

A reflection on the readings from [July 5, 2026](#)

by Justin Lorenz

Some years ago, I was living with an older gentleman who happened to live with Down Syndrome, Jim, and Jim was hard of hearing, and so he wore hearing aids that insert into his ears. One afternoon, one of the hearing aids wasn't working right, and he said, "something's wrong. I can't hear," so I took the aid out and fiddled with it and put the hearing aid back and said something to him, but he said "I still can't hear anything." Then I took it out again, cleaned out the tube, made sure it was on and thought it was good, so I put it in and said, "OK, Jim, let's test it. Repeat after me, "I'm going to the park." And he replied, "and I'm coming with ya!"

The Gospel today points to two themes: 1. Jesus' favoring humility and meekness, giving wisdom to little ones. And 2. Jesus tells us to take on his yoke, to give him our burdens, and to rest in him.

These teachings may seem distinct, but in fact they both tie back together within a few verses about Wisdom in the Book of Sirach, a Jewish book of ethical teachings with which Jesus would have been familiar; it's also called the Wisdom of Ben Sira. The points Jesus makes here about revealing wisdom to the little ones and giving us his yoke match those made in the last chapter of Sirach, and in the same order, except that Jesus substitutes Wisdom with his very self.

In Sirach, it reads: Come aside to me, you uneducated, and let your souls receive instruction. Take [Wisdom's] yoke upon your neck; that your mind may receive her teaching. For she is close to those who seek her, and the one who is in earnest finds her. See for yourselves! I have labored only a little, but have found much rest.

Notice Jesus followed this same progression as he said Wisdom is revealed "to little ones", "take MY yoke upon you", "learn from ME", and "you will find REST for yourselves." Not only is Jesus asserting Himself as Wisdom incarnate; here Jesus is countering the Pharisees and scribes, the religious leaders of his time, who enforced Jewish customs very strictly such that it was a burden and constant worry to the Jewish people.

Jesus is a gentle teacher, humble of heart. While the Jewish leaders paraded their authority over their students with a focus on hundreds of insignificant obligations, Jesus does not do that. Jesus doesn't want us anxious about precisely following all the rules. Wisdom is in making sure to follow the most important rules - to love the people around us, and to love God. The greatest commandments.

A great model for us of humility could be Martin de Porres who lived in Lima, Peru during the 16th century. He was biracial--the son of a Spanish nobleman and a free black woman.

Martin's skin complexion was more like his mother's, and his father did not acknowledge him. At a young age he swiftly gained medical skills as a barber surgeon's apprentice. As a teenager, he applied to the Dominican monastery as a donado, a lay servant. He did not apply to be a brother because it was illegal under Peruvian law for those of African descent to join religious orders. He attempted to disguise his medical and healing abilities, but those around him picked up on how gifted he was. His humility was disarming. Once when the monastery found itself in debt, he volunteered himself to be sold as a slave. The abbott was deeply touched by Martin's sincere offer, but said, "You are not for sale."

Martin did not hide his healing gifts within the monastery walls, but went out to those sick in the streets. There were many stories of his very presence or touch healing those in pain. He was known to even carry those suffering in the streets back to his own bed. At one time his superior commanded that he no longer do this. When it was discovered that he disobeyed this order, he was harshly scolded. He gently responded, "forgive my mistake, and please be kind enough to instruct me. I did not know that the precept of obedience took precedence over that of charity." Martin surely had been influenced by the Gospel we hear today. And after that, he was given freedom to act according to his own judgement.

His superiors offered, and even pressured, Martin to become a full lay brother, Despite the law that said it could not be so. Martin was resistant, but he eventually accepted. I'm sure he would have resisted his cause for sainthood, but he also came to be canonized in 1962. SAINT Martin de Porres.

For those of us who are not clergy, do we put the precept of love and humility over other precepts? Do we prioritize love over following all the rules and social expectations? We know Jesus did--look at how he healed on the Sabbath. Do we prioritize love over security? We know Jesus did--just look at Him on the cross.

Jim, the man with Down Syndrome I referred to at the beginning, who has since passed away, has also been a model of humility in my life, not that he didn't enjoy being the center of attention. Unlike many of us, he heartily accepted that he needed help. And when he needed it, he asked for it, whether it be with his hearing aids, or with finding something he lost, or with working the house phone to dial a number correctly. And he said thanks, and when he did, you could tell that he meant it.

Do we mean it when we say thanks? Do we recognize our need for others.

At this time of celebrating the Fourth of July and the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America, we celebrate the value of independence, and rightly so, because freedom to pursue our goals affirms our dignity and helps us to grow and thrive. But we need each other, and our communities, to grow and thrive, and it takes humility to recognize that, and

to recognize that we always have more to learn, as individuals, as a church, and as a nation.

Let us go forth, to serve with humility, to bear each other's burdens, to allow ourselves to be helped, and to support others to share their gifts. Let us seek to be the Body of Christ incarnate that the country needs today.