


# Formed in Prayer



Let us be still  
and ask the Holy Spirit to be with us.

Dear Father, be with us as we pray.  
Open our ears to hear your Word in the Gospel.  
Unite us in faith, hope and love as we pray together.  
Send your Holy Spirit to inspire  
and sustain us in our mission.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Gospel

Luke 18: 9-14

Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else, “Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, “I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get.” The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.’

*What words or phrases struck you in Sunday’s Gospel reading?  
What might God be prompting you to consider or inviting you to do in and through the Gospel?*

## Reflection

Sunday’s Gospel addresses a common area of weakness in all of us. The parable highlights the fact that it is all too easy to judge others and exalt ourselves. We might distance ourselves from the Pharisee in the story, thinking we can’t really relate. But are we all that different? Do we ever get complacent as Catholic leaders – speaking the right language, “doing” all the right things, meeting deadlines and standards, but all the while failing to stop and assess our own intentions? Are our actions motivated by how we will appear to others – the accolades and affirmation we might receive – rather than recognising our need for God?

Jesus is very clear when he points out which character in the parable is truly right with God; it is certainly not the Pharisee who rests on his laurels; rather, it is the tax collector who recognises and acts on his deep need for God’s grace and mercy. In a word, it is humility that separates the two.  
*(Nathan Galea, Catholic Education, Canberra and Goulburn)*

## Prayer

Jesus,  
Thank you for your mercies that are new each day.  
Help us recognise our deep need for you in every moment.  
May we always maintain a humble heart  
so that you can work powerfully in and through us.  
Amen.