

Homily. 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.C. 31/8-1/9 2019.

You probably don't need me to tell you that there's much pride and arrogance doing the rounds amongst leaders of every persuasion in every group and institution you'd care to name. Some have had spectacular falls from grace while others are still going on their merry way creating discord and leaving a trail of havoc behind them. Of course, it's true to acknowledge that the habit and pattern of hubris isn't particular only to our leaders. Even a little time spent in honest self-reflection and awareness reveals that we, too, carry some of this attitude of puffed-up specialness within us and bear some share in the resultant harm it brings.

As the gospel text shows this problem isn't new to our times. Jesus Himself experienced it more than once, and on this occasion at a meal to which He'd been invited by one of the leaders of His society. Quickly, Jesus realised that the invitation was a sham and that the meal was geared to finding fault with Him whilst asserting the power and privilege of His host and chosen friends. The medicine for the destructive malady of pride that Jesus prescribes is humility, an attitude of knowing the truth about ones limits, and the practice of thoughtful service towards others.

On this Father's day we honour that all good fathers show this virtue when they put the needs of their family before their own, as do the many generous Priestly Fathers, placing the needs of the people they are Ordained to serve before their own convenience. As for leaders, be it at home, at work, in the Church, at school and in our social groups, service of the common good must trump the machinations of parties, factions,

internal politics and our personal aims and desires every time. Without this humble, tempering and healing mind-set along with the caring practices it produces, arrogance, pride and self-importance flourishes to the detriment of many and the down-fall of us all.

I know as well as you do that this has been said a million times before, but then if it had been heeded, it wouldn't need repeating so often, would it? Love, modelled on the serving and self-sacrificing pattern of Christ is the cure for our arrogance and pride, which is a false-hood inflating our own importance while deflating the hopes, dreams and esteem of others.

If we want more clarity about this matter we need look no further than the Eucharist we celebrate and receive right here and now. We have God, come as one fully and truly like us in Jesus Christ, offered to us as humble bread and plain wine. This Heavenly food and drink enters our fragile bodies so that we can grow more like Him, becoming day after day to better resemble the One we take in, eating and drinking.

God is humble towards us, offering the totality of God-self for us and our well-being. Once more, the message and challenge is for us to share what we believe with those around us, knowing that there's no better way of doing this than by practicing what we teach and receive.