

The Cost of Discipleship and the Call to Serve

In the Gospel (Mark 10:35-45), we encounter James and John, who approach Jesus with a request for positions of honor in His glory. Their ambition reflects a common human desire for power and recognition. In the present-day society, people struggle to occupy the highest places of power, of influence, of honor, of authority; sometimes forgetting that their mission is to serve others and not to take advantage of their position to subjugate, dominate and oppress those below them. Jesus responds by redefining greatness: “Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant.” This radical teaching challenges our understanding of leadership and success.

Jesus makes it clear that following Him comes with a cost. It requires us to set aside our own ambitions and desires for the sake of others. This can be challenging, especially in a world that often values power and success over humility and service. Yet, we are reminded that the sacrifices we make for the sake of the Gospel will be rewarded. Jesus assures us that those who serve will find true fulfillment and joy in their lives.

Thus, true greatness in the Kingdom of God is found in service, not in status. While Jesus emphasizes humility and service, he also speaks of giving his life as a “ransom for many”, referencing his divine mission of salvation. He serves us, listening to our pleas and helping us through His grace. We ought to serve others following in the footsteps of Jesus, and staying in connection with Him. Mother Teresa of Calcutta reminds us that “Service flows from prayer. We are only able to serve others to the degree that we are connected to Jesus, according to the graces we have received.” (*10 Mother Teresa Quotes on Service to Make you Think*). This highlights the importance of spiritual connection in our ability to serve others effectively.

We don't have to wait for a special occasion to serve. Daily life gives us many opportunities to serve from the most material to the most spiritual: – carrying out your work with a spirit of service; helping at home with the household chores, or other people with a smile; making life pleasant for others; apologizing and forgiving; attending to the sick or to people who are in need; listening with patience to your spouse; giving good example, and the list goes on.

Also, in light of the Gospel, we are called to reflect on the values of humility and service in our leaders. This is especially important as we prepare for elections. As we assess candidates, let us consider their commitment to serving the common good, protecting human dignity, prioritizing the needs of the marginalized, and fostering unity and cooperation. Many blessings!

Father Bula.