

## Lectionary Faith-Sharing Community

### 29TH. ORDINARY SUNDAY

Cycle B - October 17, 2021



#### OPENING PRAYER

Leader: My God, come to my aid. Lord, make haste to help me.

All: Save me, my God. Hear, Lord, my prayer and listen to my words.

Leader: My soul rests in God, my hope comes from Him. When my anguish multiplies, your consolations rejoice my spirit.

All: I will gladly offer you a sacrifice and thank you, Lord, for your immense kindness to me.

**Leader: We invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit:  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth.  
Oh God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

#### FIRST READING [Isaiah 53 (10-11)]

***The Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity.***

***If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him.***

***Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear.***

In the pages of the book of the prophet Isaiah we find a variety of topics. We can read warnings, to prevent the consequences that a distancing from God can cause, as indeed happened to the people of his time, when they ignored the voice of the Lord, pronounced through Isaiah. We can also read the voice of God offering comfort after the disaster that occurred when the Israelite, ignoring the warnings, were humiliated and uprooted from their own land and sent into exile in Babylon, a land of pagans.

We also find several poems, known as "the Suffering Servant", referring to the people of Israel, but which were also fulfilled in the Passion of Jesus Christ several centuries later. One of these "poems" is the one that is proclaimed this Sunday as the first reading within the Liturgy of the Word.

We could make several reflections on this text, but we want to anticipate what the Gospel of this Mass will present to us.

Who is great? It is easy to answer: "Great is someone who does something great." In other words, greatness is not in what each one thinks (and sometimes even says) about himself. Nor is the greatness in what flatterers say, much less in what some powerful force to say about themselves, either through words or images. The greatness is found in the works, in reality, the facts that are visible to all. That is why it is easy to say that, for example, Mother Teresa of Calcutta is "great."

This reading offers us a model of greatness based on the renunciation of oneself, on the surrender of one's own being for the benefit of others. It is a fruitful type of greatness, not afraid of pain. This fruitfulness produces fruits, many fruits, which is what makes it worthy of the promises found within the same text, which we invite you to read again ...

(1) Read Philippians 2 (5-8). What lesson can we extract from this passage?

(2) Read Philippians 2 (9-10). Where does the greatness and honor of Jesus Christ come from?

(3) Jesus Christ said: "Do this in memory of me." Could we understand this as an invitation to add our sufferings to that of Jesus Christ to participate in the redemption of sinners? Discuss.

## SECOND READING [ Hebrews 4 (14-16) ]

### **Brothers and sisters:**

**Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.**

**For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.**

**So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.**

The priesthood of Christ surpasses that of the high priest of the temple, because he is at the same time higher with God and lower with men.

Because Jesus, who is also a man, wanted to show solidarity with all of us and suffer from our own weaknesses. And while it is true that he had no sin, he was tested or tempted the same as we are. Furthermore, he waived any rights his divine status granted her.

Being Jesus the Son of God, the only Son, he is Mediator and our High Priest. His priesthood is "great" and superior to that of the Old Testament priests. If they penetrated once a year into the "most holy place" where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, Jesus, crossing the heaven, came once and for all to the immediate presence of the Most High.

The Jewish high priest was neither that high nor that low. He was excessively distant from God and man. Christ, on the other hand, is at the right hand of the Father and in the midst of us ...



- (1) Why can we say that the priesthood of Jesus Christ is "great"?
- (2) The reading says that Christ is capable of compassion for us. Discuss the difference between feeling pity and having compassion.
- (3) Do we notice the sufferings and sufferings of others? What can we do to move from pity to compassion?
- (4) The reading says of Christ that "... he himself has undergone the same trials that we have ..." Do we remember this when we go through difficult situations? How can the Lord help us?

## GOSPEL [ Mark 10 (35-45) ]

**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?"**

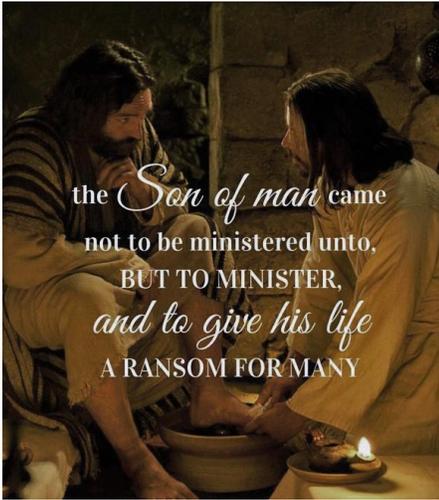
**They said to him, "We can."**

**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."**

We find a passage that I like, because it shows us some disciples of Jesus capable of doing blunders, just like us, and not for that reason they are fired or rejected. I like it because it gives me hope that even with my limitations and sins, I may be invited by the Lord to be at his service. In this passage the theme of the clumsiness of those men comes from the desire to show off. They wanted, as any mortal does, to be "great."



Jesus Christ's answer is interesting because it does not condemn the desire to be important. He also says nothing against who wants to get the first place. At least in this gospel that is not the subject of his teaching. We will find other passages in which Jesus does criticize this type of ambition. But today, Jesus teaches us where true "greatness" lies and what is the "first place" that we should aspire to.

If in the first reading we reflected that to be "great" you have to do something great, now we see that Christ proposes as a model to imitate that of the Suffering Servant, incarnated in his own person. The greatness that Jesus proposes passes through suffering his own "baptism", which is one of martyrdom. And that martyrdom does not occur only in the final hour of our lives, but throughout our lives, when we die to ourselves, that is, taming our selfishness and desires for gratification. This is what he means when he proclaims that "... whoever wants to be great among you, let him be his servant, and whoever wants to be first, let him be the slave of all ..."

- (1) What role does the rank of a member of the Church play in Christian ministries?
- (2) Why does Jesus Christ give so much importance to self-renunciation?
- (3) According to Jesus Christ, whoever wants to be first should be the one who serves the most. Discuss cases where this is true and cases where it is not. What are the consequences in both cases?
- (4) Personally and silently reflect on how we could be better servants for Christ.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord of the day and night, of the beginning and of the end: At the closing of this meeting, once again we lift up our hearts to You, divine source of all life.*

All: **We thank you for the gifts you have bestowed on us. We thank you for the love expressed in companionship and understanding, mutual respect and shared ideas. We give you thanks for your holy power that will help us in our concerns that we have shared. For these and all the gifts that come from You, we give you thanks.**

Leader: *Lord hear our prayers* (attendees can propose their own needs of prayer)

All: **In the same way in which we have being blessed by your presence as we meet, we ask now to bless our safe return to our homes. May your holy blessing be over us + in the name of the Father ...**

Leader: *May the King of the eternal glory gather us together in His heavenly banquet. Amen.*

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