



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

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

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 20, 2024

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

Greetings of peace, love, and joy!

“To Be Great in the Kingdom of God”

James and John must have been full of ambition. They are so frank in asking Jesus, their Master, that when He is glorified, one will sit on His left and the other on His right. Jesus reprimands them that it is not His authority to do that but for His Heavenly Father. The two disciples feel they have the right to do so since they are followers of their master. They want to be great, to be first, and to be recognized. With such a demand, the other disciples become indignant. This incident brings Jesus to teach all His disciples how to be great. Jesus states that whoever wishes to be great among themselves has to become a servant; whoever wishes to be first among them will be the slave of all.

Jesus' words are very contradictory to human precepts. Many wish to be above anyone else, that is, to be masters and in control and command. Many want to be served. Many would like to be first and not the last or least. Jesus clearly illustrated that this is not how it is if we wish to be great in the kingdom of God. He, though master, witnessed this teaching when He offered His life on the cross in service for all people. He bent down on His knees to wash His disciples' feet at the Last Supper; He tended to feed the hungry served the poor, the lowly, and the outcast. He went from town to town to spread the Good News of Salvation. He cured those of different sicknesses and brought back life to the dead. He came to serve and not to be served.

Servants are very keen on listening and carrying out the command of their master. They forget themselves and do what their masters tell them to do. They give up their dignity and pride and obey their master's command. In that way, they give themselves their service and dedication to their masters to be pleased and satisfied.

To embrace ourselves as servants or slaves is not easy. However, an essential virtue is needed to carry it out wherever or whoever we are. That virtue is no other than humility. To humble oneself is difficult in a culture wherein honor and power are highlighted and decorated. Like James and John, we tend to be in places of honor. As such, pride takes control, and the tendency to feel great with everybody else overwhelms.

To be great in the Kingdom of God, Jesus puts it, be a servant...be a slave! It will be a life-changing moment if we are to reflect on how we are with our Divine Master, Jesus. No doubt about it, He became a servant. He became a slave of serving those who cling to Him. What an example indeed for us to ponder and follow. Genuine service is manifested by dedication, willingness to listen and do what we are called upon, and sacrifice.

Are we willing to do that just as our Master did?

Your friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual