

Reading 1

Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

The wicked say:
Let us beset the just one, because he is obnoxious to us;
he sets himself against our doings,
reproaches us for transgressions of the law
and charges us with violations of our training.
Let us see whether his words be true;
let us find out what will happen to him.
For if the just one be the son of God, God will defend him
and deliver him from the hand of his foes.
With revilement and torture let us put the just one to the test
that we may have proof of his gentleness
and try his patience.
Let us condemn him to a shameful death;
for according to his own words, God will take care of him.

Reading II

James 3:16—4:3

Beloved:
Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist,
there is disorder and every foul practice.
But the wisdom from above is first of all pure,
then peaceable, gentle, compliant,
full of mercy and good fruits,
without inconstancy or insincerity.
And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace
for those who cultivate peace.

Where do the wars
and where do the conflicts among you come from?
Is it not from your passions
that make war within your members?
You covet but do not possess.
You kill and envy but you cannot obtain;
you fight and wage war.
You do not possess because you do not ask.
You ask but do not receive,
because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Gospel

Mark 9:30-37

Jesus and his disciples left from there and began a journey
through Galilee,
but he did not wish anyone to know about it.
He was teaching his disciples and telling them,
“The Son of Man is to be handed over to men
and they will kill him,
and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.”
But they did not understand the saying,
and they were afraid to question him.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house,
he began to ask them,
“What were you arguing about on the way?”
But they remained silent.
They had been discussing among themselves on the way
who was the greatest.
Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them,
“If anyone wishes to be first,
he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.”
Taking a child, he placed it in the their midst,
and putting his arms 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.”



*Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time***Scripture Background**

In the first reading from the Book of Wisdom, we hear about a righteous man who is being tested. At the time that this book was written, it was understood by some that the wicked believed that everything ends at death. Therefore they rejected living on behalf of what is good and right in favor of immediate satisfaction in life. The just, however, believed in life after death, so they were encouraged to work on behalf of what is good and right in the present. In today's reading, the just man is persecuted and tested. This passage prepares us for the prediction of Christ's passion that we will hear in today's gospel.

Today's gospel contains the prediction of Jesus' passion. Jesus tells his disciples about how he is going to be betrayed and killed. The disciples respond with silence. They are afraid to ask Jesus what he means by this prediction. We can imagine how lonely Jesus must have felt when his own friends could not understand him.

In today's gospel we also find the disciples arguing about whom is the greatest among them. This would not have been an unusual conversation for the time. Determining what honor was due each person was a common discussion. However, Jesus' response was unusual and poignant. He tells his disciples that whoever wants to be first must be last and the servant of all. Jesus takes a small child into his arms and says "whoever welcomes such a child in my name welcomes me." The small child represents all that are small, powerless and vulnerable. Jesus makes the point that a person's greatness is determined by how well she/he serves the most vulnerable.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

1. Do you think that Jesus felt alone when he was trying to tell his disciples about what was going to happen to him? Why or Why not?

2. How does Jesus' message that the first shall be last challenge your understanding of greatness?

3. Who are viewed as small and powerless in our society?

The Call to Service

Jesus came into the world to serve. The followers of Jesus are called to continue the work of service. Ultimately, Jesus gave his life for the people he served. Jesus was not the kind of leader who wanted people to worship him for his greatness. Instead, he came as a humble servant who responded to the needs of others with love and compassion.

As Christians, we are called to a life of service. The baptized continue the work of Jesus and serve the needs of the poor and most vulnerable. We work for peace, care for the sick, stand up for the poor and visit the imprisoned with the understanding that by doing these works we serve Jesus.

4. How can you use your talents to help serve your community?

5. Who are the most vulnerable in your school? How can you reach out to them?
