

Homily 33rd Sunday Ordinary Time, 2024

'The earth was a formless void, and the **Spirit** hovered over the waters and **God** (Creator, Sustainer and Father) **spoke** (Word and Son) "Let there be light.", and there was light, and **God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)** saw that it was good.' (Genesis 1:1)

'Three things I ask of you, that you act justly, love tenderly and walk **humbly** with your God'
(Micah 6)

I think you have heard the phrase, 'You need to be taken down a peg or two' or 'You need to know your place.' Following the US Election I listened to President Elect, Trump speak as if he could solve the world's problems including ending wars in a day, saving trillions of dollars through efficiency measures and eradicating disease. He gave the impression that he was the panacea for all ills in the USA and the world, that **he** had it all under control.

As we go towards The Feast of Christ the King, next Sunday, both the First Reading from Daniel and The Gospel refer to the 'signs' which will herald the end of the world. Arguments blazed in The Early Christian Community about when this would happen, and many thought the 'last days' were immanent. When time passed, the early Christians began to realise that they had perhaps missed the point of these warnings, written arguably to teach us that it is God who oversees our world, the universe and that **one day He** will demonstrate that absolute power.

We, human beings today live in a 'I can do anything I want society.' Some even believe WE are in total control with science and technology providing us with the necessary tools to exercise that control. Contemporary Celebrity Culture also encourages us to 'worship' our heroes of music and screen copying them in everything designer, from sunglasses, to tattoos to expensive designer clothing. I deliberately use 'worship', Don't the media and young people themselves casually use the words 'pop IDOLS', when referring to Taylor Swift or Beyoncé, almost treating them as goddesses. A wise priest once counselled me, 'Because we can do it, it doesn't mean it's right in the eyes of God. We must always put God and His will first, John!'

Today God in Jesus, through The Holy Spirit, offers us a timely reminds that we are NOT in control: youth and beauty are fleeting; fame and fortune temporary; fashion and trendy 'gear', soon yesterday's taste, Biblical Wisdom Literature counsels us, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (Ecclesiasticus). We are mere creatures of God, albeit his children, 'made in his image and likeness.' (Genesis). Don't our children sometimes need to be 'taken down a peg or two' as they get above their station and begin to think they are in control and know better than their parents. Parental wisdom generally 'puts them in their place' and sets them back on the right track to eventually become more mature respectful human beings. They often learn that they don't know everything and can't just do as they want.

Oh, if only we adults, the children of God, would listen to the wisdom of our Heavenly Father, keeping us on the right track, replacing our pride, with childlike love of God and **humble, compassionate** and loving service of our neighbour. Maybe our heavenly 'Abba' (Daddy) is today reminding us, as wise parents sometimes remind their children, 'Whilst you are under my roof you will do as I say and follow my rules?' Let us, therefore take on board the sobering but very wise words of John the Baptist, 'I must decrease, and he must increase!'