

Thursday, Fourth Week of Lent

John 5:31-47

Seeking Human Approval:

Jesus plainly says that he does not depend on human testimony and that human praise is not something he will seek. In the Gospel passage, however, he acknowledges four elements that bear witness to him: John the Baptist, the works that he does, the Father, and the scriptures. Jesus points out that his opponents have are blind to these witnesses. John the Baptist's witness should have been heeded by his critics and the miracles he worked should have made them alert and recognise that he has been sent by God the Father. But their way of thinking could not enable them to make such a connection. Jesus knew his stand with His Father and, it is only this that gave him ground for confidence in his ministry and not human praise. Most of us are heavily dependent on human praise because we have failed to anchor our lives on our relationship with God. Failure to ground ourselves in that relationship with God lends us to be seeker of other people's approval. If people do not approve of us we easily begin to doubt our self-worth. Speaking in this way, Jesus is trying to highlight a more fundamental approval than human approval, and that is the approval that comes from God. Jesus suggests in today's gospel reading that there is a more important question to ask than, *'Do people approve?'* This question is *'Does God approve?'* At the end of the day, it is God we are seeking to please rather than other people. It is also important to know that the lack of human approval can go hand in hand with God's unreserved approval.