

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

Today's Gospel

Jesus and his disciples came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they remained silent. For they had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." Taking a child (i.e., powerless in society), he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me."

MARK 9:33-37

Reflection

Twice before, in 8:31 and 9:31, the author of this gospel has shown Jesus telling

his disciples that he must be rejected, suffer, and die. In 8:34-35 Jesus makes an explicit connection between his cross and their own discipleship. Yet, here they are “discussing among themselves . . . who was the greatest.” They had some sense of the inappropriateness of their discussion since they did not answer Jesus when he questioned them. Instead “they remained silent.”

The author uses this setting to offer further teaching from Jesus. (He probably had picked up on their conversation after all!) “If anyone wishes to be first, he or she shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Then he reached out to a child, the least valuable in society, and “placed it in their midst, putting his arms around it.” Keeping the child in his arms, he declares: “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.” He connects himself, AND the Creator God who sent him, with the powerless ones.



Boy jumping near grass in daytime
By Luna Lovegood

For Pondering

- What is greatness? How does it manifest itself?
- Who is truly the greatest or among the greatest for you?
- How does the greatest one act?

- Where do you find greatness in yourself?
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For Prayer

The Magnificat or The Song of Mary/Bitter Tears (Luke 1: 46-55)

From deep in my heart I dance with joy to honor the Great Spirit. Even though I am small and weak, he noticed me. Now I will be looked up to by all. The Mighty One has lifted me up! His name is sacred. He is the Great and Holy One.

He shows kindness and pity to both children and elders who respect him. His strong arm had brought low the ones who think they are better than others... . He puts a headdress of honor on the ones with humble hearts.

He prepares a great feast for the ones who are hungry, but sends the fat ones home with empty bellies. He has been kind to the tribes of Wrestles with Creator (Israel) who walk in his ways, for he has remembered the ancient promises he made to our ancestors -- to Father of Many Nations (Abraham) and his descendants.

from First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament

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