

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Mark 10:35-45  
October 17, 2021  
Submitted by Dr. Rosemary Murphy

## *No Glory Without the Cross*

In prayerfully reading today's Gospel, many of us would be surprised, if not shocked, at the nerve of James and John to ask for prime place in the eternal kingdom. As part of Jesus' inner circle, we would expect that they had been listening to Jesus' teachings and accepted his message. Remember what Jesus told them in earlier in the Gospel of Mark. These disciples, traveling to Capernaum, were discussing whom among their group was the greatest! Jesus could not have been more clear: "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." (9:35)

Here they are again, the same disciples, this time going up to Jerusalem. Jesus predicts his death and tells them what is going to happen there in detail. The information about rising in three days apparently struck a cord and presented an opportunity to seek a higher position, a little more honor and privilege, if not on earth, surely in the heavenly kingdom.

This encounter had to hurt Jesus. Clearly, the disciples did not understand Jesus' mission to give his life for them and for us. Nor did they understand his relationship with his Father, and he certainly had to know they would go to sleep at Gethsemane and desert him when, in his darkest hour, he could have used their prayerful support.

The Gospel writer portrays Jesus' patience and love in his response "You do not know what you are asking." (10:38) *There can be no glory without sharing in Jesus' suffering.*

First, just as the head of a Mediterranean household fills the cups at table and family members accept and drink their share of the cup given to them, so the disciples must accept their portion of the suffering that is part of discipleship. Secondly, as followers, baptized into Jesus, disciples hold the hope that they will also rise to newness of life with him. And, when they rise into glory with Jesus' they will take a place *that the Father has prepared for them.*

Finally, Jesus' repeats a "new rule," a status reversal for these disciples. If there is any personal effort helpful in gaining a place in the Father's kingdom, then disciples must seek to be last and put the needs of others first. Jesus tells the disciples and us: be a servant, be a slave, and expend all your power in serving others that they may be free to love and follow Jesus alone.