

25th SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME



Anthony van Dyck
Suffer Little Children to Come Unto Me
c. 1618–20

THE GOSPEL. Mark 9:30-37

*If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all
and the servant of all.*

Who is greatest?
Who is first?

Jesus,
you were born in a stable
needing everything,
having only
life.

Then you were on the cross,
needing everything,
having no
life.

Yet
you are
greatest of all.

You taught the disciples
as you journeyed through Galilee.

Teach us. To love you.

To care for your children, to serve your poor,
to welcome the immigrant,
to free the prisoner.

Lord, we ask you,
give us only your
grace.

THE FIRST READING. Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

Let us find out what will happen to him.

He answered the mocking tongues with silence only
Never did he ask anyone to take his cross away,
or wipe the blood and saliva from his face.
Forsaken, he cried out to his Father,
just one time before he died.
His mother and his friends
laid him out in a
borrowed
tomb.

He
had
shown
his gentleness to
the Father, to us as well.
And, yes, God took care of him,
and us in him. It was for us he came,
for us he suffered, for us he won the battle.
He rose from the dead and because of this, so do we.

God loved the world and all of us in it. Death, where is your sting?

THE SECOND READING James 3:16-4:3

*And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace
for those who cultivate peace.*

Lord,
please help us to
care for your garden of peace,
cleaving only to your holy teachings:
to

- feed them with love.

- sprinkle them with truth.
- weed them every day.
- make room for them to grow.
- sow some seeds.

(hardy ones, like mercy
and forgiveness)

- and wait

Then, finally
to share his goodness
(with everyone we know.)

Annie Osáieck

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

Childish Behavior

For the past Sundays Jesus has been shocking the disciples by showing himself as the “The Just One” from today’s [First Reading](#):

He was telling them the most intimate fact of his life. Let us trace it.

No human being can become truly and freely human without putting God in first place.

In the [First Reading](#), people known as “the wicked” practiced what we could call a version of childish self-interest. They say,

Look at this “righteous one.” He thinks he is so wonderful. Let’s take his high opinion of himself and “test it.” Let us see how revilement and torture will affect him. Let us see what a slow death will do to someone supposedly so patient and gentle.

The Reading quotes these “evil ones” as saying, sarcastically, doesn’t this Just One claim that “God will defend him and deliver him from the hand of his foes”? We’ll fix him.

They practice mockery and cruelty, all based on self-deception.

Mockery: “If he says he is so wonderful, if he has God on his side, surely he will pass our little test. We are just conducting an ‘interesting experiment’.”

Translation: he’s on the wrong side, kill him.

Cruelty: “He thinks he is so holy. We will give him torture, revilement, and a shameful death. This is just reasonable research, to see how he will react.”

Translation: holiness is all a sham, a way for people to get what they want. Well, we want him dead.

Self-deception: we do not need this God stuff. We base our lives in what is real.

Translation: we are more important than God and this Jesus H. Christ. Self-interest will always win.

All these are seductively false. No human being can become truly and freely human without putting God in first place, valuing everything else in relation to God’s love—even power, even wealth, and especially pride.

The disciples, out of confusion, engaged in a long argument, about which of them was the greatest! It was as if they had started fighting for the best toys, just like children.

Instead of this, Jesus says in the [Gospel](#) that, in fact, the Son of God was going to be condemned to a shaming torture that the wicked had planned, and would be killed. It would look exactly as if God did not care.

“This is what I am going to do,” he says. I will be saying “I love you,” to my Father. But I will do it by not resisting insults and humiliating death because I love God above these things.

And I love the world, everything that is in it.

And I love you, with the fullness and warmth and generosity of God’s everlasting love.

Even if it is hard for us to believe, God’s promise is that, out of suffering and death good can emerge. Ultimately it seems that good can come only out of these.

In the end, God does defend us and deliver us from the hand of our foes.

John Foley, SJ