

August 28, 2016
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

“Conduct your affairs with humility, and you will find favor with God”

God takes great pleasure in seeing us filled with the joy of being alive. And when this happens, the nature of the event changes and the love-affair with God and life begins.

Humility

The first reading from the Book of Sirach speaks about humility being central to finding favor with God. The English word “Humility” has an unfortunate connotation of excessive shyness, of being “a wall flower,” a “Casper Milktoast.” But the true meaning of humility comes from the Latin word, humilis, itself a derivative of the Latin, humus, meaning earth, ground. In other words, being humble means “being grounded, of knowing oneself, of being self-possessed - in possession of one’s self.” Humility is a description of the true self.

Encountering the Humble

It is easy to recognize humility in someone. I have this greeting card we just received from the girls at the St. Aloysius Girls High School in Bwanda, Uganda. This parish last spring over the period of one weekend raised around \$14,000 for the construction of a security wall around this school designed to protect it from kidnapping, theft, and fire. This is a thank you card from the girls at that school with the message: *“Thank you for supporting our school. We were very happy that you love us so much. God bless you and the Christians in your parish.”* Their need is real; their thank-you is real. This card is an encounter with those who are humble.

It is easy to recognize humility in someone. I have this Thank-You letter from Fr. Joseph Carver who was here just before I returned in which he writes, *“What a blessing this time was. Thank You! The folks who came daily were such a delight. I want to express my appreciation for this sanctuary of prayer and rest. This time was healing and more of a retreat than I expected.”* This letter is an encounter with one who is humble.

“Conduct your affairs with humility, and you will find favor with God”

Humility has to do with the attitudes behind our affairs. When conducting affairs in humility, we find favor with God:

- † in politics - when our attitude is to build bridges, not walls;
- † in economics - when we believe that we are all better off individually when we are all better off as a whole;
- † in civic & social relationships - when we see that other’s wounds are not to be condemned, but to be kissed.

The Attitude of Humility is essential to our being

When we don't conduct our affairs in humility, we do not find favor with God:

† in politics of anger, manipulation and deceit;

† in economics that only view the common good as just another variation of Socialism;

† in civic & social relationships that discard the inconvenient and the different.

It all starts within

There is no peace in our society when there is no peace in our hearts. But when there is peace in our hearts, then there is peace in our communities and our country and our world. This is not just a nice sentiment that would just be nice to have; this is critical. The humility of seeing reality as it is is something that has to do with our very survival. We won't make it without it; anything other than this is illusion. Finding favor with God is our true nature and condition. It is easy to recognize when others do:

† like the high school girls at St. Aloysius Girls High School in Bwanda, Uganda

† like Fr. Joseph Carver

† like you!

God takes great pleasure in seeing us filled with the joy of being alive. And when this happens, the nature of the event changes and the love-affair with God and life begins.