

MAY 29, 2021
Saturday of the 8th Week in OT
Mark 11: 27-33

“AUTHORITY ENTAILS RESPONSIBILITY.”

Jewish leaders, chief priests, scribes and elders were powerful even before the time of Jesus. When they were confronted with opposition, they easily defeated those people who questioned their authorities. It changed when Jesus was preaching and questioning their authorities, attitudes and even their lifestyle. In our gospel today, Jesus was confronted by the group and asked Him “By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?”¹ They were questioning Jesus’ authority and jealous of Him because He had huge followers and their authority were diminishing. People were believing now on Jesus not on them. The question was also to discredit, embarrass and humiliate Jesus so that people will not believe in Him. But the opposite happened Jesus answered their question with question also and they were trapped and caught off guard.

“They immediately realise that answering Jesus’ question raises a serious dilemma. If they were to say John's baptism was from God, then it could be asked why they did not take part in it (as large numbers of the ordinary people did – and as Jesus himself did). The Gospel describes the leaders as simply coming to observe John as outsiders and judges. On the other hand if they were to say they considered John's baptism as merely a human thing, then it would offend all those people who had the highest respect for John and saw in him a prophet of God. Weakly Jesus' questioners reply: ‘We do not know.’ A strange and not very convincing reply from the spiritual leaders of the people. Jesus then refuses to answer the question they asked him. The leaders’ own question was a clear indication of their prejudice and wilful blindness in the face of overwhelming evidence.”²

¹ Mark 11: 28 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

² livingspace.sacredspace.ie

My brothers and sisters, Jesus is telling us today that we too may experience this kind of prejudice, blindness and jealousy for other people. Even if others are doing good, we refuse to acknowledge it because of our own biases or preconceived notions for others. But God is always using people, events in our lives, or things around us to convey His message. We must listen to them and see what good can it brought to us. Unlike the Jewish leaders, we must thank and praise the person/s when they do good, support whenever they want to change and encourage those who are beginning to make their lives better.

We are also people with authority in some way or another: parents who have authority over their children, managers over their subordinates, and boss or chief or head of a department over their employees. Let us always remember, authority entails responsibilities and we are answerable not only to those people we are in charge of but most especially to God whom authority comes from. And lastly, authority is synonymous with service and we can only serve others if we are full of love, humble, compassionate and forgiving.

So, let us ask therefore in this Eucharist the grace to be of service to others and use our authority with love and humility, and putting into our minds and hearts that authority entails responsibility.