

Ordinary 22C - 2025

Mind Your Manners

I heard it when I was growing up. Didn't you? I was getting ready to go to a birthday party, to a cousin's house, or to a Sunday School event. The last thing I heard at the door as I was leaving was this: Mind your manners!

I knew what it meant. It meant that I should behave myself at the party in ways I was taught at home. It meant that I should act in ways that would not embarrass myself, hurt other people, or bring disgrace on our family. Manners were important because values were important. The way we behaved toward other people showed our values. If we valued family, friends, and our relationship to others, we would act in ways that were respectful, courteous, mannerly.

In the Gospel lesson for today, Jesus was the dinner guest in the house of a religious leader. The host and the guests were watching what went on. Jesus observed the manners that were being practiced there at the meal and he saw the values that were being played out. Jesus interrupted the party to do some teaching about values and manners. He taught about values that belonged to the kingdom of God and said to all in the house: Mind your manners! (by Roger Van Harn from *Mind Your Manners*)

"Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?"

is a 1967 film, starring Spencer Tracy, Sidney Poitier, Katherine Hepburn, and Katharine Houghton. In this film, the daughter of a well-to-do white family, Joanna Drayton (played by Houghton), comes home from a vacation to announce her intentions of marrying a well-to-do black physician, John Prentice (played by Poitier). The plot thickens as Joanna Drayton brings John Prentice home to dinner to meet her parents who do not know John is black; John's parents also come into town for the Draytons' dinner in order to meet Joanna, who, they learn at the airport, is white. — This might not be such a big deal today, but in 1967 to present a positive representation of a controversial subject like interracial marriage in the United States of America was bold. Bold because, historically, interracial marriage was illegal in most states and was still illegal in 17 states until June 12, 1967. This movie presents a cultural taboo of that time, and it does so around the dinner table — because who's at the table says something about who's in and who's out. The table is not only where one may say grace; it is the space where one extends grace as Jesus instructs in today's Gospel. (Rev. Luke A. Powery). (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

"Thou shall not park here!" :

Maybe you've heard the humorous story about the pastor who was having difficulty with his assigned parking space on the Church parking lot. People parked in his spot whenever they pleased, even though there was a sign that clearly said, "*This space reserved.*" He thought the sign needed to be clearer, so he had a different sign made, which read, "*Reserved for Pastor Only.*" Still people ignored it and parked in his space whenever they felt like it. "*Maybe the sign should be more forceful,*" he thought. So, he devised a more intimidating one in the Ten Commandment style,

which announced, "*Thou shalt not park here.*" That sign didn't make any difference either. Finally, he hit upon the words that worked; in fact, nobody ever took his parking place again. The sign read, "*The one who parks here preaches the sermon on humility this Sunday morning!*"— One would probably feel uncomfortable about doing that, both because of the topic chosen and because of a lack of Pulpit experience and training. The Gospel reading here, as well as the other two readings selected for this Sunday, set before us a vision of a common ministry that all of us can be a part of. I would call it something like "a ministry of humble hospitality." [Richard W. Patt, *All Stirred Up* (CSS Publishing, Lima, Ohio, 1977, 0-7880-1040-9).] (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

The True Marks of Success

A hundred years ago, Ralph Waldo Emerson noted three qualities he deemed marks of true "success": the ability to discern and appreciate beauty, the ability to see the best in others, and a commitment to leaving the world a better place. Notice that Emerson does not say that success comes in having the best seat at the table, acquiring more material possessions, or in belonging to the best clubs. Emerson contends that success comes with appreciating God's world, developing loving relationships with God's people, and with working to improve God's world. Jesus would agree heartily.

In fact, our scripture lesson for today ends with a wonderful suggestion of how to work to make the world a better place. Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind to dinner. They are all members of your family. Just think how much richer your table talk will be if you don't just associate with your business associates and closest relatives. Remember around the table such wonderful things happen. Invite everyone to the table. They are all members of the extended family. (by R. Robert Cueni from *Sermons on the Gospel Readings, Series I, Cycle C*, CSS Publishing Company)

Lowly Sinners, Everyone

I like the story historians tell about the funeral of Charlemagne. Charlemagne was the greatest Christian ruler of the early Middle Ages. After his death a mighty funeral procession left his castle for the cathedral at Aix. When the royal casket arrived, with a lot of pomp and circumstance, it was met by the local bishop, who barred the cathedral door.

"Who comes?" the Bishop asked, as was the custom. "Charlemagne, Lord and King of the Holy Roman Empire," proclaimed the Emperor's proud herald. "Him I know not," the Bishop replied. "Who comes?" The herald, a bit shaken, replied, "Charles the Great, a good and honest man of the earth." "Him I know not," the Bishop said again. "Who comes?" The herald, now completely crushed, responded, "Charles, a lowly sinner, who begs the gift of Christ." To which the Bishop, Christ's representative, responded, "Enter! Receive Christ's gift of life!"

The point, of course, is that in God's eyes, we're all equally needy. Charlemagne, Mother Teresa, you and me. None of us will ever be "good enough" to force entrance into the presence of God. (by Alex Gondola, Jr. from *Come As You Are*, CSS Publishing Company)