

Reflection Tuesday Week 1 Year 1 2023

Pope Francis: Those in positions of authority, especially in the Catholic Church, would do well to remember that their responsibility is to serve those in their care and not exploit them for their own selfish interests. Those who have authority, any authority, also in the church, in God's people, may be tempted to work in their own interests instead of those of God.

Authority is a service, and as such should be exercised, for the good of all and for the dissemination of the Gospel. It is awful to see people who have authority in the church seeking their own interests.

A frequent defect in those who have authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical authority, is to demand from others things, even justly, but which they do not put into practice first-hand. They lead a double life.

Jesus tells his disciples to listen to what the scribes and the Pharisees say, because they have the authority to teach on the law, but not to imitate what they do, because *"they preach but they do not practice."*

Real authority is born from the good example, it seeks to help others practice what is right and proper, supporting them in the trials that they encounter on the path of good. Authority ultimately ought to be used to help people.

If we have received certain qualities or authority from God, we must put them at the service of others, rather than try to take advantage of them for our own interests and personal satisfaction. It is essential for an existence that wants to be conformed to the teaching of Jesus, to be like him, meek and humble of heart, and who came not to be served, but to serve.

The world's foremost authority on wasps is walking down the street when he sees an old vinyl record in the window of an antique shop, *"Wasp noises from around the world"*.

Intrigued, he goes in and asks if he can listen to it. "Certainly," says the shop assistant and pops it onto an ancient turntable. After listening to the first track for a while, the world's foremost authority on wasps is a rather confused.

"I don't recognise any of these noises, and I'm the world's foremost authority on wasps! Can you play the next track please?"

The assistant obliges and skips the needle onto the next track after a while, the world's foremost authority on wasps is still confused *"No, I still don't recognise any of these wasps. Can you try the next track?"* The assistant skips the needle on, and the world's foremost authority on wasps listens for a little while longer before shaking his head. *"It's no good. I just don't recognise any of these wasps"*

The assistant peers at the label of the record and then says...

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry, sir. I had it on the bee side"