

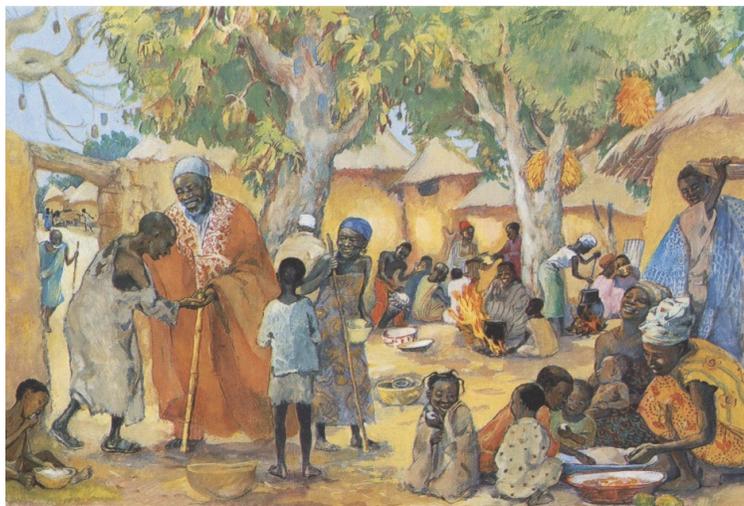
THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

September 1, 2019

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29 + Hebrews 18-19.22-24 + Luke 14:1, 7-14

Reflection by Elise Redmerski, OP



Today's Gospel speaks about a wedding feast and seating arrangements. If you ever planned an event and had to do a seating chart, you know how difficult it can be because there are always some invited guests who are never happy with their assigned place. They would like a place of honor. It is not the place that gives you honor. You are honored because you have been invited. Sirach tells us if you humble yourself, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God.

And who is on the guest list? The gospel tells us not to limit your guests to friends, relatives or wealthy people because they can give you nice gifts. Rather, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, the immigrant, and the people who share or don't share your religious or political views.

Reading this Gospel made me think of Pope Francis. On two occasions during the Pope's general audience, Francis mirrored the inclusiveness of God. He told the Swiss Guard not to remove a girl suffering from an illness—just let her be as she clapped and danced on the platform as he continued to talk. At another Papal audience, an autistic boy broke away from his mother, ran up to the stage and began rolling around. Francis' response was, "Let him be." The Pope was not ruffled in the slightest.

Can I share my space with a girl with an illness or an autistic child like Francis did? Can I remain unruffled when I am trying to listen to the homily and one of our autistic children begins to act up and the parent is having a difficult time controlling the child? Or when one of our homeless adults arrives late for Mass and begins to make noise as she makes her way down the aisle and fusses with her cart and all of her belongings?

There is a spiritual song that reminds us that there is ***Plenty Good Room in My Father's Kingdom***. And in a song by Jackie DeShannon, she tells us to ***Put A Little Love in Your Heart***. Her lyrics continue with ***I hope when you decide kindness will be your guide...And the world will be a better place for you and me*** when all are welcome.

Image: JESUS MAFA. The poor invited to the feast, from *Art in the Christian Tradition*, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48397> [retrieved August 29, 2019]. Original source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact page: <https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>).