

## Twenty-second Sunday of Ordinary Time

Cycle C

Sir 3:17-18, 20, 28-29  
Ps 68:4-5, 6-7, 10-11  
Heb 12:18-19, 22-24a  
Lk 14:1, 7-14

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Today's Gospel story asks the ultimate question: "What seats do you have?"

Jesus tells a parable about the seats people want at a banquet to some Pharisees. In other words, Jesus teaches a group of educated, competitive, hard working people with acquired tastes. In other words, Jesus tells a story to a group of people a lot like me, and perhaps you too.

"What seats do you have?" Think of how often we hear or say those words, "What seats do you have?" The question is asked of everyone no matter what they attend: a ball game at the Phillies' new ballpark, a show on Broadway, a rock concert, the orchestra, a NASCAR event, the ballet, a political rally ... The list is endless. For each and every public event the question we all know to ask or answer is, "What seats do you have?"

Understandably, we always want the best seats. We always enjoy when we can answer, "behind home plate", or "at the 50 yard line", or "with a great view of the stage". Even if the seats aren't great, if they were particularly hard to come by, we're proud to say, "I'm in the nose bleed section, but I've got seats!"

"What seats do you have?" Think of how young we were when we first heard and understood that question.

And many of us, while attending an event, when we notice better seats, after an appropriate wait, we move ourselves up to those better seats. Timing, for the better seats, is key. If you wait too long, someone else will move themselves up into the better seats before you. If you take the better seats too quickly, the rightful owners might show up and displace you – that's always a little embarrassing.

"What seats do you have?" That's the question Jesus asks each of us. But he's not talking about a ball game, or a concert, or NASCAR. Jesus is asking, "With whom are you willing to sit in this life?" For a Christian the question becomes, "What are great seats?"

In the first reading the author of Sirach exhorts us to be humble. The humble, we are told, are a precious gift to others. The humble are willing to take the seat that is offered. St. Thomas of Villanova preached "the poor, the downtrodden, the oppressed, the needy,

and the hungry and thirsty were the Lord's favorites. Why, then, should they not be our favorites as well?"

Where are our seats? With whom are we willing to sit? Jesus reminds us today that God cares where we choose to sit. God wants us to sit with those who cannot repay us. The Gospel reminds us that God has favorites – the poor, the cripple, the blind – and we are invited, we are urged, to sit with them.

Like the people in today's Gospel story, we have accepted an invitation to a banquet – this banquet – this Eucharistic feast. There are only good seats at this banquet. As we receive the bread from this table, this bread from heaven, let us ask God for the grace and the courage to sit where we are needed, and to recognize God' favorites as our own.

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