

Twenty-Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Gospel Reading

23rd September 2018

Mark 9:30-37

Jesus teaches his disciples that the greatest are those who serve all.

Background on the Gospel Reading

In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus again predict his passion, death, and Resurrection to his disciples. The setting here is important. Jesus and his disciples are preparing to journey through Galilee, a Jewish territory in which Jesus has already encountered problems with the Pharisees. Perhaps this is why Mark indicates that Jesus was trying to journey in secret. In predicting his passion, Jesus is acknowledging the danger they will face and is trying to preparing his disciples for it.

Yet Mark tells us that the disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying and were afraid to ask what he meant. Such hesitation on the part of the disciples is not characteristic behavior.

Peter had no fear about rebuking Jesus in last week's Gospel. Perhaps this is an indication that the disciples were aware that a new situation was emerging.

Mark paints a vivid picture in today's Gospel. Having arrived at Capernaum, Jesus and his disciples enter a house. In this private place, Jesus asks his disciples about the argument they had while they were journeying. Again, the disciples are uncharacteristically silent and afraid to answer.

They have been found out. Jesus then summons the Twelve, whom Mark identified earlier in his Gospel as those chosen by Jesus to preach and to drive out demons. To this select group of disciples, Jesus teaches that those who would be first in God's kingdom must be servants of all.

Jesus then calls forward a child and teaches the Twelve that to receive a child in Jesus' name is to receive both Jesus and the One who sent him. We might easily fail to understand the significance of this action. In first-century Palestine, children were without status or power, possessing no legal rights. In this action,

Jesus is teaching his disciples and us that when we serve the least ones among us, we serve Jesus himself. Who are the people without power or status in our society that

Jesus is calling us to serve? Do we do so willingly? Jesus teaches that God's judgment of us will be based on this criterion alone.

www.loyolapress.com



Church of St Francis Xavier

135 Jalan Gasing (Section 10), 46000 Petaling Jaya. Tel: 03-7956 5977 Fax: 03-7957 2435

Website: www.sfx.com.my Phone App: SFX PJ E-mail: sfxchurchpj@gmail.com

Parish Priest: Rev Fr Norris Seenivasan, SJ, Asst Parish Priest: Rev Fr Alvin Ho, SJ