

SUNDAY PLUS

To serve and not be served

Power and service



by Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

In today's Gospel Jesus shares his model for religious authority and contrasts it with pagan rulers who lord it over others and make their authority felt. Jesus' command to his followers is unambiguous: "This is not to happen among you." Before anything else is said, his

followers must not imitate those whose standard of greatness is how much power and control they have over people. That has nothing to do with the Gospel.

Jesus' image of authority is the one who is servant of all. If there is primacy in his community, it is a primacy of service. We all know people whose image of service is indistinguishable from fascism, whose insecurity makes them lord it over others, to make sure that their

authority is keenly felt. As someone who fled when people wanted him as their king, Jesus is suspicious of people who need to arrange their own enthronement.

Jesus does himself what he asks others to do: to serve, not to be served; to give love freely, not to exact everyone's worship; to reach out to those in need, not to wait for adoring approval. Christian discipleship is a service industry in which there should be

no unemployment. There is work for everyone. And as we become more aware of the giftedness of all God's people, we see many new ministries arising in the Church. This should continue, until all Christians feel that their service is not only called for: it is actually wanted in the Church. When that happens, we shall be a serving people.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

"Love is always at the service of others. Because love is seen in actions, not words."

Pope Francis

Friendship's gift

by Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

And let your best be for your friend.
If he must know the ebb of your tide,
let him know its flood also.

For what is your friend that you should seek him
with hours to kill?

Seek him always with hours to live.
For it is his to fill your need,
but not your emptiness.

And in the sweetness of friendship
let there be laughter and sharing of pleasures.
For in the dew of little things
the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.

Feast of the week
Monday 18 October

St Luke

"In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33-34), Jesus shows us the practical approach required in caring for our suffering neighbour. First, the Samaritan 'sees'. He notices and 'is moved with compassion' at the sight of a person left stripped and wounded along the way. This compassion is much more than mere pity or sorrow; it shows a readiness to become personally involved in the other's situation. Even if we can never equal God's

own compassion, which fills and renews the heart by its presence, nonetheless we can imitate that compassion by 'drawing near', 'binding wounds', 'lifting up' and 'caring for' our neighbour.

A healthcare organization that is efficient and capable of addressing inequalities cannot forget that its *raison d'être*, which is compassion: the compassion of doctors, nurses, support staff, volunteers and all those who are thus able to minimize the pain associated with loneliness and anxiety."

Pope Francis

Lord, it's all very well to ask us to serve others and in theory, it's what I'd like to do. My problem is that sometimes serving others makes me feel like an unappreciated drudge and I'd like a word of thanks. Teach me to serve as you did: without counting the cost.  Amen.

Today:
Isaiah 53:10-11
Hebrews 4:14-16
Mark 10:35-45

Monday:
2 Timothy 4:10-17
Luke 10:1-9

Tuesday:
Romans 5:12, 15, 17-21
Luke 12:35-38

Wednesday:
Romans 6:12-18
Luke 12:39-48

Thursday:
Romans 6:19-23
Luke 12:49-53

Friday:
Romans 7:18-25
Luke 12:54-59

Saturday:
Romans 8:1-11
Luke 13:1-9

Next Sunday:
Jeremiah 31:7-9
Hebrews 5:1-6
Mark 10:46-52