

James and John fall into a familiar trap today

In all honesty

They are thinking as most of us probably would

Taking Jesus aside

Lord, in your kingdom

You will need special administrators

We want to be your prime ministers

Your right and left hands

Normal thinking, right?

Jesus had picked the 12

Then he was always pulling Peter, James and John aside

Taking them to the mountain to witness his transfiguration

Letting them accompany him to the house of Jarius

Witnessing his raising up Jarius' daughter

Again and again, they were with him in special moments

So it is natural he would want them with him in his kingdom

But they don't get it

He tells them the true meaning of a prime minister

What is it to minister to another?

It is to serve them

To be great is to be a servant of the highest order

That goes against all human ways of thinking

But God's ways are never our ways

Thousands of years before Jesus walked the earth

Isaiah wrote of a suffering servant of God

It was normal to think suffering was a punishment from God

For those known as public sinners, OK

But what about those seen as righteous?

Job, for instance?

If suffering is a punishment

When the righteous suffer

God is being unjust

If he cannot prevent the suffering of the righteous

Then he is not all-powerful

If it is a test to see if one remains faithful

He is cruel

Isaiah's description of the suffering servant is different

The punishment comes from God

And he seems to delight in it

Is this our God?

How can this be?

For us, it is a paradoxical mystery

It is how God shows both his justice and his mercy in one action

If he just waived his hands and 'poof'

All our sins are gone

This would be mercy, but not just

Or he could punish to the fullest extent of the law

This would be just, but merciless

In the suffering servant, God shows both justice and mercy

The servant comes freely as a guilt offering

Paying back what had been defrauded from another

That is what Original Sin did

It defrauded God of his love

It would require restitution

The ransom Jesus offered to free us from ourselves

His righteousness makes us righteous

He was innocent, free of any guilt

Instead of our sin affecting him

His offering of himself affected our sinfulness

We ask what is the cost of our salvation?

What does it cost to be a Christian in the world?

It is picking up our crosses every day

Following Jesus up Calvary

Giving ourselves away in love

This is what John and James needed to learn

It is what the other disciples needed to learn

Why do you think they became indignant at John and James?

It was not because they had this all figured out

It was that these two had the courage to express what they all were experiencing

And we also need to learn this

And be reminded of it every day of our lives

It is not about worldly power and glory

It is about drinking of the cup of Christ

It is being baptized with his baptism

It is about becoming a prime minister in the truest sense of the ministry

It is taking our baptismal promises seriously

To follow Christ is to follow all the way

To serve as he served

Christ did pay the price for our redemption

But the game is not over

And we are not merely spectators

Cheering Christ on from the bleachers

We play a part in our own salvation

We play a part in the salvation of the world

In a few weeks we will celebrate the feast of Christ the King

One of the teachings of this feast is our calling

Our mission

We are all called to be priests, prophets and kings

I was speaking with a man earlier this week

He said he wasn't called to be a priest

I told him he is called to be a priest

Not a ministerial, ordained priest

That is a very narrow definition of a priest

He is called to be a priest in the larger sense of the word

What is it that a priest does?

We offer sacrifice and serve

As ministerial priests, we do this in a particular way at the Mass

When we offer sacraments

As the father in his household, he is to serve his family

His wife and their children

Going to work every day is a sacrifice

And if we are unemployed or underemployed

If we cannot take care of our family as we desire

Isn't that a sacrifice?

Being at work

Witnessing to others in our words and choices

Isn't that a sacrifice?

Being involved in civic government

Being involved in parish committee's or groups

Being a priest in this sense of the word is not limited to being a male

Men and women alike are called to serve in this role as a priest

Serving and offering sacrifice for others

For ourselves and our family first and foremost

But for the larger community as well

Even for those we do not know

We can offer sacrifice for those in the Far East

**We can offer up our roles of service for the salvation of the
entire world**

In this sense, we become prophets as well

By our words and actions

Pointing to the reality beyond this world

**If you need concrete examples of how to live as priest, prophet
and king**

Look at the corporeal and spiritual works of mercy

This is the mission statement of a Christian in the world

They all involve some sort of suffering and sacrifice

They are sources of grace into our lives

Sources of grace for the world

Priests, prophets and kings are not spectators of a game

We are players in the game

Partners with Christ in the work of redemption

Not to be placed on a pedestal

Drinking the cup of Christ

Being baptized in his baptism

With the World Series coming up

It is not over when the fat lady sings

It is over when we hear the angels singing