

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

Pastor – Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Victoria, BC, Canada

‘Way of Christ’: A call for Servant-Leadership.

The three Readings this Sunday help us to figure out the nature of ‘the Jesus way’. We understand Jesus to be a Servant of God who does the will of God, and ‘the way’ of Jesus is in self-surrendering to the Divine Plan.

The First Reading, from the Book of Isaiah, teaches the specific attributes of the Servant of God through whom the Will of God shall prosper. A Servant of God bears all the sufferings according to the will of the Lord. By doing the will of God, the author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus, the High Priest, became our Lord and the author of all graces.

This brings us to today’s Gospel passage which teaches the importance of Christ’s attitude on self-sacrifice, self-emptiness, and the importance of concentrating one’s life on the glory of God rather than on self-glorification.

Let us consider the request from the two Disciples James and John from a different perspective. Having heard a number of times from Jesus, about the need and the importance of ‘asking’ as in “Ask and you shall receive”, James and John decided to ask for positions on Jesus’ right and left. But their demands were not in harmony with the teaching and expectation of Jesus. The Disciples of Christ were expecting that Jesus would eventually overthrow the Romans and establish His Reign. Thus, they were dreaming of possible glorious positions. In response, Jesus told them about the sufferings that he was going to face, and that it is God who grants positions and benefits. Jesus also informed them that in order to become great, one must become a servant to others. With this, Jesus introduced a new philosophy that they had never heard before: Servant Leadership. That is: the primary goal of

Jesus' followers should not be one about positions, privileges, and power but about mutual service. The words of Jesus in Mark 10:45 "For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve..." serves as a reminder and a key source for understanding Christian discipleship in imitation of Christ. The path of true greatness lies in service!

Let us reflect: do we understand Jesus' teaching of becoming a servant in our life? Are we surrendering ourselves to the Will of God? Or are we seeking vain-glory?

Let us ask the Lord to have the spiritual disposition of "**Thy Will Be Done.**"

When we live and apply this Gospel principle to situations in our daily life, it transforms us to being examples of Servant Leadership. Let us all inculcate the Servant Leadership that Jesus taught. Servant-leadership consists of serving others by investing in their development and well-being for the benefit of the common good. In this way, good Christian servant-leaders serve God through investing in others, so that together they may accomplish each task in the name of, and for God's Glory.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

(Philippians 2:3-4)