Thought for the week
29th Sunday of the Year (B)
21st October 2018

In this week's gospel James and John attempt to wheedle from Jesus positions of honour at his left and right hand in his earthly Kingdom, which they felt sure he would shortly come into. They seek to place themselves above their colleagues, to win prized positions. The remaining disciples react angrily to these political manoeuvrings, but they are clearly most upset because they held similar ambitions for themselves.

It seems that the whole group were listening selectively to Jesus' explanations about what it would mean for him to come into his glory. They only heard the words which they wanted to hear, and which fitted with their own aspirations. Amongst themselves it seems they created an echo chamber which amplified these misinterpretations and drowned out the true message.

As I watched Question Time last night I was struck by the parallels with our on-going political debate around "Brexit". It seems to be very difficult to agree on the real message which was delivered by the 2016 referendum result and hence, on the actions which need to be taken. It strikes me that the politicians who have the most to say on this topic have the same tendency as the disciples, to hear what they wish to hear, particularly where it promises great things for them personally

Let us hope that some of our earthly representatives have heard the teaching which Jesus gave as guidance to the disciples, that

"whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all", so that

they can work diligently towards a solution which is for the greater benefit of us all, rather than for their own personal acclaim.

It can often be difficult to hear the true message which God seeks to give us, particularly when He calls for us to do something difficult or uncomfortable and the wider world drowns out the message with more palatable options. May we all find the strength to hear clearly when the Lord tries to guide us on his path. "

A Parishioner