

Monday of the Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 9:46-50): An argument arose among the disciples about which of them was the greatest. Jesus realized the intention of their hearts and took a child and placed it by his side and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. For the one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest.

”Then John said in reply, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow in our company.” Jesus said to him, “Do not prevent him, for whoever is not against you is for you.”

“The one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest”

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Today, on their way to Jerusalem heading towards the Passion, “an argument arose among the disciples about which of them was the greatest” (Lk 9:46). Every day the media, and even our conversations, are full of comments regarding the importance of some people: whether others or ourselves. This kind of logic, which is strictly human, quite often results in an unreasonable yearning for success, recognition, admiration, gratitude, or in a lack of peace if these expected rewards fail to reach us.

Jesus' reaction to the thoughts of His disciples —and, perhaps, their remarks, too— reminds us of the old prophets' style. Before words come gestures. Jesus “took a child and placed it by his side” (Lk 9:47). Afterwards, comes the teaching: “the one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest” (Lk 9:48). —O Jesus, why is it so difficult for us to accept this is not a utopia for those who are not involved in the hustle and bustle in overwhelming activity, fighting one another for

success, whereas, thanks to your grace, it could, instead, be enjoyed by all of us? If we could accept it, we would deep down have much more peace and would be able to do our job with more serenity and joy.

This attitude is also the source where joy comes from, when seeing that others work well for God, with a different style from ours, but always in Jesus' name. The disciples wanted to prevent it. The Master, instead, protects those other persons. Once again, the fact of feeling as God's small children makes it easy for us to open our hearts to everybody while growing in joy, peace and thankfulness. This doctrine is what earned St. Therese of Lisieux the title of “Doctor of the Church”: in her book *Story of a Soul*, she admires the Church as a beautiful garden of flowers, where she is happy to consider herself just a little flower. By the side of the great saints —roses and white lilies— there are the little ones —daisies and violets— intended to give pleasure to God's eyes, when He gazes at the Earth.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“It is better to be a Christian without saying it, than to say it without being one. It is an excellent thing to teach, but on condition that what is taught is practiced” (Ignatius of Antioch)

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“Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse” (Francis)

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“Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 799)