

Mark 9:30-37

Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, 'The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.

They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all.' He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms round him, and said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

The mistake that the apostles made was to put the job or position first. In their eyes the one who was greatest was the one who had the highest position. They obviously thought that Jesus would set up an earthly kingdom and so each wanted to get the top position in His kingdom. But Jesus told them that that his kingdom was not about seeking honour and glory for oneself, but about serving others. In fact, He was very direct when He told them: if anyone wants to be first, they must make themselves last of all and servant of all. Jesus is telling me today that it is not what I do but who I am that is important. My self-worth does not depend on the work I do.

- Am I ready to follow Jesus in being a Servant to all?
- How am I following the example of Christ in a life of service in my family and parish life?

***TWENTY FIFTH SUNDAY
ORDINARY TIME***

Year B

19th September 2021



Jesus was a man with a mission. He never seemed to stay long in one place. He kept on the move, leaving much of His mission still unaccomplished. His public ministry lasted only about three years - then it was on to Jerusalem to rejection, condemnation, and death on the cross. Seemingly, it was all over. But so much of what He had said indicated that His work would go on, that somehow He himself would keep on living and healing and teaching through His faithful followers. In today's Gospel Jesus suggests that His followers will always face a kind of urgency in their own generation. If Jesus continues His journey to Jerusalem and is punished and dies, what will His followers do in that crisis? Will they be children of light and have the wisdom to continue to follow Jesus and His ways in that and any other crisis they face? Or, will they be children of the world and go for the quick fix and the easy way out? These same questions I can ask myself today...

Opening Prayer

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbour, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life.

Wisdom 2:12,17-20

The godless say to themselves: 'Let us lie in wait for the virtuous man, since he annoys us and opposes our way of life, reproaches us for our breaches of the law and accuses us of playing false to our upbringing. 'Let us see if what he says is true, let us observe what kind of end he himself will have. If the virtuous man is God's son, God will take his part and rescue him from the clutches of his enemies. Let us test him with cruelty and with torture, and thus explore this gentleness of his and put his endurance to the proof. Let us condemn him to a shameful death since he will be looked after – we have his word for it.'

Today's first reading is fulfilled in the life of Christ. First, it points to Christ the Son of God, who was put to death by jealous and wicked people. As a righteous man, Jesus reproached them and condemned the ambitious Pharisees and Scribes of His time. They took offence, and so, persecuted and crucified Christ. This reading is also fulfilled in the life of all those who suffer unjust persecutions today throughout the world for being true and just. Like Christ, sometimes, we are persecuted by our enemies, and even by our friends for doing the right thing.

- As I live each day, how am I helped, as I follow the example of Christ, in living a life which is true and just?

Psalm 53(54):3-6,8

O God, save me by your name; by your power, uphold my cause.

O God, hear my prayer; listen to the words of my mouth.

For proud men have risen against me, ruthless men seek my life.

They have no regard for God.

But I have God for my help. The Lord upholds my life.

I will sacrifice to you with willing heart and praise your name for it is good.

James 3:16-4:3

Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.

Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you haven't got it; so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force. Why you don't have what you want is because you don't pray for it; when you do pray and don't get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.

Sin always divides. It creates disorder in our lives and splinters our relationships with God and other people. James mentions jealousy and selfish ambition in particular... Only a life rightly centred on God can truly bring fulfilment in life. When thinking about priorities, consider this: Jesus, first; Others, second; You, third. That's how we spell JOY. This acronym makes it easy to remember, but in reality it is harder to live out!

Alleluia, alleluia! *I am the light of the world, says the Lord; anyone who follows me will have the light of life. Alleluia!*

(Gospel overleaf)

Prayer over the Offerings

Receive with favour, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, that what they profess with devotion and faith may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries.

Prayer after Communion

Graciously raise up, O Lord, those you renew with this Sacrament, that we may come to possess your redemption both in mystery and in the manner of our life.