

## **January 19, 2014 Lowly Servants Homily**

Dear brothers and sisters, in the history of Public Television there has been no more popular dramatic series than "Downton Abby". The British import has an enormous following. The setting is an English town around the time of the First World War. The series features An English family of great privilege and wealth. But what is most striking in the cast of characters is the extraordinary number of servants in supporting roles. In each episode we are likely to meet a valet, butler, under-butler, matron, chauffeur, footmen, chambermaids, cook, personal secretaries and others.

Generally, we Americans are often condescending toward anyone in a serving capacity. They are looked upon as beneath us, our inferiors. My cousin once served as a waiter at a local Albany restaurant as he was making his way through college. I once asked him a very silly question. "Have you ever been mistreated by any of your customers?" His reply was priceless. "Are you serious? Of course, and very often!"

It is surely worth noting that many of the great figures of Salvation history often boasted of their vocation as a servant of the Lord. In today's first reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, we heard of a mysterious servant whose mission is to reunite the chosen people and to be "a light to the nations" (Is.49:6). Isaiah's words make one point abundantly clear about all God's servants whoever they may be, namely, the servant is authorized by God's initiative as Paul is "by the will of God" and as Jesus is at his baptism. The servant is one chosen by God.

The Mother of our Blessed Lord called herself "a lowly Servant". (Lk.1:48) John the Baptist declared himself unworthy to untie the thongs of the Messiah's sandals, (Lk.3:16), a duty reserved for the lowest of slaves. Our Blessed Lord "did not come to have service done for Him; He came to serve others, and to give His life as a ransom for the many"(Mk.45). On the night of the Last Supper, He stooped low to wash the feet of His disciples.

Perhaps we need to ask ourselves: "Are we offended by the word "servant". Do we willingly embrace the exalted title of "servant of the Lord"?"

Do we serve the moral law as revealed in scripture and proclaimed by the Church? (One thinks of abortion and marriage).

We are called to be Holy, set apart? Do our actions reflect the secular, anti-Christian culture in which we live?

At the end of our earthly pilgrimage, let us hope that the words of Christ uttered in His parable of the Last Judgment is applied to each one of us . "Well done, good and faithful servant. Inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the foundation of the world" (Mt. 25:34).

Amen