

## **25<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year**

**Wis: 2:12, 17-20; Jam: 3:16-4:3; Mk: 9:30-37**

Today's readings invite us to become great in the sight of God by doing God's will, as Jesus did, surrendering our lives in the service of others.

The passage from the Book of Wisdom sounds like a messianic prophecy, similar to the "Suffering Servant" prophecy in Isaiah, referring to Christ's passion. It makes us to choose the path of righteousness, in spite of painful consequences. In today's Responsorial Psalm, the psalmist prays for help against the disrespectful people who rise against the upright.

In today's Gospel, Jesus gives us a glimpse of what walking that path is, namely, welcoming and serving the helpless in our midst: the defenseless children, the despairing poor, the mentally ill and the marginalized. Jesus also teaches his apostles that child-like humility and selfless service make one great in the eyes of God. The second reading is in tune with the dispute among the apostles about who is the greatest. In it, James warns us that selfish ambitions destroy peace and it is the cause for conflicts and war. So, James advises us to choose the path of righteousness and humble service which leads us to lasting peace

We must become great through humble, self-giving service. Greatness, in Jesus' view, is found in our willingness to accept, welcome and serve those who are considered unacceptable by reason of class, color, religion, wealth or culture. We must welcome people the way a child welcomes them. If we are to be truly great, we must be ready to accept four challenges:

(1) To put ourselves last, (2) to be the servant of all, (3) to receive the most insignificant human beings with love, and (4) to expect nothing in return.

During the holy Mass, let us pray for the true spirit of service, for an attitude of love for those around us. May the Holy Spirit help us to become truly great through humble and selfless service.

St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) puts it like this: “Be the living expression of God's kindness through humble service; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile and kindness in your warm greeting.” Here is the motto of the Missionaries of Charity, the order of nuns founded by Mother Teresa:

The fruit of Silence is Prayer.

The fruit of Prayer is Faith.

The fruit of Faith is Love.

The fruit of Love is Service.

And the fruit of Service is Peace.

We need to practice humility in thoughts, words and actions. “Learn from me, for I am, meek and humble of heart.” "What is the essential thing in the religion and discipline of Jesus Christ?" St. Augustine asks, and then responds, “I shall reply: first humility, second humility and third humility." We should not seek recognition and reward for the service, we do for Christ and the Church, as parents, teachers, pastors, etc. Trusting Faith resulting from true humility is essential for all physical and spiritual works of mercy.

Since children reflect the innocence, purity, simplicity and tenderness of our Lord, and since they are given the protection of a guardian angel, we are to love them, train them and take care not to give scandal to them. We need to try to treat everyone with love and respect because, "Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life," (St. Basil)