Read: 2 Timothy 1:6-12

Whatever our skin colour or racial or ethnic background, we all tend to find human differences challenging in one way or another. At one end of the scale can be simply the incomprehension we feel when someone does not share our passion for cricket or fine wines; what's the matter with them? At the other, and infinitely more dangerous, end can be the deep sense that others of different skin colour or ethnicity, or to our view having some physical or mental defect or disability, are fundamentally inferior; the origins of a 'master race' mentality.

There is no sin in feeling such discomforts and difficult challenges; they are sadly part of our fallen human condition. But it is hugely important how we choose to respond, which is why there is now such turmoil in the USA, and on-going tribal/racial/ethnic/religious etc. tensions in all corners of the world including our own.

Jesus *begged* for a cup of water from a *loose-living,* *Samaritan, woman;*and in that there are *four* reasons why a man from his culture would have felt very challenged indeed in approaching her. We too have to swallow our pride and face our prejudices, for we are called to discover and show respect for all our human brothers and sisters, whatever their differences from us. It is not easy, but God's grace is always there to help us plentifully if we ask for it.

We come across accounts of extraordinary human goodness and virtue from all shapes and sizes of humanity, which briefly remind us that we have no grounds for feeling in any way superior. to others. Today is the feast of the Ugandan martyrs, St Charles Luanga and his 21 companions. They were just some of the 100 or so Catholic and Protestant Christians of Uganda who, showing amazing goodness and courage, were martyred by their king in the 19th century. These things are both humbling and uplifting as we reflect on them, for they remind us of our deficiencies but also tell us that with God's grace we weak human beings can be lifted to extraordinary heights of Christian faith and love for God, and love for one another.

St Charles Luanga and companions, pray for us.