

October 17, 2021

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday. Notes on the Gospel. Mark ch. 10. Vv. 35—45

“ James and John approached Jesus “ These were very senior disciples—the first to be recruited after Peter and Andrew , they would be witnesses of the Transfiguration and the Agony in the garden .

“Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory “  
At the moment Jesus has not much glory on show, wandering from village to village. Preaching and healing. James and John have a lot to learn about Jesus and his role as Saviour..

“ You do not know what you ask “ The person who will be seated at the side of Jesus in his heaven will be the Blessed Mother

“Can you drink the cup that I must drink or be baptised with the baptism with which I must be baptised “ In a cryptic way, Jesus is here referring to his suffering and death –but it is not what James and John have in mind so they say “ we can “

“ The cup I must drink, you shall drink, and the baptism with which I must be baptised, you shall be baptised “Jesus here refers to their forthcoming martyrdom. In the Acts of the Apostles, James will be the first Apostle to be martyred, after Stephen . Tradition tells us that John died in his bed, but there is a tradition in Rome that they tried to kill him in a caldron of oil but he survived.

“ Seats at my right hand or my left belong to those to whom they have been allotted “ In a chilling way this phrase has overtones with the two thieves at the crucifixion.

“ The other ten Apostles were indignant with James and John “ When their companions hear about James and John asking for preference, they are indignant, afraid the two brothers are stealing a march on them . Eventually, these 10 Apostles will give their lives for the Lord, but at this stage they have a lot to learn. It will be the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost which will change them and help them understand their true mission in God’s kingdom.

“ Among the pagans the rulers lord it over them “ The Lord, patiently, has to explain to the disciples the way pagans use their power for their own ends and make their authority felt. God uses his power very differently—and anyone who wants to be first in the kingdom has to be the servant of all . Quite a revolution for Christians in the use of authority and power, which will resonate down the centuries through the church’s teaching and example e.g, the Pope’s title is “ servants of the servants of God “ ; our head of government is called “ Prime Minister “.

“The Son of Man came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many “ While the disciples argued about what was in it for each one of them , their own careers, so to speak, the lord is on his way to Jerusalem to give his life as a ransom for many. This is how God uses his power. No doubt the irony was lost on the disciples at that stage, but once the Holy Spirit had descended on them after the Resurrection, they would understand and ,indeed , would also follow him in giving their lives for the Faith.