

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Forsake me not, O Lord, my God; be not far from me! Make haste and come to my help, O Lord, my strong salvation!

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 130)

ANTIPHON: In you, Lord, I have found my peace.

RESPONSE: In you, Lord, I have found my peace.

LECTOR: O Lord, my heart is not proud nor haughty my eyes. I have not gone after things too great nor marvels beyond me. **R.**

LECTOR: Truly I have set my soul in silence and peace. A weaned child on its mother's breast, even so is my soul. **R.**

LECTOR: O Israel, hope in the Lord both now and for ever. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! You have one Father, your Father in heaven; you have one teacher; the Lord Jesus Christ! Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, O Lord.

Or

Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me shall have life because of me, says the Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS Malachi 1:14-2:2,8-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9,13; Matthew 23:1-12

NEXT WEEK (32nd Sunday Year A) Wisdom 6: 12-16; Psalm 62; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18; Ps 62; Matthew 25: 1-13

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Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble



5 November 2023 31st Sunday Year A

'Keeping Up Appearances' is a popular British sitcom that ran from 1990-1995. The plot centres on Hyacinth Bucket (pronounced "Bouquet"), a snobbish middle-aged Englishwoman on a lifelong quest to escape her working-class background, climb the social ladder and claim her rightful place in society.

Hyacinth hosts elegant soirees, including her famous 'candlelight suppers' complete with Royal Doulton tea set, in an effort to impose herself on high-society people, usually involving her long-suffering, but compliant husband, Richard; while striving to 'hide' her less-refined sisters, Daisy and Rose, and Daisy's slothful husband, Onslow. Yet somehow, Hyacinth's family always manages to spoil her grand designs to find fame, usually resulting in chaos and embarrassment. However, Hyacinth is a determined lady, who has one mission in life - to impress people of influence, status and wealth!

In today's gospel, we meet some scribes and Pharisees who are also intent on 'keeping up appearances'! For them, religion has more to do with personal gain and they set out to cultivate a greater public profile, attract attention and improve their social status. They shine the spotlight firmly on themselves by wearing "broader phylacteries and longer tassels"; taking "the place of honour at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues" and having people call them "Rabbi."

But Jesus wants none of it. True religion is never about external things, craving power and influence or putting on a show for others. Jesus confronts such superficial, shallow and

self-indulgent understandings of holiness. He calls his followers to reject such an empty way of life and instead, build their lives on integrity, love and service, and to build relationships of solidarity, equality and mutual concern.

Jesus is also conscious of what the scribes and Pharisees say about the Law and how they act. They do not, as Jesus says, practice what they preach. Their teaching about the Law and its prescriptions places great burdens on people, which they do nothing to ease or remove. Their role, as they see it, puts them above others and they demand, and obviously get, plenty of attention and respect from those around them.

Ultimately, Jesus says: those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. Humility is realising that all we are and have is a gift; that we are dependent on God for everything. Humility is an awareness that we're not alone, but embraced by God who loves us unconditionally and in whom we can have complete trust. Therefore, we have no need to inflate our egos, be seduced by fame, dominate or put others down, consider ourselves superior or find our value in physical attributes, possessions or reputations.

As humble disciples of the Good News, may we die to power, domination and ostentation; and rise to simplicity, authenticity, integrity and servant leadership.

David J Hore CSSr

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