

He serves the Little Ones

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Wis 2:12, 17-20)

¹²* Let us lie in wait for **the righteous one**, because he is annoying to us;/ he opposes our actions./ Reproaches us for transgressions of the law* ⁸/ and charges us with violations of our training./ ¹⁷Let us see whether his words be true;/ let us find out what will happen to him in the end.^k / ¹⁸For if the righteous one is the son of God, God will help him/ and deliver him from the hand of his foes./¹⁹With violence and torture let us put him to the test/ that we may have proof of his gentleness/ and try his patience./ ²⁰Let us condemn him to a shameful death;/ for according to his own words, God will take care of him.^m

THE FOCUS: The Righteous One

COMMENTARY

- The text is about the just one whose life is being plotted against by the wicked.
- They want to make his life hard because he is against their evil doings (v.12).
- They want to test God, if God would defend him (v.18).
- They want to test the just one, to find out if he is gentle and patient (v.19).
- They want to eliminate him, to test his faith on the word of God.
- The text presents the acts of the wicked and the acts of God over the just one.

REFLECTIONS

The Reading makes us realize that the just ones (*the sincere ones*) are not spared of intrigues and plots (*negative energies*).



One just man can make a lot of wicked people insecure. Imagine a bunch of wicked men plotting against an innocent man!

Somehow, testing the just one is also testing God.

The Reading encourages the just one to continue to be just. It discourages the wicked to abandon their plot because God will prevail over their wicked schemes.

The just ones (*the good ones, those who are trying hard to be holy, peaceful and kind and just*) are God's instruments in shaking away evil forces in this world.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 54:3-4, 5, 6-8)

THE LORD UPHOLDS MY LIFE.

SECOND READING (Jas 3:16—4:3)

¹⁶For where *jealousy and selfish ambition* exist, there is disorder and every foul practice.

^{17e}But the **wisdom** from above is first of all **pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity.** ^{18f}And the fruit of righteousness is sown in **peace** for those who cultivate **peace.**

^{1*} *“Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from? Is it not from your passions* that make war within your members? You covet but do not possess. You kill and envy but you cannot obtain; you fight and wage war. You do not possess because you do not ask. ³You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.*

THE FOCUS: Wisdom (vs. Passion)

COMMENTARY

- The text talks about wisdom and what it brings about: peace.
- The opposite of wisdom is *passions*.
- The text is emphatic on passions’ consequences: wars, conflicts, foul practice, covetousness, non-possession, prayer ineffective, wish not granted.
- Passions = jealousy, selfish ambition.
- Passions stand in opposition to God and to his teachings on wisdom.
- In contrast, wisdom belongs to God: peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy... see v.17.

REFLECTIONS

The text from James traces the causes of troubles in this world: passions.

We have wars and conflicts because of passions (jealousy, selfish ambitions, etc).

Each one must examine what controls a Christian: passions or wisdom?

Passions may be interpreted here as unbridled emotions, impulse, reactions, compulsions, irrational behavior; unable to listen to reason; inordinate craving for things....

Passions in a positive sense is your drive to help the poor, to right the wrong, etc.

GOSPEL READING (Mk 9:30-37)

After the Transfiguration, Fate of the Son of Man, teaching not understood

^{30g}They left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. ^{h 31}He was teaching his disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise.” ³²But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.

Argument on the way: who is the greatest?

^{33*} *“They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” ³⁴But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest.*

The greatest is the servant of all

³⁵Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and **the servant of all.**” ³⁶Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them, ^{37k}“Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.”

THE FOCUS: Being Servant of All

COMMENTARY

- There are two sections of the text:
 - Vv. 30-32 on the Son of Man.
 - Vv. 33-37 on the greatest.
- On the Son of Man:
 - The apostles never understand the details.
 - They are afraid to clarify on who is the greatest.

- Probably the apostles shifted their talk on what would happen to the son of God who is the greatest.
- Jesus was interested in what they were arguing. He gives an answer.
- According to Jesus, the greatest is the last and the servant of all.
- He explains further: the servant of all should include one child in one's mission.
- The child refers to the newly converts, new comers in the community (Pierik).

REFLECTIONS

If we want to be the greatest, we should be the servants of all.

Being servants of all, we must accept the new comers of our community, those who don't know yet about our life.

Jesus sees the importance of paying attention to them. We should not be focused on our self-importance but on them.

The main activity of the Christian is selfless service especially to the beginners (including babies).welcoming, making new comers feel at home, making them feel they belong.

Being servants to them means explaining what our community or church is all about; taking pains in catechizing them (*not scandalizing them*).

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

The First Reading talks about the fate of the just one.

The Second Reading talks about living in wisdom.

The Gospel talks about the greatest.

Let us focus on **Jesus Christ** who is the just one (First Reading), who did what is just

and wise (Second Reading), who taught about who is the greatest (Gospel). From our point of view, the greatest of all (servant of all) really is Jesus Christ himself.

How to make your homily/sharing

Share one whom you think is a good servant, church or community worker. *Mother Teresa, Rosa Rosal, etc.* What are their significant contributions to the community? What are their difficulties?

Some people paint a bad picture; others try to discredit them (*First Reading*). How does one react or handle this?

One is not controlled by one's passions to be great, to be number one (*Second Reading*).

One is like Christ who accommodates everyone, willing to undergo one's own paschal mystery (*Gospel Reading*).

Chaos in our churches and communities is caused by people who have unbridled passion for power and prestige and recognition. These people want to take control over the legitimate leadership.

Chaos can also be caused by the underdogs or those who have been put aside, by spreading rumors, misrepresenting the views of other people.

The Readings should serve as inspiration to the authentic leaders of the church. Like Christ, they too are not spared of troubles. They must be strong in faith, in the power of God who helps as they do their duties. With wisdom (*without passions*) drawn from their good character, attitude and training (*on-going formation*), docility, good communication skills, etc., they can govern their communities and families well.

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III. OUR CONTEXT

1. What characterizes an authentic pastoral leader? Perhaps you can share a portrait whether in visual or oral presentation. (HM)