

Homily. 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.B. 20/21 October 2018.

We now have new laws in Queensland relating to abortion, placing our State amongst that sad select few with laws amongst the most radical in the world. No thinking, caring person objected to the decriminalisation of abortion. That was one issue. The extending of abortion until right up to the moment before birth and the token conditions for such an extension was, and remains, an entirely different matter. These new laws were supported on the floor of our State Parliament by all Labor members and a couple of LNP members as well. If you want to know what they said and how they voted, Hansard, the Official record of Parliament, can be read on-line with a simple search.

Power and the misuse of power is nothing new. Rome exercised its power to dominate ancient Mediterranean world, as have other empires before and after even to this day. All groups have power vested in them by their members and by those who look to them for leadership and various services. James and John within the group of the 12 disciples sought special favours and power for themselves appealing to Jesus behind the back of the other 10. When they heard about this little power grab they became righteously indignant with the 2 brothers.

Jesus wasn't having any part of this power play. He told James and John that the way to real, lasting power was the walk of sacrifice and service, drinking of His cup of suffering and being baptised into His dying for us. Listening to St. Mark we heard them say that they could do this, a rash statement that they ended up having to live. With the entire group of the

12 gathered together around Him Jesus went further calling on them to be different in both thought and deed unlike the pagans who like to lord it over others making their authority felt. Without any compromise Jesus said that this is a misuse of power not to happen amongst His followers.

Instead, He proposed a radical new way for all of us, that of service, of the sacrifice of one's personal ambitions and wishes for the well being of others. He put His own way of life forwards an example to us, as a model for our thinking and behaving in our relationships with each other. There isn't any place in His way for pride, for the seeking of approval and applause for ourselves, or for the boosting of our fragile egos that power over others appears to offer.

I don't think for a minute that we have a snowballs chance in hell of achieving this sort of sacrificial and servant power, making it our way of life, without having a living relationship of faith with Jesus Christ, relying on the help of His grace while nurturing a deep openness to the working of God's Holy Spirit of love. Prayer, a daily pattern of attentive and thoughtful reading of the scriptures, fidelity to the Mass within our own local Parish community and real life decisions making us part of serving and caring groups and activities are indispensable if we're going to practice what Jesus teaches. This is the way that we change the world, a heart, mind and a life at a time, like leaven in the dough until the whole loaf is raised up in dignity and mutual respect, especially for the most vulnerable and defenceless amongst us.

The Hebrews reading ought console us greatly. We have many weaknesses, which our misuse of power and subsequent abuse of others

reflects. Yet, as the writer says, in Jesus we have one fully like us in all ways, except sin. He knows 1st hand what it's like to be human, living in this world, feeling all of our weaknesses without scrumming to them. In our daily struggles let's heed this God given message. So friends, come now, approaching the throne of grace confidently in this Eucharist, experiencing the Lord's mercy and tender care for He came to serve us, not to be served, giving away His life as our ransom and for our freedom.