



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY October 21 & BEYOND”

“SERVANTHOOD”



Bible scholars and Bible teachers like to summarize each of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John down to one theme, and quote one particular verse as evidence. Identifying such as an overarching theme or message can be helpful, of course, especially in providing

a means for interpreting and clarifying, even explaining the rest of that gospel. Personally, I've never thought it was that simple to read the gospels that way, especially since it's not just about the author, but also about the Holy Spirit inspiring that author to reflect the fullness of Jesus Christ here on Earth.

When it comes to The Gospel according to Mark, there is virtually unanimous consensus that the theme of Mark is servanthood. The verse that goes with it is what we will hear in the Gospel reading on Sunday morning, October 21st. Jesus said, "for even the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Obviously, that is very good news!

So was Jesus just walking along the road and suddenly blurted out this amazing statement? Well, he was walking along the road, but it was in response to what was taking place with some of his disciples in conversation among themselves. And then they pressed Jesus to tell them who was going to be the greatest among them, and sit the closest to him on his throne in heaven. That's not something you want to hear your disciples say if everything that you have been teaching so far has been about serving others! It's almost as if they presumed that everything was theirs already and they just needed to acquire it.

This past week, while babysitting the four cats of some friends at their house, I heard outside in the dark that night some scratching and some chewing. My friends had a Tupperware container of dry food inside the house and outside the house for their cats. The sound surprised me because I thought all the cats were already inside the house. So I peered out into the darkness and thought I saw one of the adult cats there at the food bin. And then I heard growling. not quite the kind of growling that one cat would do with the other when they were in the way of their food, but something a little different. I looked again and saw the dark band across the nose and realized I was looking at a raccoon. There was only one. It made me mad. Ever since a very unfortunate encounter between a raccoon and my wife many many, years ago I have never appreciated raccoons since. So I pounded the patio window with my fist and the raccoon took off growling some more. It wasn't just the sight of a raccoon that had come close to seriously injuring my wife, that made me mad at the moment. It wasn't just the raccoon coming up to steal some food. It was the whole raccoon demeanor and attitude, if raccoons have attitude. What a sense of false entitlement! Growling around as if to keep people from what they were claiming as their own! Creating space for themselves when no space had been offered to them or bequeathed to them! Wow! What chutz-paw!

Same thing with the disciples. Jesus grabbed their attention by, in a sense, verbally slapping their window and grabbing their attention. Then teaching them what they needed to hear in extremely precise words and thought, vision and purpose. These were human beings who had already followed Jesus and seen service in action. I think at the very least you could say the less we act like Servants of each other for each other's sake the more we have descended into less than human behavior. More like Animal Kingdom behavior of the survival of the fittest.

But let's not leave it speaking of the least that we can understand from this. The good news is that we have presented to us in this gospel a servant Messiah, a servant King, a servant leader who is in fact the son of God. Because this is his nature, he offers salvation. Thus freedom from our own selfishness is in a way what we on our own do not conceive of. We fall asleep thinking that we gain because we deserve, like that raccoon thinking it deserves whatever it found. Jesus shows us the complete opposite. We don't deserve eternal life with him but he comes and as our servant provides the way by his death and his resurrection into his love.

The ultimate sacrifice is on him, and we are invited to believe and follow. What blessed and good news for our striving Souls.

Fr. Robert G. Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 53:4-12 Psalm 91:9-16 Hebrews 4:12-16 Mark 10:35-45

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

SATURDAY 7:00pm WillanWest Event

Choral Mass celebrating the Feast of Saints Simon and Jude