

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, October 20, 2024
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle B

Have you ever noticed how much of the world glorifies power? Think of the admiration we give to famous people, and celebrities on social media. People celebrate them based on their influence, the number of followers they have, or the power they wield. We are told that to be great, we must rise above others. But Jesus presents a radically different vision of leadership – one that is not built on *power*, but on *service*.

In today's gospel, James and John, two of Jesus' closest disciples, approach him with an ambitious request. They want to sit at his right and left hand in glory – positions of honor, power, and influence. But Jesus uses this moment to offer a gentle correction to their worldly view of leadership, showing them– and us – what it really means to be great. James and John's request for power reveals a misunderstanding of what the kingdom of God is all about. They wanted positions of influence, expecting that being close to Jesus in his glory would mean they would have authority over others. But Jesus' response must have shocked them. He says, "Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all."

Jesus completely redefines greatness and leadership. In the world, leadership often comes with prestige, recognition, and control. But in the kingdom of God, leadership is not about how many people serve you – it is about how deeply you serve others. Jesus does not reject leadership; rather, he transforms it, showing that true

leadership is rooted in humility, sacrifice, and love. Jesus' entire life was an example of servant-leadership. Think about how he washed the feet of his disciples, a task reserved for the lowest servant. It demonstrated that true leadership means lowering oneself for the good of others. This is the kind of leadership Jesus calls us to. It is not about seeking honor or recognition, but about being the first to serve and the last to take credit. As Pope John Paul II once said, "*The way of service* is the royal road to personal greatness and the measure of true leadership."

Pope John Paul II emphasized that true authority in the Christian sense is exercised in the form of service. It is about giving of yourself for the good of others, even when it costs you. Christian leadership is marked by three key characteristics: humility, sacrifice, and love. Leadership, in its truest form, looks like Jesus on the cross – sacrificing everything out of love. This is what Jesus shows us: leadership is not about titles or positions, but about how we love and serve those entrusted to us. Leadership is not about being served – **it is about serving.**

In your family, this might mean being patient with a difficult child or caring for an aging parent. In the parish, it means volunteering your time and talents, not for recognition, but out of love for God and others. The world's understanding of leadership is often about power, prestige, and recognition. But in the kingdom of God, leadership is about service and sacrifice. It is about putting others first. We are called to lead not by domination, but by love.

Jesus radically transforms what it means to lead. He challenges us to think differently about greatness, reminding us that the greatest among us is not the one with the most power, but the one who serves the most. True greatness is found in service, and in this way, we reflect the very heart of Christ.

As we strive to live out this call to serve, we may grow in holiness and reflect the love of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.