

## **Now is the Time to Spend**

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

*Mark 10:35-45*

Naïveté can be so touching.

James and John, so impressed with the “Teacher”, ask that, when it is time for the really big show, they be given front row seats. In fact, they would like to sit on stage!

**“Grant that in your glory  
we may sit one at your right and the other at your left.”**

The only problem is that they are envisioning, understanding this wrongly. Thus, Jesus tries to shed some light, that they might understand what this is all about, and what the real repercussions will be of their request.

He first politely tells them that they are clueless.

**“You do not know what you are asking.”**

He then proceeds to probe their understanding,  
which will prepare what Jesus seeks to reveal.

God likes to probe us, for probing opens us to more than we already know. We all need to be enlarged in spirit.

**“Can you drink the cup that I drink  
or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”**

How did this resonate with them?

It seemingly did not, and made no sense.

And thus, still clueless, still impressed with Jesus, and excited about the prospects of some fame, they respond, **“We can!”** So little do they know....

The beautiful thing is how Jesus receives James and John as they are. One might have expected a response similar to that a few weeks ago, in chapter 8, when Jesus says to Peter, prompted by Peter’s flagrant misunderstanding, **“Get behind me Satan.”**

Why the difference?

Why the mood change?

With Jesus, the change in tactic is never the result of mood change.

The change in tactic is perfect adaptation to person and circumstance.

Indeed, you will notice how difficult it is  
to sketch a psychological profile of Jesus.  
It is not because he is “all over the map”.  
It is because he is so amazingly “in the moment”,  
completely present to those with whom he is interacting,  
It is because love dictates (frequent) change in means to the desired end.  
This is how James and John need to be moved beyond misunderstanding,  
beyond a perspective insufficiently divine.

James and John want power and fame,  
to participate in the wonders they have witnessed.  
The remaining ten Apostles are in the same boat.  
They get upset with James and John  
because they are asking this only for themselves and not the whole group.  
The mission of Jesus, however, is not that of power and fame.  
There is no one more powerful than he, but he comes  
“to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many”.  
Jesus would never have made it onto the cover of *US* or *People*.

A disciple of Jesus has the same mission as Jesus:  
the same mission not in imitation mode but in participation mode.  
A disciple of Jesus is a friend of Jesus

- one who *shares* Jesus’ life
- one who is *filled* with divine love by Jesus

This love moves us beyond ourselves.  
Power and fame are all about self.  
A disciple of Jesus is filled full, fulfilled with a mysterious love.  
And from that place of inner stability, of intimacy with God, we are moved  
beyond ourselves, with a sensitivity to others, to spend ourselves in service,  
the concrete expression of that love.  
Do we do this?  
We need to ask it.  
It is not always easy.  
And we easily begin sliding down the slope of self: wanting control and  
attention, i.e. power and fame—the primacy of self.  
Father Damien de Veuster,  
a Belgian priest was canonized last Sunday by Pope Benedict.  
Damien felt called to leave the familiarity of his culture  
and go to the Hawaiian island of Molokai,  
occupied only by a huge colony Lepers, to serve, to spend himself.

Towards the end, after having contracted leprosy, he wrote home, and declared, **“I must be the happiest missionary in the world”**.

He died at age 49.

Contrast this with Hollywood, which sets the tone for much in our culture. In today’s mindset, this is outrageous.

We are not necessarily called to something so drastic.

We are called, however, each of us, in small real ways to spend ourselves.

How can we not, if we have been filled with the fullness of God?

Now, you may be thinking,

**“I don’t feel much filled with the fullness of God”**.

That is another question.

If we do not surrender with trust, we will not be full.

If we do not believe, then we do not let God provide.