

## **WHO WILL BE THE NEW KING?** *An Irish Legend*

### **Intent of the Legend**

- ✓ *To love God and others is the best qualification to be a superior.*
- ✓ *Power and authority are given by God for the good of the inferiors, not for the benefit of the superiors.*
- ✓ *Superiors should not abuse their authority. .*

## **The Legend.**

Old good King George was sick and aged. He had no children. Before he would die, he wanted to appoint a successor to his throne. But, whom he would appoint as next King? How to choose him? There were thousands of young men in his Kingdom eligible to be appointed King.

King George proclaimed an edict throughout the Kingdom that read thus: "Any young man who thinks he has a claim to be the next King, may come forward and meet his Majesty. The only claim to become a King has to be: "TO HAVE THE GREATEST LOVE: FOR GOD AND MEN."

In a remote corner of the realm, there was Peter, a young, loving and God-fearing lad. When he heard the royal edict, he felt in his very bones that he had a claim to the throne. He sincerely loved God and man.

Unabashedly, Peter told his fellow villagers of his aspirations. Everybody in the village knew him well, and all agreed that Peter did really would qualify to be a king. He was a most living man.

However, Peter was a poor lad. He had no fashionable clothes, no shoes and no money to travel all the way and present himself to the King. The good village folks in their simplicity made a collection and bought for Peter stylish clothes, expensive shoes and offered him enough money to reach the Palace of the King. Next day, they accompanied him to the outer gate of the village and bid him "farewell".

Peter did finally make it to the Palace. When he was about to enter the gates of the Palace, he was approached by a miserable beggar. Peter was moved to pity towards that poor man and asked him: "What can I do for you, my dear man"? The poor man repined: "I have neither clothes, nor shoes to wear and it is so cold! 'Please, help me! Do something for me" Peter replied: "Money to give you, I have none. Clothes and shoes I have no other than those wear, yet if you really wish to have them, let us exchange clothes" .There and then, Peter and the beggar exchanged their ware.

But now, Peter was worried and muttered to himself: "How can I enter the King's Palace with these beggar's rags? They will throw me out. Yet, if Christ had stood at the Palace's gate and asked me my clothes, would I have refused them to him? No, not at all."

As Peter was entertaining these thoughts in his mind, the Palace guards asked him what he came there for. Peter replied that he wanted to see the King. The guards showed him in and made him wait in one of the royal chambers.

After a while, the King came in. Peter was feeling ashamed of his rags, yet the King came closer to him, put his hand on his shoulder and said: "My dear, you will be the King! You passed the test".

Peter was startled. The King went on: "Look at my face. Can't you recognize me? I am the beggar who was standing at the Palace gate! You passed the test! You proved your claims. I can really see that **you love God and men**".

### **Points for Reflection and Discussion**

1. What lessons these legends teach us? Name them.
2. Mention some Gospel texts in keeping with the moral of this legend?
3. According to Jesus teaching, how should a King, a Ruler and Superior be and behave?
4. Which are the most important virtues and attitudes anyone in authority should display?
5. What authority and power are meant for?
6. On whose benefit does God confer authority to people?
7. What's the best proof that a superior or any boss at all, loves God and those under him?
8. Mention some of the dangers of yielding authority and power'?
9. What do we mean by "misuse" of authority? Is it common? Why?

### **Personal Examination**

In one way or other – big or small – sometime in life, all of us have held authority and been superiors to others: for example

- To our children.
- To our younger brothers and sisters.
- To our pupils.
- To our employees.
- To our servants.
- To our team-mates.
- To our classmates.
- To our office colleagues.
- Etc.

1. How did you discharge your authority?
2. To your own advantage or for the benefit of those under you?
3. Have you been a good superior to them?
4. Have you treated your subordinates as Jesus would?
5. When in authority, what things did you stress more?
6. Did those under you, love and respect you? Why? What does that show of you?

### **Points for Prayer**

- Ask Jesus to help you to practise authority as he did.
- Read one at a time, the principles Jesus gave us in his Gospel about authority quoted below. Reflect and pray on each of them
  - I came to serve, not to be served.
  - Whoever wants to be first must place himself last and be the servant of all.
  - If you want to be the master become a slave.
  - If I, your Master, washed your feet, you too ought to wash each other's feet.
  - I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you.
  - It is better to give than to receive.
  - When you are invited to a feast, take the last seat.
  - He who makes himself like a little child, will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.
  - I am among you as one who serves.

### **Check your Basic Attitudes to Authority and Power** **In the Practice of Authority, there are two Possible Stances**

#### **1st Stance: The Way of God**

##### **Authority and power are meant only for the benefit of the inferiors**

- This implies that authority for the superior is a responsibility not a 'privilege' but rather a 'liability'.
- Authority is not given to him for his personal advantage.
- Authority is a trust, a duty, a loving service, a commission conferred on the superior to help those under him.
- The Superiors are answerable both to God and to their subjects about the discharge of their office.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Stance: The World's Way**

##### **Authority, primarily, is a privilege, a gift to be enjoyed by the superior**

- It confers on the superior privilege, prestige, honour, power, wealth, immunity, etc.
- Regretfully, in our world, most people in authority seem to hold this view.

**Unfortunately, there is an ambiguous position among many good people in authority, who, though in theory agree with the first stance, in fact, consciously or unconsciously, practise the second one, namely, they use their authority to their personal advantage.**

### **What's your basic stance to authority and power?**