

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Leadership in the manner of our Lord Jesus

“The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise” (Mark 9:31). Whoever wishes to be first will be the servant of all (Mark 9:37).

Dear brothers and sisters, the central question the Gospel and, indeed, the entire Scripture seeks to answer is this: Who is the Lord--who is the Messiah, the anointed one? In the preceding chapters of our Gospel passage today the Lord miraculously fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish and also four thousand with seven loaves at a place very much like a desert. Then he made the mute speak, the deaf hear and the blind see. He raised the dead. These events recall the feeding of the people of God by Yahweh during their forty years journey to the Promised Land, which foreshadows the miracles that the Messiah would perform when he would arrive. Remember our first reading two weeks ago.

Thus, says the LORD: Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing (Isaiah 35:4-6). In other words, the Messiah will open the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf and loosen the tongues of the mute. Alleluia!

Our next question is who is this person who did those things that only God can do? Last week, the Gospel presented the passage in which the Lord asked the question regarding his identity--who do you say that the Son of man is? Even though, Peter had answered correctly that the Lord is the Christ, the full implication of what he had said had not yet dawned on Peter. Our Lord then revealed the prophecy of his future as the Messiah. He told them that, “The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. And He spoke this quite openly”(Mark 8:31). When the time for the fulfillment of this prophecy came, the entire event happened as the Lord had said it would. Now, let’s look at our first reading: With revilement and torture let us put the just one to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a shameful death (Wisdom 2:19-20). You can see that the passion narrative of our Lord reads in part like this first reading,

“He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, I am the Son of God. The revolutionaries who were crucified with him also kept abusing him in the same way” (Matthew 27:43-44).

However, those who tortured Jesus did not expect what happened next. Jesus rose from the dead. In other words, death could not hold him prisoner. Brothers and sisters, God is immortal. Jesus is the Messiah God.

In the story of the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of our Lord, we see how God reigns. We see God's model of leadership. God gave his son's life for the redemption of all. Speaking about this, St Paul writes, "I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3).

If we want to become a disciple of the Lord, we must be ready to follow him his way. This means that our way of leadership must be his way of leadership. The Lord said clearly, "Whoever wishes to be first will be the servant of all "(Mark 9:37). If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do (John 13:15). We lead with humility and service to others.

You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:42-45). As James says in today's Epistle, we must seek wisdom from above, desiring humility, not glory, and in all things be gentle and full of mercy.

Dear brothers and sisters, can we do this own our initiative and effort? No. We must seek his help and say to him, "O God, you are my God, For you I long; for you my soul is thirsting. My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water. So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory" (Psalm 63:2-3).

John D Becker, a contemporary songwriter, articulated the prayer for God's guidance in these immortal lines: "Lead me, Lord, lead me, Lord, by the light of truth to seek and to find the narrow way. Be my way; be my truth; be my life, my Lord, and lead me, Lord, today."

The word of God asks us the question: Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show his works by a good life in the humility that comes from wisdom. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace (James 3:13, 16-18).