

During this unprecedented time in our world's history, we offer you the following material for your praying and reflecting on God's Word.

Introduction - October 17, 2021

In today's Gospel, James and John ask to be given seats of honour when Jesus enters into his glory. Once again, the disciples seem to be selective in what they hear Jesus say. They want to share Jesus' glory, but do not appear to understand that his glory will be preceded by his suffering. Jesus notes their lack of understanding and predicts the suffering they will endure for the sake of the Gospel. Jesus says that the honour they seek is not his to give. When the other ten hear what James and John have asked, Mark reports that they are indignant. Jesus takes the opportunity to teach them.

Jesus explains the importance of service and sacrifice in the life of a disciple. In particular, he seems to be preparing the Twelve for their leadership roles in the emerging Christian community.

Jesus knows that his teaching is countercultural. Jesus contrasts the dynamics within the community of disciples with those shown by the rulers of the Gentiles. Disciples must make themselves slaves of the people they encounter. Their model is Jesus Christ on the cross, not the world's arrogant, self-aggrandizing rulers who flaunt their so-called power. Disciples who seek greatness will make themselves a servant to others because that is what Jesus did.

Following Jesus' example of sacrificial love continues to be countercultural in our present day.

Lectio Divina with the Sunday Gospel

Lectio Divina means 'divine reading'. It is a way to pray using the holy scriptures in a step-by-step process. Gather the entire family around and make the sign of the Cross. Light a candle.

Leader: "Holy Spirit, you inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write what you wanted us to know for the sake of our salvation. Inspire us now to hear those words not only with our ears, but our hearts, so that we might know your saving Word for us today."

- Have one person **read** the scripture slowly, out loud and have a few moments of silence afterwards. (It may be helpful for everyone to have a copy of the reading).
- **Read** the scripture again out loud and choose a single word or short phrase that touches, speaks or surprises you. Share with everyone.
- **Read** the scripture out loud one more time and discuss what is happening directly in the text.
- **Meditate** on what God is doing now in our lives through this text.
- **Respond** to what God is doing through prayer.
- **Contemplate** on what God is asking of me through this text and how to use these words as a gift for others through my actions.
- After a period of silence, end with the Sign of the Cross.

(see over)

The Holy Gospel for October 17, 2021

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee,
came forward to Jesus and said to him,
"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."
And Jesus said to them,
"What is it you want me to do for you?"

And they said to him,
"Grant us to sit, one at your right hand
and one at your left, in your glory."

But Jesus said to them,
"You do not know what you are asking.
Are you able to drink the cup that I drink,
or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"
They replied, "We are able."

Then Jesus said to them,
"The cup that I drink you will drink;
and with the baptism with which I am baptized,
you will be baptized;
but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant,
but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.

When the ten heard this,
they began to be angry with James and John.
So Jesus called them and said to them,
"You know that among the Gentiles
those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them,
and their great ones are tyrants over them.

But it is not so among you;
whoever wishes to become great among you
must be your servant,
and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.
For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The Gospel of the Lord.

(see over)

Family Activities

- ❖ Before you gather as a family, display a cup and a bowl of water. Jesus teaches his disciples that the honour they are seeking comes only from a great personal cost. Doing God's will and work will entail great challenge and suffering. The cup and baptism of Jesus symbolizes the great suffering that he is to go through and to which we will also endure. Reflect on the suffering that Jesus endured for us. Read John 19:1-30. How does the suffering of Jesus help when you find yourself in a very difficult situation?
- ❖ Suffering is not only a guarantee in the human experience, especially as Jesus says, in the life of a true disciple, it can also be a way of uniting us with others. When something tragic happens, there is usually a coming together of people to help and to comfort. In this way, we are participating in God's plan of salvation. We are reminded of how much God loves us and that he sent his only Son to us as a human being to experience all that we endure. Jesus accepted the suffering to show us the connection that God wants with us. Is there someone in your life who is suffering now? In what ways can we share in his/her suffering and to reflect the love of God?
- ❖ As you gather, name some leaders that you have in your life and in general. Reflect on what are the characteristics/actions that make them leaders. Jesus said that some leaders act in ways to show that they are better or more important than other people. Then he talks about what it means to be a **leader in the Kingdom of God**. Do I seek to serve or to be served? Leaders in the Kingdom of God are servant-leaders who ultimately would give up their lives for others. Who are some servant-leaders around us? What can we do to be servant-leaders in the Kingdom of God?

Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

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.

-Lord, help us to be loving, caring and forgiving.

For the grace to help others in their pain and frustration,

-Lord, help us to be understanding and sensitive.

For the grace to bring peace and healing to others,

-Lord, help us to give the "assurance to the poor that God will never abandon them."

Amen