

Reflection Wednesday 2nd Week Lent 2023

Power and Authority are probably two of the most misunderstood words in the dictionary when used in reference to the Church. History bares testimony to this.

Jesus is very clear that power and authority are given to us for the service of others, never for ourselves. They are gifts that only find their true meaning in service.

Pope Francis: There is a difference between “having authority” or the “inner authority” of Jesus and the authority of the scribes who exercise it “without having it”, they were not credible.

The authority of the Lord is one of “lordship”. This lordship that came from within, demonstrates the consistency between His teaching and His actions. It is this consistency, this testimony, that gives authority to a person. Hence, ***authority is seen in constancy and testimony.***

The scribes were not consistent, which is why Jesus admonished the people to “do what they say but not what they do”. The scribes had fallen into a “pastoral schizophrenia”, saying one thing and doing something else. The word that Jesus uses to describe this inconsistency and schizophrenia is “hypocrisy”. Calling the scribes and Pharisees “hypocrites”. Hypocrisy is the way of acting of those who have responsibility over the people, hence pastoral responsibility, but are not consistent. They are not lords and do not have authority, but the people of God are meek and tolerate many hypocritical and schizophrenic pastors who are not consistent, who say one thing and don't do it themselves.

The people of God who are very tolerant can recognize the power of grace. They can distinguish well between a person's authority and the grace of anointing. They can make out a confessor after the heart of Christ. This is the wisdom of our people, who many times tolerate many inconsistent pastors like the scribes and even Christians who go to Mass every Sunday and then live like pagans. People can easily recognize a scandal and inconsistent behaviour. Inconsistent Christians who don't give witness and inconsistent and schizophrenic pastors who don't give witness, do much harm!