

OCTOBER 17, 2021
Sunday of the 29th Week in Ordinary Time
Mark 10: 35-45

“TO SERVE RATHER THAN BE SERVED.”

“Have you heard the beautiful children's story about the three trees? The trees were talking in the forest one day about their dreams for the future. The first tree said it would like to be made into a cradle, so that it might go on living as a support for the fragile life of a tiny new baby. The second tree wanted to be made into a big ship, so that it might go on living, carrying important cargo and influential people to exotic new lands. The third tree longed to stay right where it was, existing only as a tree, but growing ever taller, and pointing ever higher, to remind everyone that there is a God in heaven who loves them. Those were their dreams: One wanted to be a cradle, one wanted to be a mighty ship, and one wanted to be a tall tree, pointing people toward God. But then one day the woodcutters came and chopped down the three trees...and destroyed their dreams. The first tree was not made into a cradle, but into a simple feeding trough, a manger for animals. But the manger was sold to a family in Bethlehem, and on the night Jesus was born, that simple feed box became the cradle for the Christ Child. The second tree was built into a boat, but not the kind it had dreamed of--not a mighty ocean-going vessel--but a tiny inexpensive fishing boat. A man named Simon Peter bought the boat, and on one warm afternoon when the crowds pressed in, Jesus himself climbed aboard that small fishing boats that he might preach good news to the multitudes. The third tree also was deprived of its dream...”¹ Your guess is right. The third tree became the Cross where Jesus was nailed and died, pointing to God who loves us.

Our first reading was taken from the fourth servant song of the prophet Isaiah describes the Suffering Servant of God, willing and ready to carry the heavy burden and

¹ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

undergo pain and suffering for others' sake. This is on contrasts to our own idea of discipleship, that is one of privilege, one of power, one of influence, one of being close to the decision maker, and one of special place near the Master. When Jesus was asked by James and John "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory,"² Jesus instructed them the real essence of discipleship: one who is ready to take and carry the burden of others, responsible not only for his own actions but of others as well, and to get something done without any objection or complaint. For Jesus, being a disciple is not playing the boss and saying 'I am the boss, the head, do what I have to I say!' but a servant of all. My brothers and sisters, the mantra, the principle of discipleship as mentioned by Jesus is nothing else but service: "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 a ransom for many."³

My brothers and sisters, Jesus is teaching us what His kingdom is all about and what is to be a follower of Him. John and James did not know what they were asking for and the consequences of their request. They thought and even us, since we give up something for Him to follow and dedicate our lives for Him, we should be given reward. We do good things because God is good to us and the reward is His love not the material kingdom and look for any recognition, prestige and honour or position for the services we rendered.

My brothers and sisters, are we truly disciples of the Master, and ready to follow Jesus which we are called to continue the mission by you and me? Are we ready to serve others as Jesus has taught and modeled for us? If we want to be great, be one and share

² Mark 10: 37 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

³ Mark 10: 43-45 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

in His kingdom, there is a price to be paid: laying down our lives for others in love and humble service, just as Jesus did for our sake.

“Once upon a time in a far-off country, a king had twin sons. One was strong and handsome. The other was intelligent and wise. As the ruler grew old, everyone speculated about which son the king would choose as his successor – the strong son or the wise son. In this land the sign of kingship was a royal ring. Just before the king died, he had a copy of the royal ring made and presented both rings to his twin sons. The chief advisors to the king asked him, ‘How shall we know which son wears the authentic royal ring?’ ‘You shall know,’ answered the king, ‘because the chosen one will reveal his right to rule by his self-giving service to our people.’⁴”

During every conclusion of the Mass, the priest or deacon will say: ‘Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,’ which means the worship has ended but the service begins. We can only say and mean it ‘Thanks be to God’ if we truly serve, love and forgive our brothers and sisters from our hearts.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, help me to be a servant of love and service. I may seek to serve rather than be served, to give my life for others and be great not here on earth but in your kingdom. Ignite my heart with your love that I may give myself wholeheartedly and serve joyfully my brothers and sisters for your sake and for your kingdom. Amen.”

⁴ stories4homilies.blogspot.com/