share only with the people we like. That effort would be too much appreciated by Jesus. That means to open our minds, our hearts to new horizons, to be inclusive with everyone, to be merciful and charitable; then *to know who we truly are and to live that*. We have to be genuine in our actions and know the reason that we are doing things is bigger than our own need for honour.

"Lord Jesus, you became a servant for my sake to set me free from the tyranny of sin, selfishness, and conceit. Help me to be humble as you are humble and to love freely and graciously all whom you call me to serve."

Fr Luis Herrera

28th August 2016

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time