

Scripture Reflection Oct 18 Fr Jim

May fellow Catholics:

I hope you are enjoying the fall colors and this reflection helps you with the week to come!

Fr. Jim McDougall

Sunday Gospel:

A reading from the Gospel of Mark:

Zebedee's sons, James and John, approached Jesus. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to grant our request." "What is it?" he asked. They replied, "See to it that we sit, one at your right and the other at your left, when you come into your glory." Jesus told them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I shall drink or be baptized in the same bath of pain as I?" "We can," they told him. Jesus said in response, "From the cup I drink of you shall drink; the bath I am immersed in you shall share. But sitting at my right or my left is not mine to give; that is for those for whom it has been reserved." The other ten, on hearing this, became indignant at James and John. Jesus called them together and said to them: "You know how among the Gentiles those who seem to exercise authority lord it over them; their great ones make their importance felt. It cannot be like that with you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all. The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve -- to give his life in ransom for the many."

The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION:

Growing up, we all knew a "cool" kid: the kid who was always the leader of the gang, who saw himself or herself as the best looking, the most intelligent, the most able to take on and beat the challenges ahead. The "cool" boy imposed his will by his physical power or his "smart" attitude; the "cool" girl projected the most sophistication and elegance and ruled the group by her air of superiority (there is a fine line between being "cool" and being a bully).

The cool kids intimidated us. We wanted to be cool too—but try as we might "cool" was not in our DNA. During that important rite of passage called adolescence, we all have our fundamental values tested – except for the cool kids. They lived in the moment, in the now. While the rest of us suffered through the vulnerability and insecurity of those difficult years of middle school and high school, the cool kids were too in control to waste time on such insecurities.

Or so we thought.

In our later years, when the old gang gets together, we see that everyone has done pretty well, leading happy and productive lives, we make it OK.

Except for the cool kid.

The cool kid may have enjoyed a little success, but discovered that attitude alone will not get you through adulthood, that it's what you learn after you know it all that's important. During the reunion, the cool kids are once again the life of the party; the cool kid's time has returned – the moment with the gang. We smile, laugh at the cool kid's antics, and understand.

We learned more than we realized from the "cool" kids.

It today's Gospel, the sons of Zebedee are trying to be the "cool kids," placing themselves at Jesus' side before the others in Jesus' company. But Jesus challenges their self-importance and self-centeredness by redefining the very meaning of "cool" in the Gospel scheme of things. When James and John make their startling bold request of Jesus to sit at his right hand in his kingdom, Jesus tells them that they must be willing to immerse themselves in the suffering and pain Jesus will endure for the love of God. Greatness in the kingdom of God means to totally give oneself in service to others in imitation of Jesus the Servant-Redeemer; consequently, such service can only begin once we "empty" ourselves of our own self-centered needs, wants, interests – and "coolness" in order to be "filled" with the Gospel spirit of loving servanthood, compassion and forgiveness.