September 3rd: Memorial of Saint Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church

Gospel text (*Lk* 22:24-30): Then an argument broke out among them about which of them should be regarded as the greatest. He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those in authority over them are addressed as ‘Benefactors’; but among you it shall not be so. Rather, let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at table? I am among you as the one who serves. It is you who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father has conferred one on me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

«I am among you as the one who serves»

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Today Jesus gives a great lesson to his disciples regarding the nature and the sense of authority, which is not a tyrannical power over others, but a service that helps our neighbors to develop themselves so that they may follow the path of good and get to be truly children of God. The model of authority in the Church is Jesus Christ himself; and according to Him Gregory the Great, Pope, configured his life both as a Christian and in his pastoral ministry. For love to his fellow citizens, he accepted the pastoral charge God had asked him to carry out, when his desire was the monastic life.

With His words and example, Jesus Christ taught his disciples this principle: "But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves" (Lk 22:26), and He sanctioned it by surrendering His own life for our salvation: "But I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27). By emulating Christ, St. Gregory the Great made this principle the axis of his life, without any desire for leadership or willingness to be above others, but on the contrary, with a longing to seek holiness in love and service to the neighbor for the love of God who had asked him to.

However, St. Gregory, in the midst of the troubles his ministry was causing him, since he had to worry about many temporal matters, always felt a longing for the monasticism, which he had left behind to assume the pastoral office that sometimes became very heavy; he longed for a more secluded life that would have allowed him to contemplate and pray more intensely, but he was obedient to God and said: "It is for the love of God that I do no spare myself preaching Him." St. Gregory was always a great

contemplative in action.