

**SPIRITUALITY**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Matt 11:29ab

R<sup>1</sup>. Alleluia, alleluia.

Take my yoke upon you, says the Lord;  
and learn from me, for I am meek and humble  
of heart.

R<sup>2</sup>. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel** Luke 14:1, 7-14; L126C

**On a sabbath Jesus went to dine  
at the home of one of the lead-  
ing Pharisees,  
and the people there were ob-  
serving him carefully.**

**He told a parable to those who had  
been invited,  
noticing how they were choosing the  
places of honor at the table.  
“When you are invited by someone to a  
wedding banquet,  
do not recline at table in the place of  
honor.**

**A more distinguished guest than you  
may have been invited by him,  
and the host who invited both of you  
may approach you and say,  
‘Give your place to this man,’  
and then you would proceed with  
embarrassment  
to take the lowest place.**

**Rather, when you are invited,  
go and take the lowest place  
so that when the host comes to you  
he may say,  
‘My friend, move up to a higher  
position.’**

**Then you will enjoy the esteem of your  
companions at the table.**

**For everyone who exalts himself will  
be humbled,  
but the one who humbles himself will  
be exalted.”**

*Continued in Appendix A*

**Reflecting on the Gospel**

Who doesn't love a good dinner party?! Great food, excellent company, good wine, and lively conversation. Jesus certainly enjoyed himself at such events and was considered by some to be a glutton and a drunkard (Matt 11:19)!

In today's gospel Jesus is being hosted by a leading Pharisee. This was likely an extravagant event and certainly wasn't Jesus' first or last such dinner.

The first piece of advice Jesus gives is hardly unique to Christianity or even rooted in his identity as Son of God. Instead, it's practical advice reminiscent of Greek philosophers and good Jewish etiquette. In fact, it sounds much like modern-day Miss Manners! The aphorism, “[E]veryone who exalts himself will be humbled, / but the one who humbles himself will be exalted,” will be repeated later in the gospel (Luke 18:14).

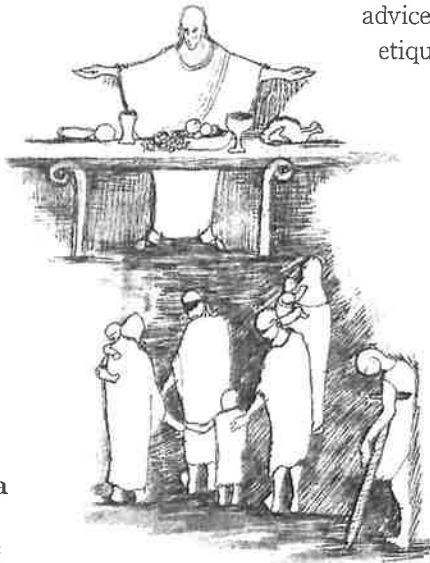
The second piece of advice culminating in a promise to be “repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” is rooted more in religious identity and a belief that there would even be a resurrection of the righteous. To receive such an invitation, Jesus implores his host to invite “the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind.” In other words, invite those people who cannot reciprocate. By so doing, God himself will reciprocate on their behalf!

So we have two lessons from today's reading. humble oneself and serve those who cannot reciprocate. There is certainly more to the entire gospel

message than that, but it is an excellent place to start. Moreover, both can be done in imitation of Jesus himself, who truly humbled himself and served us, we who cannot truly reciprocate.

**Living the Paschal Mystery**

Our liturgies, prayers, Catholic culture, and more do much to promote a high Christology and rightly so. But a gospel reading like the one we have today reminds us that Jesus was a human being who attended dinner parties, told stories at such parties, and even offered sage advice. One modern teacher made the point that in the Gospel of Luke there are so many meals that Jesus attends that one can eat one's way through the story! Is it no wonder then, that by the conclusion of this gospel the disciples come to know Jesus through the breaking of the bread? And this is the way the risen Christ is made known to believers ever since. Each meal, and even the liturgical Eucharist, is a foreshadowing of the heavenly banquet. Let's tap into this aspect of Christ, the one who enjoyed a good dinner party, to learn from him about the life that awaits us.



Then he said to the host who invited him,  
“When you hold a lunch or a dinner,  
do not invite your friends or your brothers  
or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors,  
in case they may invite you back and you have repayment.  
Rather, when you hold a banquet,  
invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind;  
blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you.  
For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”