

September 23, 2018 – 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday, Ordinary Time

*“If anyone wishes to be great, that one shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Mark: 9:35*

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> time Jesus predicts his suffering, death and resurrection to the Twelve. Anytime Jesus works a miracle they tell everyone. When he asks them what they were discussing on the way through Galilee, they are silent. Finally, someone tells the truth. They were discussing who was the greatest. This time Jesus reminds them that the greatest must be the LAST and SERVANT of all.

Right now we are in the midst of the final week of the baseball season. Who are the most dangerous teams? Often times, the most dangerous teams are those that have nothing to lose and are out of the pennant race. Those teams feel no pressure to win.

In following Jesus, we have nothing to lose if our goal is to be LAST and to be SERVANT. For it is in losing our lives with Christ that we will rise with him to life. And that is our mission, according to the Gospel proclaimed – we are to be servant to all.

He then places a child in their midst, and, putting his arms around the child and says, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me and the one who sent me.” That is a daunting statement with our institutional church rocked by the mistreatment of children in the name of clergy. It saddens us all and challenges us to set things right.

When words were not enough, Jesus decided to shock them with a sign. He picked up a child and said in effect: “You want to be important? Here’s what important looks like.” Which of the disciples had to move over to make room for the new, young star of Jesus’ show?

In reality he wanted them all to move over – all the way to last place with him. Like the child, Jesus trusted his Father, and like his Father he watched out particularly for the little ones...

**The only way to really understand what he was saying was to do what he did, to trust in God as he did. One way was by learning to be servants: servants of God’s little ones. (Mary McGlone)**

There was a boy with cerebral palsy. He had always watched **Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood**, and even watched it as a teenager. His mother was concerned that tantrums he had could lead to his death. When he was angry he would hate himself and strike at himself with his fists. He could only communicate with his computer. While in California, Fred Rogers visited with him. A tantrum ensued, but Rogers remained in the room. Finally, Fred looked at the boy and said, “There is something I would like you to do for me. Would you do it?” Over his computer, the boy responded “yes.” Fred said, “I’d like you to pray for me.” The boy responded that he would try. A reporter who was there complimented Rogers on how he boosted the boy’s self esteem. Rogers replied:

“O, heavens no, Tom. I didn’t ask him for his prayers for HIM. I asked for ME. I asked him because I think that anyone who has gone through challenges like that must be very close to God. I asked him because I wanted his intercession.”

Only when we put ourselves in the humble service of the poorest and neediest, of the forgotten and rejected, can we come to know the love of God in our lives. And God is good, all the time.