

1. Read — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.

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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? Mark 10:2-12** — Pg. 1

**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3

**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## Gospel Reading – Mark 10:2-12 – Roman Missal

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." He replied, "What do you wish me to do for you?" They answered him, "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left." Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" They said to him, "We can." Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

## Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings

From a letter to Proba by Saint Augustine, bishop  
Thy in our fear of not praying as we should, do we turn to so many things, to find what we should pray for? Why do we not say instead, in the words of the psalm: *I have asked one thing from the Lord, this is what I will seek: to dwell in the Lord's house all the days of my life, to see the graciousness of the Lord, and to visit his temple?* There, the days do not come and go in succession, and the beginning of one day does not mean the end of another; all days are one, simultaneously and without end, and the life lived out in these days has itself no end. So that we might obtain this life of happiness, he who is true life itself taught us to pray, not in many words as though speaking longer could gain us a hearing. After all, we pray to one who, as the Lord himself tells us, knows what we need before we ask for it. Why he should ask us to pray, when he knows what we need before we ask him, may perplex us if we do not realize that our Lord and God does not want to know what we want (for he cannot fail to know it), but wants us rather to exercise our desire through our prayers, so that we may be able to receive what he is preparing to give us. His gift is very great indeed, but our capacity is too small and limited to receive it. That is why we are told: *Enlarge your desires, do not bear the yoke with unbelievers.* The deeper our faith, the stronger our hope, the greater our desire, the larger will be our capacity

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to receive that gift, which is very great indeed. *No eye has seen it; it has no color. No ear has heard it; it has no sound. It has not entered man's heart;* man's heart must enter into it. In this faith, hope and love we pray always with unwearied desire. However, at set times and seasons we also pray to God in words, so that by these signs we may instruct ourselves and mark the progress we have made in our desire, and spur ourselves on to deepen it. The more fervent the desire, the more worthy will be its fruit. When the Apostle tells us: *Pray without ceasing*, he means this: Desire unceasingly that life of happiness which is nothing if not eternal, and ask it of him who alone is able to give it.

### **Be Careful What You Ask For – Lesson and Discussion**

*"You do not know what you are asking"*

In the Gospel reading, James and John make a request. Their request is similar to any number of requests that we ask Jesus on a daily basis. Jesus responds to them the same way He responds to all of us: Are we willing to drink the cup?

**What are James and John asking for?** They are asking for prestige. They believe that Jesus will be a great king soon and they want to be right there with Him to be showered with all the riches and glory Jesus will have.

**Why do they ask for prestige?** "Man is always trying to avoid suffering, and, instead, to assure himself of glory. But here Jesus undecives him; whoever wants to share in his glory must drink the bitter cup of suffering with him: 'Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?'"[1].

**What does Jesus mean when He refers to His own baptism?** The Church teaches that there are three different types of baptisms: one by water, one by desire, and one by the blood as in a martyr's death. Jesus is speaking of the last of the three baptisms here. The "metaphor of drinking the cup is used in the Old Testament to refer to acceptance of the destiny assigned by God. In Jesus' case, this involves divine judgment on sin that Jesus the innocent one is to expiate on behalf of the guilty. His baptism is to be his crucifixion and death for the salvation of the human race....The request of James and John for a share in the glory (35-37) must of necessity involve a share in Jesus' sufferings, the endurance of tribulation and suffering for the gospel (39)[2]. "The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.' Already he is anticipating the "baptism" of his bloody death. Already he is coming to 'fulfill all righteousness,' that is, he is submitting himself entirely to his Father's will: out of love he consents to this baptism of death for the remissions of our sins."[3] "...Jesus desires to associate with his redeeming sacrifice those who were to be its first beneficiaries."[4]

**How are we called to this baptism of suffering?** While we may not be called to shed our blood for our belief in Jesus Christ, we can die to ourselves everyday. We let go of sin and die to sin. By this we mean that we say "no" to our sinful desires in order to say "yes" to Jesus Christ. By saying "yes" to Him, we become more like Christ and understand Him all the more. The "possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery" is offered to all men. He calls his

disciples to take up their cross and follow him,' for 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example so that we should follow in his steps.'"[5]

### **Does Jesus have the authority to grant James and John's request?**

No and yes. As Jesus mentions in the Gospel, only the Father could grant this request at that time. This was because the "authority of assigning places of honor in the kingdom is reserved to God (40)."[6] He could grant their request theoretically because He is God and they are three in one, but He can't because He cannot do anything unless the Father grants it so because they are one in three. Also, keep in mind that Jesus had not been seated at the right hand of the Father and made King of Kings yet. He had to suffer, die, and rise before He could make any distinctions on that point.

**Why is it important to be careful in our prayers?** By praying we may get what we ask for. **But how is getting what we ask for a bad thing?** It's not. Rather, it's a challenging thing, at times. We must ask ourselves if we are willing to do what God asks of us to get what we asked from God? The Apostles wanted glory and esteem, but to get "what they wanted", Jesus told them that they must humble themselves and rely solely on God, turning to no other things except Him. The spiritual reading touches on this point: "Why in our fear of not praying as we should, do we turn to so many things, to find what we should pray for? Why do we not say instead, in the words of the psalm: *I have asked one thing from the Lord, this is what I will seek: to dwell in the Lord's house all the days of my life, to see the graciousness of the Lord, and to visit his temple?* There, the days do not come and go in succession, and the beginning of one day does not mean the end of another; all days are one, simultaneously and without end, and the life lived out in these days has itself no end."[7]

**How do we pray carefully?** When we pray, we should always truly know what we are asking for. Will this prayer help us to become God wants us to be? Will it make us closer with God or will we become holier? Our prayers are meant "So that we might obtain this life of happiness, he who is true life itself taught us to pray, not in many words as though speaking longer could gain us a hearing. After all, we pray to one who, as the Lord himself tells us, knows what we need before we ask for it."

**If God knows what we are going to ask for why pray at all?** As the Spiritual Reading continues, "Why he should ask us to pray, when he knows what we need before we ask him, may perplex us if we do not realize that our Lord and God does not want to know what we want (for he cannot fail to know it), but wants us rather to exercise our desire through our prayers, so that we may be able to receive what he is preparing to give us. His gift is very great indeed, but our capacity is too small and limited to receive it."

Prayer helps to stretch our hearts, so that we may receive the graces we are asking for and that God wants to give us. Imagine a 12oz cup. Our soul may only have the capacity of a 12oz cup, yet we are asking for 64 ounces of grace. Through prayer, God stretches our soul. As we hunger and thirst for righteousness and as we cry out from the depth of our soul, we are being stretched so that we may better receive graces from our merciful God.