

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (First Reading, Sirach 3:17-18, 28-29)

Dear Parish Family,

By Tuesday morning all school doors will open in schools throughout our area. Children, parents, and teachers will be filled with excitement, hope, and perhaps a bit of trepidation. What virtue will sustain all who are in the pursuit of academic excellence? Today's first reading from the Book of Sirach (3:17-18, 20, 28-29) provides a clue:

*“My son, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved
more than a giver of gifts.”
(Sirach 3,17)*

Humility is not the same as humiliation. The humble person freely accepts his or her talents and shortcomings and gives God the glory for all the blessings that are enjoyed. The proud person, who fails to acknowledge the source of all blessings, ends up in humiliation. A man named Augustine once struggled with this distinction. He was brilliant and knew it. He pursued advanced learning and was highly acclaimed by his peers. Nonetheless, Augustine was not happy. Something was eating away within his soul. Finally, he heard the voice of a child say: *“Take and read.”* He opened the Bible to a passage from the New Testament wherein St. Paul was urging people to *“put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Augustine recognized his call to embrace Christ as the source of his strength and hope. He was filled with a spirit of humility and profound joy as he exclaimed:

*“Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever
ancient, ever new, late have I loved you!”*

May we all discover anew how God continues to mold us and conform us to the likeness of his Son!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Bill Foley

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