

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
(Isaiah 53:10-11 / Mark 10:35-45)
18.10.2015

Mission Sunday

Dear brothers and sisters,

We all dream of becoming great or want to be the first. There is nothing wrong in that kind of desire. Indeed, to the contrary, this might be considered to be a sign of good mental health! It all depends on the way we follow to fulfil our desire or to allow our dream to become reality. If we want to grow at the expense of others or to lord it over them, to reduce them to nothing or just to use them and even abuse them to advance ourself; if we want to occupy the whole place on the stage; these are wrong ways of becoming truly great, and arriving at the first place or being recognized by others as having fulfilled our potential.

Jesus' way is different and very clear: "Anyone who wants to become great" – notice that Jesus does not say that we have no right to desire to become great- what Jesus says is: "Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant". "Anyone who wants to be first – once again Jesus does not say that we are not allowed to dream of being first – no Jesus says "Anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all". And Jesus' example confirms his teaching: "The Son of Man – that is Jesus – did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many". Jesus' greatness was revealed when he knelt in front of his disciples and washed their feet; this was a task reserved to slaves. Jesus' greatness was manifested when he offered his life on the Cross out of love for us. He did this to reconcile us with the Father, to set us free from our sin and death. We become great by serving others, not by lording it over them.

To be great, to be the first, is to consent to serve the real needs of all our brothers and sisters in humanity. We are truly great, we have a real authority when we help others to grow and become who they truly are. In the end, we don't give true greatness to ourselves, rather we receive it as a gift, a gift offered to us by others who recognize and accept our greatness.

Today is Mission Sunday. This is an opportunity to pray for those who have left their countries in order to go and preach the gospel abroad. This is also an opportunity to pray so that the Lord will continue to call men and women to consecrate their lives to the Mission of the Church by going to far away places to preach the Good News.

Of course, it is not necessary to leave our country to preach the Good News. The Good News also needs to be preached at home. And perhaps today more than ever! More than that, we are all called to be missionaries, because this is a dimension of our baptismal vocation. We all have to bear witness to God's love for humankind, a love that we have received and experienced personally.

We have to follow the example of Jesus. Jesus' mission was to reveal the Father's love for all human beings without exception. Jesus remained faithful to his vocation until the end, whatever be the price that had to be paid. His greatness was his fidelity to his mission even up to his

passion and death. His resurrection proved that this way was the right way, the way to true life. The way is that of self-giving love!

Our greatness is to remain faithful to our mission received on the day of our baptism; it is to reveal God's love for the world, not so much by words but by our lives. It is in loving our neighbours that we shall reveal God's love for humankind. To be missionary for a husband is above all to love his wife, and for a wife to love her husband. To be missionary for parents is to love their children and for children to love their parents. It is particularly relevant to underline the importance of these family relationships at the time of the synod on the family which takes place in Rome, and on this very day when the parents of St Therese of the Child Jesus, Louis and Zélie Martin, are canonised, that is to say are presented as an example to the Church for all families. To be a missionary is to do our work well, whatever it may be, for the good of the whole community, and whatever be the price to be paid! Our true greatness does not depend on the nature of our work, but on the way we accomplish it.

With the psalmist, we are called "to keep our pledge, come what may", that is to say at any cost, and the cost can be great. The pledge is the vocation or the mission received, the promise we made once for all. Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many. He went through his passion and death on the Cross, and He rose from the dead, saving the world from sin and death. This was his real grandeur and uniqueness. We too are called to remain faithful to our vocation, our mission, our promises, and to give our lives for others. Inevitably, we shall meet with temptations, opposition, humiliations, sufferings, and even death to ourselves. But this is a death for life.

The Lord is our example. Let us keep our eyes fixed upon Him. To be great is to be at our place, to serve one another, and to remain faithful to our mission in life until the end. Amen!