

Tuesday of the Seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 9:30-37): Jesus and his disciples left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.

“The Son of Man is to be handed over to men”

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Today, the Gospel teaches us two lessons of Jesus that are closely linked together. On the one hand, He tells them that “and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise” (Mk 9:31). The Father's purpose for His coming to this world was precisely this: to set us free from sin's slavery and eternal death; thus, we shall become the sons of God. Jesus' greatest form of submission —His death on the cross— shows God's infinite love for humanity: a measureless Love, a Love that does not mind facing the madness and scandal of the Cross.

On the other hand, it is terrifying, to see the Apostles' reaction. They were just too busy thinking of themselves only and forgetting to learn from their Master: “But they did not understand the saying” (Mk 9:32), because they had been arguing on the way about who was the greatest, and they were afraid to ask Him anything, lest they could be scolded.

With delicate patience, Jesus adds: let him be last of all and servant of all. We have to look for the simple and small, because the Lord identified Himself with them. We have to receive Jesus in our life; thus, we shall be opening the doors to the very same God. It is like programming our life to keep on going.

This is how Saint John Vianney, the holy priest of Ars, explains it: “Each time we put the needs of others above our own, and provided this does not go against God's Law, we are achieving merits God only knows about.” Jesus teaches with these words, but mostly He teaches with His deeds. Those Apostles, who were initially supposed to understand Him but did not quite, will follow in the footsteps of their Lord and their God after the Cross and Resurrection. And, accompanied by the Holy Virgin Mary, they will become smaller and smaller every day to let Jesus grow in them and in the world.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Blessed may you be, my Lord Jesus Christ. You redeemed our souls with your precious blood and most holy death, and in your mercy you led them from exile back to eternal life.” (Saint Bridget)
- “The ascent to God occurs precisely in the descent of humble service, in the descent of love.” (Benedict XVI)
- “It is not easy for man, wounded by sin, to maintain moral balance. Christ's gift of salvation offers us the grace necessary to persevere in the pursuit of the virtues. Everyone should always

ask for this grace of light and strength, frequent the sacraments, cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and follow his calls to love what is good and shun evil.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 1811)