I) Humility
   A) This week’s readings are all about the virtue of Humility
   B) Humility is the oddest of all virtues!
       1) If you think you have it, you don’t—and—
       2) If you think you don’t, you probably do!
   C) Yet humility is so very essential to our progress as disciples in the spiritual life

II) St. Bernard of Clairvoix, Abbot and Doctor of the Church
   A) Asked what are the three most important virtues to the life of the disciple?
       1) “Humility, humility, humility”¹
   B) St. Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
       1) “Humility is the foundation of all virtue.”
   C) St. John Vianney
       1) “Humility is to all other virtues what the chain is in a rosary. Take away the chain and the beads are scattered; remove humility, and all virtues vanish.”

III) Why is Humility so central to spiritual life? To die 2 self!
   A) It is necessary to stand aside, and allow God into life
   B) Recognition that you, O Lord, are God, and I am not

IV) Humility is the Special Sauce! The Secret Ingredient!
   A) Humility transforms strong character traits into virtues [St. Augustine]
   B) For example, Ambition – The trait Jesus transposes to Humility in today’s Gospel
       1) Strong ambition without humility is Arrogance
       2) Strong ambition transformed by humility yields confident servant-leaders, visionary disciples.

¹ Bishop Robert Barron
V) Jesus knows this, and is hard at work in today’s Gospel to open the hearts of his hosts to humility
A) Jesus is invited to dine, “With one of the leading Pharisees.”

B) Pharisees – one of two powerful and ambitious groups shaping society of Jesus’ time

C) Jesus is not there as an equal
   1) “People there were observing Him carefully”
   2) He is the entertainment – a country boy carpenter up from the backwoods of Nazareth.

D) Jesus watches these powerful, ambitious men, full of arrogance, jockeying for status,
   1) even to the point of who gets to sit where at table.
   2) How silly!

E) Jesus shows us great evangelization
   1) Doesn’t argue, doesn’t rebuke
   2) Meets the Pharisees where they are, and then invites them to open their hearts to new possibilities – humility

F) Jesus advises, “Rather than taking the best seat, and risk the embarrassment of being told to move . . .

G) . . .Pick the lowest place, and when the host invites you to a better position, you’ll have everyone’s attention and esteem!”
   1) Suddenly Jesus isn’t such a hick from Nazareth
   2) He understands the game these arrogant men are playing, and just gave them solid, practical advice
3) And because of that, now… they’re listening to him.

VI) Jesus, hoping to gain servant-leaders/disciples, invites them to consider Humility
   A) Want to throw a party people will be talking about for years?
   B) Put on humility. Forget any thought for yourself or your standing
   C) Invite only those who have no hope of repaying you in any way, and you will be blessed.

VII) Humility is the Special Sauce, the Secret Ingredient, the foundation of the spiritual life of the disciple
   A) Modern social science and history bear this out

VIII) Jim Collins, management researcher, in 1996 started a five-year study of nearly 1,500 Fortune 500 countries
   A) Examine high achieving companies – stock returns three times higher than average for 15 years – to discover the key to their success
   B) Hypothesis – not the CEO, yet they had to accept the data
   C) One common factor – CEO’s that combined intense will and ambition with . . . deep personal humility.
      1) Successes – “We” Failures – “I”
      2) Ambition for others, the corporate, the Community

IX) History provides ex’s of Humility making THE difference
   A) Abraham Lincoln – well known for humor / humility
      1) Directly imitated today’s Gospel when in 1864 he ceded the seat of honor at a White House reception to newly appointed General Grant
B) George Washington
  1) Great ambition to lead Continental Army – wears uniform to Continental Congress
  2) Accepts the position – “unequal to the task” and fearful for the lives of so many young men-

C) Mother Theresa
  1) Ambition to found an order with world-wide reach, counseled Pope JP and Bishops
  2) Humility to personally serve the absolute poorest of the poor – in imitation of today’s Gospel

D) St. Katharine Drexel
  1) Ambition to personally found an entire educational system for Native and African Americans, confront racism, and be a missionary of the Gospel
  2) Humility to take on obedience and poverty, writing with pencil stubs when she could have bought an entire pencil company

X) So Humility is the Special Sauce, the Secret Ingredient, that can make all the difference between arrogance and servant-leadership

XI) Humility is the foundation to the spiritual life of the disciple – how do we nurture it?
XII) I can think of two ways – both involve a commitment to prayer

A) “O Lord, you are God, and I am not.”
   1) So easy to forget that God created us out of nothing
   2) Without God, we return to nothing
   3) All that we have is gift
   4) Time in deep prayer
      (a) Examine our successes –
      (b) Pray for the Grace to be honest with ourselves
      (c) is there a Divine hand in our successes?
      (d) Examine times of great trial – were we alone?

B) Deep recognition of the Divine in others
   1) To see in each person a unique reflection of the Trinity, brought into being by God’s love
   2) To those we find difficult to love, to see in them a process, a journey, to see the potential of who they may become, to respect God’s ongoing work in them
   3) Be aware of how frequently God is reaching out to us through our brothers and sisters.

C) Commitment to daily prayer, opening your heart to Jesus, asking Him for the grace of Humility

D) Are there other ways? Your homework on this first weekend back to school! Discuss it!

XIII) For now, we turn to put today’s Gospel into practice

A) Jesus, our host, now invites us to His Eucharistic banquet
B) He has invited us, the spiritually poor, crippled, lame, and blind, to dine with Him
C) We who have no ability to repay Him
D) In humility, we gratefully accept His life-giving banquet, join our lives to His
E) And resolve to imitate His humble and generous Love.