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From +John...

Kia tau te Rangimarie kia koutou

Last Sunday's Gospel could be summed up with these words ***"Everyone who exalts themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted"***. Last Sunday morning I was reading a reflection from the *Magnificat* magazine. The meditation of the day was "How to be humble" written by Dom Eugene Boylan, an Irish Cistercian. He began the reflection by saying ***"if one asks how am I to be humble, the immediate answer is by the grace of God, and that is indeed the truth. Only the grace of God can give us the insight into our own condition and realization of his exaltation that make for humility. But even though it be a grace, it is a grace with which we must co-operate. The first thing to do is to ask in prayer for the grace of humility and to ask sincerely. The second thing is to accept humiliations when they come our way. But let us never forget that there is an enormous difference between being humble and being humiliated."***

In these days when we continue to be shattered, disappointed and angry about the abuse crisis throughout the world, many people do feel humiliated. That is probably especially so for we priests who are seen as the Church's public representatives.

There has been a lot written about humility. Pope Francis himself has spoken about it, saying that if this is a time of shame and humiliation, it could also actually be a privileged moment to grow closer to Christ, not just for those who have offended but for all the Church, so that everyone realizes, acknowledges, and lives by the fact that everything we do is by the grace of God.

I think Pope Francis is saying that this is giving us an opportunity to change the way the Church does things, and if this is so, then then let's embrace it. We are getting the message that humility is the only way God will have a say and the only way the Church will change.

Pope Francis is constantly referring to being poor, as Christ was poor, being crucified, as Christ was. Remember the Pope knows well the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola, which have shaped him.

Ignatius himself was no stranger to humiliation and actually saw it as the most opportune moment for meeting the real Christ. One of the lessons we are learning is that up until now the Church's culture in leadership was command and control, and that is what protected the Church and anyone who challenged it became a victim. Now is the time for humility.

That reflection last Sunday on "how to be humble" and the Gospel of the day was a great lesson for us. Pope Francis seems quite content to be humiliated because he sees it as the only way that the learning will sink in, and that we will discover that God is in control. How are we to be humble? The immediate answer is by the grace of God. Only the grace of God can give us the insight into our own human condition and help us to be grateful and humble for all that God does for us.

Naku noa

John

NEWS ...

Clergy Only Day 24 September 2019 Clergy please remember to register for this day which has been set aside for each of us to be able to spend time together in reflection and togetherness. Registrations are required by 13 September. Please confirm your attendance to t.halliday@wn.catholic.org.nz. Please **remember in prayer** Fr John O'Neill SM, and Maryann Soriano-Canonizado, sister of Fr Raymond Soriano who have recently died. Also Mrs Nora Bayliss, mother of General Manager of ADW Mr Paul Bayliss who died last weekend. May they rest in peace.

Prayer, humility, and charity toward all are essential in the Christian life: they are the way to holiness.

The Spirit of St Francis; Inspiring Words of Faith, Love and Creation
Pope Francis