Pope: May the Church Always be a School of Humility, Welcoming all.

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In his reflections before leading the Sunday Angelus, Pope Leo prays that the Church may always be "a school of humility" in following Jesus' example, as well as "a home where all are welcome", where rivalries are set aside.

Speaking to pilgrims and visitors gathered in Saint Peter's Square for the midday Sunday Angelus, Pope Leo recalled in his reflections today's Gospel reading that speaks to us about the importance of humility, openness to others and a culture of encounter. The reading from Luke's Gospel recounts when Jesus was invited to a meal by one of the leading Pharisees, an example of how in every culture sitting at table together can be a sign of peace, communion, sharing and encounter.

**Striving for Authentic Encounter**

Noting how genuine encounter is not always easy, Pope Leo explained how Jesus was "observed" closely when visiting the home of the religious leader with some suspicion by the more rigid interpreters of tradition, yet Jesus humbly attends the event as a good guest, with respect and sincerity, while also offering a teaching moment. The Lord shares a parable with them pertinent to the occasion that tells of a similar circumstance with people rushing to take the places of honour, perhaps to "be noticed" to show their importance, thereby creating a sense of competition rather than humbly being together in fraternity and sharing.

**Listening to the Lord**

In a similar way, the Pope encouraged believers to listen to what the Lord has to teach us when we gather at the Eucharistic table. In a sense, the Lord "becomes our guest and he can tell us how he sees us." The Pope said it's important we try to see ourselves through the Lord's eyes and how frequently we can focus only on competition with each other, obtaining recognition, or comparing ourselves to others.

“Stopping to reflect, letting ourselves be taken aback by a word that challenges our hearts’ priorities, is to experience freedom, the freedom to which Jesus calls us.”

**Humility Allowing for true Freedom**

Jesus explains how humility allows for true freedom, the Pope went on to explain, since "humility is really freedom from ourselves" since "the Kingdom of God and its righteousness become our real concern" as we look beyond ourselves and ahead to the horizon of life. When we exalt or focus on only ourselves, we lose sight of how precious in God’s eyes we are as his children and the "sublime dignity" that comes from this reality.

“Once we learn to take the last places, rather than striving for the first, that dignity will appear, and we will come to the fore simply and effortlessly.”

In conclusion, before leading the recitation of the Angelus, the Pope asked everyone to "pray that the Church will always be a school of humility for everyone, a home where all are welcome, a place where rivalries are set aside and where Jesus still speaks to us and teaches us to imitate his own humility and freedom", invoking Mary, "Mother of that home" and to whom we pray.