

Twenty Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

When we look at today's gospel it may be helpful to notice that it follows immediately upon the third prediction of his passion by Jesus. That James and John should then ask Jesus if they could be given places of honour in the heavenly throne room, shows how little they understood Jesus and his mission. Jesus tells them that they do not know what they are asking. And I am sure that they did not know what they were saying when they said that they were ready to drink the cup of suffering that Jesus was about to drink. Jesus assures them that because of their union with him they will have to face suffering and death as he had to face it.

We are told that the other ten disciples were angry when they heard what James and John had requested from Jesus. Jesus has to draw them close to him again and explain to them that if they took on any leadership in his company, then they would need to be like him. Greatness and leadership could only be exercised by those who were willing to put others before themselves. Jesus himself set the example for them. He had come not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus could only be understood in the light of those servant songs found in the Second book of Isaiah. Jesus could only be understood as the suffering servant who

gave his life to take away the sins of the people of Israel. We listened to part of one of those servant songs today.

Today we are called to take part in the formal beginning of the Synod on Synodality. Synodality is a big word but is best understood at walking together. Churches all around the world are praying that the Holy Spirit may renew the Church as we walk together as missionary disciples of the Lord. Pope Francis has called us to be open to the newness that God wants to suggest. "Let us with greater fervour and frequency invoke the Holy Spirit and humbly listen to him, journeying together as he, the source of communion and mission, desires: with docility and courage."

Today is also Mission Sunday. It is a day when we look again at who we are as Church in relation to others near and far away. This year we can hear the story of the Good Shepherd Sisters working in Thailand.