



Jesus went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees. He said to the host who invited him, "When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite 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."

Introductory Prayer: Oh God, thank you for allowing me to come into your presence. Your love enlarges my soul. I long to see your face! I come to this prayer with a thirst to just be in your presence, to relax under your loving gaze. May my presence here be an expression of my love for you.

Petition: Lord, grant me the grace to put your interests before my self-interest.

1. "You Scratch My Back..." "... And I'll scratch yours." Unique is the individual who doesn't keep at least one eye on his own self-interest at all times. For many, life is about leverage, and good deeds are investments that will reap future profits. In this parable, Jesus invites us to think outside that human box and more in the divine one. God derives no personal benefits through showing us immeasurable love. We can't, after all, give him anything that he doesn't already have. Maybe we should be expanding our list of dinner invitations?

2. The Poor, the Crippled, the Lame, the Blind: Blessed Mother Teresa lived this Gospel verse in exemplary fashion. The story is told of a dying man, found lying in the

street and brought to the Missionaries of Charity's House of the Dying. They gave him dignity that he had never known: "I have lived like a dog all my life. But now I will die like an angel." Sometimes we also have opportunities to help others in dire need. Sometimes, more often, we can come to the aid of the person who is spiritually poor or crippled. Perhaps it is that person who is always in a foul mood, or that other who once spread a rumor about me. "Blessed will you be because of their inability to repay you."

3. Self-interest vs. Resurrection: Fr. Joe always used to say this about his priesthood: "The pay is lousy, but the retirement benefits are out of this world." Self-interest is about getting the positive payback here and now. True love and charity do not keep a score card to make sure that "it's worth it." No, we are living for eternity. Let's ask the Lord to give us a better sense of the big picture, to see that those unrequited good deeds are the best ones. So, you parents of the world, take heart! Your sacrifices will indeed find their reward, "in the resurrection of the righteous."

Conversation with Christ: Dear Lord, how often I am thinking, "What's in it for me?" Help me to reach out to others beyond the limits of my group. Help me to see that you are in every soul, not just the ones that in some way gratify me.

Resolution: I will do an act of charity for someone who doesn't like me.