

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In today's reflection, it seems a crucial reminder to recall in our prayers the many flood victims of Hurricane Florence and especially for their hurting families as well as those people whose homes and possessions have vanished. Similar grave flooding, also unprecedented, has concurrently occurred in my own native Kogi State.

Our liturgy this weekend opens with the continuation of the Messianic prophecy; the acute slander and evil intent recorded in Solomon's Book of Wisdom intimately grieves our hearts. Can we not recognize the distinct allusion to our Lord's Passion? A careful examination of this text shows it was a precursor to the thoughts and words of those people who would eventually oppose our Lord, seeking His death thousands of years later. We are, however, encouraged by our Lord to painfully remain on the high roads like He did. In the Second Reading, St. James continues his morally pragmatic approach to our faith. He encourages the early Church and us today to make prayerful and distinct choices; to seek to rightly serve the other, rather than any narcissistic direction that would utterly destroy peace in that relationship.

In the Gospel, Jesus mercifully gives us insight into the path to greatness in the kingdom. Although the apostles are still worldly minded, thinking this Messiah to be an earthly king who would do the ruling, here they get an expanded picture of this true Messiah. As Jesus especially recognizes the least of all — defenseless children — we can extrapolate by considering the despairing poor, the terrified, the mentally challenged, the marginalized, the refugees of war, and many other vulnerable folk. The Christian vocation is an apostolate of bearing loving witness to Christ through personal humble and selfless service. Even our small prayers for those flood victims creates a spiritual turning within that predisposes us to greater tenderness without.

Although the apostles discussed greatness amongst themselves, in Jesus' view, greatness is found in our willingness to accept, welcome, and serve all in our lives, so as to receive Him and the "One who sent me." A simple way to realize that service is to reinforce our thanks to all those who serve within our community: the Christ-like priests; our police, firefighters, and armed forces; our parents, teachers, church council members, religious, and laity. Indeed, the list is large for those people willing to play the role of Jesus in our lives. Our own service can begin, small and meaningful, especially when people are least expecting it, yet helps to build up our spiritual and physical lives.

— Blessed Sunday!