



Today we celebrate 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time and also World Mission Sunday. In today's Gospel Jesus says: *"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."*

Who doesn't want to be first, and honored by others? Should we be surprised to see the disciples of Jesus thirsting for power, position, and authority? James and John, the sons of Zebedee, urged their mother to strike a deal with Jesus, their Master and Messiah. They wanted the distinction of being first and most important in position, next to Jesus.

Jesus taught contrary to the world's understanding of power, authority, and position, by reversing the order of master and servant, lord and subject, first and last! Jesus linked authority with love, position with sacrifice, and service with humility. Authority without love is over-bearing and slavish. Position without respect and concern for the subordinate is demeaning and rude. And service without generosity and sacrifice is cheap and unkind.



Those who wish to serve with the Lord Jesus and to exercise authority in God's kingdom must be prepared to sacrifice - not just some of their time, money, and resources - but their whole lives and all that they possess. A disciple of Jesus must be ready to lay down his or her life - each and every day in the little and big sacrifices required - and even to the point of shedding one's blood if necessary for the sake of Christ and his Gospel. We share in God's reign by laying down our lives in humble

service and love for one another, just as Jesus did for our sake. **AM I READY TO LAY DOWN MY LIFE AND TO SERVE OTHERS AS JESUS HAS TAUGHT AND MODELED FOR ME?**

***Lord Jesus, make me a servant of love for your kingdom that I may seek to serve rather than be served. In flame my heart with love that I may give generously and serve joyfully for your sake.***



The essence of our identity is that we are created in God's image and likeness and loved by Him. Nothing can diminish the priceless worth of any human life. Every person is **CHERISHED**. God creates every person for eternal union with Himself and continually invites us to embrace a loving relationship with Him. Every person is **CHOSEN**. We are called to be messengers of God's love, treating one another as cherished and chosen by Him. In doing so, we help build a culture that respects all human life. Every person is **SENT**.

In many places in the Bible we read that because life is from God, we do not have the right to decide to take another person's life. Since life comes from God, we would be playing God to take someone else's life whether fully grown or still in the womb. Human life is sacred, we do not have the authority from God to meddle with the sacredness of human life, to destroy it in any way.

**Pope John Paul II in his encyclical Evangelium Vitae states:**

“I declare that direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, always constitutes a grave moral disorder, since it is the deliberate killing of an innocent human being. (Evangelium Vitae §62).

“I confirm that euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person... ”(Evangelium Vitae §65).

As we reflect on this sin against life, I would also like to call to mind that God is a God of mercy, willing to forgive us no matter what our past. I am sure that any priest would be compassionate and forgiving in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If any woman or man is burdened with guilt, please turn to God for forgiveness.

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**...CHRISTUS VIVERE EST...**



A recipient of Bishop’s reward – **Christus Vivere Est** this year is Erick and Sharon Woelfel **Congratulations! Thank you! God Bless you!**

The award ceremony will take place today (Sunday) at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Paterson at 3:00pm. Our Bishop Kevin Sweeney will be a main celebrant.

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**2021 Diocesan Ministries Appeal “Let Your Light Shine”** The Diocesan Ministries is a genuine lifeline to many people and that is why every gift matters! Your support helps bring to life the work of our Catholic Charities agencies each year. It also supports seminarian education, our diocesan priests’ residence, extraordinary healthcare needs of our priests and urban elementary education. In addition, parishes receive half of all funds received over their parish goals, with over \$900,000 returned last year to parishes – and over \$3.65 million in five years! Please help people in need and our own parish by making a gift today! **For your convenience, you can make an online gift or pledge at [www.2021appeal.org](http://www.2021appeal.org).**

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