

## Homily 25th Sunday Ordinary Time

### 'Get used to DIFFERENT!' (The Chosen)

One of my many favourite scenes from *The Chosen* is Jesus' Call of Matthew. Matthew, like so many of Jesus' chosen, is a broken person. He is hated by his fellow Jews as a traitor. He is despised because he has bought the rights to levy taxes on his own people, often cheating them and using Roman strength to keep them in line. Simon Peter, a fisherman, inevitably is at the end of Matthew's whipping stick and hates Matthew with a vengeance. When Jesus calls Matthew as one of his Apostles Simon Peter is incandescent with rage. When he expresses his anger to Jesus, The Master turns to him and calmly says, 'Get used to DIFFERENT!'

The brokenness of John and James in particular and all the Apostles in general is laid bare in today's Gospel. They are back on the road to Capharnaum, and they begin to argue as to which of them was Jesus' favourite, who was the greatest. Of course, such arguments are only human and perhaps even understandable. However, when Jesus gets an inkling of their debate, he takes them aside and reminds them, 'If you want to be first you must be LAST and if you want to be master you must be SERVANT of all.' Again, this episode reminds us to 'get used to DIFFERENT.'

St James in The Second Reading again urges us to avoid the ways and standards of the world and to follow the DIFFERENT way of Jesus, 'Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it makes for peace, and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness. St. James is urging us to 'get used to DIFFERENT!'

The Book of Wisdom, today's First Reading, reminds us that virtue in a person is often a thorn in the side to those who follow the ways and the standards of The World instead of God's ways, 'The godless say to themselves: 'Let us lie in wait for the virtuous man, since he annoys us and opposes our way of life, reproaches us for our breaches of the law and accuses us of playing false to our upbringing. The Reading goes on to outline what happens to those who use God's standards and ways and challenge human logic, 'Let us test him with cruelty and with torture, and thus explore this gentleness of his and put his endurance to the proof. Let us condemn him to a shameful death.

Today these Readings From Sacred Scripture, God's Word today, have great relevance for us as disciples of Christ and pose us some serious questions: does The Church prefer to apply rules based on human reasoning and standards rather than on the compassionate, merciful and liberating wisdom of Jesus; are we applying the standards of the world or God's standards when we encounter broken people, being happy for them to remain in their brokenness; are we willing to courageously stand up and be counted when Christ's ways and standards are compromised, accepting the world's standards as gospel: are we seeking status, accolades and praise or are we striving to SERVE others, particularly the most needy; are we prone to jealousy and/or infighting or are we driven by compassion and mercy for the broken creating the conditions for them to return to 'the flock''

In short are we living Jesus' 'DIFFERENT?'