

July 25, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

By Sr. Karen Clock, CSJ

Today's Gospel

The mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something. He said to her, "What do you wish?" She answered him, "Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your Kingdom." Jesus said in reply, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the chalice that I am going to drink?" They said to him, "We can." He replied, "My chalice you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left, this is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Reflection

In the gospel passage today, the request made by the mother of James and John reveals a common human desire for recognition, status, and power. It reflects a misunderstanding of Jesus' Kingdom, which is not built on positions of authority or privilege as the world defines them. Jesus challenges this perspective by redefining greatness as servanthood; this prompts us to reflect on our own ambition and motivation.

Jesus' response to James, John, and their mother contrasts sharply with the norms of the world. He teaches that true greatness in the Kingdom of God is not attained through asserting authority over others, but through humble service. Jesus is teaching about Servanthood. He not only teaches about it, but also exemplifies it in his life and ministry. Jesus came not to be served but to serve -- and gave his life as a ransom for many. His life serves as the ultimate model of humility and service, inspiring us to imitate his example in our daily lives.

The gospel passage today invites us to a journey of transformation where our attitudes and behaviors are shaped by the value of God's Kingdom rather than the values of the world. It challenges us to embrace a radical shift from self-centered ambition to selfless service, becoming the love and humility of Christ in all aspects of our lives.





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For Pondering

Today let us reflect on our own ambitions and motivations:

- Are we actively seeking to serve and uplift those around us, following the footsteps of Jesus?

- Are we willing to prioritize the needs of others above our own desires?

For Prayer

Today is the Feast Day of St. James the Apostle, and so we pray...

*Gracious God,
we remember before you today your servant and apostle James,
first among the Twelve to suffer martyrdom for the name of Jesus Christ;
and we pray that you will pour out upon the leaders of your church
that spirit of self-denying service by which alone
they may have true authority among your people;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.*

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