

Meditation 1

MATTHEW 20:20-28

“What do you want me to do for you?”

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached him with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something. He said to her, “What do you wish?” She answered him, “Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your kingdom.”

Jesus said in reply, “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?” They said to him, “We can.” He replied, “My cup you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left [this] is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Points for Meditation

- 1) “He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’” “Chi bene comincia e’ a meta’ dell’opera”. Whoever begins the job well is halfway through it.
- 2) “He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’”
 - a. “Che cosa vuoi che io ti faccia”. Literally it translates: “What do you want me to do for you?”
 - b. It isn’t simply, ‘What do you wish?’ “What do you want ME to do FOR YOU?”
- 3) “. . . life is far too great a gift to be squandered on anything less than perfection.” (Merton, Thomas. *The Ascent to Truth*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951).
 - a. In the Old Testament, God is quite clear: “Speak to the whole Israelite community and tell them: **Be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy**” (Lev 19:2).

- b. And in the New Testament, God is just as clear in Matt. 5:48: **“So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”**
- c. “What do YOU want ME to do for YOU?”

Quotes for Meditation

“Do not be afraid to be holy! Have the courage and humility to present yourselves to the world determined to be holy, since full, true freedom is born from holiness.”

(Homily of his Holiness John Paul II, Washington, D.C., Oct. 6, 1979)

“The holier a man becomes,
the more he mourns over the unholiness which remains in him.”

C.S. Lewis

St. Teresa of Calcutta (1910–1997), while speaking at Harvard University said something like this: Being holy is not something for the few or the privileged, but the responsibility of everyone. You are called to be holy in your life as I am called to be holy in mine. Becoming holy or being holy is part and parcel of living as a Catholic.

Mother Teresa is correct; holiness is a **right** and **responsibility** of every baptized Catholic. On the other hand, holiness does take desire and dedication. A Catholic must desire to be holy and dedicate time to the practices that nurture holiness. Pope John Paul II points out that we are all called to holiness. In his apostolic letter *Christifideles Laici*, the Pope states: “We come to a full sense of the *dignity* of the lay faithful if we consider the *prime and fundamental vocation* that [God] assigns to each of them in Jesus the Christ through the Holy Spirit: the vocation to *holiness*, that is, the perfection of charity. The Pope adds, “This charge is *not* a simple moral exhortation, but an *undeniable requirement arising from the mystery of the Church: she is the choice vine*, whose branches live and grow with the same holy and life-giving energies that come from Christ; she is the Mystical Body, whose members share in the same life of holiness of the Head who is Christ.” The Holy Father reminds us that we are called to not only follow in the footsteps of Jesus but also to follow the matchless path shown us by the Church, a path that is time-tested and proven worthy over the centuries.”

(John Paul II, *Called to Holiness: Holiness in Modern Church Teaching* by Arthur David Canales. Saint Mary's Press, 2010. Living in Christ Series Document #: TX001341.)

