

2021 October 17

## Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Readings:

**First:** Isaiah 53.10-11. "Out of his anguish he shall see light" (11a)

**The Psalm:** 33, "The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord." (5b)

**Second:** Hebrew 4.14-16, "We have one (high priest) who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin." (15b)

**The Gospel:** Mark 10.35-45, "The cup that I drink you will drink." (39b)

### Power Game

"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of You." (Mark 10.35b) This was the request of James and John to Jesus. Perhaps it is typical of our prayers too. We ask God whatever we want. We normally do not think what God might be asking of us or what he wants us to do. When our prayer is not answered in the way we asked for, and within the time frame we had set, we are at war with God, and often with everyone, including our own self. James and John made the demand immediately after Jesus made the announcement of his impending suffering and death. They did not make an offer to be with him in his suffering and death, when, "The Lord crushed him with pain." (Isaiah 10a) Instead, they wanted to be part of his glory!

Jesus did not scold them, did not outright deny their demand. Instead he gave them and us more than what could be fathomed. Through his suffering and death, he gave them and us an eternal life of glory, which humanity forfeited by sinning. Perhaps this was not the glory James and John asked for, because they did not have any idea of this glorious gift of Jesus. They were looking for the passing glory that this world could offer, which consists of power and dominion over others. They boastfully offered to share the cup of Jesus' suffering and his baptism of death on the cross, about which at that time they did not have any idea.

The path of Jesus was, and is now for us, to go through apparent failure, losses and death. Failure precedes success, death is the fore-runner of resurrection, suffering and humiliation lead to glorification. Though James and John did not realize what they were offering to Jesus, they did go through suffering and death, and finally attained the glory, which Jesus promised them. The beautiful point in this episode is that Jesus did not chastise or belittle them, but slowly and patiently guided them out of their ignorance and misconceptions, a lesson we must keep in mind. For these brothers it took a life time to learn and understand the path of Jesus. Their story is also our story. In spite of all our erudition and devotion, we do not comprehend the mind of Jesus and his design for us. Only at or after the end of our earthly sojourn we will have a full comprehension of the call of Jesus and our response to him.

The one important lesson must learn from today's message from the letter to the Hebrews, is that we have a high priest, "Who in every respect has been tested as we are." (Hebrews 4.15b) That means Jesus has gone before us in and through every moment, every aspect of our lives. He knows what we are going through, he suffered more than we suffer, he suffered greater rejection than we suffer, much more than we can imagine. He went through an excruciating death, which we cannot even fathom. He knows everything, he knows us, and he will always

be with us to navigate us in our earthly journey and reach us safely to the port of salvation and glory. Be of good cheer. Alleluia!

*Fr. George*