Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 18:9-14): Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. "Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector.

The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity — greedy, dishonest, adulterous — or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.'

But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

"O God, be merciful to me..."

Fr. Joan Pere PULIDO i Gutiérrez
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Today, we read St. Luke's Gospel with special attention and interest. A parable addressed to our hearts. Words of life to reveal our human and Christian authenticity, which is based upon the meekness of realizing we are nothing but sinners: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (Lk 18:13); and in God's mercy and goodness towards us: "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lk 18:14).

Today, more than ever before, we need authenticity to discover our true self and emphasize the liberating reality of God's plan, in our lives and in our society. It is our right attitude if we desire the Truth of our faith to reach with all its strength today's men and women. Our authentic Christian witness must be founded on three qualities: power, love and self-control (cf. 2Tim 1:7).

Power, to be cognizant of God's word and keep it in our lives, no matter the difficulties. Especially, in our days, we must pay attention to this point, because in our environment there is plenty of self-deception. Saint Vincent of Lérins warned us: "The corruption of each mischievous error begins to break forth, and to

defend itself by filching certain passages of Scripture, expounding them fraudulently and deceitfully”

Love, to be able to look with tender eyes —that is, with God's eyes— at the person or event we have in front of us. Saint John Paul II encourages us to “promote a spirituality of communion”, that —among other things— indicates “above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us.”

And, finally, self-control, to be able to transmit this Truth in today's language, really incarnating God's Word in our life: “They will believe in our deeds more than in any discourse” (St. John Chrysostom).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Let us on no account take it for granted that we are without sin. Living a life that is praiseworthy includes begging pardon for things that are blameworthy." (Saint Augustine)

- "It is not enough, therefore, to ask how much we pray, we have to ask ourselves how we pray. I ask myself: can one pray with arrogance? No. Can one pray with hypocrisy? No. We must only pray by placing ourselves before God just as we are.” (Francis)

- "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God" (St. John Damascene). But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? (Ps 130:1)... Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought," are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God" (St. Augustine)." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 2,559)