

Jesus loved to go to dinners and parties!

Have you ever noticed how much Jesus liked to go to dinners and parties?

And so do we, don't we? Last Saturday we were out of town on the road and when dinner time came we pulled off the highway and parked at a Perkins.

When we went in, there were four people lined up to pay, and others lined up to be seated.

But the hostess never came!

She apparently had welcomed some personal friends of her's and stood visiting with them for a long time, ...so long a time that we got tired of standing and left in search of another restaurant.

□ The key element to any dinner is hospitality and in this instance we found none.

Jesus understood this well and so many of the

Gospels are about table hospitality.

In fact, Jesus had a table ministry. Whereas Saint John the Baptist fasted, and led an austere lifestyle, Jesus did not. He basically loved to go to parties and do his teaching there.

So what is he teaching us today in the Gospel we have just heard?

First: Notice that he was invited to the home of a Pharisee, so we learn from this that not all the Pharisees were his enemies.

Nonetheless the assembled guests "were watching him carefully."

□ He siezed the moment to teach them not to be self important, not to expect the best places at table. Humility is greater than arrogance and pride.

For as he says: "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but the one who humbles himself shall be exalted." Those of you who are farmers know what humus is: it is Earth. So those who are "down to earth" will ultimately be exalted.

On the other hand, Humpty Dumpty who sit on high walls or towers shall be humbled.

In the second part of the Gospel, Jesus teaches us that the poor and the homeless, and the downtrodden should not be excluded from the dinner table.

In the simplest terms those who have enough ARE TO FEED THE HUNGRY have nots.

We seem to live in a period of political gridlock.

It is heartening to know that once upn a time two midwest senators:

the Republican: Robert Dole of Kansas.

and the Democrat George McGovern of South Dakota

co-authored the original food stamp bill.

In doing so as fellow Christians, they were responding to the clear call of the Gospel that we are to feed the hungry.

In our own day an organization called BREAD FOR THE WORLD CONTINUES THAT MISSION.

I INVITE YOU TO GOOGLE "bread for the world" to discover the wonderful work they are doing for the hungry, and in particular for the hungry children of our land..

□ In my own home territory of Phoenix, we have a huge number of the homeless. And sadly a majority of homeless men are vets from our recent wars.

At the Saint Vincent de Paul Center in the inner city, they are not only fed, but they are treated like honored guests, as they should be.

And quite often successful people like Larry Fitzgerald of the Arizona Cardinals, and a Saint Paul native, volunteer to serve them meals with warm hospitality. In doing so they "get it." THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT JESUS IS TEACHING In TODAY'S GOSPEL.

AND SO IN TODAY'S SECOND READING WE ARE REMINDED: "HUMBLE YOURSELF

THE MORE, THE GREATER YOU ARE, AND YOU WILL FIND FAVOR WITH GOD

**AND SO IT IS NOT THE CAPACITY OF OUR GRAIN BINS THAT ULTIMATELY COUNTS. NO
RATHER IT IS THE WIDTH AND DEPTH OF OUR HEARTS THAT REACH OUT TO"**

**"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."**