

Homily. 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. B. 21/22 September 2024. Mark says that Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee after leaving the mountain. This raises a question as to which mountain they left? The answer is the mountain referred to is that of the Transfiguration, an event which was all about Jesus communion with God, witnessed by Peter, James and John, as a preparation for his coming betrayal, passion and death. It's this fate that Jesus is now trying to explain to all of his disciples, hence the need for this private journey.

Somewhat strangely, St. Mark adds that none of them understood what Jesus was saying. This was because they were all preoccupied with their own agenda, arguing with one another about who was the greatest. If we're chock full of our own ego needs it's little wonder that we can't hear the voice of the Lord, especially when he's teaching us about dying to our ego's ambitions so that we can be reborn and rise to a richer destiny.

This leads us to the words of St. James in the 2nd reading; Wherever you find jealousy and ambition you find disharmony; Where do these wars and battles start between each other? Isn't it precisely in the selfish desires fighting inside your own selves? Rhetorical questions here, for the honest response is, Yes, of course this is the source of our conflicts and disharmony for we are our own worst enemy. In reply Jesus put his arms around a little child saying that welcoming and protecting the trusting, powerless and smallest is the true way to God, the loving path to greatness. Honest then, isn't it, that Jesus comes to us as a person of sacrifice, giving himself to us today in simple prayers, little gestures of welcome and courtesy and as small slips of bread and sips of wine. Mark's gospel will insist on this message from now until the climax of the

Cross. His gospel was written to a small and powerless people of faith being persecuted in Rome, the capital of the world, by the biggest empire ever known. The Good News is that Jesus, too, was small, weak and a nobody; that he got swept away by powers and forces bigger than himself and yet, He lives for we are here now in his name and Spirit. The Good News is that all ambitions and egotism crumbles back to dust, but the pure wisdom of God keeps working for our good, without any partiality.

We know this to be the case because nothing has ever lasted except the power of loving service which lives forever in God. The villains are recalled in history; the saints, the loving, wise servants of humanity are revered and celebrated in our hearts for they have become part of our own flesh and blood. In the humble smallness of Jesus giving himself to us now we pray, like St. James said, without the distractions of the selfish ego that we will become like him who kindly feeds us on his very self.