

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. 2 Thess 2:14

Alleluia, alleluia!

God has called us with the gospel to share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mk 9:30-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of humanity . . . All who wish to be first must make themselves the servants of all.

After leaving the mountain Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, 'The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.

They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all.' He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms round him, and said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.****A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL**

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / B

19 SEPTEMBER 2021

LIVING WITH OUR DIFFERENCES

As the letter of James observes, wherever there is jealousy and ambition there is disharmony. It is the sign of both human and spiritual maturity to be able to live in peace with ourselves and others. A reality of life is that there are differences between people and that they can often be a source of division and discontent. Today's readings invite us to reflect on the ways in which differences can be life-giving rather than destructive.

For the writer of the book of Wisdom the truly righteous person will be a thorn in the side of those whose values they do not share. The implied challenge is that of daring to be different when it means being true to our values.

Even within the Christian community the problems provided by our differences and desire for recognition need to be addressed. It is to the credit of the early Christians that they did not venerate over their very real differences and honestly admitted their difficulties in this area. At the very moment that Jesus is speaking of the violent death that awaits him the disciples are already arguing among themselves about who is the greatest. It is precisely in this context that Jesus reveals to them that true greatness has always been found in the ability to serve and sacrifice oneself for the good of others. It is not that differences do not exist, or that some have the responsibility of leadership. What counts is the manner in which that responsibility is exercised. In that, Jesus remains our most enduring example.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Wis 2:12, 17-20

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

Let us condemn him to a most shameful death.

The godless say to themselves,

'Let us lie in wait for the virtuous man, since he annoys us and opposes our way of life, reproaches us for our breaches of the law and accuses us of playing false to our upbringing.

Let us see if what he says is true, let us observe what kind of end he himself will have.

If the virtuous man is God's son, God will take his part and rescue him from the clutches of his enemies. Let us test him with cruelty and with torture, and thus explore this gentleness of his and put his endurance to the proof. Let us condemn him to a shameful death since he will be looked after – we have his word for it.

■ **The word of the Lord.****RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

Ps 53:3-6, 8. R. v. 6

R. The Lord upholds my life.

1. O God, save me by your name; / by your power, uphold my cause. / O God, hear my prayer; / listen to the words of my mouth. **R.**
2. For proud men have risen against me, / ruthless men seek my life. / They have no regard for God. **R.**
3. But I have God for my help. / The Lord upholds my life. / I will sacrifice to you with willing heart / and praise your name for it is good. **R.**

**SECOND READING**

James 3:16-4:3

A reading from the letter of St James.

Justice is the harvest of peacemakers from seeds sown in a spirit of peace.

Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.

Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you haven't got it; so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force. Why you don't have what you want is because you don't pray for it; when you do pray and don't get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.

■ **The word of the Lord.**