**23 OCTOBER – XXX SUNDAY O.T. [C]**

**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.'**

**Conceit is a fruit of the heart of Satan that lives in the heart of man. It is daughter of pride. While humbleness is a fruit of the heart of the Holy Spirit that lives in the heart of the disciple of Jesus. When one lives with the heart of Satan, one is always governed by conceit. Instead, when one lives with the heart of Christ the Lord, in which the fullness of the Holy Spirit, one is always moved and led by the greatest humbleness. The more one is humble and the more one is great. The more one is truly humbler and the more one is truly greater. Humbleness is the true measure of the spiritual greatness of a man. Here is what the Holy Spirit reveals about pride: “Sovereignty over the earth is in the hand of God, who raises up on it the man of the hour; Sovereignty over every man is in the hand of God, who imparts his majesty to the ruler. No matter the wrong, do no violence to your neighbor, and do not walk the path of arrogance. Odious to the LORD and to men is arrogance, and the sin of oppression they both hate. Dominion is transferred from one people to another because of the violence of the arrogant. Why are dust and ashes proud? Even during life man's body decays; A slight illness - the doctor jests, a king today - tomorrow he is dead. When a man dies, he inherits corruption; worms and gnats and maggots. The beginning of pride is man's stubbornness in withdrawing his heart from his Maker; For pride is the reservoir of sin, a source which runs over with vice; Because of it God sends unheard-of afflictions and brings men to utter ruin. The thrones of the arrogant God overturns and establishes the lowly in their stead. The roots of the proud God plucks up, to plant the humble in their place: He breaks down their stem to the level of the ground, then digs their roots from the earth. The traces of the proud God sweeps away and effaces the memory of them from the earth. Insolence is not allotted to a man, nor stubborn anger to one born of woman.” (Sir 10,4-18). Pride is together sin against God and against one’s own nature. One gives it a value that it does not have. With the false value, one pretends to govern the world. It is as if a man reputed himself almighty, creator, lord of heaven and earth, light and wisdom of the universe and he also lacked the capacity to see that before him there is lion ready to maul, devour him, make him its food. The proud is always unjust, foolish, arrogant, overbearing, conceited. Not knowing God, he does not know himself in his truth. Not knowing himself, he judges and condemns his brothers from his lie and falsity. He is against God and against his brothers. He sees God and every other man from the falsity and lie of his heart.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 18,9-14**

**He then 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 everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."**

**The Pharisee does not know God. He does not know how everything is for grace of God and for his love. If he is “just”, he is likewise for Lord’s grace. If he were truly just, he would be humble. If he were truly humble, he would have turned to the Lord another prayer: “Lord, I thank you to preserve my feet from walking the ways of evil. Help me and give me every strength so that I never leave your holy Law. Do not let me turn away from you with you disobedience and the transgression of your Commandments. Grant the grace that you have given to me, Lord, to my brother tax collector and to all the other ones, so that they may serve you and the brothers according to your holy Law. If you, Lord, have one only grace, give it to him. Thus, he will certainly love you infinitively more than me. I correspond little to your gift. He, I am sure about that, will bless you eternally and will bring your gift at the utmost of the fructification.” Raising a prayer to God from the humble heart and making it one with the proud hear is not the same thing. There is a substantial difference. The proud heart prays from wickedness. The humble heart from goodness. The proud heart is enemy of the brothers for it is enemy of God. The humble heart, being friend of God, wants what God wants and loves what God loves. Since God loves the world so much to give his Only Begotten Son for the redemption of men, even the humble heart wants the salvation of the world. Whoever wants the salvation does not judge, does not condemn. He offers his life for the conversion of his brothers. The humble knows that he can stand on his feet only because God is his support. This is why he thanks Him. But he also knows that he always needs God’s support and this is why he asks for it moment after moment. He asks for it for himself. He asks for it for his brothers. May the Virgin Mary, the Woman entirely humble, obtain for us the grace of being humble, always humble.**