



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 22, 2024

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

Greetings of peace, love, and joy!

“To Be Great and To Be First in the Kingdom of God”

In our society wherein prestige and honor are of high ranks, Jesus’ words contradict what He says in our Gospel: “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.”

His words present to us another opportunity for reflection. We hear or read these words on this Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Jesus and His disciples are on their way to Galilee. He once again describes His forthcoming passion, death, and resurrection to them while they are on the road. On the one hand, as He continues to reveal to them this coming event in His life, the disciples, on the other hand, are so much concerned about who is the greatest among them. They argue about what status they will have when Christ reigns as King. Their selfish interest so immerses them. Instead of looking into the truth about their Master, His identity, His life, His death, and His resurrection, they are more concerned with their interests. They are afraid of asking Jesus about it. Their perplexity brings them to address their concerns rather than the concerns of the Lord. Thus, Jesus teaches and corrects them about who can be the greatest in God’s eyes.

Like Peter in last Sunday’s Gospel, the other disciples cannot accept the reality of their Master’s words that He would suffer greatly, be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, be killed, and rise after three days. Like Peter, the other disciples are not intently listening to Jesus but only listening to themselves and serving their interests.

Our Gospel this Sunday challenges us to think of how we can be great or even the greatest for the Lord. His words clearly answer that question, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” It may be challenging for us to understand this, but it would be much more difficult to live or practice it daily. To be last is not what we want. To be first is. Arrogance enables us to be ahead of others, be knowledgeable in all things, and even look down on others. This arrogance is the danger of pride. When controlled by this, there is no room for humility nor openness to the will of God. It is because what matters is what “I” want, this and that. But this is not what Jesus wants. He wants us to be humble just as He humbled Himself, even sacrificing His life on the cross. Let us be inspired by His humility and service, and strive to follow His example in our daily lives.

Also, to be the greatest for Him is to be a servant. A servant extends their help to others. One who would dedicate their life to the goodness and happiness of family, community, and nation. For the Lord Himself did not come to be served but to serve. This Sunday would be another day for us to continue our journey of life and faith and deepen our commitment to become Jesus’ disciples today, in word and action, faithful and faith-filled servants of Jesus. Let us take this call to heart and find strength and support in our community as we deepen our commitment to our faith and discipleship.

Your friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual