

REFLECTION FOR THE TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

What is the path that can lead us to "glory"? We all dream of a happy, fulfilled, and successful life. Most of us dream of a life where we are known and recognized. For many, this path to happiness consists of having health, money, fame, and power. Today's readings point us in a completely different direction, telling us that true happiness, a life that leads us to true glory, to fullness with God, comes through the cross, through service, through giving ourselves to God and to our brothers and sisters.

In the first reading, taken from the Book of Isaiah, we are told of a "*servant of the Lord*" who is crushed by suffering, but who remains steadfast in his fidelity to God and will thus lead many to salvation. By giving his life to God, he finds *true life*. Jesus' disciples, after his death and resurrection, will see in this servant of the Lord the image of the Savior Jesus Christ, who through suffering, gives himself up for us to the point of death on a cross. He has opened the doors of salvation for us, the doors to full life in God.

In the second reading, the author recalls Jesus' self-giving for us. Having been "*tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin*", He is the high priest we need, our intercessor with the Father, because he lived our human reality. Lived our weaknesses and frailties, our sorrows and joys, our dreams, and anxieties. This is why we can call on him with complete confidence, in the certainty that we will be heard.

In the Gospel, we find James and John asking Jesus if in his glory, one could be on his left and the other on his right. They were with Jesus, but they still did not fully understand who He was. They thought he was going to be a powerful King, full of strength and glory, but Jesus' way was to give his life for men, to give himself up for us. His glory was our salvation, it was giving his life so that we might have life. That is why Jesus answered them: "*You do not know what you are asking... Can you drink the cup that I must drink and be baptized with the baptism with which I must be baptized?*" The cup he was going to drink would be the cup of pain, of contempt, of death on the cross. The baptism would be the baptism of blood, the baptism of the annihilation of death, to bring life back from death.

The two disciples, without really knowing what they were saying, immediately say yes, they can drink the cup that Christ is going to drink and receive the baptism that he is going to receive. Jesus tells them yes but that his disciples must not have the pretensions of the lords and powerful of this world. They must not seek to assert

themselves through power, wealth, and strength, but through service to their brothers and sisters. Anyone who wants to become great among you must be the servant of others. The one who wants to be the greatest should be the servant of all, give his life for his brothers and sisters, as Christ did. This will be the path to "glory" for the disciple of Christ: to serve as he served; to love as he loved; to give his life for his brothers and sisters as he gave. St. Paul would tell us that our glory is in the cross of Christ. Let us learn from him to live our lives concerned with loving one another; with building paths of peace and justice; and sow the seeds of tenderness and fraternity among us.

Amen.