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29th Ordinary Sunday - 17 October 2021

Anthony Doran

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17 October 2021

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

With talk of punishment and the cup of suffering, today's readings have the whiff of Good Friday about them. Indeed, our First and Second Readings are used on Good Friday. We are getting to crunch time in Mark's Gospel. And just like Good Friday, we know that the greatness we find in Jesus involves the Cross.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus you came as a servant to offer love and forgiveness. Lord, have mercy.
You were without sin and yet you bore the sins of the world. Christ, have mercy.
You gave your life freely so that we could be saved and come to the fullness of life.
Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 53:10-11

Today's reading comes from the end of the fourth of the Songs of the Suffering Servant. Despite being crushed, the servant can see the light for his suffering will justify many.

Second Reading

Hebrews 4:14-16

Today's Second Reading is a reassurance that Jesus is truly our compassionate high priest. Having shared our human weakness, we may share in his divinity. Let us then approach God's throne of grace.

Gospel Reading

Mark 10:35-45

Today's Gospel contains the request of James and John for places of honour in the Kingdom. All Jesus promises the sons of Zebedee is that they will drink the same cup which he himself will drink. The Gospel finishes with Jesus' call to serve and not to be served.

Reflection

In last week's Gospel, we heard about the rich young man who came up to Jesus and asked the question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus' answer was very simple, "Go, sell everything you own and give the money to the poor. Then come, follow me." And we were told that the young man went away sad, because he was rich. The rich young man let his material possessions get in the way of being a disciple of Jesus.

This week, it is James and John who ask Jesus a question, "Allow us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory." Amongst the Jewish people at the time of Jesus, it was expected that the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, would be a powerful political figure who would restore the Kingdom of Israel to its former glory. This is the sort of Messiah that James and John thought they were following. And I am sure they thought that seats on either side of this sort of Messiah would be the best seats in the house.

Instead of rebuking them for such an impertinent question, Jesus asks James and John a few questions in return, "Can you drink the cup I must drink? Can you be baptised with the baptism with which I must be baptised?" Full of bravado and enthusiasm, they answer that they can. Jesus then assures James and John that they will indeed drink the same cup as Jesus, and receive the same baptism as Jesus, but that it is not his place to grant seats on either side of him in glory.

Jesus then goes on to explain to the disciples what true leadership is all about in the Kingdom of God. It is not about high places and glory in the eyes of this world. It is not about lording it over others, and making your authority felt. Rather, true leadership in the Kingdom of God is about service: "Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all." To prove the point, Jesus gives his own self as an example: For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

We see a most beautiful example of this sort of service in the first reading from the Prophet Isaiah. This reading is from one of the Songs of the Suffering Servant – a series of songs in which the prophet Isaiah sings the praise of a figure known only as the "suffering servant" – who offers his life in atonement so that many may be saved. But it is not an empty offering. For the Suffering Servant is vindicated, is ultimately proven right: "he shall see the light and be content." The Early Church soon saw in these Suffering Servant poems, an image of Jesus – though innocent, he went to death, for the salvation of many, and was vindicated through his resurrection.

This is the sort of service that Jesus is talking about in answer to James and John. It is the sort of service that will end up with the giving of his own life. This is the glory which Jesus offers to James and John. And this is the glory which Jesus offers to us. Last week, we learned that the Kingdom of God is not about material possessions, but about the freedom to follow Jesus unhindered as his disciple. This week we learn that being a follower of Jesus is not about earthly glory, but about service, the sort of

service that asks us to give our whole lives.

This gospel reading comes just after the third prediction of the Passion in Mark's Gospel. Three times now has Jesus told his disciples that he will be put to death, and that on the third day he will rise again. As a holy people, we are baptised into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. As this same holy people, we are called not just to endure the Cross, but to embrace the Cross. For we know that the Cross is but half the story because we live in the light of the Cross, not its shadow. And when we embrace the Cross, we learn what true glory in the Kingdom of God is all about. For we dare to proclaim and indeed we glory in the fact that wood of the Cross is indeed our Tree of Life.



*Can you
drink the cup
that I drink?*

Mk 10:38

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

We know that Christ suffered so that we might enter the kingdom. In that knowledge we bring all our needs before the Father.

Petitions

We pray for the Church, that in the power of the Spirit, it will guide us through these troubled times, upholding peace and unity.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of our world community that they will find a way to support all nations to eradicate the pandemic of COVID-19.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for followers of Christ, that they may not be afraid to profess their faith in an increasingly hostile world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our parish community, that we may be sensitive to the needs of those around us, always striving to lighten their burdens.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who give their lives in the service of our country, that we may respect their example of loyalty and faithfulness and respond to our difficulties in a similar way.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those in our community who have suffered from grief and separation because of families overseas dealing with the pandemic. May they find peace and strength through those who love them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

We find hope and promise in the knowledge that suffering draws us to God and so we offer these needs in confidence through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Bread of life, hope of the world. B. Farrell. 199
Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 444
Christ, be our light. B. Farrell. 404
Gift of finest wheat. O. Westendorf/ R. Kreutz. 191
Keep in mind. L. Deiss. 391
The servant song. R. Gillard. 487
Unless a grain of wheat. B. Farrell. 500

AOV1

All that is hidden. B. Farrell
Bread of life, hope of the world. B. Farrell. 164
How great thou art. S. Kine. 94
Keep in mind. 180
Shelter me, O God. B. Hurd. 140
Unless a grain of wheat. B. Farrell. 35

AOV2

Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 170
Christ, be our light. B. Farrell. 3
The servant song. R. Gillard. 169

AOV4Kids

We live and love your word. K. Bates SM. 118.

AOVNG

Come and follow me. Tom Franzak. 25
Will you come and follow me/The summons. Graham Maule and John L. Bell. 149

CWB

Lord, whose love in humble service. Albert Bayly. 741
Praise to the holiest in the height. John Henry Newman. 791
The church of Christ, in every age. Frederick Pratt Green. 818

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

Servant song. Richard Gillard. 461
Lord, whose love in humble service. Albert F. Bayly. 551
Praise to the holiest in the height. Bl. John Henry Newman. 585
The Church of Christ, in ev'ry age. Fred Pratt Green. 613
The God of Abr'ham praise. Thomas Olivers. 617
Additional selections by Chris deSilva
The summons. John L. Bell and Graham Maule. 645

S&S1

The summons. John L. Bell. 137

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 32: *Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.*

Psalm 32: Ernest Rayson SSS. CWB 211

Psalm 33: Lord, let your mercy be on us: Vivian Arnold. GA 32

Psalm 33 (32): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 100

Lord, let your mercy be on us: Marty Haugen LPB pg. 166

