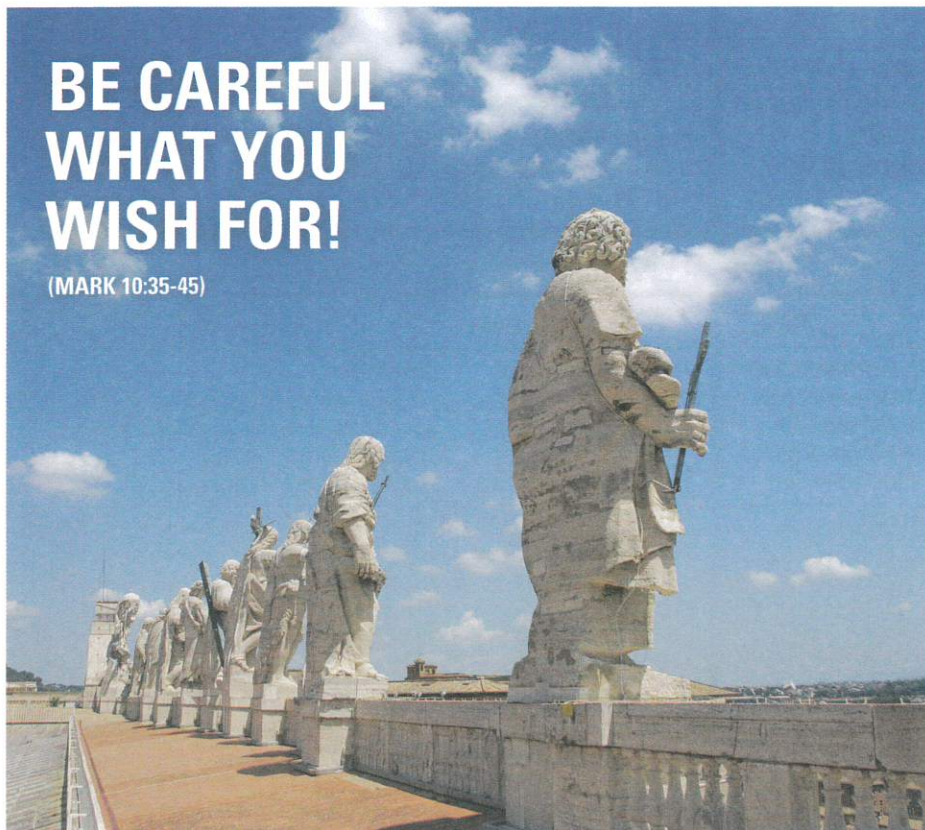


BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR!

(MARK 10:35-45)



Statues on the façade of St Peter's Basilica in Rome

We come to the end of Jesus' teaching during the journey to Jerusalem. Once again, the disciples, this time James and John, misunderstand what the kingdom is all about.

They ask Jesus for places of honour, only to be told that, although they may share in Jesus' cup, their request for seats is not in Jesus' gift to grant. The indignant reaction of the other ten provides another opportunity for Jesus to spell out clearly that the kingdom of God is not in any way like human societies and their systems of privilege: rather, it is one of service, and the leader is to be more like a slave than a king or autocratic ruler. It is not giving the disciples – or anyone else, for that matter – permission to “lord it over” others.

Jesus presents the model of leadership as that of the Son of Man: this is a title often associated with the passion. The expression “a ransom for many” recalls the “Suffering Servant” figure in Isaiah and presents Jesus' ultimate self-giving in terms of redeeming others, giving a deeper meaning to the forthcoming events in Jerusalem. ■

LEARN

“The cup” which Jesus mentions is the metaphorical cup of suffering, which will feature in the scene in Gethsemane.

Mark adds the phrase “and to give his life as a ransom for many” to this third prediction of the passion.

This explains Jesus' death in the context of the “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah.

DO

Pick up or look at a cup: think about Jesus' teaching that Christian community is all about service, not power or control.



REFLECT

The prophets of Israel were deeply suspicious of organised religion. Their problem with it was not that it was not working properly: for them, it was rather that it was working only too well. Engaging in public worship could give people the sense that they had fulfilled their religious duties and that what happened in the Temple had little or nothing to do with the way in which they conducted their social or business affairs. Ritual could function as a placebo, making people feel good about themselves while their attitudes and behaviour were violently clashing with the values put forward by their religion. By Jesus' time, the Jerusalem Temple priests had become chiefly political figures, concerned with their power and position.

The Church exists within historical settings and develops its way of life within different societies throughout the world. We can see from the history of Europe how the Church became a very powerful force: political power and influence can be very seductive, tempting leaders (at every level) towards the mistaken notion of leadership shown by James and John. Jesus' answer to their request for seats of honour was the offer of the cup of suffering: the individuals who were actually given places on Jesus' right and left hand were the two thieves who were crucified with him. We must indeed be careful about what we wish for.

It is easy to think that Jesus' teaching applies to bishops, priests and the like, but even at local level, among parishioners, there is a fine line between service and control. Individuals can carve out little kingdoms for themselves, imagining that their motives are pure and selfless, but this can, in fact, be a subtle way of satisfying a desire for power and position over others. The teachings of Jesus apply to all of us, irrespective of our particular calling. ■

SAY

“This is our God,
the Servant King.”

(Graham Kendrick)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

To you I call; for you will surely heed me,
O God;
turn your ear to me; hear my words.
Guard me as the apple of your eye;
in the shadow of your wings protect me.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
grant that we may always conform our will
to yours
and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 53:10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
The Lord has been pleased to crush his
servant with suffering.
If he offers his life in atonement,
he shall see his heirs, he shall have a long life
and through him what the Lord wishes will
be done.
His soul's anguish over
he shall see the light and be content.
By his sufferings shall my servant justify
many,
taking their faults on himself.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 32

Response:

May your love be upon us, O Lord
as we place all our hope in you.

- The word of the Lord is faithful
and all his works to be trusted.
The Lord loves justice and right
and fills the earth with his love. (R.)
- The Lord looks on those who revere him,
on those who hope in his love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine. (R.)

- Our soul is waiting for the Lord.
The Lord is our help and our shield.
May your love be upon us, O Lord,
as we place all our hope in you. (R.)

SECOND READING Hebrews 4:14-16

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.
Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the
supreme high priest who has gone through
to the highest heaven, we must never let
go of the faith that we have professed. For
it is not as if we had a high priest who was
incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us;
but we have one who has been tempted in
every way that we are, though he is without
sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching
the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy
from him and find grace when we are in need
of help.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the
Lord;
No one can come to the Father except
through me.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 10:35-45

(For shorter form, read between > <)
> A reading from the holy Gospel according
to Mark. <
James and John, the sons of Zebedee,
approached Jesus. "Master," they said to
him, "we want you to do us a favour." He
said to them, "What is it you want me to do
for you?" They said to him, "Allow us to sit
one at your right hand and the other at your
left in your glory." "You do not know what
you are asking" Jesus said to them. "Can
you drink the cup that I must drink, or be
baptised with the baptism with which I must
be baptised?" They replied, "We can." Jesus
said to them, "The cup that I must drink you
shall drink, and with the baptism with which
I must be baptised you shall be baptised, but
as for seats at my right hand or my left, these
are not mine to grant; they belong to those to
whom they have been allotted."
When the other ten heard this they began
to feel indignant with James and John, so
> Jesus called them to him and said to them,
"You know that among the pagans their so-
called rulers lord it over them, and their great
men make their authority felt. This is not to
happen among you. No; anyone who wants
to become great among you must be your
servant, and anyone who wants to be first
among you must be slave to all. For the Son
of Man himself did not come to be served but
to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for
many."
The Gospel of the Lord. <
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant us, Lord, we pray,
a sincere respect for your gifts,
that, through the purifying action of your
grace,
we may be cleansed by the very mysteries
we serve.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold, the eyes of the Lord
are on those who fear him,
who hope in his merciful love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, O Lord, we pray,
that, benefiting from participation in heavenly
things,
we may be helped by what you give in this
present age
and prepared for the gifts that are eternal.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

