

Twenty Second Sunday Ordinary Time – C – 2022
Sirach 3.17-18, 20, 28-29//Heb. 12.18-19, 22-24//Luke 14.1, 7-14

→there is a true story told by Don Shula, the famous Miami Dolphin football coach, that happened years ago...it seems that he and his family were vacationing one year at a small town in northern Maine

→on a rainy afternoon...Shula, his wife and their five children decided to attend a matinee movie in the town's only theater

→when they arrived the house lights were still on in the theater

→there were only six other people in the theater

→when Shula and his family walked in... all six people stood up and applauded

→he waved and smiled kindly at them

→and he turned to his wife and said... "we're a thousand miles from Miami and they're giving me a standing ovation all the way up here..."

→then a man came up to shake Don Shula's hand

→Shula beamed and said.... "How did you recognize me?"

→and the man replied... "Mister, I don't know who you are....all I know is that just before you and your family walked in the theater manager told us that unless four more people show up we wouldn't have a movie today."

→now I like that story because it clarifies the teachings of today's readings for us...namely that our Christian faith calls us to be humble people.

→it calls us to be the kind of person Don Shula showed himself to be in that story...because, here was a man whose reputation extended across the country,

→not only as an excellent coach but also as a fine human being

[and so] it was only natural for Shula to think that the man who came over to shake his hand knew who he was....and when it turned out **that he didn't**

→Shula was the first to laugh at himself.....

→[when you think about it]...only a humble person would do something like that

→Which raises the all-important question...the question that our gospel reading is all aboutwhat exactly does it mean to be a humble person?

PAUSE

→...a humble person...is hard to come by these days

→in fact...it is becoming more and more rare to find a gracious person who will take the time to help others...who thinks of others before themselves...who is kind and gracious

→and as disheartening as this may be...it shouldn't come as a surprise ...because in reality....our culture...our world...our society....really doesn't promote an attitude of a common unity, or kindness or helpfulness towards others these days...at least not the way it used to

→instead, we live in times that seem to promote an attitude of oneness...individualism...watching out for myself and nobody else...of a "minding my own business, don't bother me...stay out of my way" type attitude...

AND YET

→today's gospel is calling us to be exactly the opposite of this popular attitude...

→today's lesson calls us to be gracious and open towards one another

PAUSE

→in a word...today's gospel is about kindness and compassion

→[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 being centered on yourself but rather be open to
taking care of others needs

→unfortunately and in all honesty...being kind and gracious and gentle with one
another is becoming very hard to do these days...

→it's difficult to be kind and gracious with others after a long days work....

→it's difficult to give someone your attention when you want to be left
alone after being pulled in so many directions

→it's difficult 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 exactly what the gospel story is challenging us too today...

→and so maybe, the message of the gospel reading today is for us to be more alert
and aware of the many opportunities we have to be kind and gentle towards one
another...MAYBE even 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...

→or tonight at home

→or maybe this week at work or at school

PAUSE

→.....we are slowly shifting back into the busy time of year.....school is back, summer vacations are over, businesses and offices, factories and plants are getting back to the normal routines....the holidays are on their way

→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 also wears thin

→and maybe it is also a time to remember some extended kindness and gentleness

PAUSE

→Jesus is our best example of this and he is calling us to share this kindness and gentleness among ourselves

→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

→all is not lost...*we still can* be a gracious and kind people if we want to

→and we have the perfect role model.....a kind and gracious God....who invites us [today and every day] to be just that

....a kind and gracious person to one another.