



# Come and See!

Week of August 31, 2025, 22 OT

## The Word...

"When you hold a lunch or a dinner,  
do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy  
neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment.  
Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind;  
blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you.  
For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous"  
(Lk 14:1, 7-14).

## Pondering the Word...

Today's readings address a subject in vogue right now: Humility. Not! It seems more like a four-letter word these days. And these readings come right on the heels of "hypocrite week," when Jesus lambasts those in leadership positions who act so pious, holy, and just while placing burdens upon the poor and oppressed.

But the word that speaks to me today is "repayment." Aside from credit cards, car and student loans, and for those fortunate enough, mortgages, most of us don't like to be in debt. It seems a fact of life when it comes to finances, but how about being indebted to someone who has done something for you? It can be uncomfortable for both the giver and the receiver. In fact, some cultures dictate you should always repay in some way, even if it is just a promise to never say anything bad about the giver.

So, what about "repaying" God? As I reflected on the gospel, I thought of God as the host of the banquet. God invites everyone: the poor—not only the materially poor, but those who are suffering, crippled by illness or addiction; those made lame, unable to go on due to depression or the weight of the world; the blind which we all are at times when we fail to see the face of Christ in our loved ones, the least of our siblings, or our enemies.

We can never repay God, and in fact, thinking that we can by fasting and confessing and humiliation is hubris in itself. But we can take the advice found in Scripture: *"How can I repay the LORD for all the great good done for me? I will raise the cup of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD"* (Ps 116:12-13). Or, as Meister Eckhart says, *"If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough."* Be grateful.

## Living the Word...

Another quote I rely on is from Micah 6: *"And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."* It's pretty simple, you know: I wake each day and do my best to keep in step with Jesus, walking *with* him by his side, making sure the first thing out of my mouth is "thanks!" As I go about my day, I converse with Jesus. I ask him to help me know what is just and kind in any situation and I feel his nudge and see his gentle smile when I'm off the mark! I ask him to show me what mercy—not forgiveness—but mercy looks like as I encounter different experiences and people. And every so often, I stop, overwhelmed by his closeness and love and say "thanks" again and again 'til I close my eyes in sleep. Your turn, now: how do you walk with Jesus, your God, each day?

## Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

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**Mon, Sep 1:** *"I tell you, there were many widows in Israel, but only to a widow in Zarephath [was Elijah sent]. There were many lepers in Israel, but only Naaman the Syrian [did Elisha cure]." When the people heard this, they were all filled with fury (Lk 4:16-30).* The folks from Jesus' hometown speak highly of his gracious words. That is until he compares them to the Israelites of old, the stiff-necked people who were shunned by the prophets. They do not see in themselves the same haughtiness and sinfulness that led to their ancestors' downfall. **Provision:** **"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (Santayana).** I would add to Santayana's famous quote: *"Those who cannot learn from the past..."* I shudder at what's happening in our world. I wonder why people don't see in the move to authoritarianism and racism images of the recent past. Pray to learn, not only from your own past, but from humanity's past. Put those lessons to work for the good.

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**Tue, Sep 2:** *"Encourage one another and build one another up" (1 Thes 5:1-6, 9-11). "When we form a Christian community, we come together not because of similar experiences, knowledge, problems... but because we have been called together by the same God. Only God enables us to cross the many bridges that separate us... By the way [we] carry each other's burdens and share each other's joys, [we] testify to God's presence in our world" (Henri Nouwen, adapted).*

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**Wed, Sep 3:** *The crowds went looking for him, and when they came to him, they tried to prevent him from leaving them. "I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God" (Lk 4:38-44).* I have the honor to lead spiritual seekers through the Exercises of St. Ignatius. For most who embark on this journey, it is a deep experience of Jesus' mercy and life. I did the exercises almost 25 years ago and still remember feeling lost when the program "ended." I wanted to hold onto this Jesus I had come to know, to keep him all to myself. It takes time to realize the purpose of this intimate knowledge and healing experience is for us to go out and proclaim the good news! **Provision: "What is most personal is most universal."** This quote, from the late psychotherapist, Dr. Carl Rogers, speaks of the deepest longing of the human heart. I wonder about those who call Jesus their "personal Savior," while staying holed up in their own little bubble, not willing to embrace his message, or worse, using their "salvation" to justify sinful and immoral acts. In these days of chaos and confusion, we might be tempted to hide away, to keep Jesus all to ourselves. But what we have found to be most personal is exactly what we are to share with everyone, what Jesus was called to share: The good news of God's mercy.

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**Thurs, Sep 4:** *"Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Lk 5:1-11).* If we read Luke's Gospel chronologically, we know Jesus has been hanging around Capernaum. He's preached at the synagogue; he's healed Peter's mother-in-law. Peter and his companions realize something big is afoot. We know of Peter's admission of his doubts, but could it be his humility is not just about doubting Jesus and himself? Could fear of change, of leaving behind what he thinks he knows about life be part of his asking Jesus to leave? *"I'm not worthy to be in this man's presence, but I'm also not up for what this presence means for my life."* **Provision: "Do not be afraid."** The reality of Jesus' presence is what keeps some people from getting to know him better, or to engage in the kind of deep prayer we talked about yesterday. It can seem easier to keep God at arm's length. But "the hound of heaven" calls to us always: *"Do not be afraid." "Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"*

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**Fri, Sep 5:** *"No one who has been drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good'" (Lk 5:33-39).* I wonder if that person drinking the old wine ever stopped to think whether the old wine tastes good to everyone. For some, the old wine is bitter, sour, burning like vinegar. **Provision: "See, I am making all things new."** If you are one for whom the old wine is preferable to anything new, take some time to ponder how much your opinion is limited by your experience. See if you can imagine how it might "taste" to someone different from you. Don't dismiss the new out of hand. Open your mind and heart to the Spirit who makes all things new.

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**Sat, Sep 6:** *"Persevere in faith, firmly grounded, stable, not shifting from the hope of the Gospel that you heard" (Col 1:21-23).* What is that faith, what is that hope? The answer can be found in today's psalm 54. **Provision: "God is my help; the Lord sustains my life."** When doubts pile up, when institutions, "princes and principalities" let us down and abandon us, let us remain firmly grounded and stable in God's ever-present mercy. And let us strive to bring that faith and hope to those who search for solid ground.