

Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus. 'Master,' they said to him 'we want you to do us a favour.' He said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' They said to him, 'Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory.' 'You do not know what you are asking' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup that I must drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I must be baptised?' They replied, 'We can.' Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I must drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I must be baptised you shall be baptised, but as for seats at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted.'

When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John, so Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

I come to my place of prayer. I gently become aware of God's presence.

When I am ready, I slowly read and re-read the Gospel.

The disciples are so slow to understand Jesus' teaching. But their slowness is an opportunity for Jesus to teach. His glory is not a matter of privileged honour, but the privilege of love that comes out of suffering and self-sacrifice. Those who wish to follow Christ are those who give themselves in total service to all. The joy of giving is itself their privilege and their crown.

I ask the Lord to deepen my understanding and to strengthen me to follow Him. I take the time to end my prayer slowly, in a spirit of thanksgiving.

TWENTY NINTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Year B

17th October 2021

The Son, Servant of God and of His Brothers and Sisters



Jesus continues on the road to Jerusalem, where he will suffer, die and on the third day, rise to new life. His disciples, who accompany him, still fail to understand Jesus' mission and are found arguing about personal greatness. Jesus teaches that the true disciple can only aspire to one thing: to share the passion of his Master.

The **First Reading**, from Isaiah, prepares us for the Gospel. We are presented with the mysterious figure: the Suffering Servant, who '*justifies many taking their faults on himself*'.

Psalm 33 praises God for his loving plan of bringing salvation to all. With the Psalmist we cry out: '*May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you*'.

In the **Second Reading**, we continue listening to the Book of Hebrews, reflecting on the priesthood of Christ. Christ is the 'supreme', high priest, perfect for interceding for us, because he knows us so well – '*He has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin*'.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.

Isaiah 53:10-11

The Lord has been pleased to crush his servant with suffering. If he offers his life in atonement, he shall see his heirs, he shall have a long life and through him what the Lord wishes will be done. His soul's anguish over, he shall see the light and be content. By his sufferings shall my servant justify many, taking their faults on himself.

The Suffering Servant in the Book of Isaiah, remains a mysterious figure.

Isaiah was living during a dark period, when Israel was facing exile and banishment. The 'Servant' might refer to the collective people of God, or to a particular individual. What is important, is how the 'Servant' approaches his suffering. Through accepting & embracing it, he will turn it to good. He will use it to save others. No wonder, that the early Christian communities came to see the 'Suffering Servant' as explaining the value and purpose of Jesus' suffering.

God does not send suffering, but it is often through suffering that we come to the light – that we come to know ourselves, our Creator, that we draw close to our neighbour.

Not a day goes by without aches & pains; fears & failure. Do I accept suffering in my life? Do I use it for good? How do I respond to the suffering of others? Do I feel the love and strength of God in the midst of my pain?

*O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be
consoled as to console; to be understood as to
understand; to be loved as to love; For it is in giving that
we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Prayer of St Francis

Psalms 32(33):4-5,18-20,22

*The word of the Lord is faithful and all his works to be trusted.
The Lord loves justice and right and fills the earth with his love.*

*The Lord looks on those who revere him, on those who hope in his love,
to rescue their souls from death, to keep them alive in famine.*

*Our soul is waiting for the Lord. The Lord is our help and our shield.
May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.*

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme high priest who has gone through to the highest heaven, we must never let go of the faith that we have professed. For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.

**Alleluia, alleluia! I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord;
No one can come to the Father except through me. Alleluia!**

(Gospel overleaf)

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant us, Lord, we pray, a sincere respect for your gifts, that, through the purifying action of your grace, we may be cleansed by the very mysteries we serve.

Prayer after Communion

Grant, O Lord, we pray, that, benefiting from participation in heavenly things, we may be helped by what you give in this present age and prepared for the gifts that are eternal.