

The path of humility and service

I was listening to a radio interview recently with the author of the Rebus novels Ian Rankin and was struck when he posed of the following reflective question:

'What is the role for fiction in a world that appears to be made up entirely of fantasy?'

He was referring to the comings and goings in the White House and, to the political drama we have all had to live through over the last couple of years. His basic point was that you couldn't make it up and that if he adopted the plot line for a novel it would simply be far too incredulous for most of his readers.

Ian Rankin's view, and one which I share, is that in many walks of life egotism and rampant competitiveness, leading to a winner takes all attitude seems to have taken hold with the virtues of humility, service and, trust being side-lined. Any notion that the meek may inherit the earth, or that mercy, righteousness and, peace-making are all attitudes, beautiful attitudes, that those in positions of influence or leadership would do well to adopt (see Matthew 5, 1-11) seem to be regarded as mere religious sentimentalism.

At the end of July the church celebrated the life of the apostle James. James' story is a story well worth reflecting on in light of current affairs. James famously had to make the journeys from pride, arrogance and an over competitive ego to humility, service and trust. He had to learn that whoever aspires to greatness must first assume the role of servant and that for all true followers of Jesus the mandate is ***'not to be served but to serve.'***

I don't know about you but I believe that the world would be a far better place if humility and service ranked amongst the most important of guiding virtues in all spheres of life?

The apostle James' greatest desire was to sit at Jesus' right hand in heaven. He thought that he could get there through acts of heroism and, dare I say it, overtly alpha male behaviour (ironic then that he had to get his rather pushy mum to ask Jesus for the consummate prize!). He had to learn that his only route to glory was through humility and service.

His is a story worth reflecting on, so why not this summer spend a few minutes with the readings set for St. James 2 Corinthians 4, 7-15 and, Matthew 20, 20-28? They are a good, interesting and challenging read.

In Christ, Andrew