

## 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time 2016

October 23, 2016—There is a story told about a brand new Colonel who was moving into his big new office. As he sat behind his desk taking it all in and feeling very proud of himself and his new rank he sees a young Airman walking down the corridor heading for his office. And so, to impress the young man with his importance, as soon as the young soldier is within earshot the Colonel picks up the phone and turns his chair to face out the window and says in a loud voice:

*“Why yes, Mr. President, I agree completely, Sir. I will be sure to give that message to the General today when I see him. Thank you, Mr. President and my best to the First Lady.”*

With that he turns around and places the phone back on the desk and then, acting surprised to see the young man standing before him says, *“Yes, Airman, is there something I can do for you?”*

To which the young man replies, *“No sir, Colonel, I just came by to hook up your phone.”*

Ah, yes ... for all of us, a dose of humility is a very good thing once in a while. But **how people see us**, and **how we see and treat others** are very big parts of our life. Like it or not, we are conditioned from our earliest days to be observant and smart, to associate with the good and avoid the bad, and to use our intellect, our skills, our speech, and our manners to make a favorable impression on others and to be sure that *we* project the proper image that we think we should.

It can make all the difference in business. It is the subject of classes and seminars since who we **are** and who we **appear** to be, like it or not, is

sewn into our daily lives.

In today's holy Gospel [Luke 18:9-14], Our Blessed Lord gives us a powerful glimpse into the hearts of two silent "*pray-ers*" who step into the sanctuary of the temple before Him. With Divine eyes, he sees what is **real** inside and dismantles what is **false** outside. He exposes the exterior piety of the Pharisee bloated by his own righteousness and exalts the humility of the breast-beating publican who feels unworthy to even look heavenward.

How fascinating it is that this snapshot of the interior piety of two people who lived thousands of years ago can still inspire us, so many centuries later to **take a good look at our lives** and to ask with sincerity where **we** stand before the Lord in our relationship with Him.

My friends, in an age when the moon above us is within our grasp and spacecraft are preparing to land on Mars; in an era when travel beyond the stars has become a commercial venture; and in a society where information travels faster than the speed of light, you and I can often forget that we have been graced with an ancient power so fast and so powerful that as the Book of Sirach [first reading SIR 35:12-14, 16-18] just told us: "... it can 'pierce the clouds.'"

From our earliest beginnings as a tiny infant right to this very moment, we have been taught and schooled in the **power of prayer**—the ability as frail and weak mortals to have the capacity to converse with the Almighty in the firmament of heaven. As Verizon and AT&T and Sprint are vying for our earthly communication business, we are assured of a heavenly link—a direct connection to the One who spins the planets on their courses and gives life to all the world.

But just like that Pharisee in today's Gospel, we also go through life oftentimes with head unbowed and prayers and heart untouched. We can do

all the right things for all the wrong reasons and forget to imitate the humility of the Lord Himself, who taught us to recognize our need for **Him** at every moment of our lives,

My friends, what privilege we have. Not just here at Holy Mass each week, not just when trouble comes or nations shake, and not just when we have nowhere to turn and God seems like the only answer to our woes, but at every moment of every day. When we set aside time for Him around our dinner tables, at our bedside before sleep, when we wake, as we drive or walk, or spend some time alone, you and I can unleash the power of prayer in earnest and humble ways and pay the Lord the highest flattery of all by freely choosing to use our time and our moments to speak to Him. For remember this: He in His high heaven always has time for us. He chooses to listen to us, to hear us, and always to embrace us.

May we then take the time to **bow** our heads and offer our humble prayers and then we too can “*pierce the clouds*” and invite Him into our homes, into our lives and into our hearts ... every moment of every single day.

God Love You.