



Thirtieth Sunday Ordinary time -C- October 26, 2025

Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18; Psalm 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

Annual Catholic Appeal -1- Homily - Father Ed Hislop

The image is striking if we let the words connect with what we see and feel today: Too many are convinced of their own self-righteousness, while despising everyone else. Condemning, judging, blaming, while exalting self. We live in a time when “scorn” is cast on those, who the “arrogant” thank God they are not like, enabling the justification to create chaos and violence in many ugly forms. But, this we hear, this we believe: *“The Lord is a God of justice who hears the cry of the poor, who is close to the brokenhearted...”*

Caring for those in need, hearing the cry of the oppressed the wail of the orphan, abused child or the weariness of the refugee and immigrant, is not only a matter of charity, or a kind word, now and then. Giving, sharing, listening, serving and hospitality is, for us, a matter of justice. The kind of justice of which Jesus speaks in another place: “The poor,” he says, you are to always have with you. In other words, be with them, listen, converse, give them a home. That is, of course, a challenging goal that begins with listening to the cry, both close and far away, and a growing closeness to the brokenhearted.

Conversation begins with listening, listening evokes change! Conversing, more than charity, begets the justice of true care, hospitality, love, and abiding presence.

St. John Chrysostom, a great father of the Church, begins the conversation this way: *“Do you want to honor Christ’s body (the body and blood of which you eat and drink)? Then do not scorn him in his nakedness, nor honor him here in the church [with your prayers] while neglecting him outside where he is cold and naked. For he who said: This is my body, [this is my blood] and made it so by his words, also said: “You saw me hungry and did not feed me, and inasmuch as you did not do it for one of these, the*

least of my brothers/ my sisters, you did not do it for me.” (Mat 25:34ff) What we do here in the church requires a pure heart; what we do outside requires great dedication.” It also requires an open mind and often a change of heart.

The two we meet in today’s Gospel are two very different people who see life from different perspectives. One, the Pharisee, from his view of privilege, his own secure life of plenty, a sense of self-righteousness and his own “entitlement.”

He was likely a “good person”—doing everything he was supposed to do, but he could not see beyond himself, his own community, opinion, and social standing—he was entitled, therefore, to be heard and to be respected. And entitled, as well, he must have felt, to be unconcerned, with no need to see beyond his own opinion of life or others.

The man, the one at the back of the temple—the tax collector—saw from the point of view of his own neediness, weakness, and sinfulness. He was not likely poor from a monetary perspective—he was a tax collector—but he was poor because he was not accepted, because he violated (as a tax collector) his own people—he was “outside, cold and naked,” that is, “seen,” something, according to the Pharisee, that he likely deserved or brought on himself. The Pharisee was convinced that this tax collecting sinner, whom he did not know, and with whom he did not enter into any conversation, was not “entitled”—he was not like him, he was “different,” separate, despised, unwelcomed, “poor.”

Poverty comes in many forms, the cry of the oppressed is heard in many ways. It is easy to give some food to the hungry now and then, without ever knowing them, than it is to listen to the anguish of those on the outside, the outer edge,

especially if they are thought to have placed themselves there, as this tax collector seems, in the view of the Pharisee, to have done. It is easy not to help, or withdraw help, to those unknown, unheard, or who struggle far away. It is easy to forget that the “wail” of the poor, forgotten, judged, deserted and “despised” is a cry, not just to persons, but to the nation, nations and world! There can be no claim to Christianity if the cry is ignored, condemned, ridiculed, or deafened. There can be no claim to Christianity if help is taken away, either close to home or far away. *“The Lord hears the cry; the Lord confronts evildoers.” “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.”* With *“great dedication,”* followers of Christ hear, confront and draw close, to the Lord’s vision and command.

Those who gather around the Lord’s table in conversation with God, listen to the “cry” and

“wailing” echoing at home and across the seas. At this table we are commanded to listen, see and *“with great dedication”* embrace all as neighbors.

We let our eyes open, and our hearts change, that *“we may serve them truly, after the example of Christ and at his command... that all people may be raised up by the hope of a world made new.”*

The words we sang shape the conversation: *“The Lord hears the cry of the poor...” “The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; and those crushed in spirit he saves. The Lord redeems the lives of his servants.”*

With great dedication, it is this “Lord,” we become at this table: this is what we do, this is what we believe; this is the conversation; this makes us “Christian.” This is who we are. The image and the song is striking! ***IT IS LIFE-CHANGING.***

