

Twenty Second Sunday Ordinary Time – C – 2010
Sirach 3.17-18, 20, 28-29//Heb. 12.18-19, 22-24//Luke 14.1, 7-14

→5 people won a shopping spree: rules of the spree were simply...get as much as you can to the front door in 20 minutes time...and all of it is free of charge

→and so on the appointed morning...the contestants were there...a large crowd had gathered...reporters/media were there also

→doors opened at 9...and 4 of the 5 rushed in grabbed shopping carts and off they went; while the 5th contestant walked in casually

→meantime...the 4 others ran helter-skelter through the aisles, loading carts with steaks, and fine wines, electric appliances, expensive colognes----whatever they could get in their carts

→the 5th contestant meanwhile was a woman who strolled around carefully looking at things...eventually she picked up a toothbrush and put it in her cart, then stopped to help one of the others who had dropped some of their merchandise on the floor

And she did this...not only to this contestant but she helped all the others as well...helping them find things, helping with their bundles of merchandise, helping them carry things and run up and down all the aisles

→and by now the reporters began to notice [with curiosity] the one woman who was taking her time...helping all the others

→and as time ran out...the 4 collapsed in front of the store with their mountain of items...while the fifth one quietly strolled out of the store with her toothbrush and a few small other items in hand

→well one of the reporters asked the 5th one... “why didn’t you grab everything you could get in your time?”

→and the lady looked at the reporter////smiled graciously and said... “ I just thought I would be nice to the others for a change”...and began to walk away...and then turning around to the reporter and winking she said.... “and besides, my father owns the store!”

PAUSE

→now in today’s world...a person such as this...is hard to come by these days

→today [when you think about it] it is becoming more and more rare to find a gracious person who will take the time to help others...instead of grabbing all that could be gotten

-→i.o.w. as we live life today...it is becoming harder and harder to find a gracious person who is willing to take time to help others, provide assistance and simply show some kindness to others these days...isn’t it!

→and as disheartening as this may be...it shouldn’t come as a surprise to anyone of us, nor is it a news flash...because in reality....our culture these days...our world...our society....really doesn’t promote an attitude of a common unity, of kindness or helpfulness towards others...the way it use to

→instead, today we live in a society and culture that seems to promote [moreso] an attitude of oneness...of watching out for myself and nobody else...of a “minding my own business, don’t bother me...stay out of my way” attitude...of worrying about and taking care mainly myself and no one else

AND

--very simply put, today's gospel is about calling us to be exactly the opposite of what this popular attitude in our world today seems to be promoting....instead the gospel is calling us to be gracious and kind and open towards one another

→and sadly, when you think about it...those qualities of graciousness and kindness, of respect and reverence, of appropriateness and decorum are slowly disappearing from our society and life...just look around these days if you want any proof of that...and yet our lives as Christians are calling us to the exact opposite of what is happening

--i.o.w...our Christian life...our Christian call...seems to exactly contrary to those qualities that our society today seems to emulate and encourage

-→have you been to a cemetery recently...take some time one day...and look at the tombstones that are there...they don't read "she drove a Mercedes" or "he was the top salesman" or "they lived in a mansion" do they...and yet these are the qualities, these are the ways, these days that we seem to judge people by...the standards by which we say people are important and worthy

→when we die, hopefully someone will deliver a eulogy about us and if so, hopefully...the words are not going to be about how big our bank account was, or how intelligent we were, or how many books we read...but hopefully...the words of our eulogy will be about how kind and gentle we were with people around us, how helpful we were to those in need, how understanding we were and patient we were with others....

→[yet try to do any of those things today, in the workplace, in the corporate world, on the roadway and what type of reaction do we get these days.....]

PAUSE

→in a word...today's gospel is about kindness and about being compassionate towards one another

→and Christ uses the image of a banquet table and very straightforwardly says --- do not take your seats at the head of the table...but instead make your way to the lowest place so that, when the host comes, they might take you to a higher place

---i.o.w...do not spend your life gobbling up all the merchandise...but instead wait for the owner of the store to come and then you will be rewarded

---do not spend your life dwelling on all that's wrong with it...but instead perhaps focus on what is good with it...be gentle, be humble and be kind

-→unfortunately and in all honesty...being kind and gracious and gentle with one another is becoming very hard to do these days...especially with the way the world is becoming these days isn't it?

→it is becoming more difficult to be kind and gracious with the family after a long days work....

→it is becoming more difficult to be kind and give someone your attention when you yourself, need the attention or want to be left alone after being pulled in so many directions

→it is becoming more and more difficult [isn't it] to be nice to others when someone cuts in front of you, takes your place in line, or doesn't treat you fairly/////but that is what the gospel story is challenging us too today...and that, as hard as it may be, is what Christ is urging us to work on as well

→and so maybe, the message of the gospel reading today is for us to be more alert and more aware of the many opportunities we have to be kinder and gentler towards one another...MAYBE JUST in the coming week

→and when you think about it...there are a lot of ways for this to happen...little ways even

→maybe it will happen in the parking lot after mass today...letting someone out before you

--or tonight at home, by just listening to someone who needs to be listened too

--or maybe this week taking a greater interest in the events of your spouse or children or school

--being kind to a customer salesperson, your boss, your spouse, your neighbor

--perhaps being more tolerant of those people that just set you off...or to a classmate, a friend, a relative or companion

PAUSE

--[with Labor Day fast approaching and the end of summer] we are shifting back into the busy season...the busy time of year...the holidays are on their way, school is back, summer vacations are over, businesses and offices, factories and plants are getting busier

---and we may relish the thought.....or dread it.....but the fact of the matter is...is that it's a time of year when things get hectic and busy....and consequently patience is going to wear thin

--[but] it is also a time [perhaps] to remember some extended kindness and gentleness as well

PAUSE

---Jesus is our best example of this kindness and graciousness and he is calling us to share this among ourselves as well

--he calls us to this banquet, to share in this meal...so that we can share with one another his love, his kindness, his graciousness

→[I believe]...that all is not lost...we can still be a gracious and kind people if we want to be

--and we have the perfect role model.....a kind and gracious God....who is inviting us [today and every day] to be just that....kind and gracious to one another.