

## Sept. 19, 2021 Deacon Jim (Mark 9 30-37)

“Taking a child, he placed it in their midst, and putting his arm around it, he said to them, ‘Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the one who sent me’.”

So why does Jesus use a child as an example? The obvious answer in my way of thinking was because the child is a symbol of innocence right? That’s what I assumed. That’s what I would have told you before I read what St Jerome had to say.

I was fortunate enough to obtain a book when I was on retreat at the Campion Center. It’s called “The New Jerome Biblical Commentary”. They were clearing out some of the duplicate books to make room on their shelves so I grabbed this book not really knowing what it was, but one of my brothers on retreat said “that’s an excellent book you ought to take it”. It’s not a book to read from cover to cover, it’s over 1400 pages long and it’s more of a reference book for understanding the deeper meaning of scripture.

So getting back to why Jesus chose a child to teach the disciples. St Jerome says and I quote; “The child is not so much a symbol of innocence or humility as someone without legal status and therefore helpless. The child can do nothing for the disciple; to receive a child is to perform a good act for an insignificant person, without hope of earthly reward” end of quote.

So in other words the child was considered a useless member of society and his value was meaningless.

Isn’t it amazing what you can learn about our faith just by digging a little deeper? I find it very humbling especially when you’re so sure of what you think you know. So I was thinking that perhaps what this discussion among the disciples was a lack of humility on their part.

So I decided to look for a definition of humility from a Catholic perspective and I came across this quote;

“Simply put, we know our place in acknowledging that without God we are nothing.”

At this point in scripture the apostles were still unsure of what their mission was, what their status was.

Because of all they were taught and all they had seen Jesus do in their humanness they figured it was time

## Sept. 19, 2021 Deacon Jim (Mark 9 30-37)

to establish and order of leadership. Who would be next in line as far as importance, which of them was the most significant after Jesus. They were almost childlike in their understanding of what direction the ministry of Jesus' was headed.

In the upper room when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples they were given all the knowledge that was needed to continue on without the physical presence of Jesus. Jesus was aware of this power to gift his disciples with this knowledge when he chose the twelve so why didn't he call upon the Holy Spirit at that point?

The disciples were gifted as we are to make choices it's our free will. Had Jesus bestowed all this wisdom on them they would not have been disciples but perhaps brainwashed soldiers of Christ. They needed to learn humility, understanding, love and they needed to see for themselves the true power of Christ. They needed to learn to be followers of Christ just as you and I do now even though we have the Bible and all the evidence for Jesus right in front of us.

Jesus himself said it himself in Luke chapter 5 versus 30-32 it says;

The Pharisees and their scribes complained to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

Jesus said to them in reply, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do.

I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."

So Jesus chose twelve men who were not of great status but of common heritage. He didn't choose the Pharisees or the Sadducees who were considered the holy men of that time.

Too many of the Pharisees and Sadducees of our time are trying to tear down our faith, some from without but also some from within our Church. The ones from within that are insisting that we need to change the teachings of Christ because they are too outdated and old fashioned and not in tune with

## Sept. 19, 2021 Deacon Jim (Mark 9 30-37)

modern times. The ones from outside the Church are the ones that find Christ's teaching too confining, too restrictive and too imposing.

After two thousand years the sins may be different but they are still sins. The seven deadly sins are still the same we just found creative new ways to commit them.

Our faith is built on compassion, Love and understanding this will never change. Our God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Jesus said I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end and he promised to be with us until the end of time.

I was wrong about why Jesus chose to use the child as an example but doesn't mean we shouldn't approach the kingdom of heaven with innocence and humility.

As it says in the collect today; "O God who founded all the commands of your sacred law upon love of you and our neighbor, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to obtain eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son.