

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time C

My sense of humor sometimes results in unintended consequences. Such was the case in 1997 when I was part of a six-week training program for Air Force Captains at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama. In the first week we had to give a power point presentation to the other nine students in our small group describing our job in detail. We were each limited to three minutes, were not allowed to use any timing device, and had to follow all other format instructions.

“God loves a cheerful sinner” was my first slide. That first slide got the attention not only of my classmates and instructor, but also of the Air Force Chief of Chaplains. Six years later, in 2003, I reported back to Maxwell Air Force Base as an instructor and course director for the Air Force Chaplain School; after ten months of post-graduate studies, including training at the Air Force Instructor School. On the first day as an instructor my boss told me that my “God loves a cheerful sinner” slide launched a series of assignments that landed me the job.

I believe that God does love a cheerful sinner. If we go through life constantly beating ourselves up over the sins we commit and become depressed over our cycle of repetitive sins we aren't going to achieve anything positive as we strive to know, love and serve the Lord. Jesus approved of the way the tax collector humbled himself. He recognized his need for the only remedy for his sinful state: God's mercy. “O God, be merciful to me a sinner” is a magnificent prayer. As this Jubilee Year of Mercy comes to a close may we too recognize God's remedy for our sinfulness: His Divine Mercy. Don't worry, be happy: God loves a cheerful sinner.