

Small Groups

Discussion Questions for September 20, 2015 – Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

There's a lot in the readings and message this weekend that can get us to really think about our place in God's plan. In the second reading, James says that we don't get what we want from God because we ask "wrongly". I would think that most of us don't think that we're asking "wrongly." We tend to think that those things we're asking God for – money to pay bills, health for a family member, clear skies for a wedding day – are beneficial to us. And maybe for that moment they might be; but God knows what's best for us in the long run. He's doing all this for eternity, not just the moment. But it's not always easy to see beyond what we need at the moment. This is where faith comes in. Sometimes, we just have to have the faith to realize that what God is doing in our lives is for the best. If we knew for certain, then it wouldn't be faith. We should try to "be last" as the Gospel tells us – that is, put our desires and wants behind those of another. It's not a false humility that Jesus is calling us to, rather, it's the real relinquishment of our pride in ourselves and our reliance on the things we can do. As we put others first, and our needs last, we will truly be first in God's eyes, and we will get those things we ask for in abundance.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the paragraph above and come up with some ways that you have or could "be last".
2. When you pray and don't receive, how do you react? Do you have ways of letting go of "self" and increasing your faith at times like these?
3. How has your 5 minute prayer time gone? This week, use only 1 minute to pray a Hail Mary, then spend the remaining 4 minutes thanking Jesus – as if he's right there with you – for the blessings he has given you.
4. The first reading (*Wisdom 2:12, 17-20*), if we're honest with ourselves, indicts us for many things we've done in the past to good people, whether family, friends or co-workers. Discuss some ways we can avoid being like the wicked ones in this reading. Look at all they do and discuss what the opposite approaches would be.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, our redeemer, the light of our salvation, come and be with us this day and all the days of our lives. Let us be in your presence and be in ours. We ask that you enable us to see you in our lives and help us to speak with you as we would a friend. Enable us to not be quick-tempered, to pause before we speak, to assume that the "other" has good reason for doing what they are doing. Let us be as you in this moment in time. You have put us here at this time, in this place, for a reason; help us to understand that reason and act on it. We do this for you, for the peace that you give and for the love of God and the world. Jesus, be with us. We ask all of this in the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

"Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward." (*Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48*)