

## ***Greatness through Selflessness, Steadfastness, and Life of Service!***

Today's readings are connected in different ways, and they invite us to reflect on greatness through selflessness, steadfastness, and a life of service. The first reading, the book of Wisdom, one of the Deutro-canonical books written many years before Christ, describes the type of conspiracy and connivance that Christ himself suffered. Christ's patience and gentleness were tried and tested. Nevertheless, Christ had a good disposition towards all these and persevered till the end. It is the prophecy and prediction of his passion we read in the first part of Mark's gospel today, which is a follow-up to last week's gospel, the first prediction of his passion.

In each of the predictions, we see different reactions of Jesus' disciples. In the last week's gospel, the first prediction, Peter reacted by rebuking him, but he shunned him, telling him to get behind him Satan. Today, the gospel tells us that the disciples didn't understand and were afraid to ask the question because they were busy arguing on who was the greatest among them. They thought that the mission of Christ was that of becoming a civil leader that would eventually control all the powers, and they would be part of the ruling power. Each of them was thinking of himself. It is a destructive tendency which St. James describes: "Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice."

If we allow our hearts and thoughts to be filled with jealousy and selfish ambition, we can do anything to pull others down so that we can climb. Christ invites us to imitate his life of selflessness and service. We become great through a life of self-giving, sacrifice, and service in humility to one another, which is typical of Christ's life (Philippians 2: 6-14). He came to serve and not to be served and to give his life as a ransom for us (Matthew. 20: 28). Our gifts of time, talent, and treasure are meant to be shared through our life of service. We are stewards of God's gifts. The gifts we have are God's gift to us and what we make out of these gifts in love to one another is our gift to God. Let us pray that the Sacraments we receive will help us eschew all kinds of jealousies and self-ambition and put into us strength for a life of selflessness, steadfastness, and service. Amen.