

My dear brothers and sisters, today we are meditating on **call to serve not to be served**. In today's Gospel, we see two of Jesus' three intimate companions, James and John requesting for a privileged position in the coming Kingdom of Christ. Jesus should allow *them to sit one at his right hand and the other at his left in his glory (Mk.10:37)*. They are obviously men who dream, men who desire, men who want to excel. The holy mother the church is bringing all these images to help us to be good Christians. Last week, it was the rich man and possessions; and today it is **prestige and power**. Just before the passage of the Gospel we read today, Jesus, for the third time in Mark's Gospel foretold of his impending death and resurrection to his disciples – something they still do not understand. It is in this context that James and John ask Jesus to sit at his right and his left in the kingdom. This would have been understandable in the Jewish mindset. The heavenly kingdom was imagined to be a banquet, when the Messiah would come forth with his royalty behind him in processing.

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 say, "We can drink of the cup and we can be baptized with the baptism (Mk.10:39)," not understanding at all what they are talking about. He says to them, "Yes, someday, you will have to drink the cup, and, someday, you will be baptized in this kind of baptism. "But to give you places in heaven, that is not for me to talk about, that is for the Father. It is the prerogative of the Father to speak of rewards, to speak of the things that you are crying out for so much." But the other disciples hear about it, and they protest. Why do they protest? They, too, want the first places at the table and want to be honored.

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 (Mk.10:42-45)." Why would Jesus follow this way? Because it's the will of the Father, for Jesus to die and rise again on the third day." As a result, the gospel says, "Jesus went ahead of them." Jesus would go ahead of them and they would walk behind him, because none of them wanted to go up to Jerusalem if the things that he said were going to happen were really going to happen. so they were amazed at this sudden change of what the Messiah has come to do, if they could understand it, but they couldn't really understand it.

The metaphor of **drinking the cup** is used in the Old Testament refers to an acceptance of the destiny assigned by God; see the note on Psalm 11:6. Again, the metaphor of **baptism** refers to Jesus' crucifixion and death for the salvation of the world confer Luke 12:50. As the Hebrews attested in the second reading that Jesus being *tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin. Jesus became perfect through suffering*; he matured through suffering life and death. He chose to love in a world that is frightened to love, really love, and so is inevitably caught up in violence and death-dealing. He accepted the reality of being excluded, the reality of death, rather than withdraw from his own truth, and the reality of living authentically. He trusted God; and, in the process, *he became the source of salvation* for all those who attune their deepest selves, their hearts, to the rhythm of his deepest self.

Finally, beloved in Christ, in the Gospel of Mark over the last few Sundays has shown Jesus on his final journey to Jerusalem where he would *drink the cup* of suffering for our salvation and after that be raised out of death to fullness of life at the right hand of the Father. Mark used Jesus' journey as a symbol of every disciple's journey to and through death and to the glory of resurrection. He interrupted the journey narrative with a series of teachings about the basics of discipleship. As disciples of Christ we are called to serve and not to be served. We are to use our positions to help rather than manipulate the poor and the needy. May God give us grace to help, by contributing to our church and to society as a whole. Amen!