



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Matthew 20: 17-28

As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the Twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day." Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something. He said to her, "What do you wish?" She answered him, "Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus said in reply, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the chalice that I am going to drink?" They said to him, "We can." He replied, "My chalice you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left, this is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, though I cannot see you with my eyes, I believe you are present to me now, in my innermost being, and that you know me far better than I know myself. I also know that you love me much more than I love my own self. Thank you for loving and watching over me, though I don't deserve your love. In return, I offer you my sorrow for my sins and my hopes to love you more each day.

Petition:

Lord, wean me from dependence on human honors and approval.

1. Seeking the Limelight:

James and John rub shoulders with that temptation the devil puts before every apostle: "What's in it for me, Lord?" We start out our apostolic work with purity of intention, but if we are careless, it soon becomes purely attention. That is why we should always be willing to submit our work to the approval of the proper ecclesiastical authorities. Christ steered clear from all power grabs and squabbles. John would alert Christ, Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us. Christ simply replied, "Do not prevent him... for whoever is not against us is for us" (*Mark 9:38-9*).

2. Christ is Never Discouraged:

Christ has just told his apostles of his passion, and it weighs heavily on his heart. Drowning in their own fascination for recognition, however, they are completely oblivious to Christ's sufferings. He doesn't let himself get discouraged. Rather, he gently helps them to look beyond themselves to follow his lead of self-giving to the point of death.

3. Putting Others First:

Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you (*John 6:27*). Human recognition is passing; it doesn't even last a lifetime. Even in heaven human recognition will be useless—our eyes will be fixed on God, not on each other or ourselves. However, we do know by faith that God will reward us in heaven according to our merits. He will exalt us for serving others, especially when we bring others to love and serve him. Am I convinced of this? What ephemeral honors am I hankering after? How can I put Christ and serving him first in my life?

Conversation with Christ:

Dear Jesus, too often I compare myself with others. It's easy for me to find or imagine my superiority. I ignore you and your great goodness. I forget that everything I have comes from you and that I can't claim credit for any of my qualities and virtues. Help me to keep this truth in mind so I may have an attitude of genuine humility in my heart.

Resolution:

I will pray a special prayer for humility every day this week.