

Twenty-fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time Year B

Mark 9:30-37

“Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.”

That is one of the three responses in the Mass when we are asked to proclaim the mystery of our faith.

The Paschal Mystery.

And when we do that, we proclaim it as the very central mystery of our lives as Christians.

Simply stated, “By Jesus Passion, Death, Resurrection, baptized Christians have been given the gift of eternal life.

Jesus gave His life for us so that we might share in His Divine life.

And as Christians, we are called to imitate that mystery in our own daily lives.

Called to put our lives at the service of others so that their lives may be enriched. No matter whether it be in ways large or small.

And that is what Jesus is saying to us in today’s Gospel.

“If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.”

When we participate in Jesus’ death and resurrection in the Sacraments of Baptism, the Eucharist, Marriage, and Holy Orders those are not isolated events. They should mirror the fundamental pattern of our lives.

That is to give our lives in act of service for the sake of others.

Now these acts need not be dramatic major events. Most often they are the simple everyday actions of our daily lives.

But they can be a reflection of the death and resurrection of Jesus. And when we do that what we find so often is that is gives us great joy.

For instance, being parents involves a lifetime of sacrifice. Parents quite literally pour out their lives for the sake of their children.

But most parents will also tell you that, at the end of the day, they also find great joy and life in doing so.

Marriage involves sacrifices day in and day out for the sake of the other.

But most will tell you that when the giving of life and love is a mutual exchange, there is happiness and a fullness of life.

And need I say anything about the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Why do you think Fr. Magnano is so happy and joyful?

The same could be said of any relationship or friendship. If you give your life for the sake of others you will find life as Jesus says *“full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.”* (Lk. 6:38)

And the best example I can give is right here today in this church and in this parish.

It is filled with people who come from all walks of life and backgrounds who are volunteering in so many ways to serve the needs of others. And they are full of joy.

I can tell you the establishment of this parish, the renovation of this beautiful church, and our soon to be completed pastoral center would not have happened without the generosity of many giving of their time talent and treasure.

And because of that, every day is see where those sacrifices are now giving life to others, especially to those in most need.

However, there is more to it in living out this mystery of our faith.

Jesus didn't mean for this to apply only in our private lives and relationships. Jesus was not crucified merely for preaching love.

He was crucified for preaching a reshaping of how people look at the world.

Jesus wants us to continually think about what it means to be a teacher, a lawyer, a salesperson, an executive, a nurse, or whatever our job may be in light of this call to serve and give life to others.

The life of Jesus teaches us that, in light of this mystery of service to others, we are to reshape how think about our work, our economic systems, about power we might have, and how we use it.

Are we to us it for the good of some, or for the common good.

The institutions and the laws of our society would surely look different if patterned after concern for the other instead of the I.

As I said before, it is in those moments of love and sacrifice for others that are the fullest.

They are not always easiest or most joyful moments, but they can be the most meaningful when we unite them with the suffering of Christ.

It is hard to be joyful when the inevitable strains of parenting and married life seem to just keep coming.

It is hard to keep serving when nobody seems to ever notice or just say thanks.

It is difficult to rethink this idea of service when you see a world where there is so much greed and self-centerdness.

A world where consumption is the goal when so many lack the bare necessities.

At times it is disheartening when our seeds of service seem so small and the harvest so far off.

But if we continue to plant the seeds, Jesus has promised a harvest in the eternal kingdom of God.

That will be when we will experience the true joy we are all longing for. And we will be united with those who have gone before us. The ones we have loved and those who have loved us.

So now in a few moments we will be asked to proclaim the mystery of faith with this response

“We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again.”May that proclamation renew our commitment to live out that mystery.