

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
June 12-13, 2010

“From Self- Sufficient to Faith- Filled Love”

There is an attitude in human beings, as old as the human race, and as current as the latest computer. It is an attitude that will shut us off from God. It's called “self-sufficiency”.

Simon, the Pharisee is self-sufficient. He probably had several homes, owned vineyards and a wine press. He probably owned a number of olive groves, fig trees, and had an array of traveling animals, anything from mules to horses, to camels. Simon, the Pharisee probably owned slaves and was prominent in the synagogue.

Simon, as a good host, was suppose to have greeted Jesus with his hand on his guest's shoulder and exchange a kiss of peace. He did not. Simon was to have refreshed his guest with cool water poured over the guest's feet to bring comfort and cleansing. He did not. Simon was to have sweet smelling incense burning when the guest arrived and

was to have placed a drop of perfumed oil on the guest's head, perhaps a drop of Rose Oil. He did not. What is so interesting in the Gospel story, and the time it was written, is that none of the steps of welcome were to be omitted, not ever. Simon, however, did omit them.

Simon was not remotely aware that anybody among his guests needed anything, leastwise, Jesus. The one attitude that shuts us off from God is self-sufficiency. It's something like saying, "Since I'm OK you must be OK," emphasis on "must." Simon is not attentive. Simon is self-absorbed and self-sufficient. He has everything and needs nothing.

The sinful woman, on the other hand, has a good sense of human nature. She knows that we are not completely self sufficient. She knows that a new-born infant needs its mother and father. Children need teachers. Sick people need doctors. And people who make mistakes need helpers and mentors. As soon as we are born we are dependent

on each other. We are not perfect. We make mistakes, some good, some bad. Sometimes we sin and we need each other and God more than ever.

The sinful woman has a sense of humanity. She has a sense of healthy dependency which influences her sense of hospitality, her active concern. Her great love and empathy moves her away from the position of sin, self righteousness and self sufficiency to a position of self-effacement. Self effacement means she is acting humbly, openly, and lovingly. She is not self absorbed. She has made room in her life for something more. It is often the case in our human experience that we come to a question in our lives: "Is this all" Isn't there something more? I have my education, my career, my wife, my husband; I have my children; I have my money, my T.V., my computer, my DVD's and my compact discs. I can roll from bed to the automobile, to the grocery, roll back home, eat, sleep, and watch

T.V. I can even get the televised Mass. What more do I need.” Answer: The something more that completed the woman’s life was Jesus. She knew she needed the Son of God, and the Son of God more than reciprocated her hospitality with acceptance, mentoring, and divine forgiveness. Perhaps reflect on this gospel story: If God, who all perfect, all loving, and completely self sufficient; if God who does not need us humans has made room for us, cannot we make room for God?

So we pray: *Lord Jesus, we cannot rely on ourselves to find our ultimate meaning and peace. With Holy King David, we acknowledge that in our strength and in our weakness, in our failures and in our success, it is only You who make all things right and fulfill our every need. You lift the sinner. You confound the proud of heart.*

With St. Paul, we proclaim that it is not our self-sufficiency that makes us good and holy people. What makes us great people is our faith in Jesus,

active faith in Jesus; faith filled with love, because the dear Lord has loved us first. You dear Lord have made room for us first, from all eternity. Help us make room in all our accomplishments, in all our challenges, in all our business, in all our family affairs; help us make room for You, Lord Jesus. Keep our faith alive and our love strong and we shall be saved. A favor we ask of You, Lord Jesus for you live forever and ever. Amen.

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