



An argument arose among the disciples about which of them was the greatest. Jesus realized the intention of their hearts and took a child and placed it by his side and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. For the one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest." Then John said in reply, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow in our company." Jesus said to him, "Do not prevent him, for whoever is not against you is for you."

Introductory Prayer: In you, Lord, I find all my joy and happiness. How could I offend you by chasing after fleeting success and lifeless trophies? I believe in you because you are truth itself. I hope in you because you are faithful to your promises. I love you because you have loved me first. I am a sinner; nevertheless, you have given me so many blessings. I humbly thank you Humbly I thank you.

Petition: Holy Spirit, teach me to see myself as the least of all, as one called to serve all.

1. Me-first Syndrome: Listening wasn't the disciples' strong suit. How could it be? If they had truly paid attention to the Master, they should have known that the Good News wasn't about striving for prestige and recognition. It was about humility and service. We can only wonder why Jesus' words didn't sink in for his disciples. Yet, are we much better? We hear or read the same Gospel passages year after year, yet we still fall into sins of pride. We might think ourselves better or smarter or holier than the rest. But how does Christ see us?

2. The Corrupter: Jesus explains in what greatness consists: the acceptance of the weakest and most defenseless, in his name. This requires a humble heart. God gives us certain powers that he hopes will be used for good purposes. The history of mankind seethes with tales of people exploiting one another at every opportunity. Examples abound: ethnic groups that exploit minorities, employers who take advantage of poor immigrants, the road-rager who cuts off people in traffic. "Power corrupts," says the ancient adage. Indeed, it does. How do I treat the people over whom I have authority? Am I like a dictator? Do I always want to show them "who's the boss"? Or is my attitude one of service?

3. Zealously Jealous: John explains that he and the other disciples tried to stop someone who was doing good in Jesus' name. The person's crime was that he didn't follow "in our company." Christians have derailed more than a few good works over the centuries because they thought themselves appointed by God to police the Church. The Holy Spirit raises up all kinds of new works which need to be serenely discerned, not systematically squelched simply because they are new. "By their fruits you will know them," Jesus says (see cf. Matthew 7:16). The lesson Our Lord wants to give is: Don't be so quick to judge others' motives. Give them the benefit of the doubt and wait to see what their work produces. Is there anyone I'm keeping from doing good?

Conversation with Christ: Give me the grace to see people and actions through your eyes. Let me bring my standards in line with yours. Let me learn to look at a person's heart rather than his appearance. And above all, give me the wisdom never to stand in the way of people doing good for your Church.

Resolution: I will do an act of charity for the pro-life movement or for a children's group.