

Cycle C

The Baptism of the Lord

Lectionary #21

Reading I: Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11

This reading is known as the “prologue of Second Isaiah.” In it, the prophet is bringing comfort to those who have been exiled in Babylon. He speaks of the great, good works that God has done for the people of Israel and reminds them that God is the Creator and that all of humanity is what he has created. This calls us to a **humility** that is crucial to any person of faith. **Humility** is a virtue that is not often talked about in today’s society, yet it is through the virtue of **humility** that people are able to accomplish many great things. To live in **humility** means that we are grounded in the fact that we are God’s creations.

Reading 2: Titus 2: 11-14; 3: 4-7

In this letter to Titus, Saint Paul reminds us that we have been the recipients of many graces and that we are called to be humble as these graces are constantly poured upon us. Saint Paul uses the image of us being *bathed* in love, which is reflective of today’s feast. Saint Paul reminds Titus and us that we were saved not because we earned or deserved it, but purely for love’s sake. This knowledge makes it clear that we must live in a **humble** way.

Gospel: Luke 3: 15-16, 21-22

In this very brief story, we are given a glimpse of the relationship between Jesus and Saint John the Baptist. Both individuals are true models of **humility**. Jesus **humbles** himself when he comes forward to be baptized as an example for others, while Saint John the Baptist states that his baptizing of others is merely a preamble to the great baptism that will come through Jesus. Neither men are driven by ego, but rather are led by the virtue of **humility**.



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



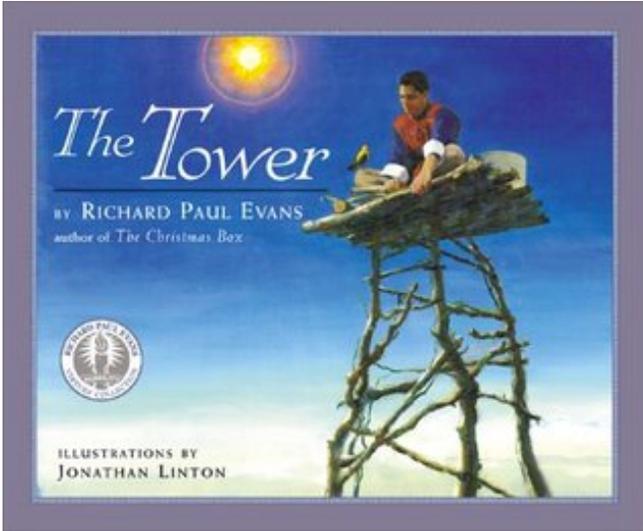
ordinary
time



lectionary
reading



children's
story



The Tower: A Story of Humility

Written by Richard Paul Evans
Illustrated by Jonathan Litton
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character
education
activity

Humility is the virtue that allows us to remain grounded in the fact that we are Gods' creation and as such are called to be God's instruments in the world.

The Tower

The Tower is the story of a young man who wishes to be great and who decides that in order to accomplish this, he must be above everyone else. He builds a tall tower to live in, but in living above the rest of his villagers, he finds that he is very isolated. After a while, he is visited by a bird who tells him about a person whom even the birds look up to. The young man climbs down from his tower to meet this person, and finds that the person is a small old woman who spends her time feeding the birds. The woman explains to the young man that *to be great is not to be higher than others, but to lift others higher.*

The Role of Priest: A Person of Prayer

The suggested activity below offers an ideal opportunity to investigate the roles given to each person at baptism, with an emphasis on the virtue of **humility**. The activity here will be to investigate how **humility** is an essential element in the role of "priest," a person of prayer.

Step One: Present the acronym ARTI to the students so that they may learn how to pray in the way that Jesus taught us the Our Father. ARTI stands for **A**doration, **R**eparation, **T**hanksgiving, and **I**ntercession; make sure that the students are familiar with the definition of each term.

Step Two: Invite the students to write their own prayers using the ARTI acronym. Remind the students that by beginning each prayer with adoration, or praise to God, we are remembering to include the virtue of **humility** in our prayer. Secondly, reparation, or asking forgiveness, reveals how we are **humble** before God as we confess our wrongdoings. Asking for something in our prayer should always come at the end, after we recognize and thank God for all that we have been blessed with.

**Without humility,
there can be no
humanity.
-John Buchan**



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

Try to get into the habit of beginning each of the prayers that you say by first praising God, so that your prayers are rooted in **humility**. Be sure to include an element of gratitude in your prayer before you ask for help from God, so that gratitude is also expressed; continuing to use the ARTI acronym is a great way to remember these steps. One way to think about using this structure when praying is to consider what it would be like to receive a telephone call where the person does not say hello or ask how you are doing, but instead asks you for a favor right away. Think about how your communication with God can be appreciative and reciprocal so that you are able to strengthen your relationship with him and grow in **humility**.

Look Feel Know Act

When you read about people in history who are truly great human beings, you can begin to recognize that these people often display **humility** in that they give credit for their successes, talents, and prosperity to the presence of God in their lives.

Look at your own personal gifts and talents and see them as gifts that have been given to you by God. The greatest way that you can thank God for these gifts is to use them in a way that they give honor and praise to God. Practice this daily and recognize that each time you use one of your gifts and talents to help someone else, you are praising God. This is one way that you can practice the virtue of **humility** in your daily life.

The readings selected for today and the story, *The Tower*, indicate how important it is to lead a life of **humility**. Many times, people are inclined to be talkative and inattentive to those around them. By listening to the stories of others, we are able to understand different perspectives and open ourselves up to hear the voice of God in people around us. In *The Tower*, it wasn't until the young boy listened to the old lady that he realized that true greatness is grounded in **humility**.



**closing
tool**

One way to express humility is by simply saying *thank you*. Thanking those around us is important, but it is also important to remember to thank God with a sincere heart. Today and every day, remember to thank God for all the blessings that you receive.



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