

Service

The Gospel today could prove to be an embarrassment to the minister preaching. Generally he, HE, will be referred to as Father. He will be wearing a broad stole. Although standing at the lectern, there will be a prominent seat reserved for him at the front of the church. Then at this point he will attempt to teach.

Is the priest a hypocrite?

Well probably. Nobody is perfect, and the aspiration for perfection is a part of the faith he proclaims.

But then Forgiveness is a part of that same faith, and at the beginning of the mass (with all the people) in the penitential rite, he admits fault and seeks to begin again.

So the priest may well share the nature of hypocrisy with the Scribes and Pharisees.

Although a difference would be that he is encouraged by the honesty of faith to recognise he is a servant.

And more important at the service of Christ

The solution to the dilemma of authority is in the nature of that service.

The true servant of Christ endeavours to subject all,

to the love of God and the love of his people

Thus to be a servant of all

It must be asked

Why are you doing this?

Is it for status? NO

Is it for honour? NO

Is it for the prestige of the thing? NO

Fundamentally all ministry should be for the love of God and the people of God

To be greatest

ironically you must serve.

Inspired by Christ

That service must be the motivation.

But service is complicated and sometimes involves confrontation

So the parent is in a position to give money to the child

But does not give

The parent lends money on an interest free level

With an agreement that there will be instalments of repayment

Which will be rigorously held to.

Why are you doing this?

Is it for status? NO

Is it for honour? NO

To be the all-important parent. NO

The parent knows that this is a tough world

The parent knows the value of taking responsibility for decisions made

The parent knows that the child must grow up

To serve is not to create dependency

But to give in a way that creates liberty

And risks confrontation

So the teacher, the nurse, the friend allows failure

Watching as attempts are made

Feeling the frustrating temptation to take over

And do it right

But allowing for the learning

Why are you doing this?

Is it for status? NO

Is it for honour? NO

Is it to prove that you can do it better? NO

It is clear that failure is a part of the process

It is evident that the sense of achievement is linked to struggle

That the pupil must do it alone or achieve nothing

To serve is not to create dependency

But to give in a way that creates liberty

And risks failure

So the pensioner, the invalid, the victim of circumstance

Watches as others attempt to care and independence erodes

The individual allows for this painful loss of pride

Which was so rigorously held to

Why are you doing this?

Is it for status? NO

Is it for honour? NO

To be the centre of attention. NO

It is clear that the years have passed and the strength diminished

It is clear that to serve now is to let go

To trust to the love given in the past

Thus not to fight self or those struggling with consequence

To serve is not to resent the necessity

But to give in a way that creates liberty

And risks dependency

SERVICE IS SUBTLE, AND DIFFICULT, AND DANGEROUS

Why are you doing this?

Why are you doing this?

From the Priest wearing the broader Phylacteries

To the parent, the teacher, the recipient

To be valid

It must be for love

For love of God

For love of the People of God

For love

Complicated

For love

Difficult

For love

often unclear

But underneath the event,

Underneath the circumstance

It must be for love.

It must be for Love.

To be ministry

It must be for love.