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| 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time |
| Wisdom 2:12, 17-20 |
| James 3:16-4:3 |
| Mark 9:30-37 |

**A. Text/Context**

* In the gospel today Jesus makes it clear to his disciples what is the real meaning of discipleship
* And it can be told that the intentions of his disciples are not really that clear and pure at this period of time
* From Galilee and on their way to Capernaum Jesus has already told them about his impending sacrifice that will occur to him in Jerusalem; and that is, he will be handed over to the powerful and he will be killed, and he will rise again after three days
* During the public ministry of Jesus he is already alluding that he is the Messiah preached by John the Baptist in a rather vague manner and sometimes clearly pointing that he himself is the Messiah and that his kingdom is not here of this world
* And while going from different places to preach he would inspire disciples to follow him, others voluntarily and still others Jesus would really do the personal call
* It was very common among the culture of the people at that time to follow someone who gave them an inspiration
* The apostles themselves who have been so clearly chosen only understand the character of the kingdom that Jesus will establish merely on the human level on an earthly sphere
* The 3 years in the public ministry prepared them for their mission in the future. The fullness of its understanding can only come after the resurrection when their courage and faith will be fortified when Jesus will be gone
* So the discussion of who is the greatest among them is all about who gets the choicest position in the kingdom that Jesus talked about
* They cannot understand why Jesus “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him. Rather, they do not have the courage to question him because they do not understand him
* We cannot blame the disciples for that as the time they spent with Jesus is not yet very long
* Remember that they have just left Galilee on the way to Capernaum and the ministry of Jesus began in Galilee
* They are not yet fully motivated when it comes to their real intentions why they follow Jesus. Unconsciously this impure intentions are there and this is so understandable because it is really part and parcel of human weakness
* Unconsciously, as we serve even in our communities or in whatever position is given to us; psychology has already proven that there is always the need for human beings to be affirmed of the good things that they do
* So Jesus gives them a lecture, that anyone who wishes to be first, he shall be the last and the servant of all
* Taking the example of a child before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, “Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me”

**B. Human Situation**

* In our lives as Christians there are three things that the standards of the world would long for; fame, wealth, and power
* They are always in company with each other; the existence of one would have two consequences
* Why is it that you are already a famous actor or actress or a celebrity, you still want to run for politics? Fame will be used in order to extract power
* When power is already in, it will be used to influence others in order to have hefty contracts and money is already involved
* And once power and money is already there, it is always easy to get more power
* That is why in this world, we run for money, because we can have power or fame as a result. If you have one of them, it is easier to get the rest
* Jesus now teaches his disciples to do the opposite. Instead of fame, a disciple must be lowly, working in silence without much publicity
* Instead of power, a disciple must be humble without complexities. Instead of wealth a disciple must be poor and rely only on God’s divine providence
* In the 2nd reading in James it is clear that “Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity”
* The trick is that if we are lowly, God will raise us up. If we are humble, we will be catapulted to the reins of power
* If we are poor, God will give us the riches of heaven, and the material riches will follow. Remember King Solomon, he is the richest man ever alive walking on the surface of this planet. He has committed a sin, repented and remained faithful to God in the end
* In the 1st reading from the Wisdom of Solomon himself; God can make use of the wicked in order to test the just

**C. Challenge**

* So today we are challenged to take great care of our intentions and motivations in life
* If we work very hard, and fortunately we become well off, our motives must be to make life better and not to avenge for the people who have done us wrong when we now have the capacity for vendetta
* If because we do many good things and our name becomes famous, we see to it that we remain humble as the praises of men are really empty
* If we hold a high position at present let it be that we share with the authority that God has given us to restore order and harmony and not to be used to trample upon the rights of others
* We must never forget that the position, the authority that we hold today, whatever it is, is not really totally our own effort. God has given us the authority
* God is so generous, the ones that we do not even ask for, he will just willingly provide
* We can still be ordinary disciples if we are only motivated to serve even if we are powerless, poor, and humble
* We may be stained with the impurity of motives in the beginning but God will purify them as we go along