



29th Sunday Ord. Time, Yr B

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Jesus has completed Mark's catechetical section. He was delayed in starting his journey to deal with the eager rich man's question (last Sunday's text). The rich man went away sad when asked to give away all he has to the poor. Eternal life cannot be earned or bought! Jesus finished this section saying, '*Do pay attention: Many who now are first will be last, and the last, first*', Mk 10:31 – How do we determine who is first i.e. the greatest? Jesus' teachings are not just suggestions. His followers must shape their lives according to Jesus' teachings!

After dealing with the rich man's question and Peter's follow-up question, Jesus walks on ahead of his disciples heading for Jerusalem and his Cross, Mk 10:32. As they move off, the Twelve and those who came with them were afraid, Mk 10:32-33. They feared for Jesus who was heading into 'enemy territory' i.e. the 'head quarters' of the religious authorities who were resolved to get rid of Jesus. Jesus does not subdue their fears but rather explains in detail his impending betrayal, how he will be ridiculed, how he will be killed and how he will rise three days later, Mk 10:33-34. They hear his words probably with incredulity. Rather than trying to understand what was going to happen to Jesus and allay their fear, they think of what will happen to them when Jesus is victorious in his glory. They don't want to face the reality of Jesus' impending painful death on the Cross!¹ Also they probably had no understanding of what Jesus meant by resurrection. Why didn't they also question Jesus about this?

► In our text, despite their reaction to disregard Jesus' prediction of the Cross, Jesus explains how they should understand his Cross. First of all, Jesus turns around the misplaced question of apostles James and John to show that greatness is to be sought in service, Mk 10:35-41. Secondly, he turns to the Twelve and explains to them this same need to serve, Mk 10:42-45 i.e. the shorter form. The Cross is to be understood as the greatest act of service out of love. Jesus' Cross and resurrection would reveal the immense depth of God's love for us and bring about the salvation of us all. The Twelve had still much to understand!

Read: Mark 10: 35 – 45 (Shorter form Mk 10:42-45)

Meditatio: Do I pray for inappropriate favours? Do I strive to move up the social status 'ladder'? When have I been given places of honour? Do I want to be seen with great and/or important people? Can honour be received without increased responsibility? Am I ready to do the hard work of caring and service without seeking reward? Am I taking up my crosses and coming to new life, just as Jesus died on the Cross and came to new life in the resurrection – baptism is death to sin and coming to new life in Christ? Can I live with (drink) the sufferings and persecutions of following Jesus – i.e. 'drink the cup'? What do I think of people whose lives are all about achieving worldly greatness and/or higher social status? For me, what are the dangers of the 'tall poppy syndrome' – Jesus was a good man brought down by people out of jealousy? Have I ever 'lorded it over' people? Do I act with compassion and not with a harshness that can come from being 'the authority'? Am I committed to live a life of service? Am I a gracious receiver or do I think I deserve to be served? Does my life respond generously to Jesus' greatest act of service in saving me by his death on the Cross?

Oratio: Pray that we will grow in the ways of service. Pray for those in authority, may they act with compassion especially for the poor and needy. Pray for politicians, may they serve the people that they represent. Pray that we will serve out of love and not for reward. Pray for all who suffer or are persecuted for their faith. Pray that we will grow as persons as we give of ourselves to help others. Pray for a true understanding of Jesus' death on the Cross?

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer – Help others without counting the cost or seeking reward.

✍ Fr Joe

Mark 10: 35 – 45 (Shorter form Mk 10:42-45)

(Shorter form in bold)

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 baptized with the baptism with which I must be baptized?’ 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 baptized you shall be baptized, 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.’**

Note:

1 The expected way to get rid of someone was to get the Roman authorities to condemn the person and have the Roman soldiers crucify the person. Crucifixion was a most painful and shameful death. The person would die of asphyxiation after many hours of stretching their body to keep breathing.