

*Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking."*

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

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In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus telling these words to James and John after they asked him for positions of honor and authority in Jesus' new kingdom to come. The brothers thought they were asking for something that would be good for them and thought that there was nothing wrong in asking for this. They were thinking in a worldly way.

How often do we find ourselves doing or asking for something that eventually we realize wasn't what we expected? Things turn out opposite of what we were looking for because we really didn't know any better.

This November, we are running the risk of doing exactly that! In this coming election, in our State of New York, a proposal is being put forward for us to vote on, Proposal 1, that, if we are not careful, we'll end up voting for something that we are made to believe is a good thing for us but that we really don't understand. This is one of those moments that we need to listen to Jesus telling us: "You do not know what you are voting for."

The New York State Conference of Bishops is trying to communicate to all of us to look closely at the proposal because it is not what it seems to be. If we are not careful, many of us will be taken just by the title of the proposal: "Equal Rights Amendment." Of course, we are all for equal rights! This is why the proposal is somewhat deceiving. The changes in the language, which at first reading don't seem to be of concern, the bishops tell us that they really are like a "wolf in sheep's clothing" (see Matthew 7:15).

For example, by including age as one of the categories of protected classes, teenagers would have a right to have an abortion or transition their gender without their parents' consent. In other words, parents could see their parental rights being stripped away because of this amendment. The amendment would also enshrine into the constitution abortion rights without providing any allowances for conscientious objection for healthcare workers. Abortion laws in New York State are already some of the most liberal laws in the nation, there is no need to make further changes in the constitution for this.

There are several other objections to this proposed new language that we really need to carefully understand before election day. We cannot in good faith vote for this proposal. At least, we should not go to the election booth before studying this issue. We should not want Jesus telling us: "You do not know what you are voting for."