

Reminders and Resources for the fall 2025 Homily Series

Marks of Discipleship II

Week Two — Humility

Discipleship is a lifelong journey of spiritual growth, wherein we intentionally learn from and actively follow Jesus.

Perseverance keeps us moving forward; **humility** keeps us on the right path.

Genuine humility is truth — the truth about who we are before God and before others. It is an accurate self-view that we are no better and no worse than anyone else, and an awareness that there is a God and it is not me.

Scripture Connections:

(Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18) God knows no favorites. God draws near to the lowly and the honest of heart, the ones the world tends to overlook.

(2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18) St. Paul writes from prison near the end of his life, “The Lord stood by me and gave me strength.” That’s humility — the deep awareness that *I didn’t do this alone*. Paul knows that everything he’s achieved is by grace.

(Luke 18:9-14) The Pharisee prays, “O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity.” The prayer is all about himself. He’s performing for God. The tax collector, meanwhile, stands at a distance, won’t even raise his eyes, and says, “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” Just seven words, but they move heaven. Jesus says that this man — not the Pharisee — goes home justified.

Why We Need Humility:

1. We can’t access God without it. We only begin to pray authentically when we realize we need God. Sometimes we only learn humility when we hit a wall. People who struggle with addiction — alcoholism, gambling, pornography, even work or control — come to see that they cannot change on their own. At some point the prayer becomes, “Lord, do for me what I cannot do for myself.” That’s humility. The surrender that lets God act. It allows healing, reconciliation, and growth in all of us.

2. Humility levels the playing field. It reminds us that everyone here — whether you’ve been in this parish for forty years or you walked in today for the first time — is a beloved child of God. Humility lets us see one another as equals, not competitors. It helps us celebrate the gifts and successes of others instead of feeling threatened by them. Pride divides; humility delights in goodness wherever it appears.

3. Humility sets us free — free from comparison, from pretending, from the exhausting need to prove ourselves. When we stop pretending to be perfect, we finally

make space for real grace. Humility restores everything to its proper proportion — God in God's place, us in ours — and peace follows.

Humility also has public importance. In a world obsessed with image and competition, **humility might be one of the most countercultural acts of faith.** It is what allows people to listen instead of shout, to serve instead of demand, to care for the earth as stewards, not owners. Without humility, even religion can become self-centered. With humility, even ordinary acts become holy.

“Pride makes us artificial and humility makes us real.” — Thomas Merton

“Love yourself. Then forget it. Then, love the world.” — Mary Oliver

“Every person that you meet knows something you don't; learn from them.”
— H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God. — Micah 6:8

Some practical ways to practice humility:

- **Avoid comparisons.** When you catch yourself measuring your worth against someone else, stop and thank God for both of you.
- **Listen more than you speak.** Let the goal be to understand, not win.
- **Serve quietly.** Do one act of kindness no one knows about except you and God.
- **Pray the tax collector's prayer:** “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”

For further reading:

- The Litany of Humility: https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0426/0547/8038/files/The_Litany_of_Humility_Guide-06.pdf?v=1601668016
- Humility is the 'gateway to all virtues,' pope says: <https://www.usccb.org/news/2024/humility-gateway-all-virtues-pope-says>
- The Little Way: Reflections on the Joy of Smallness in God's Infinite Love — book of writings by St. Thérèse of Lisieux https://www.amazon.com/Little-Way-Reflections-Smallness-Infinite/dp/1641239514/ref=monarch_sidesheet_title

Lord Jesus, you humbled yourself to walk among us, to wash our feet and feed us with your life. Teach us to walk humbly with you — to depend on your mercy, to rejoice in the goodness of others, and to see every gift as coming from your hand. Keep us steady in perseverance and faithful in humility, until we are exalted with you in glory. Amen.