

WHO HUMBLER HIMSELF WILL BE EXALTED...

We have reached the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, and connecting this Sunday's texts with last Sunday's Scripture texts, Jesus continues to insist on the importance of prayer. Always pray without fainting.

But there are some aspects or considerations we must contemplate in our life of faith as we approach prayer.

We all know that comparisons between people are unpleasant, and this is precisely what we discover in the attitude of the Pharisee presented in the Gospel as he enters the Temple to pray.

In his prayer, the Pharisee compares himself to others, believing himself superior to them; he especially despises the tax collector, considering him a sinner.

The Jews rejected the tax collectors because they had abandoned their faith and submitted to the Roman Empire. Thus, in tax collection, they were exposed to theft, corruption, and fraud.

In other words, their sin was public, and therefore they could not even enter the temple to pray.

However, the parable we have heard highlights the humility of this tax collector. Realizing that he was a sinner, he humbly turned to God, allowing him to return home justified, with the possibility of a new life.

This confirms what the first reading from the Book of Sirach tells us: the prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and this is the experience of Saint Paul, as recounted in the second reading.

We can discover several lessons in this passage from St Luke.

First, it is important to avoid comparisons and, above all, to examine our inner selves. For this purpose, it is advisable to examine our conscience frequently, preferably daily. This is what Saint Ignatius of Loyola recommends; this will help us discover our own fragility and understand the fragility of others. In other words, it helps us remain humble.

Another lesson we must apply is to avoid comparisons with others. We are all different, as the philosopher Ortega y Gasset would say, I am me and my circumstances.

All we know about others are their actions, but we don't know their inner selves or their motivations.

If we avoid comparisons, we will also avoid judgments; because each person carries their personal history, their experience of God, their fragility.

In short, we are invited to pray perseveringly from humility, recognizing our truth before God and trusting in His mercy. Amen.