

## **Homily 2019.09.01 by Fr. Gabor**

Some American tourists one day visited the home of Beethoven in Germany. A young woman among them sat down at the great composer's piano and began to play his Moonlight Sonata. After she had finished, she turned to the museum caretaker and said, 'I presume great many musicians visit this place every year.' 'Yes' he replied. 'Paderewski was here last year.' 'And did he play on Beethoven's piano?' The museum caretaker replied quietly, 'No, he said he wasn't worthy.'

Well, looking at my own weaknesses, my own big ego, I also feel I am not really the most authentic person to talk about humility. However, we, priests still have a duty to proclaim the good news even though we are unworthy, because we do not promote ourselves, but Jesus, our Saviour.

So what does Jesus mean by humility in accord with the Gospel reading. He says that everyone who exalts themselves will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted (see verse 11). So the humble are those who do not exalt themselves, who do not put themselves into the focus of attention, into powerful positions, or do not think they are more than who they really are, and do not manipulate people to think how wonderful they are. Instead the humble person comes down to earth, brings himself low, right down to the level of earth, where he came from. After all the word 'humble' comes from the word 'humus', or earth.

But the question is: 'before whom should you make yourself low, God or man or both?' Nowhere does the Bible say that you should let people to treat you like dirt. Humility is about humbling ourselves first of all before God; emptying your mind and heart of your egoistic, impure and sometimes childish thoughts, or of your anger, of your resentment or grudges, and stopping to behave immaturely, and letting God take over; letting His Spirit fill your minds and hearts, and letting Him to direct your decision making, behaviour and your words, so that all in all He may be glorified and the attention of all people may be directed towards Him, and not to you.

This also implies that if God wants you to tell people something that they don't want to hear you still tell them believing that this is what God wants to tell them. If people don't like God's message through you, they may say you are not a humble person and that you are arrogant and perhaps will even say: 'who do you think you are', but that's their problem, because in God's eyes you are a humble person who is passing on His message.

However to endure these attacks you need to die to your ego, to yourself (cf. Gal 2:20). This is sometimes the biggest challenge both to parents when you discipline your children and they verbally abuse you, or to priests when we preach about countercultural things, and to all who have a responsibility for the spiritual life and development of others. But we should never despair, never be discouraged and never let anyone trigger your ego to defend yourself (cf. 2 Cor 4:8-10; Luke 12: 11-13).

Humility also gives you the freedom to do God's will. So from this point of view humility is our way to true inner freedom, because true freedom is not about being free to do whatever you want, but about being free to do what the Father wants. If you don't feel you are free to do His will, because you are afraid of losing something, eg. your reputation or some of your friends, you need to take courage (cf. Mt 16:26). Often what you are afraid of is not as disastrous as you think. Our spiritual enemy's greatest weapon is to make you afraid, and it tempts you to manipulate people, but resist him and he will disappear (cf. James 6:4).

Finally, I have already referred to, that humility is not for its own sake. We do not humble ourselves so that people may see how humble we are, but humility is for the sake of glorifying God's love and mercy. The truly humble person behaves as a channel; He speaks and acts with the Father's love and mercy in his minds and hearts, so that people may give glory to the Father alone (cf. Mt 5:15-16), because He is the only source of everything that is good and virtuous and honourable (Philippians 4:8-18, see also the reading for the Memorial of St. Augustine, Mt 23: 8-12), we only enjoy it and pass it on. The Catechism reminds us in par. 559 that Jesus always refused peoples' attempts to make him a King, because he always wanted to give glory to our heavenly Father. He considered himself as a face of the Father (Jn 12:45 and Jn 14:9).

So a humble life is not without trials, but at the end of time the humble will be exalted by the Father and will have a share in the glory of Jesus in eternity (Mt 23:12; Romans 8:17; Philippians 2:9ff; 1 Pet 5:6-10).