



25th Ordinary Sunday

Wis. 2:12, 17-20;
James 3:16-4:3; Mark 9:30-37

When St. Bernard was asked what the four cardinal virtues were, he replied: “Humility, humility, humility and humility.”

In today’s gospel, the disciples of Jesus on their way to Capernaum, they discussed among themselves who is the greatest. The disciples were still clueless about Jesus and His mission. Even as he predicts for the second time the betrayal and death await Him in Jerusalem, they continued to dream of sharing His glory when He declares Himself as the Messiah in the holy city.

Imagine that their conversation goes this way between the disciples

Peter: “Of course, without doubt, I am the most important! Didn’t He call me the Rock on which that community of His will be built?”

John: “I am sorry for you. What you are saying maybe true but that is only a question of administrative bureaucracy. Though you may be a good administrator, it does not mean that you are important to others. You should look for something else, something more important. You should look for His love. When you do, you will realize that well, he loves me the most.”

Judas Iscariot: “The most important person in a group is the one who holds the money. The world is ruled by money. To whom would you entrust your riches?”

Philip: “Do you remember when he had that catering problem? Thousands followed Him, eagerly awaiting the words of wisdom that flow forth from His mouth. Nobody knew what to do – not even Him, it seemed. He turned to me for advice. I am sorry for you, but he asked me!”

Because of this argument, Jesus assembled the Twelve and said: “If anyone wishes to rank first, he must remain the last one of all if anyone wishes to rank first, he must remain the last one of all and the servant of all.” This appears not to be a practical advice for someone wanting a promotion. But a reminder for us

that we can be exalted with Christ in heaven only after following in Christ's footstep of carrying the cross with humility.

Humility is the most misunderstood virtue of our times. The humility is synonymous with weakness. Being humble doesn't mean suppression of one's personal attributes or abject self-depreciation. No, this is not. The humble person knows his/her places and takes it. The humble person if he/she is supposed to rule – rules; and when he/she is supposed to serve, serves. But even in his most triumphant moments, the humble person remembers that all he/she is and all that he/she has is from God.

But because of pride and which is very difficult to conquer, the virtue of humility becomes unpopular. St. Francis de Sales said: **“Pride, human pride dies fifteen minutes after your own death.”**

Humility is learned in the family setting. There are many obstacles in our formation on humility. Our society does not value humility. Just look at TV programs alone, they are filled with all forms of violent behavior. Violence is glorified and appears more exciting, clever and very much a part of the lives of attractive people. We like action movies; we don't want to be oppressed. We want him/her to take revenge. If it is her/his time to take revenge, we clap our hands, Children are provided with toy guns that help them to mimic the violence they see in TV and movie. Even watching the evening news, one has the impression that people all over the world are fighting each other. We are surrounded with violence, so it is not surprising that six-year-old boy shots to death his ten-year-old brother.

Children are greatly harmed by witnessing and experiencing violence among family members. Wife and children abuses are becoming prevalent. Various studies show that violence in the home is self-perpetuating. A boy who has an abusive father, whose mother is the victim of violence in the home, frequently becomes an abusive husband and father himself.

My dear friends, is this the teaching of Christ? No, because the teaching of Christ is today's gospel is: “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” In other words, it is humility or humble service. Rabindranath Tagore said: **“I slept and dreamed that life is only pleasure. I awoke and saw that life is only service. I served and saw that service is pleasure.”**

Amen