



29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE B

*Fr. David Rosenberg
Institute for Spiritual Direction*

This incident occurs in Mark right after the third prediction of the passion. Once again the disciples are shown in a negative light.

Along with Peter, James and John formed an inner circle among the Twelve. Perhaps this is why they thought they deserved the places of honor at the messianic banquet. Jesus asks if they are ready to share his cup and his baptism, and they rashly assert that they are.

Jesus assures them that they will share his cup and baptism, but he is referring to his suffering and death, which they will share in due time.

Their request stirs indignation among the others and gives Jesus the opportunity to teach about humility. He calls for a reversal of the way things work in the world. The greatest must serve the rest, just as Jesus is the servant who gives his life for the "many" (see ecumenical: promoting or tending to universal unity – in this case, Jesus Christ's "House of Many.")

Use your best storytelling skills for your reflection on this reading. The dialogue between Jesus and the sons of Zebedee is an animated one that hinges on their misunderstanding of what he means by cup and baptism. The anger of the other ten is described briefly. Then Jesus' teaching about humility relies on strong contrasts. The final sentence of the reading is a solemn statement of the mission of Jesus.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee,
came forward to Jesus and said to him,
"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And Jesus said to them,
"What is it you want me to do for you?"
And they said to him,
"Grant us to sit, one at your right hand
and one at your left, in your glory."

But Jesus said to them,
"You do not know what you are asking.
Are you able to drink the cup that I drink,
or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able."
Then Jesus said to them,
"The cup that I drink you will drink;
and with the baptism with which I am baptized,
you will be baptized;
but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it
has been prepared."

When the ten heard this,
they began to be angry with James and John.

So Jesus called them and said to them,
"You know that among the Gentiles
those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants
over them.

But it is not so among you;
whoever wishes to become great among you
must be your servant,
and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.
For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many."

