Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

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 the Son of Man 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 and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.”

Fr. Pedro-José YNARAJA i Díaz
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Today the Gospel tells us that Jesus was walking with his disciples, passing through towns, across a great plain. To get to know each other, there is nothing better than walking and travelling together. Then confidence arises easily. And confidence is trust. And trust is communicating love. Love dazzles and astonishes when it reveals to us the mystery that is housed in the most intimate part of the human heart. The Master speaks with emotion to his disciples of the mystery that gnaws at his interior. Sometimes it is an illusion; other times, when he thinks about it, he feels fear; most of the time he knows that they will not understand him. But they are his friends, everything he received from the Father he must communicate to them, and until now he has been doing so. They do not understand him, but they are in tune with the emotion with which he speaks to them, which is appreciation, proof that they count on him, even if they are so little, to make their projects successful. He will be handed over, they will kill him, but he will rise again after three days (cf. Mk 9:31).

Death and resurrection. For some, these are enigmatic concepts, for others, unacceptable axioms. He has

come to reveal them, to shout that the joyful fate of mankind has arrived, even though for this to happen, He, the friend, the elder brother, the Son of the Father, will have to undergo cruel suffering. But, oh sad paradox! While He is living this inner tragedy, they argue about who will climb higher on the podium of champions, when the race to His Kingdom comes to an end. Do we act differently? Let him who is free of ambition cast the first stone.

Jesus proclaims new values. The important thing is not to triumph, but to serve; this will be demonstrated on the culminating day of his evangelizing work by washing their feet. Greatness is not in the intellect of the wise man, but in the naivety of the child. “If you knew the whole Bible by heart, and all the teachings of the philosophers, how would this help you without the grace and love of God?” (Thomas à Kempis). By greeting the wise man, we satisfy our vanity; by embracing the little one, we hug God, and we are purified by Him, and divinized.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “We endure punishment to the uttermost, and when we are put to death we rejoice, believing that God will raise us up by His Christ, and will make us incorruptible, and free from suffering, and immortal” (Saint Justin)

- “This teaching of the Lord [announcement of his Passion] is always followed by the resistance of the disciples. Jesus corrects us: the ascent to God occurs precisely in the descent of humble service, in the descent of love” (Benedict XVI)

- “... For the Christian, "to reign is to serve him," particularly when serving "the poor and the suffering, in whom the Church recognizes the image of her poor and suffering founder." The People of God fulfills its royal dignity by a life in keeping with its vocation to serve with Christ” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, nº 786)