

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021
Sunday of the 25th Week in Ordinary Time
Mark 9: 30-37

“BE THE LAST AND SERVANT OF ALL.”

“A young man entered the coach of a train in a small university town in France. The ink was scarcely dry on his newly acquired diploma. As the train sped off for Paris, he took his seat in the rear of the coach near an elderly gentleman who seemed to be dozing. As the train suddenly rolled, a string of rosary beads fell from his hand. The young man picked up the rosary and handed it to the elderly gentleman with the remark, "I presume you are praying, sir?" "You are right. I was praying." "I am surprised," said the young fellow, "that in this day and age there is someone who is still so unenlightened and superstitious. Our professors at the university do not believe in such things," and he proceeded to "enlighten" his elderly fellow-passenger. The old man expressed surprise and amazement. "Yes," continued the young man, "today enlightened people don't believe in such nonsense." "You don't say!" replied the old man. "Yes, sir, and if you wish, I can send you some illuminating books." "Very well," said the old man, preparing to leave as the train came to a stop. "You may send them to this address." He handed the young man a card, which read: Louis Pasteur, Director of the Institute of Scientific Research, Paris.”¹

Humility is the queen of all virtues. It is opposed to pride that demonstrates no respect for others, tends to dominate, to exercise the power for its own benefit, its own good and not concerned for others. Humility is a virtue that identifies service of others as the highest way of authority. It is in serving others that you are powerful because one is giving himself/herself for others without looking for prestige or recognition. This is

¹ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

what it meant by Jesus in our gospel for today: "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."²

My brothers and sisters, a lot of people are exhausted today because of the pandemic. Our doctors and nurses, our frontliners, those who are serving people in need. But to think of it, with deep faith and understanding, they are great in the eyes of God because if they realized it, they are serving people who are vulnerable, weak, sick and with the help of God, they are instruments of healing, care, love and compassion. We need to pray for them, for those who risk their lives for the sake of others, for those families and friends who think not of their own selves but others who are in need. Only when you serve others, you are great in the eyes of God.

"The first reading from the book of Wisdom reminds us that often the just man has to endure suffering not because he has done evil, not because he has sinned but precisely because He is walking the path of justice, the path of truth, and the path of God. Because of his upright life others feel threatened, others feel uncomfortable, others feel guilty and challenged and so they retaliate, they hit out at the just person who stands for God and His values. When we are put to the test do we resort to proving how tough we are, or are we ready to accept our powerlessness so that God can reveal His power and presence in our lives? And in the gospel, Jesus takes a little child present, sets him in the centre and says to his disciples: "Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes not me but the one who sent me." What is the point Jesus is making through this enigmatic statement? Why did Jesus use a little child? In the time of Jesus the child had no rights till it grew up to be an adult. Yet God came to us in the form of a child, totally dependent on others. Jesus in today's Gospel once again affirms his readiness to give up all power, to submit to suffering, to

² Mark 9: 35 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

submit to death itself, the ultimate loss of the power of life. In embracing the child, Jesus is embracing weakness, is affirming his choice of being on the side of the powerless, who believe not in their own strength but rely totally in the power of God.”³

My brothers and sisters, let us be ready to embrace our own weaknesses so that we can experience and accept God’s power in us, as St. Paul said: “Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.”⁴ Let us accept, welcome, respect and serve others even strangers and focus not on oneself but rather for the wellbeing of others. So, am I great in the eyes of others or in the eyes of God? Am I ready to be powerless in order to embrace God who is the most powerful? Do I serve the weak, the powerless, the poor with love and humility, care and compassion or I avoid and neglected them? Let us ask therefore in this Eucharist, the highest symbol of service, of giving, of greatest love, that we may embrace the mission that Christ is handing to us, to serve and not to be served, to be the last and servant of all.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, You give all for us to saved us. Your humility on the cross is the greatest love of all. May I totally surrender all to You, and help me to conform my life with You, to serve and not to be served, to be last and servant of all, and be humble of what I have and share it to those in need. Amen.”

³ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

⁴ 2 Corinthians 12: 10 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society